

distinguished and respected gentlemen of the Supreme Court seriously declared with all solemnity, that a woman was not "a person" under the meaning of the Act—

Some Hon. Senators: Oh, oh.

Hon. Mr. MacLennan: Varmints.

Hon. Mrs. Fallis:—and therefore was not entitled to a seat in the Senate. That decision was handed down in all seriousness by men high in the esteem of this country. And we call ourselves a progressive nation! But five able and courageous women from the western prairies, led by Judge Emily Murphy, who up to this point had championed the admission of women to the Senate, were not to be daunted by anything so trifling as the decision by the Supreme Court. They carried their case to the Privy Council, and that body reversed the decision of the Supreme Court and declared a woman to be a "person" under the meaning of the Act. Consequently we were permitted to come in and take a place in the Red Chamber of Canada.

By the way, perhaps some of the new members have not noticed a bronze plaque bearing the names of those five women, which is on the west wall of the ante-chamber of the Senate. That plaque was placed there by the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women.

On the eve of making this momentous change and of placing all power in the hands of a Canadian court, I should like to remind my colleagues of something they already know. Sometimes, in order to get the proper perspective of a good painting or picture, one stands back at some distance so that the little details will not interfere with the beauty of the whole. I think it has been that situation with regard to many decisions of the Privy Council. The very fact that they were far removed from the scene of action where they were unhampered and untrammelled by petty arguments and petty influences which might intrude themselves upon the scene here, has enabled them at times to give better and more unbiased decisions than they could have given if they had been at closer range.

I am not intimating by these remarks that I directly oppose this legislation. When my leader (Hon. Mr. Haig) was speaking the other day, he gave one or two very good reasons why the change would be for the better. I can see something of value on both sides, but I definitely cannot see the argument advanced in another place by the Minister of Justice when he introduced the bill. He hung his whole case on the fact that this legislation needed to be passed at once in order to bolster our national pride. I do not like that. It smacks to me too much

of an inferiority complex, something with which I have never been afflicted. My national pride does not need any bolstering; I have plenty of it without any assistance from legislation of this kind. I do not like this type of argument. There were arguments put forward by the leader of this side of the house the other day which I think are quite valid. Nevertheless, I think it quite in order for me to bring to the attention of members of this chamber what the right of appeal to the Privy Council has meant to the women of Canada.

I sincerely hope that if and when the change takes place and the Supreme Court of Canada becomes the court of last resort in matters of appeals, the men who exercise the power of making the final decision may have a broader vision than some of their predecessors.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

On motion of Hon. Mr. Howard the debate was adjourned.

The Senate adjourned during pleasure.

The sitting was resumed.

APPROPRIATION BILL NO. 5

FIRST READING

A message was received from the House of Commons with Bill 11, an Act for granting to His Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of the financial year ending the 31st March, 1950.

The bill was read the first time.

SECOND READING

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this bill be read the second time?

Hon. Mr. Haig: Honourable members, I object to the bill being read a second time now, and I will state the reason for my objection. I was furnished this morning, as of right, with a copy of the detailed estimates. When we adjourned during pleasure I left these papers on my desk here, but now, on coming back, I find that my desk—and apparently every other desk in the chamber—has been cleared off. I have inquired where my papers are, and cannot find out. On them I had written some figures relating to questions that I wished to ask the acting leader of the government (Hon. Mr. Copp). Those figures in themselves are not important, but I do want the details of the estimates in front of me, and until I receive them I shall object to any further proceedings on the bill.

Hon. Mr. Copp: Honourable senators, I quite understand the point taken by my honourable friend. I do not know who was responsible for removing papers from his