

who studied it would recognize that it would be unacceptable to the Canadian population. So when I say that as long as we have the present Senate we are never going to have reform, I am speaking from some experience of what has happened over the last few years.

We did a study. We did go out and talk with provincial governments in each province. We let learned academics come before us with all of their different ideas. We talked with ordinary Canadians, with labour leaders, with business leaders and various regional groups. We did all of that study. So it has been done and it has been done time after time. However, the recommendations which come forward are not the types of recommendations which talk about real reform. The report we received in the past proves that the Senate does not really want to reform itself and, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, there are Hon. Members of this House—as is evidenced by Hon. Members who previously spoke on this issue—who really do not want to reform the Senate.

Much has been said about the value of the Senate and the fact that because we have people with great backgrounds, former Premiers, former Members of Parliament, former Cabinet Ministers, and so on, there is a lot of value in keeping a Senate to do all sorts of things. For that matter, the report of the committee from last year emphasized the Senate's reputation as a legislative and issue review body whose research and hearings have produced good legislative proposals. The committee used this function as a *raison d'être* for continuing a second chamber.

However, that committee deliberately ignored the fact that in the past number of years it has been all-party House of Commons committees and task forces which have done the real research into such issues as Latin America, disarmament, bank profits, minorities, federal-provincial fiscal arrangements, and so on. These committees have done all of those studies which are so important to the actions of this House and to the directions taken by various Governments. These studies were not done in the Senate. Each and every one of those task forces were House of Commons task forces. I think the people who have served on those task forces recognize that they do the yeoman's work for which the Senate has the reputation. They do the in-depth analysis of some of the controversial issues on which the Government wants more research before it comes forward with a legislative proposal or Government policy paper. That is being done and has been done by the House of Commons. It is 20 or 30 years since we have had the Crow report on poverty in this country.

When people talk about the research capacity of the Senate, they are really talking about something which has not been a function of the Senate in the last little while. Other people who have talked about the value of the Senate refer to the fact that it was the Senate which did the study of the security legislation. They say that the security legislation which was introduced by the Liberals—which was unacceptable—was studied by the Senate and found to be unacceptable. Those of us who were in the House of Commons at that time realized that the Government deliberately sent that Bill to the Senate for study

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because it did not want the House of Commons to study it. The Government sent it to the other place because it did not want us to reveal the holes which existed in that legislation.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the elected representatives of the people of Canada could have done a much better job of showing just how weak that legislation was. That was a deliberate Government move to keep the legislation from the people who were elected to study legislation. So the Government cannot use that as an excuse for keeping the Senate.

● (1750)

The Senate is elitist in its very nature, Mr. Speaker. It is there because of a lack of trust in a popular mandate. We had an election on September 4 for the purpose of letting the people of Canada decide who they want to govern and what mandate they want to give. We do not always agree with the choice of the people; sometimes we do not even like the choices they have made, but we have always maintained that they have that right. To then create another body to control the elected representatives of the people of Canada is completely and obviously undemocratic.

That body is also elitist because of the very nature of the people in the Senate. Two thirds of the Senators, at last count, were either corporate executives or corporate lawyers. Fully 40 per cent of Senators are on board of directors. Certainly most Canadians are not on boards of directors. The very fact that Senators, who are paid full-time salaries, are doing other work would indicate that they are not truly representing the people of this country.

I have heard some of the debate about how the Senate could be wonderful, how it could represent the provinces, how it could solve the problems of regional disparity and somehow protect the French-speaking minority. I remember that that was the original purpose of the Senate, but it has not done that over the years. It has been the provincial Governments which have protected their own interests. It has been provincial Governments with French-speaking populations which have protected language rights. It has been the federal Government which has worked to protect language rights, not the Senate of this nation.

I know there are others who would like to speak on this proposal, but I would like to remind the House of the motion presented by our Leader in the House yesterday which the Government did not allow to go forward for debate. The motion was that this House recommend the abolition of the Senate. I believe that is the only reasoned course we could ever take.

Do people in this Chamber remember that we used to have second Houses in some of the provinces? Does anyone miss them? Does anyone really feel we have lost something by no longer having second Houses at the provincial level? I do not believe we need the Senate. For that matter, for most purposes it has been dead for the last 100 years. It has served no useful purpose, and when it does exercise its powers we all wish it was not there. So we have not had a useful Senate. In some ways I would have to say that at the present time we have a dead