

Yes, like so many other countries, Canada has its troubles. They do not amount to a fatal disease. They can be cured by the dedication of women and men of common sense, whom Aristotle much preferred to philosopher kings.

Clearly, as we saw earlier, predictions of cures did not follow the prescription of what was considered the appropriate remedy. I do not doubt the sincerity of those who prescribed those cures. The cures did not work. There are forces at play that we did not fully understand in years past. The consequences of the free trade agreement with the United States may not be clearly and fully understood for years to come, if only because the U.S. is so much bigger, and its trade policy so much at the mercy of pressure groups. We cannot be sure of any prediction, not even of my past predictions of disaster. The fact is that we share a bed with a very large, if benevolent, elephant. If it rolls over and we are not agile, we become a very flat pancake. We must train to be as agile as possible.

The same can be said of the North American Free Trade Agreement, of the new GATT, and of globalization in which capital that can no longer be confined by national legislation seeks advantages, such as the lowest labour costs. We must not forget that countries where labour costs are low are often also countries that do better than we do in turning out people with better mathematical, scientific and even linguistic skills at the end of high school. Meeting the challenge of these hard-working and intelligent nations is part of our being more agile.

A newspaper article this past weekend said that our Prime Minister aspires to fixing the plumbing rather than building pyramids. I should like to remind honourable senators that the pyramids were tombs. This government simply plans many reasonable, open and measured actions to make the country better and make us all feel better about this wonderful country of ours — many actions in amicable collaboration with other governments and all citizens; all the actions that are needed to serve Canada well.

Honourable senators, you all have an important role to play in nurturing our country which you love, as I do, more than it is possible to say.

[*Translation*]

We all have a role to play in improving the well-being of a country we all love. That is what our fellow citizens want, and we are their servants. Is this a grand design for our society? Of course. A society's well-being is the best grand design there is.

[*English*]

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Anne C. Cools: Honourable senators, I rise to second this motion.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Cools: Before doing so, I would like to add my voice to the many who have congratulated Senator Fairbairn, Senator LeBlanc and the new leadership of the opposition. I wish them well. I congratulate Senator Fairbairn on becoming the Leader of

the Government in the Senate; historically the first woman to do so. I also congratulate Senator LeBlanc on becoming Speaker.

• (1450)

With respect to both Senators Fairbairn and LeBlanc, I wish to say that they are certainly, in my view, very worthy human beings. They have served our side and this country well, tirelessly, and willingly in many different roles for a long, long time. I look forward to serving with them for another long time, particularly on this side of the chamber.

Honourable senators, I wish to proceed now by saying that in this, the Thirty-fifth Parliament of Her Majesty in Canada, we Senate Liberals, supporting the government in the Senate, will have as our primary goal the implementation of the government's program as outlined yesterday by His Excellency the Governor General. Our support will proceed in this chamber in accordance with the historical and constitutional role of the Senate as the upper chamber in this our bicameral system of Parliament.

Our Liberal senators will review, study, and support those matters placed before us with due diligence. Our instruments will be the principles of Liberalism that have served Canada for many years, to the point that Canadian history is largely intertwined with the history of the Liberal Party of Canada.

Canada as a concept and Canada as a country has possessed the minds of many great Liberals. One of those was the Right Honourable William Lyon Mackenzie King. In 1948, Mr. King, speaking at a national Liberal convention, described the conditions of the Liberal Party when he became its leader in 1919. He described the Liberal Party's historic defeat in 1911 after 12 successive years in government. He described the enormous division in the party on the issue of reciprocity during that election. He also described the following electoral defeat in 1917, when again the Liberals met with another historic defeat.

The problems facing Mr. King and facing the Liberal Party at that time seemed insurmountable. Mackenzie King, and I would ask you to note that he was speaking in 1948, had this to say:

Such was the position of the party when I was chosen its leader on August 7, twenty-nine years ago. It was a party which had been out of office for eight years; a party which had become sharply divided at a time of war; a party which had lost the great chieftain who, for over thirty years, had been its unchallenged leader; a party which was in a minority in both Houses of Parliament. In its ranks there were still enmities and divisions. A third political party — the Progressive Party, with a program largely Liberal in its inspiration — had come into being and was a rival of the Liberal Party for power. The country itself was unsettled. Still all too visible were the cleavages of opinion which, over the conscription issue, had threatened to destroy the Unity of Canada. I myself, as a Laurier Liberal, had been defeated in North York in 1917 and was without a seat in Parliament. When I was chosen leader of the party it was said by my opponents, and by some others, that I would not last long in that position.