

I dare hope that my personal contribution will be of value. The many years I spent serving the public and the private sector as a professional, as an insurance broker, will perhaps help set the nature of my participation in the affairs of the state. Further, I think I am the first man in our profession to serve in the Senate. I think therefore that I shall be able to see and to analyse things in a new light, which will perhaps be useful.

The profession I practice is not only that of a great number of other Canadians, but is also one which relates to almost all the working population. In my province, it is related to a professional and commercial activity which plays an important role in the economic picture of Quebec in addition to being a major francophone presence in the financial community.

In this respect, I have been particularly impressed by the new vision the Speech from the Throne is giving us with respect to private enterprise. I take for example the common denominator for the different economic positions. The government is clearly showing a favourable opinion of private enterprise. We cannot help, in my opinion, but welcome such an attitude. For more than a decade the government, in general, has systematically and openly opted for other directions. It is now high time to concentrate our efforts on the spirit of initiative and liberty of action. The trends of the past have been reflected by an invading governmental presence in the business of individuals and corporations. Their rights and privileges to settle their own future are quite eroded today. It seems to me that the Speech from the Throne is bringing us back in a healthier direction for our collective future, most of all because of the insight shown by the legislators' intentions, for there is clearly a will to encourage increasingly the individual spirit of initiative. It is also clear that its action will not fall into excessiveness. For we would stand to lose much by focusing indiscriminately on anything we did in the past.

Everywhere in the legislative menu of this session we can denote a sense of balance; for that, too, we ought to rejoice. This balance, coupled with firmness, can also be noted in the government's attitude toward more important questions that will have to be debated shortly, such as national unity. The Speech from the Throne tells us that from now on, confrontation will be replaced by consultation in the relations between federal and provincial governments. This is a turning point in the constitutional debate because the fact that Quebec, which I represent here today, is under a political regime dedicated to

separation may be due in part to some positions adopted by the previous federal government which were stirring up dissension. Out-and-out centralization could only end up in frustrations which are felt not only in Quebec but in all other provinces as well. We must suppress from our relations with the provinces all sense of aggressiveness.

● (1650)

[*English*]

As a professional involved in business I have learned that a partnership will succeed only when there is mutual respect. In just a decade we have witnessed its erosion through certain attitudes and decisions. This Speech from the Throne gives clear indication that we are heading in a new direction, and I am personally relieved to see that the last look Quebecers will have at the functioning of our system before the referendum will be one of a team working to solve our own economic problems in a positive manner. Economic and financial well-being will go a long way in uniting this country. This seems to be the direction the government intends to take, and I heartily agree.

[*Translation*]

I do not think that the cause of Canadian unity is helped by certain attitudes, that are often arrogant, of some federal representatives. Allow me to say that the spirit of the Speech from the Throne reveals a flexible federal government, willing to prove that the central government, within the context of the Canadian confederation, will succeed in improving the economic well-being of all Canadians. As a representative from Quebec, more precisely from Kennebec, one of the most picturesque spots in our country, I am proud and pleased to start in public life as a promoter of that new perception of the role of our two houses.

In conclusion, I should like to stress once again that it is by making fully available to this house my means and efforts that I hope to be in a position to make a worthy contribution. Therefore, honourable senators, I am pleased to support the motion for an Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne because, in addition to numerous other strong points, which I have no time to refer to, it is the start of a new era for Canada for the promotion of private enterprise and gives a new orientation to the national unity issue.

[*English*]

On motion of Senator Perrault, debate adjourned.

The Senate adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.