

Some Reform Party members could argue that, contrary to their unimaginative Liberal colleagues, they have a suggestion for Quebecers: the well-known triple-E Senate.

• (1830)

This brings me to the second part of my speech in which I intend to demonstrate once again that Canadian federalism does not work and never will.

The proposal for a Triple E Senate reflects a very poor understanding, not only of Quebec but of the history of Canada and of the purpose of our institutions. I would urge the Reform Party to examine the reasons and discussions that led to the adoption of the Constitution Act, 1867. At the time, franco-phones and anglophones decided to unite in a confederation that recognized the equality of its two founding peoples. It took some vigorous negotiating before these two founding peoples managed to agree on their choice of political institutions for this country.

A constitutional expert, whom I will not name but who is also a member of the Senate, recalled, and I quote: "Sir George-Étienne Cartier wanted parity between Quebec and Ontario for the Senate and he got it, in other words, 24 senators for each province".

We signed acts of union with a partner, English Canada, based on two houses, one with proportional representation and one with equal representation for Upper and Lower Canada. Over the years, as new English-speaking provinces were added and of course new senators for each province, Quebec's political clout in the Senate gradually diminished, so that today, Quebec is under-represented in the Senate in terms of its demographics, with only 23 per cent of the members in that house.

As though this were not enough, our English Canadian partner now wants to marginalize us even further and consider us as only one of ten partners. I may recall that in 1867, the Fathers of Confederation felt that the presence of the Senate was also required to restrain the democratic excesses of members elected by universal suffrage.

Perhaps the Liberal government still thinks it is necessary to restrain the democratic excesses of elected members. However, it should realize that times have changed and that Canadian and Quebec public opinion has changed as well.

To sovereigntists from Quebec, English Canada's desire to make the Senate more effective, elected and equal is not a problem. However, there is no way we would agree to be included in this reform.

We will not let the other provinces further diminish Quebec's political clout within our federal institutions. On behalf of all Quebecers, we say no, no forever to this kind of reform. Senate

### Supply

reform will happen without Quebec, or not at all. If the Reform Party or the other supporters of a Triple E Senate truly wants to provide English Canada with a democratic legislative system, one that is less cumbersome and more efficient, then they should begin by ensuring a victory for the sovereigntist forces in the next Quebec referendum.

Need I remind members that to reform the Upper House, the constitutional debate would have to be reopened? Pursuant to section 42 of the Constitution Act, the consent of the federal government and of seven provinces representing more than 50 per cent of the population is required in order to alter the powers of the Senate or the way in which senators are appointed.

After the recent failures of the Meech and Charlottetown agreements, to name only two, I think that Canadian federalism has proven itself to be inflexible and incapable of adapting to new realities.

The members of this House who are concerned about the state of Canada's public finances must support the Bloc's motion. Canada can ill-afford from an economic standpoint the luxury of having a Senate. It is no longer dynamic enough or flexible enough to carry out in-depth reform. Until such time as they acquire institutions which correspond to the realities of Canada and Quebec, the members across the way sometimes enjoy pointing out that the official opposition is not truly representative of Canada as a whole.

In conclusion, I would simply like to recall the findings of the latest Gallup public opinion poll which asked how Canadians and Quebecers felt about the Senate. On July 22, 1993, Gallup found that for the first time ever since it started asking this question, that is since 1944, a majority of Canadians said they were in favour of abolishing the Senate. Fifty-four per cent favoured abolishing the Senate, as the Bloc advocates, while 37 per cent said it should be reformed, the option favoured by the Reform Party, and 4 per cent preferred the status quo, the option being defended today by the Liberals.

• (1835)

The results in Quebec are even more revealing. Sixty-eight per cent said they were in favour of abolishing the Upper House, while 20 per cent would prefer to see the Senate reformed and 4 per cent prefer the status quo.

The numbers speak for themselves. All that remains for the government to do is to heed the will of Canadians and Quebecers and vote in favour of the Bloc Québécois' motion.

[English]

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona):** Mr. Speaker, while the hon. member is engaged in giving the House a history lesson he might be well advised to include in his remarks the fact that long before Claude Ryan in 1980, or long before they asked the