

made public some day; when those recommendations are made public, it will be evident that at least some of them will necessitate amending the Constitution. That will undoubtedly entail laborious discussions with the provinces to obtain the consent of at least seven of them, along with the approbation of at least 50 per cent of the population. That may take quite some time.

[*Translation*]

This is why, honourable senators, I hope that the Senate will set up immediately a special committee responsible for the immediate implementation of the numerous reforms which the Senate can undertake without any constitutional amendment.

That would be a resounding affirmation of its commitment to reform and, perhaps also a way to restore the credibility it allegedly lost a long time ago.

Now, those internal reforms on which we could agree easily, I would hope, are so numerous and would have such consequences that we could wait for other changes in all equanimity. "I am worth what I want", wrote Valéry.

Along with Canadians of all ages, I am quite pleased that a Ministry of State for Youth will be set up. Hardly a year before the International Year of Youth, this concrete gesture will be an encouragement to our young Canadians, a great number of whom are unfortunately unemployed and even sometimes on the verge of despair.

At sixty, one sometimes dreams of being 20. Personally, I would not like at all to be twenty in 1983 and belong to a generation which seems to have been forsaken by all.

To be 20 years old today is to begin life with the ever present anguish of a nuclear conflict which would jeopardize the future of mankind itself.

To be 20 years old is to be the helpless witness of the wasting of natural resources, the destruction of the environment, the population boom in Third World countries where already a third of the people are literally starving to death.

To be 20 years old is to be constantly confronted with violence which erupts almost every day in some corner of the world, Lebanon, El Salvador, Grenada, Poland, Afghanistan, Northern Ireland.

However, if I were 20 years old today, all the calamities elsewhere in the world would not prevent me, like a great number of Canadians, from complaining about the so-called disastrous situation in Canada. Without any sense of shame, I would no doubt forget that our country is one of the wealthiest in the world. Not the wealthiest but one of the most flourishing among some 160 member countries of the United Nations. Canada is endowed with an abundance of natural resources, almost unlimited space, advanced technology and highly qualified manpower.

[*English*]

Instead of asking ourselves whether we have a right to all these advantages, we grumble; we grumble about our government at all levels; we grumble about our salaries—which are among the highest in the world; we grumble about the rate of

[Senator Hébert.]

inflation here—which is one of the lowest in the world. We complain about the recession—from which we are beginning to recover, although not without some difficulty. In Canada, the recession has meant that we have had to consume a little less, have a little less fun, and, in some cases, do with a little less. It is true that we have a seriously high number of unemployed, but at least we have unemployment insurance, welfare benefits and health insurance—advantages unheard of in most countries of the world.

In poorer countries, a recession causes many hundreds of thousands of men, women and children to die of hunger or of easily-cured diseases. There is, undeniably, a certain difference between our problems and theirs.

[*Translation*]

This being said, if I were 20 years old today, I would have to admit that this great country of ours, while rich and well developed, fails to provide employment to more than a million Canadians, half of them young people.

I do not pretend that unemployment is the sole cause for anxiety among today's youth; there are many other causes, as we have just seen. However, while it is a tragedy for any individual to be unable to find a job when one wants to work, it is a much more serious problem for a young person, who feels rejected, useless, unneeded, and this at the very time he or she tries to become integrated into society.

In these circumstances, it should not come as a surprise to us if, out of sheer frustration, a number of young people turn to delinquency or stupefying addiction to alcohol and drugs.

The new initiatives announced in the Throne Speech are cause for great hopes. We are delighted to hear the government announce that "a larger portion of the Government's job creation expenditures will be devoted to unemployed youth. Using re-allocated and new resources, a \$1 billion Youth Opportunity Fund will assist young Canadians in acquiring new skills and in finding jobs in the private, voluntary and public sectors".

[*English*]

I was very glad to see that the volunteer sector was given special mention. It is hard to see how even the total combined efforts of the federal and provincial governments together with the private sector could, in the short term, find jobs for the approximately 650,000 unemployed Canadians aged 15 to 24. Older or experienced workers are the first to be hired, while these young Canadians, either lacking experience or being qualified in areas no longer in demand, are the last to be hired. That is why it seems to me so important that the government enable young people who are interested—and there are thousands of them—to serve their community through non-governmental agencies that can use young volunteers. I am, perhaps, not in the best position to point to organizations such as Katamavik and Canada World Youth as examples, but there are others, and new ones will probably be set up to respond to the new realities.