

### *The Senate*

Members will not agree with me, but I do not think what has happened in the past month, the kind of fury which has occurred, provides justification for such a radical change. We do not throw out the baby with the bath water. We try to examine the purpose and deal in a constructive way with the potential for change.

Perhaps the second most popular touted reform has been to have the Senate as an elected body. Again commissions have reviewed various options, and various configurations have been put forward. When I started to look at this issue I think that was my first inclination. One of our present Senators, Peter Bosa, indicated in an article he wrote several years ago on this subject that he started out as an advocate of an elected Senate but after some thought and consideration he too had rejected that.

● (1710)

Again, I look at an article by Professor Burns of Queens University who has done a lot of writing in this area. I found his writing most constructive. He wrote:

There is a good deal of support for the direct election of the second Chamber . . . More often than not, this seems based more on democratic sentiment than on any base of functional understanding. What has not yet been clarified or perhaps even considered sufficiently in this debate is whether we are seeking to develop another level of representative Government or what is essentially an instrument of control within the governmental structure that is already in place.

We can look at other jurisdictions, Australia in particular which has an elected Senate, and some of the great difficulties there and the frustrations they have been through with Bills. We would have exactly the same kind of problems, indeed worse with an elected Senate than we now have. Professor Burns went on to say:

The life of a Government could be one of continuing uncertainty, if it were to be responsible to two elected Houses.

A lot of people say that an elected Senate could move us more toward an American system of Government, but there is a sense of confusion. We do not have an American system in this country. I do not think we should be working toward that. We would get into greater difficulty with an elected Senate than we have with our present institution.

There have been a lot of recommendations for changes in the way that appointments are made. There have been suggestions of a House of the Provinces or that the provinces actually appoint some of the Members of the Senate. They would almost be servants of the provinces. The basic purpose of the Senate was not to represent the provinces *per se*. It was to provide a representation of regional interest. If we introduced that kind of system, we would be creating more difficulties for ourselves. I do not think that is the forum in which we should be discussing federal-provincial relations. From the recent efforts in Regina, we see that there are other ways which the federal and provincial Governments can get together to share and come together with constructive ideas. Having the Members of the Senate appointed by the provinces and, therefore, feeling a sense of accountability for the provincial Governments would not be a particularly constructive option.

Reforms are required. Some are legislative and some are changes in the character and in the attitude of the Senate which would result in a change in public opinion of the Senate. It is important that we have a Senate that does not frustrate the will of a democratically elected Government. That has to be the first and most important issue that we address.

There have been suggestions, suggestions that I would like to support and propose, that certainly the veto right of the Senate should be changed. They should only be entitled to a suspensive veto, short term on money bills and perhaps a longer term on other kinds of Bills. They would have the opportunity to discuss and debate constructively, but could not totally obstruct the will of this House. That is certainly one of the reforms that I would recommend. That of course requires legislation. Although there is not a clear indication, it probably requires the consent of seven of the ten provinces, including 50 per cent of the population.

As well, we should support the recommendations made both by the Lamontagne committee and the Special Joint Committee on Senate Reform to go to a fixed term. Personally, I rather liked the suggestion of a 10 year term, with a possible renewal for a further five years. I do not think people should view appointments to the Senate as a sinecure or a reward for life. We should be looking for people who are in their middle years, their vital years, people who are prepared to give up some time to be a part of public policy formulation in this country and who can look at it from a longer term view than perhaps we can in the House, and from a thoughtful point of view. A change in the term of appointment of Senators would certainly be an important change in this respect.

I also support the recommendation that the Senate should be given the power to review regulations. As a Member of the Standing Committee on Regulations and Statutory Instruments, I feel it would be very interesting if a lot of that work was done by Senate committees. They probably have the time. They have the people with the interest in that area to do it more effectively than perhaps Members of this House who are so busy with the myriad of issues with which we have to deal.

Items which would not require legislation but require a change in the way that we do things would be, first of all, the way in which appointments are made, the type of person. Originally, the concept was that the type of person to be appointed to the Senate would be persons of considerable experience and wisdom who would make a commitment to this work. They were not considered to be strictly partisan appointments.

As it was originally conceived, the Senate was not considered to be a purely partisan body. If they are going to receive public acceptance of their work, they have to move in that direction and view issues, not from a partisan point of view, but from the kind of experience and background that each brings to the task.

We need to be assured that appointments are made in a speedy way, that we do not leave vacancies, that there are requirements for attendance in the Senate. Therefore, we would not have the continued public criticism that they do not