

Mr. MEIGHEN: What is the difference? The hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Vien) knows that the effect of this bill is to abandon all pretence of moral claim.

Mr. VIEN: Not at all.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Why, of course. The bill is on the basis of relief and nothing else now, so there was nothing to be objected to in the fact that there was no moral claim.

Mr. VIEN: The Senate has now dropped the preamble in which they contended it was a measure of relief only.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I know that, but the bill itself, no matter whether there is the preamble or not, makes it absolutely manifest to everybody that it is on the principle of compassion, whether it is recited or not.

Mr. VIEN: No.

Mr. MEIGHEN: What is the use of the member saying that to the House? Everybody knows it is exactly on the principle of compassion. It does not need to be recited. We all know it. So what was the value of dropping the preamble? It is purely academic; it does not amount to a hill of beans.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN (South York): I hope the House will pardon me if I refer for a few minutes to the incident now before us. I have sat in this House a good many years, and have seen a number of disputes between the Senate and this House in regard to money bills and other questions. I ask the House if this is not something in the way of a solution of these difficulties, especially in view of the fact that a conference has to be called in regard to our constitution.

In regard to our Senate, I would have the constitution as written in the British North America Act amended in the direction of making seats in our upper house elective or appointive, for fixed terms, with the right of re-election or re-appointment at the end of the term.

And I would have their election or appointment rest in the legislatures of the provinces, not in the gift of the Governor-in-Council, or as a matter of fact in the gift of the Prime Minister, who may disappear any day as a responsible factor in the political life of the country. By this change the senators would always be responsible to their legislature, not as most of them are to-day to Prime Ministers or governments no longer in office.

In no parliamentary constitution outside of Great Britain does anything like so irresponsible a Senate exist as we have in Canada; and while the House of Lords in Great Britain

[Mr. Vien.]

is hereditary the party in office there can in a political emergency create new peers to overcome any holdup of their legislation, more important still of their money bills.

In the great democracy alongside of us the Senate of the United States is chosen by the voters of their respective states for fixed terms.

But it may be said that our Mother Country is a monarchy, not a federation. True we are a federation, and like the federation of the United States, our provinces, like their states, ought to choose senators for a limited period. Until we have this reform Canada has neither responsible nor autonomus government in the broad progressive parliamentary sense of that term.

May I add that our Governor-General is appointed for a fixed term, this House of Commons is elected for a fixed term, the legislatures and the lieutenant-governors of the provinces for fixed terms just as is the case in the United States. Our senators are appointed for life.

Otherwise, I respect the rights of the Senate. We need a second chamber, but one responsible to someone. To whom is our upper chamber responsible? Only to men out of office or long dead. And we must have the rights and duties of our Senate in regard to money bills limited to the full limit of modern parliamentary practice. In respect of responsibility and in regard to the rights of the lower house in money bills, we have neither of these things.

That is my proposal to cure the difficulties that have been occurring in this country, and the main difficulty is that we have a Senate that is not responsible. It ought to be responsible, as is the case in all other parliamentary institutions in the world that are recognized, and the only way to make them responsible is to have them elected for fixed terms, and the ones to elect them are the legislatures of the country, rather than electing them in the irresponsible way in which they are chosen now. The Prime Minister now appoints them. Well, Prime Ministers disappear, and then there is no one to hold responsible. A crisis has arrived. I have seen it coming for many years, but it is now more pressing than ever, and it must be cured. If this parliament, this House of Commons and the Senate, fails to tackle that question, we shall end up in annexation or drift to some other country where there is responsible government. I have every respect for the Senate. They are in office by law, but surely this country living alongside the great democracy to the south of us, should have a more democratic Upper