

Some Hon. SENATORS: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. MURPHY:

—but the Committee trust that other remedies may be found. The forms and proceedings of the Senate, the Committee think, are well adapted for the dispatch of public business; whether any change could advantageously be made in this connection in those of the House of Commons must be left to the wisdom of that House to decide.

This report was unanimously adopted by the Senate on May 12, 1868. If any further action was taken, it is not disclosed in the records.

Now let us come to 1874. Another phase of the same subject came up for discussion in 1874 when a special committee was appointed by the House of Commons to consider whether "any facilities can be given for the despatch of business in Parliament, especially in regard to the relationship of the two Houses," and requesting that the Senate "appoint an equal number of members to unite with the members of the House of Commons in the formation of a joint committee of both Houses on the said subject."

The Senate duly appointed a committee of its members to act with the committee of the other House, but, as has often happened with joint committees, nothing practical was done.

From 1874 to 1879 the records are silent on the subject, but in 1879 the Hon. Mr. Miller, speaking in the Senate, voiced a protest against the manner in which legislation had come up from the other branch of Parliament at the close of the session. Evidently there was a change for the better, because in the session of 1880-81 Senator Miller again referred to the matter and said:

I think it is only fair, under the altered circumstances this year, to compliment the Government on the decided improvement which has taken place in that respect during the present session of Parliament. We have had very important measures initiated here, and had full time to discuss them. We have not, on any one single day up to the close of the session, been behind with our work. . . . We have been able to keep up with it, and give it all the time that we thought it deserved. . . . I only hope the good departure the Government have made this year will be followed up in subsequent sessions.

Apparently the improvement that Senator Miller noted in the method of sending up business from the Lower House was not of long duration, because in the Senate Debates for the session of 1882 there is to be found a vigorous protest by the Hon. Mr. Alexander, who did not mince his words, as the following extract will show:

It is time that we spoke freely on this subject, because the people could not elect a body such as the members of this House are, for intelligence and experience, and we ought to desire to raise the Senate in the public estimation, so that they will love and honour this body. I think the Senate must display greater activity, it must not permit any Government, I do not care what Government it may be, to treat us as we have been treated. It is simply discreditable that we should remain without any bills before us until 36 hours previous to the end of the session. What an insult to the House that measures should be brought to us within 48 hours of the end of the session! It is treating us with contempt and showing that they do not care what becomes of the Senate—it is showing that they do not care what use is made of this body, and that they do not care if the Senate gets into bad repute with the country.

Had Hon. Mr. Alexander been a member of the House of Commons in Sir John Macdonald's time, it is not likely that he would have been turned aside as easily as were some members of that Chamber who once voiced a protest similar to his, whereupon Sir John is reported to have told this story:

A man guilty of forgery, was arrested for the crime, immediately put into the dock, tried and convicted. When the prisoner was asked if he had anything to say, he rejoined: "Nothing, further than I think this is a smart place for doing business."

Needless to say, the incipient mutiny was quelled there and then.

In the year 1908 Hon. Mr. McMullen introduced a motion in the Senate with reference "to the agitation regarding the services rendered by the Senate as a part of our legislative system." By way of amendment Hon. Mr. David moved:

That it is desirable, in order to increase the efficiency of the Senate, that more legislation be initiated in the House, that more ministers of the Crown have seats therein, and that any minister personally may introduce and defend Government measures in both Houses.

Then, in amendment to the amendment, Hon. Mr. Béique presented a motion declaring:

That the present constitution of the Senate seems to be on the whole the best which can be devised for this country; that, moreover, in order that this honourable House may give the full measure of its usefulness, it is greatly desirable that means be adopted to keep it more constantly occupied, thereby relieving the House of Commons of part of its work and shortening the sessions of parliament.

After a lengthy and illuminating discussion, the main motion, the amendment and the amendment to the amendment were withdrawn.