

The Constitution

Failing that, we would want to look at the term of appointment, the style of appointment, the source of appointment, and we would want to look at a balancing of the roles of the two Houses. This measure does not approach reform. It is a sham. It is a little petty, political revenge for the Prime Minister and the Government against the members of another political Party.

Mr. Nunziata: Shame on you!

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Allan MacEachen will be proud of you.

Mr. Crosbie: You will be all right in caucus next week. You have saved yourself—72 to 40. We know who has the power now.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): I want to tell you, Your Honour, that the Members of the Senate in our caucus agree with an elected Senate, and if this matter ever gets out of this House, they will put an amendment and vote for an elected Senate in the Upper Chamber.

Mr. Crosbie: Sure they will.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Yes, they will. Count on it. I have a feeling that the House will eventually come to the conclusion to which I have come, that this is a wasted exercise, the provincial consent not being there.

Mr. Crosbie: Then why spend so much time on it?

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): I have not even approached the time taken by the Hon. Minister.

Mr. Crosbie: You have been 40 minutes.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Well, you were an hour.

Mr. Crosbie: I was an hour in sensible discussion.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): The Hon. Minister was giving us a very inadequate Government of Canada 100 just like a first-year freshman at Memorial University. It was about that style and standard.

Mr. Crosbie: I was filling in the background for Nunziata.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): You gave us a lot of background.

We believe that the Senate could better represent the outlying regions of this country, including Newfoundland, through increased representation from these regions. The exact form of increased representation should be the focus of the constitutional conference. The special committee recommended doubling the representation in each of the western provinces and Newfoundland, and substantially increasing the number of seats in Atlantic Canada and the Territories, while leaving the same number for Quebec and Ontario. We believe that this is a good starting point for discussion.

There is no mention in the resolution by the Government on ways to improve the way the Senate works. What is really

critical is that this resolution is totally incompatible with a reformed Senate which could represent the regions of our country more effectively. Therefore, we cannot, nor will we, agree to strip the Senate of power now with the vague promise of real constitutional reform later. We will participate in a resolution which calls for an elected Senate. We may participate in an amended resolution which deals with the method of appointment or the term of appointment. But what does the Government have in mind for the Senate? We do not know. We did not learn from the Minister, and the resolution does not tell us. What has the Government promised the provincial Premiers which does not appear in the correspondence which was tabled this afternoon? We do not know and the Government will not tell us.

Mr. Prud'homme: Wheeling and dealing.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): We can accept the principle of establishing reasonable limits on the time the Senate can spend on government Bills. We can accept the 30-day time limit on money Bills. But we would suggest a time limit of at least 180 days, the constitutional time limit which is now in the Constitution Act, 1982, in order to give the Senate, on non-money Bills, the opportunity to consider the legislation adequately and provide us with its views. We can accept that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): We also accept the principle that in situations where there is a conflict between the two Houses, the will of the elected Chamber, the House of Commons, prevails.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Well, that is a step forward for the Liberal Party.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): None of the paltry rhetoric of the Minister and none of the irrelevant interjections of the House Leader will sway me from the position I have always held. We have never called into question the primacy of the House of Commons. What we are saying to the House is: abolish the Senate or reform it, and reform it in a meaningful way, and we believe in an elected Senate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nunziata: You guys are gutless.

Mr. Prud'homme: Crosbie is speechless.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): We accept the principle that when the two Chambers are in conflict, the will of the House of Commons prevails.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: They only have 180 days.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): The reality is that that situation of conflict will arise infrequently. It has only arisen a few times in the history of Parliament, and the nation has not been rent asunder. So why are we now in such a rush? That we accept the supremacy of this place, the House of Commons,