

Newfoundland

it is abnormal that there should be, in the event forecast by the hon. member, a Senate composed exclusively of members of one party. That is something which is giving concern not only to hon. members on the other side of the house but to others. I can assure hon. members that we have within our own party serious misgivings about the situation that is apt to occur because of the way in which the Canadian public favours those who are elected to this house.

Mr. Fulton: Your misgivings will be removed at the next general election.

Mr. MacNicol: Can the minister give the name of the sponsor to whom I referred?

Mr. St. Laurent: I do not remember his name.

Mr. MacNicol: It was shortly after confederation.

Mr. Hansell: The Prime Minister has thanked us for some little advice that he may have received from members of the opposition. I should like to put my little finger in the pie and give him some further advice. I appreciate what he has said with respect to the overbalancing of one side of the other place, but there is a way in which it can be overcome. I know that I am not voicing anything new, but from my experience here a feeling has grown upon me that we are in need of some parliamentary and electoral reform. No country remains static. We make progress. We change our ideas and we change the machinery which is used to put over those ideas.

I contend, Mr. Chairman, that the government and this entire house should give some consideration to a change in our parliamentary and electoral machinery and have the gentlemen who sit in the other place elected by common consent of the people of Canada. Personally I see no particular reason why in the other place there should be sitting two apparently separate bodies, one the counterpart of the government side of the house and the other the counterpart of the opposition side. Why cannot that body be a true example of a democratic institution? Let each member act independently and oppose or favour a measure as his experience guides him.

I know it is difficult to put this election idea over to any government which is in power. It is extremely difficult to do that because naturally they like to have the privilege of appointing various distinguished gentlemen to that other place. I am confident every one of us is aware of the fact that in Canada there is a large body of opinion which belittles our parliamentary institutions. I do not know that the hon. member for Vancouver Centre was right when he made the

remark which caused so much discussion the other day, but I just wonder how much of that kind of thinking is retained in the public mind. The effectiveness or the ineffectiveness of our parliamentary institutions is the subject of some concern to us and to the people of Canada. We do know that in Canada many people hold the view that the gentlemen who sit in the other place sit there as the result of having been good party supporters in the past, and what they have received is just a juicy political plum.

Mr. Knowles: It is a pretty good old age pension.

Mr. Hansell: A lot of people think that. I am not prepared to say that it is not so.

Mr. MacNicol: You will admit it is a good plum.

The Chairman: Order.

Mr. Hansell: It is a good plum, whether they deserve it or not. I believe the time has come when members of that other place should be elected by the people of Canada.

Mr. Fraser: The Prime Minister and the hon. member for Macleod have mentioned the fact that gentlemen are called to the other place. I was wondering whether the Prime Minister was going to select some ladies for the other place. There are two there now. The women of Canada constitute over 50 per cent of the voting strength of the country. They should also be appointed to the other place.

Mr. Rowe: Many years ago the policy of the party opposite was to reform the Senate—I believe that was some thirty years ago. We were to have Senate reform.

Mr. Garson: We have now.

Mr. Rowe: The Minister of Justice has said that we have it now. It is reformed because nothing has been appointed to it for a number of years except reformers. However, the predecessor of the Prime Minister stated on one occasion, when asking about reforming the Senate, that no one was appointed to the Senate by his government except those who were committed to submit to any reforms the present party might design. Therefore I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether in the appointment of these new senators from Newfoundland he would inflict that obligation upon them which, I understand, has been inflicted upon every senator appointed by his government.

Mr. St. Laurent: I know of no infliction imposed upon any of the members in the other place, nor have I found in their reaction to notification of appointment that they felt that anything was being inflicted upon them.