

*The Address—Mr. MacRae*

The first is the item concerning election campaign spending. While I wish the government well in this matter, I cannot see much hope for success here as things now stand. It is possible to set a limit, for example, on the amount a candidate or a party can spend on advertising or on the hiring of buildings for public meetings and so on, but it seems to me that the only reasonable way, and perhaps one of the better ways, to limit expenditures on election campaigns is to limit the time during which those campaigns are held. Eight weeks is far too long for an election campaign. It is too long a grind for the leaders of our parties. It is too long a grind for the prime minister and the members of his government, who must perforce neglect their duties. It is too hard and too long a grind for the candidates and, above all, it is too long and too hard a grind for the voters, many of whom are sick and tired of the whole thing by the time the shouting is over.

After all, the issues should and can be presented within two or three weeks, yes, less than that in these days when practically every family in Canada owns or has access to television, radio and newspapers. I suggest that an eight week campaign is now an inexcusable waste of public time and public money. I suggest that a commission be established to work on this problem with a view to setting a sensible limit in this regard. Once this is done, campaign spending will of necessity be cut to correspond.

The only other new proposal in the throne speech was that there should be a retirement age for senators. It is generally presumed that this will be set at 75 years. This is, of course, a step on the way to Senate reform but, Mr. Speaker, it falls far short of what needs to be done. At this point I want to make it clear that what I am about to say in the next few minutes bears no personal reflection on any member of that house; not at all. But I cannot see that the Senate is fulfilling any useful purpose today. Occasionally it is given an important task to do such as the Senate committee on manpower and employment a few years ago. That was a job that, as we all know, was done exceptionally well. But the Senate is not now being given enough worthwhile work to do. It seems to me it has become a rubber stamp for the House of Commons, which was never the intention in the beginning.

I suggest that what we really need in this country is an elected senate, and in this regard we might profitably borrow from the procedures in the United States. I do not see any merit in the proposal for a retirement age because, after all, one man can be in perfect physical and mental condition at 85 while another man may be senile at 65. To

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suggest that a senator is capable of fulfilling his office when he is 74 years and 364 days old and is incapable when he is 75 years and one day old seems to me nothing short of absurdity. I suggest to the government that if they want to do anything really constructive in this field they will have to go a great deal farther than simply setting an arbitrary age for retirement.

No mention was made in the throne speech of a Canadian flag. The Prime Minister and his colleagues said in the last election campaign that they would settle this entire question within two years of taking office. In fairness, Mr. Speaker, there are still 14 months to go, of course; but I feel and I think most Canadians feel that the government should be getting on with it. All of us are besieged with suggested designs for a Canadian flag. Some are attractive, some are ridiculous and all, of course, are unnecessary. I and many millions of other Canadians have not changed our minds.

We feel that the flag we were proud to fight under in two world wars, the flag which is now flown at the masthead on all our public buildings both here and abroad, the flag which is now recognized all over the world as Canada's flag, the red ensign, should once and for all be declared to be the official flag of Canada.

No mention was made in the throne speech, Mr. Speaker, that an Indian claims commission would be set up. Some of us tend to adopt a holier than thou attitude about racial problems in the United States, especially in the south, and they are great problems indeed. However, we tend to forget the conditions under which so many Canadian Indians are existing. We have here a perfect example of defeatist paternalism carried to its ultimate. We have to take more enlightened action than ever before in regard to our Indians, and it is disappointing that this measure, which was very strongly advocated by the previous Conservative administration, is evidently to be disregarded.

There are a number of other items in the throne speech, as well as a number of items which have been omitted from it, with which I should like to deal. However, I shall reserve my right to speak on them until they are brought before the house as the session proceeds.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I should like to say this. In the months ahead this house will have to deal with many vexing problems, both internal and external. If we are to deal with them with any measure of success it will require the wisdom and energy, the co-operation and attention, of every member of this house without regard to political party. In our system of government the