

Drummond County Railway for the extension of the Intercolonial Railway to Montreal. It is unnecessary to enter into the details of these two measures. The judgment of the majority has been questioned by one party and extolled by the other in both instances, but whether the Senate exercised a wise discretion in rejecting either or both Bills or not, one measure was never reintroduced, and the other, when introduced a second time, was so modified that the Opposition claimed the country was saved a million dollars by the defeat of the first Bill.

At one time there was a good deal of talk about abolishing the Senate; that was in the early days of Confederation, when some able editors and not a few public men were ignorant of the strength and power of the Senate under the Constitution. They were for the most part writers and speakers in Ontario, with a few scattered through the other Provinces who ignored the fact that any serious attempt to destroy or to weaken the influence of the Upper House would rally to its support the smaller Provinces, for the protection of whose rights the Senate was intended at Confederation. A small minority in the House of Commons, backed by some labour unions, still clings to the idea that the Senate must go, but in the Upper House their clamour is treated as a joke. At the same time there is a feeling amongst the Senators themselves that the present mode of constituting the Senate could be improved upon. They feel that the appointing of Senators for life is open to criticism. At one time, so large a proportion of the Senators had passed the three score years and ten that irreverent people spoke of the Upper Chamber as the "Old Men's Home," "the Asylum for Imbeciles," the "House of Obstructions," and hurled other terms of opprobrium at the dignified Chamber.

Sometimes it happened that the Senate enjoyed a quiet revenge. The Honourable David Mills, when an Opposition member in the House of Commons, frequently spoke in scathing terms of the Senate, describing it as a political Magdalen Asylum for politicians debauched by the Government of the Day. In this onslaught on the Upper House he was ably seconded by the *Toronto Globe*, then controlled by the late Honourable George Brown. Shortly afterwards Mr. Brown was defeated in South Ontario, and was appointed by the Mackenzie Government to the Senate, where he was at once hailed as the "new Magdalen." Years afterwards Mr. Mills himself, when defeated in Bothwell, was appointed to the Senate and made its leader, to the great advantage of the Upper Chamber and the whole Dominion. The man who not many years before had denounced the Senate as a political Magdalen Asylum made a public retraction and admitted the necessity of a second chamber, notwithstanding the fact that he had never since receiving his appointment had a majority of the Upper Chamber at his back.

From the Liberal point of view the reformation of the Senate, which was one of the planks in the party's platform, has made steady progress since the change of Government in 1896. Old faces have disappeared from year to year, and new faces have succeeded them. The former Conservative majority has become a minority, which grows weaker each succeeding session, and may entirely disappear should the present Government remain much longer in power. This feature of the present system is viewed with disquietude by Senators on both sides of the House, and many suggestions have been made to improve the present mode of constituting the Upper Chamber and increase its usefulness. None, however, has met with the approval of a majority.