

Senator MacEachen: That is not right.

Senator Barootes: I know that I express the goodwill and respectful regard of all honourable senators, and wish him well in his new duties.

Senator MacEachen: The house always elected speakers.

Senator Barootes: Perhaps you will allow me also to express my personal respect and admiration for the Honourable John Bosley for the dignity, integrity and honest care which he brought to that office. May I also add that I interpret my selection as seconder of the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne not only as recognition of my province but also as recognition of the 250,000 Canadians of Greek ethnic origin who now constitute 1 per cent of the population. It is a group to which I proudly belong.

In being chosen to second this motion, I felt a great deal of humility as I read the speeches and the names of those who had so eloquently addressed this senatorial chamber on previous occasions.

There are several changes in this house that are worthy of personal comment. First, I want to welcome in our midst Senator Atkins whose legendary skills and qualities need no elaboration from me, and I know all senators join me in looking forward to his participation in our deliberations.

Senator Frith: Yes, and he is now out exercising them at this very moment.

Senator Barootes: Second, I wish to salute our trusted and worthy new leader, Senator Lowell Murray, who by experience and character is well suited to the duties and responsibilities of his office. He has a proven record, and will serve Canada well as Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations. All senators, sir, applaud and congratulate you.

Senator Frith: We are withholding our applause until the end, as they say.

Senator Barootes: Third, if I may, I would like to express my enduring admiration and eternal gratitude to Senator Roblin whose stalwart leadership, impeccable credentials, unquestioned integrity and gracious manner taught me the traditions of this chamber. I thank him for the infinite patience and tolerance that he has shown to me in particular, but also to all of his colleagues in the Senate.

Finally, may I extend to Senator Neiman a warm and sincere welcome back to this chamber.

This debate offers us the opportunity to review the recent record of the government and of this Senate and to anticipate the future. Honourable senators, contrary to public reports, there are a number of efforts and initiatives from this last session of which this chamber may be properly proud. Members of this chamber have applied their considerable and wide experience in an assiduous and most diligent manner to ensure that legislation is carefully and microscopically analyzed with knowledgeable witnesses at the committee level. Care has also been taken to ensure that the basic thrust of government intent can be carefully defined and refined within those pieces of legislation.

Care has also been taken to ensure that legislation is such that the departments and agencies of government can execute and administer it without ambiguity or equivocation; that when there are amendments worthy of inclusion, they are considered and often included in the original tabled bills; that major, nation-wide problems are thoroughly studied by various committees and by knowledgeable and keenly interested senators with long-term experience in such matters.

On that work, this chamber is expert. It is a pity that the public, through the media, regard as of consequence only those formal sittings of this chamber which, in truth, constitute only a small segment of our work, and one that is actually a less time-consuming part of our duties.

It is most gratifying to hear from the many organizations and citizens who bring briefs and present viewpoints before our 18 standing committees and subcommittees as to how deeply they appreciate the obvious expertise, the piercing inquiry and the depth of knowledge of the members of the Senate committees who question them.

Lest the organs of news dissemination have overlooked some of the accomplishments and achievements of this Parliament, allow me to merely touch on a few in which this chamber, the other place and members of all parties may take credit, and Canadians take some comfort.

1. 600,000 new jobs have been created in less than two years. This, I believe, is more than in any comparable period in our history.

2. Unemployment, though still considerable and unacceptably high, particularly in some regions and in some economic sectors, has been reduced overall from 11.7 per cent in 1984 to 9.7 per cent in 1986. This drop exceeds the forecasts made by Brian Mulroney in his election campaign.

3. The prime lending rate has fallen from 13 per cent-plus to around 9.25 per cent, giving stimulus to the economy and helping to safeguard small and large borrowers from the fear of losing their businesses or their homes. Mortgage rates, in fact, are at less than half the peak they reached a few years ago.

4. Inflation rates have not quite been "wrestled to the ground," to requote a phrase. They have, however, dropped from highs in the 12 per cent bracket to around 4 per cent, thus saving this country from becoming a bankrupt Third-World economy.

Honourable senators, these are indisputable facts. The depressed economy of 1982-83, however caused, has been reversed and, despite pockets of economic stress, we are in an upturn of about two years' duration. Some critics may not wish to give credit to the administration or to this Parliament for the improvement. However, in that case they must not howl for the government's skin if an adverse reversal occurs. If Ottawa is blamed for recessions, is Ottawa then not equally entitled to take credit for the upturns?

I shall go on with the record. Wait for it.

5. The constantly-rising annual deficit, mounting each year from 1975 to 1984, has been reversed. The bright red ink—