

the House Leader and others on the Government side because he felt there was a disposition—I do not want to put words in his mouth, and one can read the committee minutes and see exactly what he said—on the Government side to at least remove that part of Clause 25 which would allow for the appointment of Parliamentary Secretaries from the other place. Although he could not, of course, promise anything, he did make us all feel that we need not push and keep pressing the matter in committee because we might find that when the Bill finally came to the House for report stage, the Government itself would have decided at least to remove that part of Clause 25 which allowed Parliamentary Secretaries to be appointed from the Senate. Indeed, it might decide to put that part in as it was originally. Either the Hon. Member did not do that, or he tried and was unsuccessful. However, it did cause many of us to discontinue to press the matter too strongly in committee.

I feel I speak for most of us who were on the Miscellaneous Estimates Committee when Bill C-152 was before it when I say we really did expect that to happen, given the degree of opposition, not only on the part of the two Opposition Parties, but also on the part of a number of Government backbenchers, to the idea of appointing Parliamentary Secretaries from the Senate.

The Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Evans) was present on behalf of the Government, and I have forgotten his capacity.

An Hon. Member: Something minor.

Miss Jewett: Something minor. However, he made a rather incredible argument that one of these days the Senate would be reformed and it might even become a partially elected body. In that case, it would be desirable to have Parliamentary Secretaries appointed from the Senate as well as the House of Commons. That was the argument of the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre in supporting the proposal of the Government. Several members of the Committee pointed out to him that it would be time enough to address the issue of the appointment of Parliamentary Secretaries from the Senate after it had been reformed—and we have no guarantee whatsoever that it will be reformed or, preferably, abolished. They said also that until there is such a guarantee—in fact, until such reforms are in place—we should not be giving any consideration whatsoever to appointing Parliamentary Secretaries from that body. The Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre said that that was a good point. That was his main argument for defending a policy of appointing Parliamentary Secretaries from the Senate. Then, when we suggest to him that it will be time enough after the Senate is reformed, he agrees that is a good point. So I cannot for the life of me understand why the backbenchers on the Government side did not persuade the Government to withdraw that part of Clause 25 of the Bill.

I do not know if other members of the Committee feel the same way, but I almost feel a little cheated by the Government on this issue. I feel that we were really made to feel that the

Government would certainly reconsider this favourably. However, it did not.

I agree with other Hon. Members that the increase by four of the number of Parliamentary Secretaries is totally unnecessary. As has already been pointed out, we have far too large a Cabinet now for the efficient operation of Government. We do not need any further Parliamentary Secretaries. My mind boggles when I think of the Minister of State for External Relations (Mr. Pepin), about whom I was talking a little earlier this afternoon, now being eligible for a Parliamentary Secretary because he is a Minister and not a Minister of State. None of us can figure out—nor can the Minister, for that matter—what the role of the Minister is. What are his powers, his functions? Nothing is in the Bill about that whatsoever. The former Minister, the Hon. Member for Charlevoix (Mr. Lapointe), could not figure out entirely what he was doing when he was Minister of State for External Relations. In fact, I have it on excellent authority that he went on bended knees to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and said, “Put me somewhere where I will know what it is I am supposed to do”. I have that on excellent authority.

Mr. Lapointe (Charlevoix): That is not true.

Miss Jewett: He did. His mind boggled also, Mr. Speaker, when he realized that he would also be entitled to a Parliamentary Secretary. He did not know what he was doing himself, but he would have to explain to a Parliamentary Secretary what the Parliamentary Secretary should be doing. So the Prime Minister kindly obliged and moved him on to a job where he has a little better delineation of his workload. To think that the Hon. Member might have had a Parliamentary Secretary from the Senate, the mind boggles even more. That, perhaps, was one reason why the clause which includes the Senate was left in, because they figured they did not know either what the Minister should do, and since people do not expect Senators to do all that much, perhaps it should be left in the Bill that Parliamentary Secretaries can be appointed from the Senate so the Minister of External Relations could have a Parliamentary Secretary who does not know what his function is.

Although we are concerned about the growth in the number of Parliamentary Secretaries, and that is why we support this motion, we are, as I mentioned earlier, particularly concerned about drawing Parliamentary Secretaries from an appointed body. It is simply not good enough to say that perhaps one day that body will be reformed and will become elected, or partly elected, as the main reason for drawing Parliamentary Secretaries from the Senate. I hope that perhaps some of the multitude sitting across the way wish to speak on this motion and wish to give it their support. I have a number of friends still on that side of the House and I would wager my last dollar that the vast majority of them would prefer to keep our institution as democratic as possible and would prefer, therefore, to have Parliamentary Secretaries drawn from the democratically elected body of this country, that is, the House of Commons.