

small number of Government supporters in this house, and, conversely, the relatively small number of supporters of the Opposition in the other house. Fortunately for us here, in the words of the late Senator Dandurand:

We stand above the sharp divisions of party that exist in the other chamber, . . .

I am sure honourable senators will agree with me that we should not allow narrow party prejudice and political advantage to be the overriding consideration in our attitude toward legislation which comes to us.

The Government, we must admit, is faced with many difficult problems, not only at home but also abroad. Every day we hear of wars and rumours of wars. Indeed, it would appear that we are living on the edge of a smoldering volcano. In view of the tension in international affairs and the serious problems at home, I do not deem it to be my place as Leader of the Opposition in the Senate to indulge in recrimination and narrow, bitter partisan criticism of what the Government has done or proposes to do as outlined in the Speech from the Throne.

The former administration was in office for 22 years. It went through many crises, and faced up to great and important issues. No one can deny that it administered the affairs of the country efficiently and with an integrity which has never been questioned. It gave outstanding leadership both at home and abroad. Canada underwent a development unprecedented in its history, and when the time came for a change of Government the administration which had been in power for 22 years turned over to the new administration a country whose economy was sound, a country of untold natural resources, a peace loving and industrious people living in economic conditions which were the envy of the whole world.

We on this side of the house are just as anxious to maintain that high standard as is the Government itself, and so far as I am concerned we will support all legislation which has that end in view. In saying that, I do not want the Leader of the Government (Hon. Mr. Aseltine) to be under the misapprehension that we will blindly support any and all Government legislation. Having in mind, not political advantage but rather the well-being of our fellow Canadians, I feel I can say, that we of the Opposition will examine thoroughly, even critically, all legislation which comes to this house. In fact, in view of the unprecedented and overwhelming number of Government supporters in the House of Commons, and of the small number

sitting in the Opposition in that house, I feel that our responsibility in the Senate is greater today than it ever has been.

Honourable senators, we must realize that as a result of the last election there is only one member of the official Opposition in the other house who sits for a constituency west of the western boundary of the province of Ontario. In fact, there are only six members sitting in opposition—five members of the C.C.F. party and one Liberal—who represent that part of Canada west of Ontario. Two western provinces, Manitoba and Alberta, have no representation whatsoever in the Opposition. Likewise, from two eastern provinces, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, there is not a single member sitting in the Opposition. So, honourable senators, a very large number of people who think as the Opposition think—and we know how many million people from all parts of Canada voted for the Opposition—cannot make their voice heard in the other place. I feel it is our duty to have their voice heard, not in any narrow partisan way, in this house. That imposes a very great responsibility upon us.

We must be given the opportunity to discuss legislation fully and freely in this chamber and to have it examined minutely in committee. We should not hesitate, when we think it is in the public interest to do so, to amend it and to return it to the Commons for its further consideration. It may happen that this house will think it is in the interest of the country to reject and to defeat completely legislation when it comes to this house. In that respect I might state that I have not changed from the stand which I took last year when the present Government took office. Since then it has been re-elected, this time by an overwhelming and unprecedented popular vote. It has received a general mandate to administer the affairs of the country for the next five years and has received a specific mandate in certain matters. Where it is clear that the Government has received a popular mandate and where there are not the most compelling reasons for believing that the issue should be referred once again to the electorate, I do not think the Senate will resist the adoption of any such Government legislation. This is the attitude which the Senate has traditionally supported over the years.

Last fall when I spoke on the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, shortly after the present Government took office, I went into this matter quite fully. I stand four-square by what I said then. I will not weary you by reading long excerpts from my speech, but to clarify my position and to leave no doubt as to my views I crave the indulgence of the house while I quote briefly