

*Retirement Age for Senators*

would please a lot of people, but it would not necessarily be the right thing to do. If we want to find out exactly how much it would please the public, I would ask the Government to submit to the people a referendum or to make it an issue in the next election campaign, thus saving perhaps the Senate's skin. We will not only abolish the Senate but possibly get rid of the Liberal Party from this House forever, so it might be a very good thing to submit a referendum to the people on this matter.

I think that we need some further deep thinking before abolishing the Senate entirely. We can have measures brought before this House to reform the Senate so as to make it a more active body, instead of a political refuge for financiers who have financed either the Liberal or the Conservative parties in the past or who will do so in the future. It is also a refuge for those who deserve some recognition for their efforts in helping the party. The hon. Member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) mentioned having Senators in the other place who were of Liberal or Conservative affection, and this is entirely true. I agree with him in his remarks about the Province of Alberta. If the Senators were to represent the interests of the provinces, which in turn are guided by the governments of the provinces, then why do we not find any Social Credit Senators in the other place? There are no C.C.F. Senators in the other place, yet the C.C.F. have been in Saskatchewan since 1944. There are no Social Crediters from British Columbia even though the British Columbia government was elected to office in 1952. There are also no Union Nationale members from the Province of Quebec in the Senate, a government which was in office for 16 years.

I agree with some hon. Members that Senators are not entirely fulfilling their role at the moment due to the way they are nominated for the other House. The only interests they defend at the moment are those of the government in power when it also has a majority. We cannot touch them or do anything about them because these Senators are named by the government in power. If the Government were to act as some Senators sometimes act toward legislation which is brought forward, we would suggest that it would go before the people and their conflict of interest, as mentioned by the hon. Member for Winnipeg North, would be settled in due course of time by the electors themselves, the Canadian people.

• (4:30 p.m.)

But you cannot do that with the Senate. We have had a Liberal Government in this country for many years, with the exception of the period 1957 to 1962. During that time the Liberals did not name other than Liberals to the Senate. I do not wish to give too many flowers to the Conservative Party, but from 1958 to 1962 they had to struggle and perhaps make up for a lot of difficulties because of that position in the Upper House. There might have been a lot of difficulties because the majority of the Upper House was not Conservative. But this is something that is abnormal, Mr. Speaker, and to my mind the other place is just a political refuge for aged financiers who have furnished electoral funds to the two large parties; and it is also a refuge if they did not furnish financially but because of their service to the party were qualified to be appointed to the Senate.

I am not discussing the age limit of 75, Mr. Speaker. You have people of 75 and even 90 years of age who in many ways are more alert and intelligent than is the case with some who are 30 or 40 years of age. This is always the case. This is why those nominating people to the Senate should know what they are sending them there for and whom they are appointing. The main reason people are appointed to the Senate now is for political services in the past, or their financial assistance to the party.

When we come to deal with the clauses of the bill I intend to deal with this matter at greater length than did the hon. Member for Port Arthur (Mr. Fisher). I certainly agree that it might be a slap in the face to some, but this is the perfect, honest truth as I see it. Sometimes it is difficult to swallow the truth, but in a case like this I do not discriminate against any of the Senators, because if they have succeeded in attaining a certain financial state or prestige, so much the better. But I object to the Government appointing them only on these bases. I blame, not the Senators but the Government for acting in this way. Furthermore, I am convinced that the people do not know exactly what is the role of the Senate. When you get out and meet the public you find that most people want to get rid of the other place.

I can say I am not of that opinion, Mr. Speaker. I honestly think that the Senate can fulfil a better role and do a better job than it is doing now. One way it could fulfil a better role, if it is going to represent the provinces and the federal Government and any