

gree, a Democrat and a Republican, but one may still make a deal with them and say, "Do not be too harsh on this, and I will not be too harsh on that." That is constantly going on. I think that a lot of this, or most of this, comes from this fixed term idea. This is where one of the big disadvantages come in. When there is constant lobbying going on, when there is constant pressure, and when individuals are singled out, they could fall one way or the other on a bill when it is an individual sort of thing; and there is a great danger—I do not say that it is widespread—of corruption developing. As a matter of fact, I think Canadians get the backlash of this. Canadians look at the American political scene. American TV portrays congressmen as being politicians with their fingers in the till, as being people who are in some way corrupt. One sees this constant discussion about corruption in American politics. There is wheeling and dealing going on.

Mr. Malone: And in Canadian politics?

Mr. McRae: I think most of it is upright; but there is wheeling and dealing going on all the time, and we do not have that here.

Mr. Malone: You want to bet?

Mr. McRae: Maybe in committee we might sit down and make a deal on a certain amendment, but it is very rare. In the American system, it is a constant thing.

Mr. Malone: Where have you been?

Mr. McRae: We are politicians in this House, as there are politicians in the American Congress and in the American Senate. However, because of the closeness to the American scene, the fact that Canadians are exposed to American TV and so on, Canadians begin to see politicians in this light, as wheelers and dealers, as people who have fingers in the till, or people who are being influenced by this lobbyist or that lobbyist. That is not the correct picture in this House of Commons.

Certainly, there are some lobby groups which will come around; but basically speaking, we do not make deals, because we tend to be in an adversarial situation. One of the disadvantages that I think stems from this fixed term is that one develops this constant political activity, and from that comes some corruption, and from that comes the notion that politicians, in some way or another, are seedy characters who are influenced by groups which may or may not be on the up and up, and so on. Therefore, this is one of the disadvantages that I see. One leaves oneself open for the kind of corruption, or the kind of apprehended corruption, which is really not possible under our system.

I suppose I could count on one hand, in nine years in this House, the number of times that I have actually sat down with an hon. member opposite and said, "Can we get this thing through, or can we do something like that?" It is just not done to any great extent. It is done by the House leader, but it is usually only done at that level. There may be people who have opportunities to do more of this, but I do not think that is the

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situation. I think it is a shame that we as Canadian politicians and as members of Parliament are labelled as wheeler-dealers, because we really are not. We really do operate in this House in a very adversarial way, in a much more adversarial way than do the Americans.

I think there are other things we could say in terms of advantages and disadvantages. I have a feeling that when there is a fixed term, as there is in the United States, the election is constantly in progress. One knows the date, one always has it in one's mind, and one is working toward it constantly. When we are in this situation where we do not have a fixed date, where we have some kind of feeling that in three years down the line, or every four to four and one-half years, there will be an election in this country, one is not so tied down to a date and to an idea that one must meet a certain objective.

I watch the American congressional elections, and certainly, the presidential elections. I think that for a good two years, the Americans are at it. They have this date for the presidential election well in front of them. They are into primaries, pre-primaries, post-primaries, and a whole host of things, and it goes on for years and years. I do not think that is the case, to the same degree, in this country. Certainly we are well aware of the fact that two or three years down the line, that will happen. However, if there is not a fixed day, something that one can really grab, then I am not so sure that people tend to take it nearly as seriously or work only toward that objective, as they do in the American system. I think that is a rather bad feature of the American system. Again, it lends itself to that intense politicization which carries some dangers with it.

I do not come down on either side, because I thought about it. This is not something that I just thought about ten minutes ago, picked up and said that I would speak on it. I have thought about it a great deal. I want to say that I have not really decided, in my own mind, which way we should go. First, I would very much like to see steps in this House, through our parliamentary system, to limit, to cut down the amount of adversarial activity which goes on. Really, between parties, we are not all that far apart.

Mr. Malone: Oh, yes, we are!

Mr. McRae: Certainly, there are people on all sides who relate very well to people in other parties.

Mr. Malone: Not to you!

Mr. McRae: That is true. I may be one of the more progressive members of my party, but there are certainly people in my party who feel differently from me. It is certainly a good thing that we are able to sit down and talk to each other after we leave this House. But still and all, I think it is important that we work toward a less adversarial system. I think we should be trying to find more common denominators than we have. However, I have some really serious worries about intense politicization, the fact that we will be lobbying each other, and that we will be lobbied by everyone else if we come into a fixed term.