

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** I think this should be a matter of considerable concern to Quebec Members like those protesting in front of us. I ask Hon. Members, why is the Government proceeding without the participation of Quebec? It is an insult to the men and women of Quebec! In our view, if we really want to reform the Senate and if the Government decides to make this a priority, it should first call a full federal-provincial conference, as of now, immediately, this year, in 1985, and not in 1987, 1988 or 1989, but now, to ensure, first of all, that Quebec is part of our Constitution before amending any part thereof. But, as Hon. Members are aware—

**An Hon. Member:** Go back to sleep!

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** Mr. Speaker, our colleagues are getting a little excited. I can easily understand why.

My Liberal colleagues and myself will demand an elected Senate. We are going to demand additional representation for the regions, the Atlantic Provinces and Western Canada. This country came into being as a result of two factors: first of all, the parliamentary system, since proportional representation at the time gave a special advantage to Upper Canada or Ontario; the second was the federal and territorial aspect. The debate that led to Confederation shows clearly that if there had not been some kind of Upper Chamber, a second Chamber like the Senate, to protect territorial interests within the Federation, neither Lower Canada, now Quebec, nor Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island would have become part of our country, because these provinces were unwilling to be submerged in the House of Commons by the flood of Members from Upper Canada. I would like to quote George Brown—he is not often quoted in French—who was not much in honour, but the French translation of his words on the subject of Ontario was as follows, and I am quoting from the *Debates on Confederation*, page 88:

The very essence of our agreement is that we shall have a federal and not a legislative union. Our friends in Lower Canada have agreed to proportional representation in the Lower Chamber, provided seats in the Upper Chamber are apportioned equally. We would have been unable to make any progress without that condition. I for one am fully prepared to agree to the principle of equal numbers.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear from this excerpt from the *Debates* preceding Confederation that the purpose of the Senate was to equalize territorial or federal representation and thus balance densely populated Ontario. The Senate made it possible to provide for balanced representation of the territories that agreed to join our Federation, and this requirement could be met thanks to a more or less equal division of seats among the four regions, namely, Western Canada, Ontario, Quebec and the Maritime Provinces. Six additional seats were subsequently attributed to Newfoundland.

### *The Constitution*

We must consider this principle which forms the basis for our Confederation. We must also consider the role played by the Senate in protecting minorities, and especially French Canadians, because this aspect was also a major point in the minds of the Fathers of Confederation, and is mentioned several times in the *Debates*.

The resolution before the House today would deprive the Senate of any significant legislative role and reduce Parliament to a single Chamber. If the resolution is passed, the Senate's ability to defend the smaller provinces and minority rights will be seriously diminished if not eliminated altogether. [English]

The proposition which we will put before the House—and we will make the appropriate amendment—is that we believe an elected Senate, as recommended in the report of the Special Joint Committee on Senate Reform, which was released in January of 1984, would be a positive move in restoring the credibility of the Upper Chamber and in reinforcing our style of federalism. It is true that the current system of appointment, which is the sole preserve of the Prime Minister of the day, has increasingly been called into question. No matter how judicious, reasonable and fair the appointments may be, and no matter how qualified the individual may be, there is the perception that the Senate exists only for the appointment of the Prime Minister's friends of the day. That is the weakness with that method of appointment.

Other speakers on this side will have something to say about improving the method of appointment. Should the method be shared with the provinces? Should there be a term instead of the Senator being appointed until he reaches the maximum age of 75? Should there be a rebalancing of regional interests? My Province of British Columbia wants more seats in the Senate. I am sure the other provinces do as well. But that would be part of the reason that Premier Bennett would agree to and want a constitutional conference.

● (1450)

While I have a great deal of respect for Members of the Senate, I do believe they would agree with me—and they do—that the credibility of that institution would be greatly enhanced if they were elected Members. As the report of the special committee says, Your Honour, and I quote in the language of the report:

Only a politically strong second chamber can dispute, when necessary, the decisions taken by a Government that is supported by the House of Commons. Therefore only an elected Senate can satisfy the original intent of the Fathers of Confederation: The provision of a chamber that would balance judiciously the power of the Commons (which is based on representation by population) by safeguarding the legitimate interests of the people of the less populous provinces.

So what we are saying to you, Your Honour, and to the country, is that if Senate reform—and we do not believe this measure really touches it—is on the agenda of the Government, despite the economic and budgetary problems we should be discussing at this stage, then let us really reform the Senate. Let us reform it or abolish it. We would begin with an immediate constitutional conference on an elected Senate.