

Mr. Fleming is the ex-P.R. Flack for this administration, he speaks with a certain authority.

Senator Frith: It takes one to know one.

Senator Roblin: My honourable friend may be speaking for himself, but he is not speaking for me. I repeat, a combination of cynicism, ballyhoo and manipulation. That is the charge. I have never used such harsh words. Perhaps I might have wished to, but I have never done so. They seem appropriate today, however. Are they sour grapes? They may be, but that does not make them untrue.

Fortunately, we are witnessing the last days of this administration. It is an administration whose credibility is forfeit, whose performance is lacking, whose fund of progressive ideas to inspire Canadians to put their country back into that state of competence and good heart which used to be its birthright is limited; an administration which seems to be lacking in that will to live, perhaps. It knows that its time has come, and it is writ large in the documents that have been placed before this house. It will take more than the Throne Speech to save the government, and if the government had 10 Throne Speeches, I do not believe it would do the job. For all the good they are attempting to do, I believe the people of this country will be content to see them go, because they know that that good amounts to very little. The nation needs a new start. It needs new hope, and it will take a change of government to get it.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Roblin: With some confidence, that is what I believe the people of Canada are looking forward to, and I might say, honourable senators, I too look forward to that.

Hon. Royce Frith (Acting Leader of the Government): Honourable senators will no doubt wish that Senator Olson were here to participate in the debate on the Speech from the Throne. As honourable senators will no doubt know, tests showed that Senator Olson should undergo an operation on his heart. The operation, which is being performed at the Ottawa Civic Hospital, is now almost routine because of the expertise of the team led by Dr. Keon who performs the surgery. Therefore, I am happy to tell honourable senators that the prognosis is favourable, and others of our colleagues can attest to the competence of that surgical team. I know that Senator Olson would wish to be here, and there is a very good chance that he will be able to return to the chamber when we resume in January.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Frith: I echo the sentiments expressed at the continued regrettable absence from the chamber of Senator Flynn. I am encouraged, as are all honourable senators, by the observation of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that progress is being made and that Senator Flynn may return to the Senate about the same time as Senator Olson.

It is my purpose to comment on the government's position as reflected in the Speech from the Throne. To some extent, the Speech from the Throne speaks for itself; it is quite detailed. My job is made easier by the procedural good luck that I speak

after the mover, the seconder and the Leader of the Opposition, and because Senators Bosa, Hébert and Roblin have contributed in a very detailed and eloquent way to the debate on the subject. I compliment them all on their interventions.

● (1650)

Honourable senators, what does the Speech from the Throne purport to do?

Hon. Richard A. Donahoe: Not much!

Senator Frith: A great deal. It reflects the government's efforts to recognize the expectations and concerns in the minds and the hearts of all Canadians, and it isolates, identifies and attempts to deal with those concerns, not in high-sounding rhetorical terms but in terms of specific, building bricks to the programs. What are those concerns as reflected in the main themes?

[*Translation*]

Here are the five major themes: First, seeking new avenues to world peace. And I could suggest that we examine those themes within the context of the very specific efforts made by the government to identify the problems and propose solutions. Second, promoting economic growth. Third, creating a new alliance between business, labour, government and other groups. Fourth, strengthening the safety net. And fifth, pursuing our Canadian identity.

[*English*]

Those are the five principal areas that the government feels are properly the concerns of the people and must be dealt with, and the government proposes to do so in the way it outlines.

What can we say about the first concern? Certainly not much more than has been said by Senator Bosa, Senator Hébert and Senator Roblin. In the present context, it is almost trite to say that in the search for peace the role that Canada has to play, as precisely identified by Senator Hébert, is the turning to the advantage of all the citizens of the world the fact that, earned or not, we enjoy a reputation—a reputation, we are often told, based on the fact that we have never been a colonial power and we have never sought to dominate other peoples. How can we turn that to our advantage? What can one say about the need for that search for world peace when, considering present weaponry, it seems almost to cheapen the subject even to talk about it in terms that do not really beggar the absolutely awesome nature of the first theme of this Throne Speech? Senator Hébert said that this is a much needed theme for the people of the world as a potential message of hope.

In essence, its basic theme is peace and prosperity. In spite of the awesome nature of any attempt to deal with the problem of world peace, we must try to do something of a practical nature, and the government is doing so. For example, it concretely proposes, in the first theme, the devotion of full resources to restore confidence and trust in the international scene by continuing to advance proposals to slow the arms race. There is almost complete non-partisan support for the initiatives to fulfill obligations to NATO and NORAD, as has been emphasized already, with conventional weaponry, not