

THE RED CHAMBER

AN APPRECIATION OF THE CANADIAN SENATE

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EVERY Canadian is supposed to be familiar with the British North America Act, the constitution of the Dominion. Many intelligent people, however, have but a vague idea of the Senate. In fact, some who ought to know better regard the House of Commons as the Parliament of Canada, the Senate being an expensive and wholly unnecessary appendage. This popular ignorance of the Senate and its place in the legislative machinery of the country is due to many causes, but mainly to the fact that the Upper House is not elective and therefore not a popular body like the Lower House. Senators are appointed by the Crown, on the advice of the government of the day, for life and do not necessarily come in contact with the electorate. Not being responsible directly to the people, very little public interest is taken in their debates and proceedings, except when, as sometimes happens, a conflict arises between the two Houses. Then, for a time, they fill the public eye and become dauntless patriots, protecting the public from a corrupt and rapacious government or a mischievous body of irresponsible obstructives, just as they happen to be viewed through opposition or government spectacles. Under the terms of the British North America Act, the two larger provinces, Ontario and Quebec, have each twenty-four senators, and the three Maritime Pro-

vinces (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island) twenty-four. By the subsequent admission of British Columbia and the acquisition of the Northwest Territories the total number has been increased until there are eighty-seven senators for the whole Dominion. This is not representation by population, but comes much nearer a just and equitable representation of the people than exists in the upper chamber of any other English-speaking country. The census of 1901 gives Ontario a population of 2,167,978, and the Province has, therefore, in the Upper House a representative for every 90,300 of its inhabitants. Quebec has a senator for every 67,500, the Maritime Provinces one for every 37,250. Manitoba one for every 61,600, British Columbia one for every 63,300. Each of the three Prairie Provinces is represented in the Upper House by four senators. In the neighbouring Republic each State, however populous or however small its population, has two representatives in the Senate at Washington. Thus Nevada, with less population than London, Ontario, has the same representation in the Senate at Washington as the State of New York, with a population considerably larger than that of all British America, including the British West Indies. The new Commonwealth of Australia has started out in a somewhat similar way, each State in the