

Many changes have been made in Canada, as in other democracies, to bring about a more full and more equitable participation of the citizens in the process of choosing who should govern them. Citizens have the right to choose who should govern them. But mark this. If we do not do anything to change the powers of the Senate, then the citizens of Canada will not choose who should govern them because they will be governed by the Senate. Legislation which is passed by this House can be repudiated and rejected by the non-elected, appointed Senate, which has a Liberal majority, a majority of Liberals who were repudiated by the people of Canada in the last election.

At the present time there are three vacancies in the Senate. One person has been named, but not yet appointed, from New Brunswick, Mr. Simard. There are 72 Liberals in the Senate, 25 Progressive Conservatives, three independents and one independent Liberal. The Senate is dominated completely by the Party which was rejected decisively in the election of last September. Very few might regret that, but that is what happened. The Party which now controls the Senate has been rejected by the people of Canada. The Party which has a majority in the House of Commons has been chosen. Its policy and its leader have been chosen by the people to govern Canada. What we are dealing with is whether Canadians can choose who should govern them. If the Liberal cabal in the Senate can reject or delay unduly the legislation of the House, then the people of Canada are not choosing who governs them.

Many changes had to be made in Canada to achieve the political process which we have today. There were a number of barriers. There was once a very stiff property qualification for candidates for the House of Commons. That was changed in 1874. Until 1898, only men who met a property-owning requirement had the right to vote. Some women gained the right to vote in 1917, and basic adult suffrage was established in 1920, although even then it was not fully universal. Certain groups of oriental origin were denied the suffrage until 1948. That is quite amazing. Indians, Inuit and Doukhobors did not gain the right to vote in federal elections until 1960. By 1940 all provinces had granted the franchise to women. It is unfortunate that the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps) is not here to celebrate that. In the 1970s, limits were placed on election spending in order to limit the influence of Parties' and candidates' financial resources in election campaigns. Today, all political Parties are starting to ensure that women, visible and audible minorities, and disadvantaged groups participate fully in the political process.

An important anomaly persists in Canada—an appointed and not accountable Senate is still empowered to exercise an absolute veto over legislation which is adopted by the elected House of Commons. Why has this anachronism persisted until now? To get the answer we must look at what the Fathers of Confederation intended when they designed the Senate. They tried to marry the principle of federalism to a parliamentary form of Government. That took some imagination and boldness and, on the whole, the form of Government they devel-

oped has served us pretty well, but we are trying to combine a parliamentary form with a federal system of Government.

● (1230)

The Senate was conceived as a hybrid second Chamber. Its name, and the basic principle of representation, was supposed to be equality of representation of regions rather than representation by population, and that was based on the example of the American Senate. On the other hand, the Fathers of Confederation chose a method of selection which was more like that of the House of Lords in the United Kingdom. The method of selection was not a surprising one for those times. We often forget, Mr. Speaker, that the American Senate was not then elected. It was an appointed body in the 19th century. Appointment reflected the values and the desire of the Fathers of Confederation to protect against what they called "The excesses of democracy". We all know, Mr. Speaker, that there are excesses of democracy, but our view today is that it is up to the people to decide whether or not there have been excesses. As a result, the legitimacy of the Canadian Senate at that time compared favourably with second Chambers which existed elsewhere.

The Fathers of Confederation also chose to give the Senate powers virtually equal to those of the House of Commons. That did not shock anyone in the year 1867. The Senate had the full legislative functions of the House of Lords at that time, including an absolute veto over legislation. Its powers were just about the same as those of the elected House. But since then, of course, we have had an evolution in other countries and major changes to both of the second Chambers which were the model for our Fathers of Confederation. In 1907, Mr. Speaker, the House of Commons in England adopted this motion:

In order to give effect to the will of the people as expressed by their elected representatives, it is necessary that the powers of the other House to alter or reject Bills passed by this House should be so restricted by law as to secure that within the limits of a single Parliament the final decision of the Commons shall prevail.

We all recall the bitter struggle which took place between the House of Lords and the then Liberal Government of the United Kingdom, which was finally settled with the adoption of the Parliament Act in 1911, after two elections, as I recall. So the power of the House of Lords over money Bills was reduced by law to a short delay. Its absolute veto over other legislation was reduced to a suspensive veto. And in 1949 in the United Kingdom, the length of the suspensive veto over ordinary legislation of the House of Lords was further shortened. So that is the situation in the United Kingdom.

In the United States, the American Senate underwent a major change early in this century. The Senators were chosen by the state legislative assemblies. But in 1913, only two years after passage of the Parliament Act in Britain, a constitutional amendment was adopted which provided for Senators to be popularly elected on a state-wide basis.

We have not as yet, Mr. Speaker, followed either the British or the American development. Why is it that Canadians were content to leave the Senate as it was originally constituted