

Quill and Quire, Update, (July 5, 1978)

THE CANADIAN SENATE: A Lobby from Within, Colin Campbell, Macmillan, \$5.95 paper ISBN 0 7705 1631 9, 184 pp., index, May 1978

This book is another in Macmillan's Canadian Controversy Series, which is showing signs of becoming the best new series since the Carleton Library introduced its paperback line in 1963. The books are written by some of the most articulate young scholars in Canada who all seem able to combine the specialized vocabulary of their discipline with the clarity required for the ordinary reader.

Colin Campbell's argument that the Senate should be abolished is not a new one, but he approaches the subject with the tools and detachment of a scientist rather than with the hysteria or cynicism of many critics of the Upper Chamber. His main thesis is that in recent years the Senate has performed two major functions: protecting the interests of the business and financial communities, and investigating and reporting on various social problems. He finds that despite a number of useful studies in the past 15 years the Senate has become primarily a forum for the very special interests of business and finance. He concludes, somewhat reluctantly, that this violates a fundamental tenet of liberal democracy: that all segments of society should enjoy reasonably equal access to government decision-makers.

Campbell's thorough and systematic argument in favour of abolition is offset to a degree by his superficial endorsement, in the book's final three pages, of the proposal to replace the Senate by a House of the Federation modelled on the German *Bundesrat*. This idea is now embodied in the Prime Minister's proposals for a new constitution. But Campbell's brief discussion of it is unlikely to persuade many skeptics that such an arrangement would work as well in Canada as it does in West Germany. Gary Levy