

satisfactory or reasonable substitute for continuing the administrative responsibility of the government of the day in making appointments to the Senate. Under the circumstances I am thoroughly convinced that we would be very much wiser to retain the system we have than to adopt one that we know not of. The Parliament of Canada would be poorer if, by any chance, this continual discussion about the reform of the Senate should lead in due course—and partly because of our own foolishness—to the abolition of the Senate. Ottawa would not be the same place without the sober—and I use this word in both its senses—second thought which the Senate gives to legislation.

I wish also to refer to the suggestion that we ask the government and the House of Commons to give us more work to do. Honourable senators, I am thoroughly sick of the proposition that we should go wailing to the government and the House of Commons complaining that we are sitting around doing nothing and want more to do. To begin with, I do not think it is wise that we initiate anything but routine measures in this house. By doing so we would reverse the order of procedure: we would become responsible for the initiation of legislation and the House of Commons would become responsible for the sober second thought—a commodity which might be a little lacking.

I am sick too of the talk that has been going on for so long about getting Ministers of the Crown to initiate legislation in this house. The honourable senator from Southern New Brunswick (Hon. Mr. McLean) has called my attention to the debate which took place here in 1934 about the work of the Senate. No doubt my friend from Lethbridge (Hon. Mr. Buchanan) will remember that debate vividly. Those who took part in it kept urging the Cabinet to give them more work, and they wanted more cabinet members to sit in this chamber. In my opinion the Senate should not keep up this agitation. For one thing it is *infra dig*, and for another thing the Cabinet members would never agree to it. They would be unwise if they did. Obviously the minister who prepares important legislation—usually at a great deal of labour to himself—is going to introduce it in the house of which he is a member, and not where he is a stranger. If we want more work to do we should create it for ourselves. We all know that there is plenty that could be done.

Let me deviate for a moment to speak about the complaint as to the rush of legislation which comes from the other house a day or so before the date set for prorogation. We have been complaining about this for a long time. Whose fault is it, if not our own? Who closes

the Parliament of Canada if we do not close it right here? Why do we allow ourselves to be pushed around? Somebody says that parliament shall prorogue on a certain date, and we have to close our debates to meet the deadline. When legislation is rushed to us during the last days of the session we should say: "We too have a duty to perform with regard to this legislation, and we are going to carry out this duty irrespective of how long it takes us. We shall stay here until we are finished our work." By adopting such a policy it might be that we could have a longer recess in the earlier stages of the session. We should let the members of the other house thoroughly understand that the session does not conclude until we are through with the legislation they have sent to us. We should be allowed to complete our work with full satisfaction to ourselves; and I have no doubt this would be of benefit to the country at large.

I am sure the honourable member from Lethbridge will not hold it against me if I refer to a portion of what he said during the debate of 1934 to which I have referred. I read the debate through from end to end, and I know that he, and only he, made a suggestion of which I entirely approve. He said:

During the time I have been a member here I have come to feel that the Senate can render a very great service to Canada through the carrying on of inquiries in existing committees, or perhaps in special committees appointed to deal with particular problems. Nearly all the congressional inquiries at Washington are conducted by the Senate, though some of them are carried on in a way that might not be possible here. I do not know of any legislative body in this country that numbers among its members so many experienced legislators as does the Senate of Canada. There are in this chamber honourable gentlemen who have served in municipal life, in provincial legislatures and cabinets, and in the House of Commons, and even a considerable number who have been members of the federal government. These men, with their ripe experience, are well qualified to inquire into matters about which the people are greatly concerned and desire the utmost information. My honourable friend from Sydney (Hon. Mr. McLennan) rather bemoaned the fact that the work of our Senate committees did not seem to lead anywhere—that their recommendations were not followed by action. In many instances that is possibly true. But I think the important benefit gained from these inquiries is the information which the people receive, and which enables them to form opinions on questions that are before the country.

He then mentioned inquiries by two committees on which he had served—the Special Committee on the St. Lawrence Waterways and the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Forestry—and he remarked:

I feel that both committees justified their appointment.