

a Senate. If that is the best the Senate can do, perhaps we should be discussing abolition of the Senate, rather than selection by election.

Senator Marshall: Watch it.

Hon. Duff Roblin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Don't go too far.

Senator Frith: Moving on to your next point.

Senator Phillips: I realize that I am skating on thin ice here, but I am sure that there are many people who will agree with me.

Last February, while returning from Toronto I sat beside a fairly senior executive of a company located in Ottawa. He was telling me that it was his hope that the Senate would spend the winter making recommendations to the government on various matters concerning the economy, such as housing, the mining industry, agriculture, fisheries, and so on. In other words, he was recommending that we attempt to reform the economy, not the Senate, and he considered the economy to be the uppermost problem facing this country.

Hon. Heath Macquarrie: So say we all.

Senator Phillips: In his speech Senator Roblin equated the opportunity to cast a ballot with the solution to the problem. It is a fallacy to make franchise synonymous with solution. Over the past few years the frequency of federal elections and provincial elections has provided everyone with more than ample opportunity to vote. We have had all kinds of political propaganda, promises and programs but, in spite of all these opportunities, our problems are increasing, and I do not think that an election for this chamber will do anything to solve them.

I do not believe there is a great outcry for another opportunity to vote because fewer Canadians are voting in each election. About 60 per cent of the eligible voters in Ontario vote. I think they are staying home, not because the Senate is appointed, but because they are just not interested. Ontario spent approximately \$1 million advertising the recent municipal elections in the province and they received a turnout of less than 40 per cent. I just do not think there is a great desire on the part of the people to turn out and vote. People are looking for solutions not a ballot, and we are not providing solutions by giving them an extra ballot.

Hon. Jacques Flynn (Leader of the Opposition): But if we want to change the government how can we do it without a ballot?

Senator Phillips: I can tell the honourable senator that both he and I have tried the ballot to change the government on a number of occasions, and I do not think we have succeeded.

Recently, the "Arkansas Fiddler", Senator Frith, suggested that my colleagues and I from Prince Edward Island were very much like the people from Missouri—we had to be shown. I can say that that will be my attitude throughout my remarks in dealing with the subject of an elected Senate.

I have no real hard and fast preconceived idea except that I want to be given the reasons for, and the advantages of, such an eventuality. So far these have been avoided and no one has mentioned an advantage to anyone. I understand from Senator Frith's remarks the other evening that we are going to have the pleasure of listening to him give us a travelogue on his trip to Australia. I hope he comes up with some advantages for an elected Senate, because if he is going to talk on what the Australian Senate does he could have gone to the high commission and obtained a pamphlet on the matter.

Senator Marshall: Or done some library research.

Senator Phillips: The Library of Parliament could have researched the matter and probably given a better report than we will get from this freebie that some honourable senators enjoyed.

Senator Marshall: You had better not go on a trip.

● (1450)

Senator Phillips: I can safely say that. I am getting too old to go on trips.

Senator Frith: There goes Thailand.

Senator Phillips: I can agree with Senator Roblin's idea that we need a second chamber. I will agree with that, in spite of my reference to abolition. However, it is a chamber that should be more functional than the present chamber. I think Senator Roblin would agree with that too.

Senator Donahoe gave some excellent reasons for the existence of the Senate in terms of its functions. I will not repeat them except to call attention to one of the main functions of the Senate which is seldom mentioned, that of putting on the brakes.

Let us say for discussion purposes that the Minister of Finance decides to nationalize the banks in order to balance the budget.

Senator Flynn: Don't give him an idea like that. He might do so.

Senator Phillips: The Prime Minister has a close connection with Mexico, so that is a distinct possibility. However, if that were to happen, I would hope that senators would forget their allegiance to the Liberal Party, remember that their allegiance is to this chamber, and through this chamber to the country, and put the brakes on.

Senator Flynn: I am not too sure about that—at least not on the basis of what has happened up to now.

Senator Phillips: The members of the House of Commons like to criticize the Senate, and that is their prerogative; but in turn I think occasionally we should remind them of their behaviour. The Senate is normally accused of having rubber-stamped legislation. Honourable senators, I do not think we rubber-stamp any more legislation than they do in the House of Commons. When a bill is introduced in the other chamber, it passes. There may be filibusters and there may be delays, but the bill passes. About the only difference between the rubber-stamping in the House of Commons and the rubber-