

He is perfectly bilingual and the next time he has occasion to speak, we will no doubt hear him express himself just as eloquently in English.

(Text):

The honourable senator who seconded the motion (Hon. Mr. Thorvaldson) gave us a very interesting discourse, and his references to the island of Iceland were very informative. He told us how his people came from that island and settled in Canada. I was very delighted, as I am sure we all were, to learn that on their arrival here they named the place where they settled on Lake Winnipeg *Gimli*, which in English means Paradise or Haven of the Gods. He said they were happy to have come to Canada, and I was very pleased to hear him say "Canada has indeed been good to us." He also gave us very interesting references to the settlement of the province of Manitoba. He stated that at times westerners have been regarded as poor relations. Well, I wish to assure him that we easterners, notwithstanding what was said about us in the West, never did consider westerners poor relations. But what pleased me more than all was when he said that westerners are poor relations no longer.

The honourable senator referred to his father and another Icelander as having been members of the Legislature of Manitoba. It was once my pleasure, and that of a number of other senators seated here today, to sit in the House of Commons with one whose forebears were Icelanders—a man who has brought great distinction to himself and to his country, a Rhodes scholar, who became a member of the cabinet of the Dominion of Canada, and is still living today and is a friend of many of us—the President of the Exchequer Court of Canada, the Honourable Joseph Thorson.

Honourable senators, I come now to the Speech from the Throne itself. It gives us a forecast of certain legislation which the Government proposes to introduce, but of course, doesn't tell all. I ask myself how much of this legislation can be and will be introduced, in the first instance, in the Senate. It is often said that the business of Parliament could be accelerated if a larger percentage of public bills were introduced, in the first instance, in the Senate—that is, prior to their introduction in the House of Commons. There is, however, a very definite limitation to the number of such bills which can originate here. Section 53 of the British North America Act provides that:

Bills for appropriating any part of the public revenue, or for imposing any tax or impost, shall originate in the House of Commons.

That is, money bills must originate in the House of Commons.

From a perusal of the legislation forecast in the Speech from the Throne there appear to be few if any bills which will not require the expenditure of very large sums of public money. Accordingly, under section 53 of the British North America Act, practically none of the announced legislation can be initiated in this house. Speeches from the Throne at best give only an obscure picture of the contemplated legislation. There will, I am certain, be other legislation than that which has already been announced, and probably some of it will not come within the provisions of section 53 of the British North America Act. I would urge upon the Leader (Hon. Mr. Aseltine) that he do all in his power to have such legislation first introduced and discussed in the Senate. I know that is a difficult task, for I have sat in his position, as has also the honourable the senior senator from Winnipeg (Hon. Mr. Haig), and we realize that frequently a minister wants to introduce his own legislation in the other house. Any legislation that is initiated here will receive the most careful scrutiny, both in the house and in committee, and the leader can assure the Government that when it is presented to the Commons it will be in such form that much time of that house can be saved.

In connection with legislation which is introduced here, I would like to support the suggestion regarding the explaining of bills made on Friday last by the senior senator from Ottawa (Hon. Mr. Lambert). A number of senators have spoken to me about this and have asked me to support the proposal. Honourable senators who sometimes sit in the gallery of the House of Commons have observed that when a bill is introduced in that house some member invariably calls out "Explain!" The member introducing the bill, whether a minister or a private member, then makes a short statement about it; and thus from the very outset members of the house have some idea of the nature of the proposed legislation. I feel that before consenting to a bill going on the Order Paper in this house we should know something at least of its contents—and this applies not only to public bills, but also to private bills which honourable senators introduce from time to time. I think it would be worth while for us to adopt this practice, and I would ask the Leader of the Government to give some consideration to the proposal.

Honourable senators, may I now turn to consideration of the attitude which I think the Opposition in the Senate should take toward Government legislation. This is of special importance in view of the relatively