

# Obituary

## Robert McIsaac "Mac" Sprowl

The title of Mac Sprowl's autobiography, *From Farm Boy to Sheriff*, neatly summed up his life from his birth on his parents' Third Line farm to a distinguished career as Halton County's longest serving, and last, Sheriff. Robert McIsaac "Mac" Sprowl died, surrounded by his family in Georgetown Hospital on Monday. He was 86.

Farming played a large role in his life – Sprowl joined the Acton Junior Farmers in 1947, and was the President in 1951. In 1952 he was involved with Halton Junior Farmers, and was President of the Acton Fair in 1953. Sprowl's father, John Sprowl, owned Sprowl Well Drilling for 40 years and his mother Beatrice was well known as a water diviner.

Sprowl was awarded a Lord Nuffield Scholarship to Great Britain in 1954.

He was President of the Halton Federation of Agriculture and subsequently sat on its Board of Governors for five years. He was a Member of the Esqueving Area School Board for five years, and a Rotary Club of Acton member for



more than 55 years, serving twice as President, and receiving Rotary's highest award – the Paul Harris Award – in 1983.

In politics, Sprowl was a staunch Conservative who was nominated twice as a candidate for the Conservatives Party in 1957 and 1963, but failed

to get elected.

He retired as Sheriff in 1992, and in 1993, Sprowl was appointed to the Citizens Committee on Property Tax Reform, and was President of Halton Hills Home Owners Association.

While his many trophies attest to his skills as a curler, Sprowl said he was a poor golfer, and an avid reader. He was a founding member of the Acton Seniors Centre, and an elder at Knox Presbyterian Church.

Sprowl is survived by his wife of 49 years, Joyce, his daughters Dianne Utter and Marie Boivin, and four grandchildren.

Visitations are scheduled for today (Thursday) and Friday at MacKinnon Family Funeral Home, with a funeral service Saturday at 1:30 p.m., at Knox Presbyterian Church.



### Report from

## PARLIAMENT HILL

By Mike Chong

MP Wellington/ Halton Hills



Many of you have contacted me recently to voice concerns about the Senate of Canada. I'd like to take this opportunity to talk about Senate reform.

The Senate, as it stands today, must change.

Senators should be elected, so that Canadians can hold them directly accountable. In addition, term limits should be introduced,

replacing the current term of serving until 75 years of age.

These two Senate reforms should be achieved in a way that does not require provincial consent for a constitutional amendment. Consent would be difficult to obtain and would risk re-opening the Meech Lake and Charlottetown demands that were so

divisive in the 1990s.

The federal government has asked the Supreme Court of Canada what Senate reforms can be accomplished exclusively by the Parliament of Canada. The government expects to hear the Court's opinion toward the end of this calendar year. At that point, based on the Supreme Court's opinion, the gov-

ernment can introduce plans for Senate reform.

While I believe that Senate reform is necessary, I do not believe that Senate abolition is a solution.

First, abolition would be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. In my view, the Constitution of Canada requires the consent of the majority of provinces in Canada to abolish the Senate – possibly even the unanimous consent of all ten provinces. It does not appear that provincial consent is there. This is particularly true for smaller provinces, which are over-represented in Parliament, and whose numbers of House of Commons seats are dependent on their number of Senate seats.

Second, the Senate serves as an important review mechanism for legislation. There are a number of examples in recent memory where the Senate lived up to its moniker as "the chamber of sober second thought." In this Parliament alone, the

Senate identified important gaps and subsequently amended the government's Bill C-10, the Safe Streets and Communities Act, in order to strengthen its anti-terrorism provisions. It is also currently undertaking thorough scrutiny of Bill C-290, An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (sports betting), which did not receive a standing vote in the House of Commons and which only received one witness while at the House committee.

Third, the Senate is an important investigative and research body. For many decades, the investigative work of the Senate has led to the development of social policies that have become integral to Canada's modern social safety net. The Canada Pension Plan and the Canada Health Act were all developed through the research of the Senate. More recently, the Senate has been instrumental in highlighting reforms to mental health services in Canada.

Last, but not least, the Senate serves as a counterweight to the executive branch of Canada's government. It diffuses the power of the Prime Minister's Office. Without the Senate, power would be further concentrated in the executive branch. This is precisely why over 50 countries around the world have bicameral legislatures like Canada.

While there is clearly a need for a lower and upper chamber, I recognize that the Senate needs to be reformed. To this end, the most effective way to fix the Senate is to elect Senators and implement term limits. These changes would bring meaningful reform to the Senate and fully restore its utility in Canada's Parliament.

Canadians want to see change in the Senate, and I am committed to the Senate reforms outlined above. Please contact me if you have any questions or comments at (866) 878-5556 or michael.chong@parl.gc.ca

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