

Retirement Age for Senators

bility in the making and remaking of their Cabinets by reason of the existence of the Senate. The Senate serves as one of the attractions, all too few in our system, drawing men and women into public life. By its mere existence it deters the spread of the dangerous doctrine of primitive congressionalism.

Mr. Prittie: Your High Commissioner votes too, you know.

Mr. Stewart: Those valuable functions of the Senate would still be performed if the rights of the Senate were modified, in line for example with the provisions of the Parliament Act, 1911, as amended in 1949. It is conceivable that at some future date this House should take the time to examine the need for such a modification. But, Sir, the conflict between socialism and the Senate is far from imminent. We need not try to anticipate it now, nor indeed for many years to come; and I use those words only so as not to be too discouraging to Members of the New Democratic Party.

Even the bitterest critics of the Senate would not insist that the other place is so outrageous in its conduct that at this very moment we should put aside for weeks all other business to deal with the great constitutional issues raised by some of those who have spoken on this bill. The bill under debate, despite all that has been said about it, is a recognition of the general rule that beyond a certain age a man's capacity for public affairs decreases.

The hon. Member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow), as reported at page 426 of *Hansard*, said:

I should like to say on behalf of the Members of this group that not only will we oppose this resolution but that I hope, indeed I expect, that we will fight the Bill when it comes in, clause by clause.

Mr. Orlikow: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stewart: I would appeal to him to change his mind, though evidently from his interjection he is not likely to do so.

Mr. Orlikow: That is right.

Mr. Stewart: I appeal to him and to the other Members of the N.D.P. to abandon their last ditch approach. Their approach is all too reminiscent of the position taken by the most obstructionist opponents, the "backwoodsmen", in the House of Lords, when the Parliament Bill of 1911 was before that august body.

I refer now to an editorial which exactly sums up the situation which confronts us.

It appears in the *Chronicle-Herald* for Wednesday, April 28. Commenting on what was said by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker), the *Chronicle-Herald* said:

Mr. Diefenbaker asserts that the legislation is a "sham", even while the Bill differs from that which he introduced when Prime Minister in April, 1962, at one point only. At that time Mr. Diefenbaker would have forced the retirement of Senators then serving. The present Bill, on the other hand, applies to future appointees only; it gives present senators over 75 the option of staying on, or of retiring with a substantial pension.

The new approach, in our opinion, is realistic. It is certain, moreover, that not many years will elapse after its passage before the goal of an age limit of 75 is reached.

Members of the N.D.P. may be worried that they might be neglected by this newspaper; but they can rest assured that they have not been overlooked, for the editorial goes on:

As for the New Democrats, they persist in their time-worn cries of abolition. Mr. Knowles has submitted his usual bill to this end, although it must be remarked that Mr. Howard, demonstrating once again the confused front that party often puts up in the Commons, now advocated an elected Senate, with 10 members from each province.

This editorial concludes, as I do now, Sir, by stating that this bill is both reasonable and suitable to the circumstances. It states that this bill does not deserve time-consuming opposition at a time when other, more pressing matters await parliamentary attention.

● (3:40 p.m.)

If you will review, Sir, the time expended on the debate at the resolution stage, you will find that the Government took up something less than 10 minutes. If you review what has been said today you will find that hon. Members on the Government side of this House have taken up something less than one hour of the time of the House.

Mr. Peters: Do not apologize.

Mr. Stewart: We have before us a bill which proposes a reasonable adjustment to the Senate Act. I realize that this does not please Members of the New Democratic Party who wish to see no change at all, year after year after year, if they cannot have their own way. They are whole-hoggers. My request is simply that hon. Members of this House realize how reasonable this Bill is and co-operate in the passage of it without further delay.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): The hon. Member has taken his theme from the suggestion that it only took the Government