

Senate Reform

point of view of the Government. There is no point in reforming the Senate because it is ideally designed to serve its two main functions, those functions being to serve as the top prize in the pyramid of patronage and to serve as an internal lobby for business interests. I would just like to make a couple of comment on each of those points.

In terms of patronage, we have seen the appointments made by the present Prime Minister over the last several years, We have seen former executive assistants appointed. We have seen the appointment of a Conservative Member to the Senate, a Member from a seat which, in all probability, would go Liberal in a byelection and which, indeed, did go Liberal. We have seen the appointment of a former Member for Spadina to the Senate, a Member whose main qualification, according to *Saturday Night* magazine, was that he travelled well. He was appointed in order to make way for a parachute candidate who was supposed to land in Spadina and take that seat for the Liberals and, hopefully, have a seat in the Cabinet. Unfortunately, my colleague, the Hon. Member for Spadina (Mr. Heap), managed to win that seat for the New Democratic Party because the people of Spadina and the people of Canada just do not like the kind of patronage associated with that kind of parachute candidate.

We have seen the appointment of the former Clerk of the Privy Council to the Senate. Yesterday, the announcement came that one of the Prime Minister's long-time friends and travelling companions was appointed. The list continues. In addition, the Senate has been used as a plum and a safe haven for Party organizers and bagmen, by both the Liberals and the Conservatives. It has been used as a source for pseudo-representation on the Cabinet from regions where those particular Parties have not had the ability to elect Members, the Conservatives from Quebec, the Liberals from the Prairies and British Columbia. Therefore, we see very well that the Senate has served the interests of the Government as the top prize in patronage appointments.

Second, the Government is not particularly anxious to see the Senate disappear because its friends and big business want the Senate there. It serves as an internal lobby for business interests. In a study of the Canadian Senate by Colin Campbell, called "The Canadian Senate: A Lobby from Within", at page 71, he quotes two Senators who discussed their method of operation. One said:

Without us, the Cabinet and the bureaucracy would never get the type of cooperation out of the private sector which is needed to make the system run.

Mr. Campbell continued:

The second corporation lawyer emphasizes the tactics which business reviewers employ. He says that they frequently ask members of their law firms to help them draft amendments to Bills. Then they lobby according to an established pattern: "I go to the Minister in charge and show him what I think should be changed in the Bill and ask for his cooperation; then I go over to the Commons and start lobbying among the M.P.s, pointing out, of course, that I have been to see the Minister and that I have his blessing."

● (1510)

Another Senator touches upon some of these points when he summarizes his perception of business review. Although the role emerges from the business and legal expertise of senators, he says, it relates most fundamentally to an appreciation of the legislative process. Bureaucrats want to 'cover the waterfront' in legislation. Senators, on the other hand, ask two crucial questions of each Bill

before they vote on it. First, does it preserve Parliament's ultimate authority to make law, especially by denying Ministers excessive discretionary powers? Second, does it meet those requirements of the business community which are essential to maintenance of the free enterprise system? This Senator's view, then, is explicitly oligarchic. In fact, he voluntarily suggests that the Founding Fathers established the Senate because "they were worried about the possibility, without an Upper House, of popular swings which would take command in the House of Commons and generate legislation that throws the whole system out of whack."

Campbell details the efforts of Senators in restricting progressive tax changes or in the dilution of FIRA.

We all recognize that business has legitimate interests and that those interests need to be represented in Parliament. But those interests should be seen in context with other legitimate interests; the interests of consumers and labour. Any conflicts between those different interests should be fought out in the public arena. Business should not have the privileged access to the ears of Ministers and to caucus which the Senate gives them and does not give to other groups. Yet this is the very basic reason for the existence of the Senate.

It seems to me that from the point of view of the Government which can use the Senate as a patronage plum and wants to represent the interests of business, it has the Senate as a convenient lobby to keep it informed and it has no real interest in Senate reform.

That leads me to the second question and perhaps the most basic of all: is the Senate worth reforming? Do we need a Senate? From the point of view of our Party, the answer is no. The Senate has not served the Canadian people in the past. We do not see any useful functions that the Senate can be serving in the present or in the future, and the most meaningful contribution we can make to Senate reform in our time is to push for its abolition. I urge that upon my hon. friends.

Mr. Evans: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to stand and speak on Bill C-640 today.

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Our Party has not yet had a chance to take part in this debate. Surely we are entitled to one speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilgour): I was misinformed. In that case I will recognize the Hon. Member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath).

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I will give the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Evans) a little time so that he can have the privilege of talking out the Bill. I will leave that honour and distinction to him.

The question that was posed to us by the Hon. Member who just took his seat is: do we need a Senate? I believe that we do. I believe that the federal system does require a bicameral legislature. I do not believe that there is a federal state in the world that does not have a bicameral legislature. It is for the very obvious and fundamental reason that varying sizes of states or provinces mean various sizes in the representation of those states and provinces. Therefore it is necessary to have an upper Chamber to balance the disproportionate representation which often takes place in the elected Chamber or House.