

we are prepared to advance public money in order to enable private industry to locate somewhere else, should we not start, first of all, by having a good look at the Government's own operations, to see what sensible decentralization can be proceeded with?

What about our Crown corporations? Should not their activities as well, from the economic standpoint, be reviewed by an overall government body? So I would propose that at the same time as we urge private industry to decentralize, that there also be an in-depth study of what government operations can be decentralized.

Preposterous as it may sound, it may be that we should even consider the decentralization of some of our legislative operations. It may be that we should consider moving some of our legislative activities, be it the House of Commons or the Senate.

An Hon. Senator: When do we go?

Hon. Mr. Molgat: There may be some sound reasons for holding sessions of our Houses in other parts of Canada, not just as a show but really as a part of tying in the whole of the country. I have spoken out about other means of giving more participation to western Canada, and the fact that I have now become a member of this chamber does not change my view in that regard. I think the Senate could become an important instrument of regional representation.

I do not recommend offhand that the American system be simply applied to Canada; but I think that there is a great advantage in the American system. When I see the State of North Dakota, immediately to the south of my province, with a population less than that of Manitoba, but with two senators from that state having an equal voice to that of the two senators from New York or the two senators from California, I cannot but say to myself that this is certainly a method of giving regional representation. I think we should look at this avenue.

On the immediate scene I believe that the Senate has undertaken new roles in past years, roles which previously were mainly played by royal commissions, that is, studies in committees. In this respect the Senate might well consider a committee to study the economic structure of Canada. I suppose, many people in central Canada could say, "You western Canadians are constantly complaining, but you have nothing to complain about." Well, that may be true, but if we do not, then somebody ought to tell us. Somebody ought to have the facts and figures, and if they are right, then I think it would be an advantage in any case, because it would stop any grumbling that might occur. I suspect that we in Manitoba are right, but, be that as it may, I believe that the Senate could well undertake a study of this problem.

Honourable senators, I do not pretend to know all the answers. I know the concern in Manitoba; I know the need; I am convinced that the Senate could play a most useful role in this area.

We in Manitoba do not want handouts. We simply ask for what the Throne Speech speaks about: equality of opportunity.

[Hon. Mr. Molgat.]

[*Translation*]

Honourable Louis de Gonzague Giguère: Honourable senators, this is my first opportunity, in the house, to express my gratefulness to the Speaker and to the Government Leader for the very able way in which they have conducted the proceedings in this house. Of course, they get good support from the Leader of the Opposition who always co-operates sincerely and ably. I wish to thank my leader for having entrusted me with the seconding of the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

After the excellent and complete speech of the mover, honourable Senator Molgat, to whom I wish a long and successful career in the Senate, I should refrain from commenting. However, I would like to review briefly certain aspects of the speech made by His Excellency the Governor General.

In the last two years, the Government has presented to Parliament and to the Canadian people an impressive number of reforms and bills. Four main fields were in the focus of the Government's consideration and cover its over-all operations since 1968, in spite of the large number and the variety of the measures adopted: a more just society, a more united country, a prosperous economy, a more effective foreign policy.

The building up, through continuous effort, of a just society: that is the underlying theme of the Speech from the Throne, that is the deep aspiration of the Government of our country. But what is needed for a society to be just. When we speak of this constant striving towards a fair balance, of this constant concern for economic and social justice, what do we mean? Well in my opinion, honourable senators, we mean that a just society is not simply a society; the animal kingdom has several societies which have not changed since the beginning of time.

Is a just society one which is happy to be what it is and determined to keep at any cost the happiness acquired a long time ago and put then among its eternal possessions? Is it a society frozen in its structures, confined forever in its institutions and practices? Or, on the contrary, is it a society open to the world, always alert to changes, sometimes superficial, sometimes deep, which contemporary science and technology bring in their fast course? Better still, is a just society one which puts man above everything, human capital above material wealth? Not that the latter is unimportant or harmful, quite the contrary, but because diverted from its instrumental function, refusing to serve man's dignity and happiness, it would fall to the lowest level of our scale of values.

And that, honourable senators, is what the Speech from the Throne means by a just society. Needless to say, therefore, in the minds of our Government, there must be a continuous but rational evolution of the laws that govern us, because these laws are the mirror of the society in which we live and want to go on living.

As societies become more complex, better organized, the gap between the rich citizens and the destitute ones widens visibly. A few reports on poverty will have been enough—the one from the Economic Council of Canada, in particular the very serious study undertaken by the