

Honourable senators, I do not like to say this but I think it is true. I think our public men at the present time have become so obsessed with international affairs, so obsessed with the clichés, the cliché-ridden claims and statements about an affluent society, about what they call the Gross National Product, and so bemused by strutting the international stage, that they are forgetting why they were elected to office. They were elected to office to govern in Canada and not to try to set in order the whole house of the world.

I submit to honourable senators that we in Canada shall make small contribution towards setting the world's house in order unless we can first show capacity to set in order our own, and the events of this week have shown that in this, the Government has failed, and failed in a most melancholy way.

Of course I am supporting this bill. I am going to vote for this bill regardless, but I think that the public must not be permitted to forget what it was in the first place that brought this crisis about. This is the main thing. If we are not going to learn a lesson from what happened in Canada this week, with its peril and its threat of greater peril, then we are not going to learn anything at all.

I am sure that tomorrow or next week the railway unions will return to work, and for that we should all be grateful; but let the gratitude be for the common sense of the Canadian people, for the common sense of the railway unions, and not for the wisdom or the statesmanship of the Government of Canada at this time. This is not the last crisis we shall face. If the present Government of Canada continues—which God forbid—then other crises will follow, and they will not be solved permanently or well by the people who have brought about this present one.

Hon. Arthur W. Roebuck: Honourable senators, I congratulate the honourable speaker who has just sat down for the skill and beauty of language with which he carried out his original principle, which he quoted in favour of rancour and—the word escapes me.

Hon. Mr. Choquette: Say it in French.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck:—and acerbity of political discussion. Certainly, his rancour and acerbity were surely up to his own desire, and I may say that I have no intention of replying in kind.

Hon. Mr. Choquette: You did not say “absurdity”—you said “acerbity”?

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: Yes, acerbity—acidity of meaning.

Were I to indulge in an attack which I could make on the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons to match my honourable friend's attack upon the Prime Minister, I submit to you it would be entirely out of place at this moment in this chamber. When the Deputy to His Excellency the Governor General is outside the door waiting to assent to this bill, when the leaders of the labour unions are ready to telegraph the instructions we are giving in this bill to their men to return to work, and when the business interests of Canada are waiting anxiously for the wheels of thousands of cars to start turning, it would be entirely out of place.

Hon. Mr. Walker: Let us not keep them waiting too long.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: No, let us not keep them waiting too long. My speech will be a short one—much shorter than that of the honourable gentleman who suggested that my speech should be short.

Hon. Mr. Walker: Mine took about eight minutes. You have taken five minutes already.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: I have not yet taken up more than one minute. At all events, I am not going to compete with the honourable gentleman in the length of my speech.

I have certain things to say, but I do not propose to go through this bill in detail after listening to the eloquent and excellent speeches made by my colleagues, the honourable Leader of the Government, Senator Connolly (Ottawa West), and my honourable friend, Senator Croll. It is unnecessary to do so, but I do think it will serve some purpose if I make some short comments which I hope will be listened to by my friends in the labour unions outside this house.

I am not in favour of everything in this bill. I think that the men have been underpaid for a long time. Were I drawing this bill, I would draw it differently from the way in which the Government has drawn it, and I suppose every other honourable senator would say the same. I would have granted the men very nearly all that they asked, because even at that it would have only brought their wages up to a fair comparison