

Retirement Age for Senators

more active members who can make a contribution. The contribution to be made is potentially a very great one. As has been pointed out, at least theoretically a very great degree of power resides in the Senate; a power which the Senate has chosen, wisely in many instances, not to use. But I suggest there is a very great role, and an important one, to be played by the other place in providing continuity of committees. An elected legislature has on occasion a very large turnover in terms of the proportion of its members. The Senate can provide a continuity from one Parliament to another. It can give a great deal of assistance, primarily of the type that does not hit the headlines, to newer Members of Parliament who come to a very busy institution. It can participate in representing Canada abroad at the United Nations, and in many other places, recognizing the growing role which we have in the eyes of other nations as a middle-rank power. I prefer to see this measure adopted as the first step. This is a measure of reform. How we will develop from this stage will depend upon the customs and usages of the Canadian Parliament itself.

Mr. J. B. Stewart (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, the matter treated in Bill No. C-98 has brought on a far-ranging discussion. The bill is simple enough. In essence it provides that persons hereafter summoned to the Senate shall retire at 75 and that persons who are now Senators who are, or become, either 75 or permanently disabled may retire with an annuity.

In this discussion, Mr. Speaker, the N.D.P. has rushed to one extreme. They have demanded the total and immediate abolition of the Senate. I shall not discuss that extreme view because the relevance of it to the debate now going on was settled this morning; it is not relevant to this debate. But we may assume that if this alternative were not available to the members of the N.D.P., they would propose some far-reaching and radical alteration in the Senate. It has been argued, as the hon. Member for Burnaby-Richmond (Mr. Prittie) reminded us, that this N.D.P. extremism is caused by the fact that no member of the N.D.P. is now in the Senate, nor can have a reasonable hope of being summoned. I think that explanation is inadequate. There are at least two more serious reasons why the N.D.P. wants to see the Senate either abolished or very extensively changed.

The N.D.P. dreams of a time when it has a majority in this House. One Member fondly imagines a day when he, as Prime Minister, will bring in a measure to nationalize the iron and steel industry. Another yearns for a day when he, as Minister of Industry and Energy, brings in a bill to nationalize the gas, oil, coal and hydroelectric resources of this country.

Mr. Orlikow: This has been done already.

Mr. Stewart: Yet another has his own plans for clinics and hospitals. These gentlemen fear that when their bills have passed this House, they will be rejected by the Senate. Consequently, the N.D.P. now proposes to deal radically with the Senate. They sought today to bring forward an amendment proposing that the Senate should be abolished.

Mr. Knowles: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stewart: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear the hon. Member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) indicating that I have hit the nail on the head.

Second, the N.D.P.—whether consciously or not, I do not know—more and more has come to espouse a primitive congressional theory of government. One has only to read what the hon. Member for Winnipeg North Centre said, as reported at pages 412 and 413 of *Hansard*, about the resolution preceding this bill, to detect this approach. He contends that political theory allows no place in the governmental process for persons not selected by the electorate. Naturally, he has no use for an appointed Senate.

As I listened to the hon. Member the other day I was reminded of a famous American professor who always introduced his own views by beginning, "Sound political theory teaches that . . ." The theory put forward by the hon. Member is only one theory. It is not the only theory of representative constitutional government. Moreover, his is a theory that has rarely, if ever, been successful in practice. But be that as it may, the point is that the hon. Member's insistence that the Senate be abolished is perfectly consistent with his theory. It is the logical product of his conception of representative government. At the other extreme we find those who would have Senators come to Ottawa as the delegates of either the several provinces or the people in those provinces.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Speaker, would the "professor" permit a question?