

Changing Perspectives: Interviews with Patrick Binns, Raymond Garneau and Michael Cassidy



The opinions a new member of the House of Commons forms about Parliament and his own role in it are determined not only by his immediate observations, but by his former experience in various fields. Of particular interest are the views of members who have previously served in provincial legislatures, and who are, in consequence, observant of the effects that differences in scale, procedure and geography can create.

Three members with previous provincial experience were interviewed for the Canadian Parliamentary Review in February 1985.

Pat Binns (Conservative, Cardigan) was a member of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island from 1978 to 1984. He served at various times as Minister of Municipal Affairs, Minister of Labour, Minister of the Environment, Minister of Community Affairs, Minister of Fisheries and Minister of Industry.

Raymond Garneau (Liberal, Laval-des-rapides) was, early in his career, executive assistant to former Quebec Premier, Jean Lesage. He was first elected to the Quebec National Assembly in 1970 and served as Minister of Finance from 1970 to 1976. He left politics after failing to win leadership of the Quebec Liberal Party in 1978, and worked in the private sector first as Vice-President of the Laurentian Group of insurance companies, later as Chairman of the Montreal City and District Saving Bank until his return to politics in the last federal election.

Michael Cassidy (NDP, Ottawa Centre) has had experience at three levels of government, beginning as an alderman for the City of Ottawa. He represented Ottawa Centre in the Ontario Legislative Assembly for 13 years (1971-1984), including a period as party leader from 1978 to 1982.

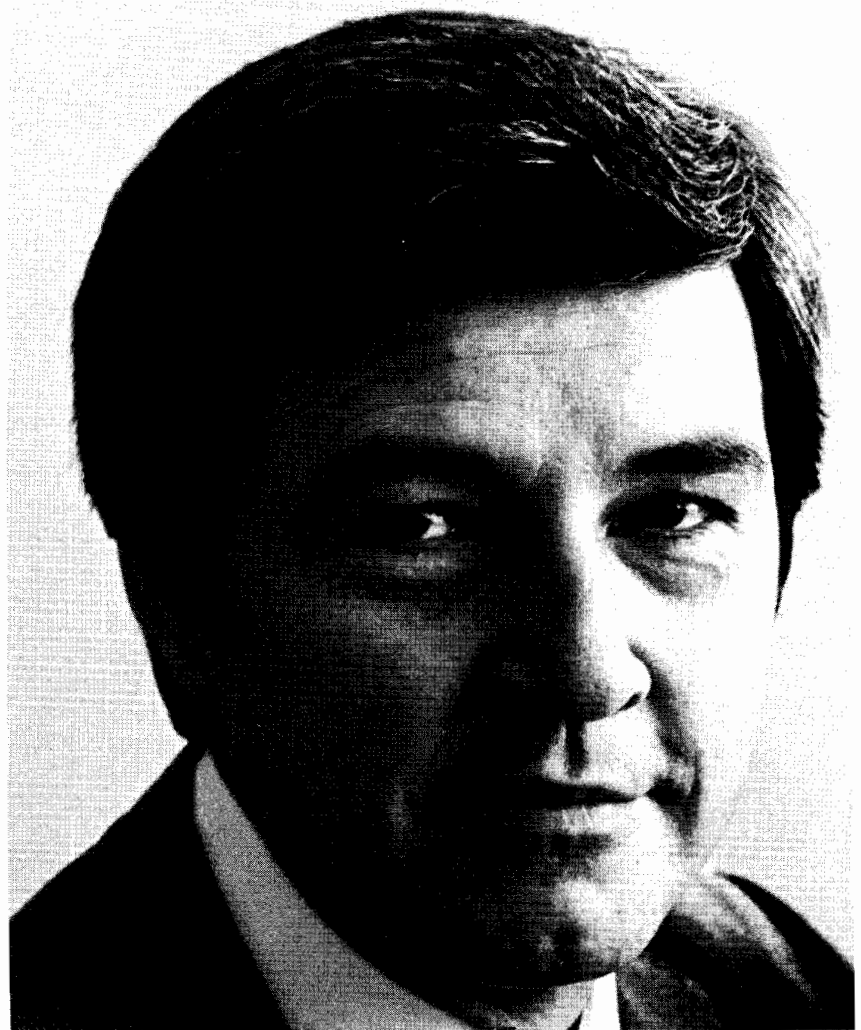
The interviews were conducted by Barbara Benoit.

What led you to move from provincial into federal politics?

Mr. Binns: A lot of things came together. I was approached by a number of people in the constituency. I had been concerned for some time that the issue of regional development was not getting the attention it should. In Prince Edward Island we have been so dependent on the federal government, we had to develop a better relationship with Ottawa. I thought that if I could help to create a better understanding of our difficulties in the federal arena, I would be doing a useful job.

Mr. Garneau: It had been in my subconscious for some time that if I returned to politics, it would be at the federal level. I had been actively involved in provincial politics from 1963 to 1978; but although circumstances brought me in at the provincial level, ever since my studies in Europe I have had a profound interest in international economic questions. I certainly had not thought to return to politics as soon as I did, but a number of prominent Quebec Liberals resigned at the same time as Mr. Trudeau. Evidently, that was going to affect the representation of Quebec in the Parliament and it was necessary to recruit some new people with considerable political and administrative experience. So it was a sense of duty, an obligation to do my part, that led me to run for office in the last election.

Mr. Cassidy: I had represented Ottawa Centre at the provincial level for thirteen years and thought there was a good chance I could carry the seat for the NDP federally. In personal terms, I looked forward to the challenge of operating in the federal arena. Now that the attention of the country has shifted to economic concerns, there are great opportunities in policy development. Because of our strong base in the west, the New Democratic Party has in the past focused its attention primarily on resources and other concerns of western Canada. Our attention is better balanced now, and a few of us in caucus are seeking to ensure that the balance includes concern with the policies of the Bank of Canada for example. We are also trying to reflect the interests of regions not included in our caucus. For example, I am the head of a group of caucus which will travel and raise issues of particular importance to Quebec.



Raymond Garneau, MP

At the constituency level, what was the effect of moving from a provincial legislature to the House of Commons?

Mr. Cassidy: The difference was incredible. After I was elected in September, the demands on my riding office tripled from the level of a year earlier. The office had been open continuously the whole time, although the staff, of course, wore different hats as I changed position. We could not tell if the increase was due to pent-up demand which had not been met by the previous federal member or whether it suggested that a Member of Parliament has higher visibility and prestige than a provincial legislator. The demand is still quite high, but I have had experience for only a month or two of sharing riding duties with an NDP provincial member, so it will take us a bit of time to

determine whether there has been an absolute increase.

One striking fact about coming here was that, even though I have been an outspoken member of the Legislative Assembly and Leader of an opposition party, once I became a Member of Parliament, the number of invitations to take part in various events shot up. I think that is quite a clear indication that Members enjoy higher prestige than do provincial legislators, and it is probably true right across the country.

Having a spending limit during the campaign is a very good thing, but it ought to be higher. We certainly found during the last campaign that it did not go very far, and we had the impression that the other two parties were trying to cut corners and find loopholes. In Ontario elections, however, where there are no limits, there are tremendous abuses.

Mr. Binns: The style of campaigning, of course, had to be different. In a federal riding, it is not as easy to reach most people at the door, so there has to be more communication through the media, through mail-outs, through debate, and so on. There simply is not time to talk much on a one-to-one basis.

Because of federal legislation, there are controls on campaign expenditures in a federal election, and I think that is a good idea. Everyone is playing by the same rules. In a provincial situation, the costs can vary wildly from one riding to another, or from one election to the next.

Federally, the individual member may be slightly less important. An incumbent can be swept out more easily. People weigh all the factors — they look at the polls, at the candidates, at the leaders, at the issues. Of course, different factors will have more or less importance in each election.

Now that I am in Ottawa, I notice that I receive different kinds of requests from my constituents. I hear from people about Canada Pension, old age security, farm credit, federal fishing subsidies and licenses. When I was an MLA, constituency demands, especially related to employment, tended to be very heavy in the spring. The seasonal economy had a big effect. The demand now is more steady.

People seem somehow to find out who is responsible for what. Of course, if they have a special problem and they know you, they will call on you for help no matter what the jurisdiction. But the bulk of my constituency work load has shifted.

I do not know whether I am any busier. Constituency work takes about 60 per cent of my time. Because of the size and relative isolation of PEI, people feel they can bring their problems to their member, and because of the broad economic base and the numerous small communities, the problems touch on a lot of areas. Of course, as a federal member, I am much more isolated from my constituency. I keep in touch a lot by telephone. As an MLA, I did not need a constituency office. I drove to Charlottetown every day.

Mr. Garneau: The size of the federal, as opposed to the provincial, ridings makes a difference. The fact that federal jurisdictions are in general more removed from the day by day preoccupations of citizens also changes one's relationship with one's constituency. It

is not everyone who takes an active interest in Canadian-American relations or in our role in South America. Such matters are not as immediate in a constituency as, say, construction of a new road or a municipal sewer. So the individual demands on my constituency office are relatively few. I would estimate that I spend 90 per cent of my time on parliamentary work and 10 per cent on constituency work. I think people elect their federal member in the expectation that he will attend to national policy. On the other hand, there are, for me, numerous similarities.

When I was a member of the Quebec National Assembly, I represented the Jean Talon riding, in the city of Quebec. In 1979, I sold my house in Quebec and moved to Montreal, where my work in the private sector brought me. Now I represent Laval-des-rapides, which is half in the City of Montreal and half in the City of Laval. The two ridings are very similar: chiefly middle class, middle income urban areas, both containing poorer neighbourhoods and also significant groups with a higher-than-average level of education. The difference is that in Laval-des-rapides I also represent an ethnic community — Italian, Greek and Lebanese. They, together with English Canadians make up 25 per cent of the population of the riding.

It was a great advantage, when I was Finance Minister in Quebec, having the National Assembly in my riding. I practically never went to my constituency office, although I had one. I had a secretary who took calls, and if constituents had to see me, they usually came to my office at the Assembly. My evenings were therefore more free. Furthermore, all the provincial administrative offices were at hand. If a constituent had a problem, say, with workmen's compensation, he was very likely to go directly to the appropriate office and resolve it on his own. Constituency contacts were also much easier. I could arrange a meeting with the executive of my riding association or make an appointment to meet the Chamber of Commerce on very short notice, and without worrying about being absent from the Assembly.

But in effect, my relation to my constituency is very similar now to what it was when I was in provincial politics. The real contrast is not between the two levels of government but between representing a rural or an urban riding. In a rural riding a much

wider variety of questions will come up. A member may represent 25, 30 or 40 municipalities. If he meets with each mayor only twice a year, that's 80 meetings. If I meet each mayor I represent twice a year, that's four. And of course, in most rural ridings the problems of distance, travel costs and travel time make constituents more likely to turn to their Member of Parliament for help.

In the organization of your personal or family life, has the move to Ottawa created difficulties?

Mr. Garneau: Of course. One of the great advantages of representing a Quebec City riding, was the extra time I could have with my family. I came home in the evening and my children were there. Even if I arrived late, after they had gone to bed, I would see them at breakfast. Now that the children are grown up, having to maintain a secondary residence is not the problem it would have been then, and I have a lot of support from my wife. But my sympathy goes out to the younger members, to those with young families. It is very difficult. If you look at the divorce rate among members over the last 20 or 30 years it is fairly high; and certainly it takes a lot of character and understanding on the part of a member and his spouse to "manage" their marriage, under that sort of strain.

Mr. Cassidy: In my case, election to the House has resolved many problems. As a provincial member, I found that after a few years of carrying on business in a different city from where my family lived, I was very tired of it. It was rough on the family as well. When I became leader, we all moved to Toronto and we stayed there as a family even after I resigned the leadership. Any provincial member who brings his family to Toronto has my sympathy, although even cabinet ministers tend to leave their wives and families in the ridings. It is a great pleasure to me now in terms of my personal as well as my political life to be representing an area only a 10 minute walk from Parliament Hill.

It therefore seems to me that one of the reforms suggested for the parliamentary timetable makes a great deal of sense, and that is having members sit intensively for 3 weeks and then take a week off to go back to their ridings. It would be highly preferable to the sort of thing I went through — of coming back to Ottawa on the weekend, returning to Toronto Monday, flying back

Tuesday evening for a meeting, then rushing back to Toronto again until Friday. That sort of schedule is pretty killing and can be even more so in federal politics when the travel time can be eight or ten hours each way.

Mr. Binns: We knew that there would be some sacrifices involved in my being a federal member, that I would be away more, and we accepted that. I am able to get home most weekends, and in fact I think I see more of my family on weekends now than I did when I was a provincial minister. My constituency office is very close to home and I spend less time driving here and there around the Island. Of course I miss them through the week, but if they were in Ottawa I would probably end up seeing less of them. My evenings are so frequently occupied with work. We did have to give up the little farming we were doing. We sold the livestock. But farming is easy to pick up again.

How well served are you in Ottawa in terms of Parliament's administrative system — office, staffing, support services, etc.?

Mr. Cassidy: Individual members are much better served than in the Ontario legislature. There are substantially greater resources available. The administration does try to put the members first.

At Queen's Park, the political culture has been so affected by four decades or more of Conservative rule that it was a constant struggle getting reasonable consideration for the needs of individual, private members. It was not an issue for the government, because so many Conservative members were ministers or parliamentary assistants, and they were looked after, thank you very much. Two reasons for the difference here are that there have been more changes of government and there are a substantial number of backbenchers on both sides of the house.

It is very important to have a good legislative library. Obviously, the resources of the Library of Parliament are much greater than what was available at Queen's Park — although the resources at Queen's Park have improved greatly over the last seven or eight years and compare very well with what exists in most of the other provinces.

The bureaucracy is larger in Ottawa, and there are more rules, but at least the rules are communicated to us. At times they are awkward, and there are things I find

frustrating. One is the rather trivial matter of being unable, as only a private member, to get a suitable design of bookshelf for my office. But taking it on balance, there is an orderliness to the administration which is a virtue.

Members of the House of Commons are much better served with staff. It may still not be entirely adequate — I find that my staff are running off their feet with the pressure of the job — but it is much better than in the Ontario legislature. An enormous amount of the pressure which I felt as a provincial legislator was related to having to do so many things myself, or to find people who would do them for me for free, or to compete with my colleagues for the very limited resources of the caucus just to deal with my basic responsibilities — particularly in being an effective opposition critic. We still have NDP members in the Ontario legislature facing ministries which may spend up to \$6 billion a year — for example, in education and health — and they do it with the assistance of one person who is secretary, scheduler, research assistant and everything else, and one other person looking after their case work in their riding offices.

Mr. Binns: The difference of scale between Parliament and the PEI Legislature is of course extreme. The PEI Legislature does not meet on the average, for more than three months a year. The ministers, during most of the year, play a pretty large role in the administration of their departments. The systems are smaller, and you become familiar with most of the people in most program areas. It's a very "hands-on" kind of situation.

The obvious difference in Ottawa is that there are many more people to get to know — and many I will never get to know — who have relevance to what I am doing here. So I appreciate that it is going to take more time to get things done and there are more steps to go through to get a decision made.

A great deal of information is available but it may take me and my staff a little longer to find it. I have never found that I could not get something I needed.

I found some of the orientation seminars offered to new members quite useful. The Member of Parliament in some ways has to operate a kind of small business.



Patrick Binns, (centre) in discussion with two of his constituents

He is provided with a certain amount of support — both financial and in terms of ability to hire staff. General guidelines are provided. But beyond that, he has to sort out what will be best for his own constituents and for his own needs in working for them. He has to take responsibility of establishing offices, staffing and equipping them, and making them run efficiently. In Prince Edward Island, the MLA normally does not have a constituency office, as such, or a personal staff. The training sessions were valuable to me in that they gave me an idea of what support services there were — through the whip's office and so on — and how I might utilize them. The legislative processes are quite similar, so I was less in need of special training in that area.

In terms of legislative procedure, do you find that Parliament functions smoothly? Can you suggest any desirable reforms?

Mr. Garneau: I have seen a great many changes in legislative procedure, and, although I am far from being an expert on procedural reform, it seems to me that the essential thing is that there be good will in the Chamber. Otherwise, whatever the reforms, they will come to naught. There is, however, one thing that has struck me as being somewhat inconvenient. That is the fact that the house sits from 11 a.m. till 6 p.m. It gives one very little time to prepare or consult. One may have only a week to study a fairly complex bill. It may be necessary to consult a number of people. There are only two working hours available — from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Or one can have an evening meeting — but committees often occupy one until after six. You have to eat at some point, and there is always reading to be done in the evening. When I was in provincial politics, the Assembly sat at 3 o'clock and went on into the evening. We had the whole forenoon to prepare and to meet with interested groups.

But obviously, evening sittings have their disadvantages too. Many people say that nothing gets accomplished. I am reserving judgement for the present.

Mr. Cassidy: The decision not to sit nights is positive, though there is no easy answer. Evening sittings are an archaic tradition, and I thought it ludicrous in Ontario to sit from 8 to 10:30 two evenings a week. We should perhaps start our days earlier, at 7:30 or 8 a.m. That is happening more and more in

the Prime Minister's Office, and also in Washington.

In general, our political institutions are immensely flexible and powerful. Their effectiveness is limited chiefly by two factors: the ability of the people who are running the institutions; and our political culture. There is a substantial lack of harmony within the country that imposes constraints. Canada is a far more difficult country to govern than it was a few years ago. We face the dilemmas that afflict all western countries, plus the added baggage of federalism.



Michael Cassidy, MP

Some reforms are necessary. A way has to be found to ensure a more adequate flow of information, to enhance the ability of Parliament and the legislatures to grasp some of the issues emerging is essential.

There is no doubt that Question Period in the House of Commons is much better than in the Ontario legislature. I think the major reason is the tradition that the Speaker be quite firm in directing the use of time. The consequence is that even though Question Period is only 45 minutes, we on our side are getting about six rounds of questions a day. In the Ontario legislature,

where Question Period lasted an hour, we would get at best only four or five. Each series would, of course, tend to be longer. The federal Question Period, however, is crisper. It gets more attention. Because the press follows it more closely, there is more rapid interplay between parliamentarians, and the press. In Queen's Park, the press tends to be awfully comfortable with the government in power.

The presence of television is another difference. Queen's Park is televised only to the extent that newsmen are allowed to bring video cameras into the press gallery. The

angles and lighting are bad, and the tendency is to take only short clips. I was on the committee that successfully recommended the introduction of television into the Ontario legislature. We recommended authorizing videocameras in the gallery on the grounds that it was an inexpensive foot in the door. Unfortunately, the process stopped there. I think it is a lot healthier to have Question Period and the rest of the debate televised. To judge by the reaction of my constituents and others, a large number of people form their opinion about what's going on from the televised proceedings. I am strongly in favour, in this Parliament, of introducing

television to committees. That is an idea whose time has come.

Procedurally, one of the differences between the House of Commons and Queen's Park is the fact that, in the Ontario legislature, ministers are allowed to make statements *ad nauseam* with no right of reply from opposition critics and spokespeople. These statements can last up to an hour, and so Question Period can often drag on until 4 o'clock. By then, newsmen have left and whoever gets up may be speaking to the wind. In the House of Commons, such statements are rare, in part because spokespersons have the right of reply. Instead, the first few minutes are used for members to make statements on matters of public concern, and that process of ventilation, I think, has been very valuable.

If the reforms brought in by the special committee a year or so ago are confirmed, we will certainly be well ahead of where we were in the Ontario legislature.

Do the structure and functions of committees differ at all from what you were familiar with at the provincial level?

Mr. Garneau: Yes. In general legislative procedure at the two levels is so similar as to be virtually identical, but the most marked difference is in the functioning of committees. When I was active in provincial politics, a minister who sponsored a bill would be present, after the bill was referred to committee, at all the meetings, and defend it step by step from A to Z. In Parliament, now, the minister is not necessarily present while a committee reviews his bill. He will come and testify; he will answer questions; but the review is carried on principally by the other members of the committee and ministry officials. To give you an example, I am a member of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. The Minister of Finance rarely appears at its hearings. The committee itself hears testimony, and the minister comes only when the committee invites him to appear. I find this procedure very interesting. It has the disadvantage of tending to undermine direct ministerial responsibility, but it is probably the only possible way to operate in a country as vast as ours, where regional problems can often call the minister away from the capital. The overwhelming advantage is that it gives more responsibility and more scope for positive action to the private members on the government side.

It is probably also true that officials of the public service hold greater sway in Ottawa than in Quebec for that reason. I have no quarrel with the fact: the scope of the minister's responsibilities and the size of the country make it necessary to delegate and the minister cannot possibly have a thorough knowledge of everything that comes under his authority. He has to be able to trust the competence of his officials, especially in matters of administration. (Certainly, during the six years I was Finance Minister in Quebec, I was at various times both praised and blamed for things about which I had not the slightest knowledge!)

Mr. Binns: I have been struck by the great degree of specialization and the consequent structural formality in the federal government. Because of the nature of Prince Edward Island, all MLAs have to be well informed about all government programs and services, both federally and provincially. The island has a very diversified economy and you are dealing on a day to day basis with farmers, fishermen, small businessmen, municipal organizations and community groups.

In Ottawa, I am a member of the standing committees on fisheries and agriculture, and those two areas alone occupy a great deal of my time.

The committees seem very workable. I have not found them unwieldy to date. It is quite possible for a private member to express views and concerns to a minister and to department officials. One weakness of committees is that their powers are limited and they can generally only recommend, but I accept that as part of our system. Persuasive argument often leads to changes in any event.

I welcome the fact that the government has established a committee to look at procedural reform. It is a difficult area. I appreciate that a cabinet has basically to set the pace for the House, and that the private member's role flows from that. The challenge is to make the private member's role more meaningful. One thing that could make a tremendous difference would be giving committees more responsibility in terms of administering finances. But I am of two minds about making such a radical alteration to a system that has, on the whole, worked reasonably well in the past.

Do members sufficiently understand and respect the rules of the House and make use of them?

Mr. Cassidy: My experience is that the rules are complex, that most of them you never need to know, and that therefore, quite properly, parties have tended to have one or two members who specialize in becoming experts on the rules and that other members have obtained a general understanding of them without knowing all the specific details. Although I have always been aware of parliamentary rules, what I have learned about them has often resulted from doing the wrong thing and being chided for it.

Is the caucus organized differently in Ottawa?

Mr. Garneau: Number is the great factor in caucus organization. After the 1973 election in Quebec, we had a majority Liberal government with 102 members. That posed a number of problems in party organization and coordination. With 211 members, as the Conservatives have at present, it becomes devilishly complicated. You practically need an amphitheatre just to have a meeting. On the Liberal side, we have something over 120 caucus members, including our Senators.

The result is that, at the federal level, the regional caucuses become very important. It is not solely the effect of numbers, of course; the strong regional caucuses are also a way of dealing with the significant regional differences across the country. The provinces, individually, are far more homogeneous.

The substantive differences in the matters that come under discussion at federal and provincial caucus meetings is the third factor that creates a very different tone. There are numerous policies, particularly in international relations, that transcend party differences.

Mr. Binns: We have here both provincial and regional caucuses that meet regularly. The regional caucus is a very useful institution, it promotes a sense of fraternity among members from the same area of the country and gives us a chance to discuss areas of policy that may not come up in our other work — on standing committees for instance.

Mr. Cassidy: Our party in caucus was rejuvenated in the last election, but we have so much to do, one hardly knows where to begin. We sit on a basis of parity with the Liberals in major committees and ask questions in the House on almost a basis of

parity, so we have almost half of the opposition debating time. It gives us a tremendous opportunity to develop themes but requires great effort and participation from each individual member.

This workload had, in the early months, the effect of limiting casual social contacts with other caucus members. Now I have a bit more time for NDP get together. There is a very strong bond among the 23 members who were here under seriously adverse conditions in the last Parliament. It will take a bit of time before all the new members are completely integrated.

The real issue in the organization of caucus is that of the resources available to opposition parties to do their job. A member has three or four staff at most, and that is an insufficient level of support to carry on the duties of opposition.

It is also important to recognize the importance of travel. Government members and especially ministers can travel much more freely than opposition members. An opposition member is always trying to make one short trip serve a dozen purposes. His travel might be more usefully done if he were free to concentrate in each trip on the subject of principal interest.

Is there a significant amount of contact between members across party lines?

Mr. Cassidy: At Queen's Park, most of the members of caucus — Conservatives, Liberals or NDP — had offices in the same general area. Here in Parliament, members are scattered: there are three or four PCs a couple of Liberals and a couple of NDPs in every corridor. That leads to more contact across party lines — which is a healthy thing for the institution.

Mr. Binns: Two factors besides party influence one's contacts. Members from the same region tend to have common interests, despite differences in points of view. Relationships also build up around the fields you are working in — for example, the standing committees. But because of the very large

Conservative majority in this parliament, I tend to associate mainly with other Conservatives.

Is there too much mobility in Parliament? Would it be better for the institution if more people were to make politics a lifelong career?

Mr. Garneau: This Parliament, obviously, is an extreme case. Most of the members on the Liberal side, however, have considerable experience. Some have been there 15 or 20 years. One cannot object if the electorate decides to make a sweeping change. That is its privilege in a democracy. The American system of rotating elections for the Senate leads to more continuity, but it is difficult to see how that could be adapted to our parliamentary system. In Europe you have politicians who are embedded in public life like flowers in a carpet, but I am not sure that that is a good thing, either. I think it is a very good idea for politicians to move in and out of public life and gain experience in different sectors. I think I am a better member today for my experience of the last five years.

Mr. Cassidy: I think it's healthy to move in and out. There is no question that someone with a dozen or so years' experience in a legislature has a great deal to contribute in public — or indeed in private — life. But every institution needs continuous renewal. If the parliamentary system has a relatively regular ebb and flow in terms of changes in position and retirement you will achieve some of that. For the most part, the good members will survive — although it is regrettable that some of the best and brightest inevitably will be competing against each other in the same riding, and some will necessarily be bumped out. But a system that was totally stable would be not only boring, but less effective than what we have now.

How important is it to have experience at both the provincial and the federal level?

Mr. Cassidy: It is hard to say. I found my municipal experience was helpful to me when I became a provincial politician. The

reason was that municipal politics is not, as a rule, adversarial. I could go to other people and get support without having to worry about party lines. I learned a great deal about building consensus. Similarly, many of the things I did provincially have enabled me to adjust fairly rapidly to the work here. But I do not think experience at two levels is necessary. It is nice to have some people who know provincial politics at first hand. If there were none, it would make Parliament less effective in terms of understanding what is going on in the country.

Mr. Binns: Traditionally in Prince Edward Island there has been a lot of movement back and forth between the provincial and federal arenas. There are no set patterns or hard and fast rules about it. Whether a member moves from one level to another depends on times and circumstances. I think it has been valuable for me personally to have the twofold point of view — although the fact that I grew up in Saskatchewan has also contributed to my sense of regional differences and regional similarities. The Atlantic region and the prairies have a lot in common. Part of the challenge Canada faces is ensuring that the various regions share equally in the benefits of belonging to Canada.

Mr. Garneau: What I think is important, is to have the experience of administering something and experience in public debate. But this can be obtained in many ways — as a member or minister of a provincial legislature, in municipal politics, in chambers of commerce, in women's clubs, in teaching, in parish organizations, in sport, in recreation and so on. A politician has to learn to recognize what is going on around him and to reflect it within the confines of the House of Commons or the Legislative Assembly. If a person has never administered anything, has never had to give an account of his thoughts or his actions, then certainly he is ill prepared to be a Member of Parliament. Experience comes, in large part, with age. There is without doubt a place for youth in Parliament, but there must also be a component of experience, and that is what makes a society civilized, responsible and wise.