

on Parliament Hill. During those years, I have not lost touch with him. I watched him carefully; he is a great Scot and a great scholar and I will be expecting great things of him. At his best, he was one of the greatest debaters in the House of Commons. It took much to arouse him at certain times but, once engaged, he was formidable and I regard him so highly that, when I talk about him, as I will, I intend to gloss right over the period when he was the Minister of Finance. That was not his best period, if I may say so.

I admire our new Leader of the Opposition here in the Senate for many things. I have mentioned his eloquence; I have mentioned his sense of history, but he has shown in recent months a sense of survival even sharper than that of the party which he served for so long. That is very important. We need people like that in the Senate and I hope that he will give us his best or his near best from time to time, although he knows, as a student of poetry, that his eloquent best will likely be wasted in the desert air and certainly not reported by the media. However, those of us who are here will appreciate it and there may be some people out there who will read the *Debates of the Senate* and know that, here, a man has spoken and spoken well.

I do not think that Senator MacEachen will exert his every muscle to support Senator Roblin and company in their duties in carrying out the legislative program of the new and vigorous government. He will not guarantee smoothness and harmony, but I count on him, on the other hand, not to confuse the mathematical strength which he has here with any tendency to assert the full legal and constitutional powers which the Senate still has. In these interesting times, with an overwhelming predominance in one house and the positions reversed in the other—a situation which has not been so extreme, I think, since Confederation—it is important that we have a man of his wisdom and experience. I mention this not only because of my love of the new government, which I wish well, but more because I have long believed that this chamber, perhaps altered in some ways, is an integral and valuable part of our Canadian structure. In these tense and delicate times, I believe that there is an enormous responsibility on the Senate, as a non-elected body, not to be seen as being insensitive, or attempting to frustrate the actions of the place in which the people have put their confidence. I therefore do not think that Senator MacEachen will be a party to any action which, in the long run, might end up bringing a very heavy public assault upon the Senate itself. In other words, I know he will not become a Samson pulling down the temple while he and I are both in it.

Honourable senators, in my careful preparation for this speech I went back over the years to see what other senators had said to their colleagues in other times of dramatic political change. As always, when you read, you learn a great deal. Some things I would like to emulate; some things I cannot or would not try.

In 1930, Senator Bell of Nova Scotia made an interesting speech but a very poor prediction. He said that Canada could escape from the depression which then threatened other parts

[Senator Macquarrie.]

of the world. To say that, in the fall of 1930, indicated that your crystal ball was not very clear.

Going back a little earlier, to a time before I and almost everybody in this chamber was born, in 1911 the Borden government took over and Senator Taylor said something which I would love to be able to say. A change of government had taken place; Mr. Borden and his government had been installed, and Senator Taylor addressed his colleagues and said, "Our treasury is overflowing." How wonderful it would be to be able to say that.

Senator Perrault: That must have been the party treasury.

Senator Macquarrie: Believe it or not, he said this:

The difficulty will be, honourable senators, to know how to dispose of the surplus. No matter how great the expenditures the country may be disposed to make, the government will have ample funds to meet them.

If we only lived in a situation such as that, the Minister of Finance could go to Toronto on Thursday night instead of staying to tell the people of Canada what is what. Those were happy days, and it would seem that the great Sir Wilfrid Laurier was a far better and more prudent administrator than most of his successors.

● (1510)

But what the Throne Speech said at that time is important and significantly germane to the present day. The government announced an aid to highways bill. Up to that time, the federal government was responsible for the railways, with the provincial and municipal governments being responsible for the highways. The Borden government had decided that Canada had reached the age when it was important to find a means by which to move primarily agricultural goods to the railheads. As a result of that, an offer was made by the federal government—they called it the Dominion government then, and they were right, by the way—that it would pay half of those costs and the provinces would pay the other half.

Throughout the sittings of that Parliament, which began in the fall of 1911, the Senate, with a Liberal majority, kept introducing amendments to the bill which had been defeated in the House of Commons. The Senate, in effect, eliminated that aid to the provinces.

It was not until 1957 and 1958, under the aegis of Alvin Hamilton, that that measure was recovered. I know, and I am sure that Senator Bonnell knows, that in Prince Edward Island that resulted in one of the greatest boons that we ever had, because during those intervening years the Conservatives had become brighter—there is always hope for us—and instead of putting it on a population basis, the Diefenbaker Conservatives said that they would give the same to each province, irrespective of size. So, little Prince Edward Island received \$7.5 million, as did Ontario. We thought that that was great. I do not know what Ontario thought, but we in P.E.I. were thinking of ourselves in this connection. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were happy with that too. I remember Senator Muir dancing in the streets when that went through.