

Retirement Age for Senators

Senate after the bill comes into effect—and these will have to be under 75, somewhere between 30 and 75—will be required to contribute under the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act, so when they reach the age of 75 they will get pensions they will have paid for out of their indemnities. As I pointed out on a previous occasion, when the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act was passed for Members of this House there were many Members who had been here for a number of years. They were given an opportunity to cover their pension rights, but they had to pay for it. I submit that just as we had to pay for our pension rights, so Members of the other House should have to pay in respect of their past services.

If it is argued that given such a choice they will elect to stay and draw their full indemnities for the remainder of their days, then in the eyes of the public they would have to take the responsibility for such a decision. I do not think we should be made to look foolish by passing legislation which seems to give so much to these people for so little. When the Canada Pension Plan was under consideration there was a lot of talk about its providing pensions for those who did not need them and failing to provide pensions for those who did. I do not think this criticism was valid in respect of the Canada Pension Plan, but certainly this is what is happening now: People who have been receiving good indemnities for many years will get these generous pensions without paying for them at all. I think the very tributes which have been paid to these Senators, tributes regarding their public spirit and so on, suggest that if they were given the kind of choice we propose they would make a socially responsible choice.

We feel, as has been said on a number of occasions, that the Senate is an anachronism. In our view a non-elected body should not be part of our parliamentary process and for this reason we believe that to try to reform it is just a delusion. Accordingly we shall be opposing this bill. However, if our opposition does not succeed in defeating it we hope that when we get into committee of the whole some of the changes which we believe ought to be made in it will be carried out and that some of the rather scandalous provisions which it contains will be removed.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, we are now considering Bill No. C-98 whose object is, as outlined by previous

speakers, to fix at 75 years the retirement age for Senators.

Before coming to the heart of the matter, I must say that here, in Ottawa, there seems to be no desire to reduce or change the status of the upper house while in the province of Quebec, the legislative council is now considering a bill initiated by the legislative assembly to reduce the powers of the legislative council in that province. Yet, in Ottawa there seems to be no wish to change the legal status or the present powers of the Senate.

What is most appalling about the Senate is that this legislative body is not responsible to the Canadian people.

People like to refer to the United States. And yet in that country the senators are elected by the people. They have to go through general elections. However, here in Canada it has not yet been deemed advisable to proceed to truly serious reforms of the Senate other than to fix the retirement age of senators at 75 years.

Mr. Speaker, I have here several articles written by persons who have expressed their opinion on the Senate, either from the constitutional point of view or from some other angle. I would like to put on record an article written by Mr. Jacques-Yvan Morin, professor of constitutional law at the University of Montreal. It was published in *Le Soleil* of June 6, 1964, and is entitled: "Laws of federalism altered by the Senate". I quote:

Mr. Jacques-Yvan Morin stated yesterday before the committee of the legislative assembly on the constitution that the Canadian Senate, in its present form, goes against the laws of federalism.

Mr. Morin said that the Senate does not have a federal form, because one of the elements of federalism is the participation of member states in the operation of the legislative process in the central bodies.

From the very beginning of confederation, Mr. Morin continued, the Canadian Senate was faked because Senators were appointed by the central government. The appointment of Senators by the provinces was rejected, Sir John Macdonald insisting for a state of the type of the legislative union. Mr. Morin pointed that the United States holds more powers than the Canadian Senate and that it carries more importance than the House of Representatives.

According to Mr. Morin, the provinces should appoint the senators. They could be appointed by the government, by the legislature or even be elected.

Because the senators are appointed by the central government, Mr. Morin believes that Canada is not a federation in the true meaning of the word.

In its issue of October 23, 1963, *La Presse* of Montreal gave statistics compiled by the