

Senator MacDonald on April 19, 1971. I mention the cases of these senators because they fulfilled the "voluntary retirement" prerequisite set down by the Prime Minister if he were to replace Conservative senators with Conservative appointees. The senators had been appointed for life. None of them had to retire. Their retirements were, therefore, voluntary. But, as you know, none of these senators were replaced by a P.C. senator.

Yet, in 1974, on October 2, when the Prime Minister participated in the Throne Speech debate, he had this to say concerning the Senate and appointments:

Hon. members opposite talk about partisan appointments. This is a serious matter which I have already had the opportunity to discuss several years ago with the authorities of opposition parties, and I had then suggested, and I repeat my suggestion today, that if indeed the senators of the Progressive Conservative party, of the Tory party, who wish to retire from the upper chamber, refrain from doing so because they do not want to be replaced by Liberal senators, I repeat what I told several years ago to Senator Flynn, who, if I am not mistaken, represents the opposition party in the Senate—

I interject here to say that I have for some time now.

—that, for my part, I would readily appoint Progressive Conservatives to replace the Progressive Conservatives who voluntarily retire from the upper chamber. I am well aware, Mr. Speaker, that some of them accept my suggestion, but there were many more when I first made this offer several years ago, and if the official opposition party continues to act so speedily, they may be even fewer in four years.

By his own admission, the Prime Minister was repeating what he had said to me in 1970. But he did not explain why, in the four years between 1970 and 1974, he had not replaced with Tories the Conservative senators who had voluntarily retired from the Senate.

After the Prime Minister's 1974 statement about replacing those senators of ours who would voluntarily retire, I had a talk with Senator Perrault about this, which conversation I later summarized in a letter to him dated November 15, 1974. I explained in that letter that if the Prime Minister's promise meant that one of our senators had to retire before a Progressive Conservative replacement could be appointed, that indicated that our number was never to rise beyond what it was at that time, namely, 17. I did not mention it to him, but it was also clear that our number would further decline if the assurance did not apply to those who might die in office. I also pointed out that that would afford us very little help, and reminded him of those who had voluntarily retired between 1970 and 1974, and who were not replaced by Tories as promised.

Senator Perrault's reply was not swift in coming. It arrived three months later in February of 1975. The gist of it was that the government was only prepared to replace those Conservative senators who voluntarily retired. There was no question of

increasing the number of Tories beyond 17, where it stood at that point. Here I underline again the fact that this maximum was illusory because of possible further vacancies created by death. Senator Perrault also told us that if we expected Tories to be replaced by Tories, we would have to supply lists of names. He wrote:

● (2100)

The P.M. is prepared to do so—

That is, replace Tory senators with Tory appointees.

—on the basis that if a list of five candidates to succeed any sitting Progressive Conservative is submitted to the P.M. and the P.M. indicates that at least one of such candidates is acceptable, then the Government would feel itself under an obligation to appoint an acceptable candidate from the submitted list within a reasonable time after the resignation or intervening death of the Senator in question.

You note now that mention is made of replacement in cases of vacancies created by death, contrary to the Prime Minister's statement of October 2, 1974, in the House of Commons. The letter went on:

If one of ours retired or died without such a list having been submitted, the P.M. would not feel bound to replace him with a Tory.

Four months later, in July 1975, Senator Perrault wrote to me again, repeating that:

If the P.M., prior to a particular vacancy occurring, has not received from the Leader of your Party a list of candidates from which the P.M. has decided that at least one is acceptable to him, then the Government has stated that it will not be obliged to protect any such vacancy in your Party's ranks in the Senate for an appointment from your Party.

Note again that there is no distinction here between vacancies created by death and vacancies created by retirement, and that there is no reference to voluntary retirement.

Two days later I replied to the July 15 letter of Senator Perrault, underlining, once again, that it was unfortunate that the Prime Minister should be prepared to guarantee only the status quo and not provide us with a greater number in the Senate. I agreed that it was fair of the Prime Minister, in the case of resignation, to expect that we might supply him with a list of five possible replacements prior to the senator's actually resigning. But, with regard to those of ours who might die in office, I had this to say:

The case of vacancies created by death, however, presents a serious problem. Any one of us might die at any time. What therefore we are being asked to do to ensure that our number not fall below seventeen, is to supply the P.M. now—

And I underlined the word "now".

—with a list of five possible replacements for each Progressive Conservative senator.

This is totally impractical.