

admiration and when I extend to him our best wishes. May he pursue for a long time the brilliant career which has had such a good beginning.

All of us senators, I think, should feel grateful for the choice of such a worthy person, who presided over our sittings with a personal charm and a dignity that never ceased to enhance the quality of our debates.

With the first session of the Twenty-eighth Parliament, there came a new Leader of the Government in the Senate, the Honourable Paul Martin. The Senate was glad to welcome, as the Leader of the Government, a most experienced politician who is also a world-famous statesman. We extend to him our congratulations for his important contribution to the Senate and our best wishes so that he will pursue here, for a long time, a brilliant and fruitful career.

I add on behalf of all honourable senators, that we appreciated the intelligent participation, the unfailing courteousness and the understanding of the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, the honourable Senator Jacques Flynn and of his assistant, the honourable Senator Lionel Choquette.

Honourable senators, I will make a digression here to express our sorrow at the passing, during the last session, of excellent fellow-workers and colleagues, the lamented Senators Édouard Joseph Thériault, who died on December 20, 1968, Clement Augustine O'Leary, whose death occurred on June 12, 1969 and Gunnar S. Thorvaldson, who died on August 2, 1969. A sincere tribute has already been paid to them in a magnificent way in the Senate. I merely wish to stress here their worthy contribution to Canada and to the Senate. We greatly deplore their absence here today.

We also regret honourable Senator Sydney J. Smith's resignation, tendered on December 31, 1968, following a fruitful career as Speaker of the Senate; that of honourable Senator Cyrille Vaillancourt, on January 3, 1969, whose absence we deeply regret, as we do the resignation of Honourable Arthur L. Beaubien, Liberal Whip in the Senate, who always enjoyed the respect and consideration of senators on both sides of this house, and the departure, on January 5, 1969, of our congenial colleague Senator Norman A. MacKenzie. We have a very pleasant memory of them and our wishes for a long and fruitful life accompany them.

Lastly, I wish to thank the Leader of the Government for the confidence and consideration he has shown me by inviting me to move

[Hon. Mr. Desruisseaux.]

the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

We are now in the 103rd year of our Confederation. We are going towards our second centennial, in the light of the numerous observations, recommendations and suggestions that were made. We thus satisfy in a way the wishes expressed by a great number of Canadians. During the first session of the Twenty-eighth Parliament, in 1968 and 1969, the Senate was somewhat modernized and revitalized. The Senate took over many duties and, in addition to becoming even more efficient, it spared the taxpayers huge amounts of money in taxes.

For the current session, the Senate has provided for 18 active committees, membership of which is shared among the 90 senators who sit here. In addition, the role of each of those committees has become more important than at any time in the past. Their recommendations, their assessments of other recommendations have been, are and will be invaluable to parliament and could not easily be replaced.

Since my arrival here in July 1966, I have witnessed great functional changes in the Senate. The Senate is leading the way much more than before. We also note that during the session which has just come to a close, 40 bills were initiated here and 44 bills which came to us from the House of Commons were passed. However, I feel that discretion will have to be used so that this house does not become swamped with matters of little importance or which will inevitably have to be dealt with hastily. The serenity of the Senate must be preserved for more complex problems, for more important decisions, and assessments of great bearing and consequence.

Although I like to follow current developments in the political history of the countries of the world, I have been unable to discover in the other senates as many and as frequent examples of functional changes brought about merely by means of an evolving process, without resorting to any change in constitution. We have now right here something which is unique and constructive. It provides the Canadian people with every assurance that their rights, whether they be individual, collective or minority rights, will be protected, with a double safeguard for the fairness and equity of legislative and social measures, the tool to maintain some kind of parliamentary stability in spite of the minority governments they sometimes elect and which tend to multiply during certain periods.