

Retirement Age for Senators

Mr. Orlikow: That may be so, but the Prime Minister would not consider it for very long. After all, he needs a vacancy from Quebec for some deserving fund-raiser. That is the important consideration. Appointments of the kind I have been suggesting are those which might be made if this question of Senate reform is considered seriously, but this is not what we get. We get businessmen and former politicians who very quickly become members of boards of directors of companies.

The hon. Member for Carleton (Mr. Francis) raised this question in connection with applications for banks which came before the Senate last year. He said the Senators were not the only people who had a conflict of interest, and that is true. It may be there are Members of Parliament who have a conflict of interest; I can think of several sitting on the other side of the House who have a conflict of interest, as it seems to me. The difference between the Senators and the Members of the House of Commons is that at the next election the constituents of any Member of Parliament who may have a conflict of interest can settle it by defeating their Member, who has not represented them but has represented the business interests.

• (4:20 p.m.)

I want to talk briefly on this conflict of interest in the Senate. Bruce Macdonald, who I think was one of the best reporters in the press gallery, of the business of Parliament, wrote an article on July 7, 1964 which appeared in the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, and I want to read two paragraphs to which I hope the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pickers-gill) will give some thought in the future, if he has not done so in the past. Mr. Macdonald says:

A question arises whether some members of the Senate, many of whom are associated with the oldest, most powerful financial institutions in the country, may be using their position to discourage or retard the development of young and lusty rivals to challenge this establishment.

That is a pretty serious charge to make, Mr. Speaker. Further, Mr. Macdonald says:

Yet another question that begs an answer is the extent to which individual Senators should properly participate in consideration of measures, such as the establishment of companies, that may conflict with their private interests as shareholders, officers, directors or partners of organizations which may be affected by the legislation at hand.

What was Mr. Macdonald talking about? He was talking about applications for the right to operate banks made by the Bank of Western Canada, the Laurentide people

[Mr. Regan.]

and the British Columbia bank. They were applications which got a very rough hearing from the Senate Banking Committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Batten): Order. I must interrupt the hon. Member to advise him that his time has expired.

Mr. Raymond Langlois (Mégantic): Mr. Speaker, having listened to a few members in this House giving their opinions of Bill No. C-98, which provides a retirement age for Senators in the other place, I have come to the conclusion that not only do the public feel something should be done about the Senate but that that feeling exists also in this chamber. This puts me more at ease in speaking about the other place, realizing that I am not the only one who thinks that something should be done about the Senate.

If we go back to some of the speeches made on April 26 and 27—that of the hon. Member for Port Arthur (Mr. Fisher), for example—we realize that a certain pattern is followed in the nomination of Senators. I had realized that for some time. During the 1963 campaign I read a list during a television interview of all the Senators who belonged to financial institutions, naming them and the institutions concerned. The reaction to that television program was such that for the following two weeks I received telegrams, letters and telephone calls from all over the area covered by that station, which was the Sherbrooke television station, a station with an audience of two and a half million people covering about two thirds of the province. I was asked for a list of the Senators, and I can say that 99 per cent of the people who phoned me or wrote to me were not in too good humour about the Senators I had named. I had four long type-written pages of them; there were not just one or two. I might say that before the bill passes I intend to read these names again. These names were obtained from the 1962 financial survey, and I would be very interested in the 1964 financial survey to bring me up to date, because since this Government has been in power it has named a few more Senators. And the hon. Member for Port Arthur has given these Senators a pretty good pedigree.

In passing this bill we are asking the House to provide a retirement age of 75 for Senators. The way I see it, this will not help solve the problem. We have two possible solutions. The first is to abolish the Senate entirely. The second solution is to reform it. Abolishing it