

Bumper Crop Senate, Commons Still Hold Class Distinction

By H. L. JONES
Canadian Press Staff Writer

OTTAWA — Why must the page boys in Canada's Senate wear white ties, and those in the Commons black ones?

The Senate and Commons cleaning staffs wear different uniforms, and they clean only to each side of an imaginary line in the halls of parliament.

Tradition is the answer, and on Parliament Hill tradition dies hard. Even those traditions governing staff uniforms stem right from the constitution itself.

STRICTLY SEPARATE

The Fathers of Confederation laid it down that there should be two separate houses of parliament, the Senate and Commons. The Senate chamber is a little

more ornate than the larger Commons chamber, and the appointed Senators of course have the constitutional right to veto any legislation coming from the elected members of the lower house.

When the two chambers were set up, they established separate staffs. And the Senate, patterned after Britain's House of Lords and jealously guarding its rights, dressed its staff in a more formal style than the Commons when uniforms were ordered, to show its independent status.

So to this day the Senate and Commons have separate stenographic pools, separate police services, post offices, barber shops, messenger and page staffs, reading rooms and cleaning corps.

There have been suggestions the two staffs, or some parts of them, might be amalgamated in the interests of economy. Ross Thatcher, CCF member from Moose Jaw, Sask., told the Commons once he could not see the necessity of all the separate services.

Other members disagreed. They said any amalgamation might result in some old-timers losing their jobs. They would rather see two staffs retained than put veteran workers out of a job.

SENATORS OPPOSE CHANGE

Those who speak for the Senate staunchly oppose any move toward staff amalgamation. They say there would be little or no saving; but more important, they feel any such merger even on the staff level might be the thin edge of the wedge for eventual engulfment of the Senate by the larger House of Commons.

To these, the constitutional phrase "separate houses of parliament" mean separate in every sense.

So the separate houses go

their separate ways with separate staffs. The much larger Commons administrative staff takes care of about two-thirds of the main parliamentary buildings, housing offices connected with the Commons, and the Senate staff looks after the remaining third of the building on the east side.

The imaginary dividing line is a stairway just east of the main entrance hall to the parliament buildings.

The Senate staff comes under the clerk of the Senate, Clare Moyer, 64, appointed in 1938. The Commons staff is under Leon J. Raymond, 41, clerk of the Commons appointed in 1949, and Lt.-Col. W. J. Frazer-Klin, Sergeant-at-Arms in the Commons.

The char staffs of the two houses, working up to the dividing line, make one exception for the press gallery. It is on the Senate side of the building, but is cleaned by the Commons char staff.

LARGER COMMONS STAFF

Actually the Commons workers have far more services than the Senate. The Commons staff includes a barber shop with two barbers, a shoe-shiner and a masseur; an upholstery shop to keep Commons-side furniture and drapes in shape; two locksmiths and three carpenters.

The Senate has one barber, Jack Reynolds, who doubles as a messenger. When needed, he often throws off his barbering smock, locks his shop and runs messages. He is reported to be the favorite barber of Prime Minister St. Laurent.

The Senate also has a handyman who does almost anything from odd carpentry jobs to fixing locks and doors. There are two curators in the Senate reading room compared to five in the Commons reading room. Senate stenographers number 18 during the session and six between sittings, compared with 169 and 40 for the Commons.

Like most other things, the cost of these staffs has increased over the years. General administration for the House of Commons for the next fiscal year is estimated at \$1,651,893 and for the Senate \$393,448.

But Senate spokesmen will tell you that nothing could be saved by amalgamating the staffs.



CAREFUL THERE!—The Commons and Senate have separate staffs, including cleaners called "whitewings," to do various jobs around the Parliament Buildings. The whitewings clean only their own section of the buildings by agreement. Here Commons whitewing William Henbrey, left, warns Senator whitewing Thomas Brule not to flick Senate ashes on the Commons side of the building. (CP PHOTO)

Bumper Crop Reap Now

EDMONTON — An Alberta farmer has developed a strain of wheat which may be the answer to the short growing season in northern Alberta.

A. W. Manchester of the Jarvie district, 80 miles northwest of Edmonton, says his wheat called "Early Harvest" matures two to three weeks ahead of other crops seeded at the same time under the same conditions.

His wheat, developed by years of patient cross-breeding, heads out seven weeks after planting and yields 40 to 45 bushels an acre. Slower-maturing varieties used by Manchester yield 60 to 70 bushels.

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A long-broken tie with pioneer fishing in Prince Rupert was picked up again this week when Dewey Soriano spent a few hours ashore upon arrival here as first mate on the MV Lucidor, from Seattle.

A member of a well-known fishing family, Dewey left Prince Rupert as a boy of five in 1925. His father is Angel (Mingo) Soriano who came to Prince Rupert in 1915.

Mingo started very modestly but when he left here 10 years later he was the owner of the halibut schooner Summer. He now fishes out of Neah Bay and Port Angeles.

Also on the Lucidor is Purser Reg Harris who was purser on the old Prince George on her first trip here in 1910.

Mr. Harris went overseas in the First World War with such well known Prince Rupert men as A. L. Holtby, Col. C. W. (Cy) Peck, VC.

IMPROVED METHOD

OSLO (CP)—A large Norwegian chemical firm reported its scientists have developed a new, slow-acting form of the drug ACTH which requires fewer injections for arthritis sufferers. One injection every two or three days is said to equal the former four-a-day treatment.

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