

That was the way the bill was introduced in the House of Commons. When it emerged from that house certain changes had taken place. The institute was created, but a different clause 3 was added which said:

3. (1) The affairs of the Institute shall be managed by a board of directors composed of not fewer than ten and not more than twenty-five members of the Institute who are Canadian citizens and who shall serve without remuneration.

The rest of the bill is substantially the same, except that it says:

3. (2) Directors shall be elected by the members of the Institute.

In the bill as it came out of the House of Commons nowhere does it say how the membership of the institute shall be comprised. It says that the members shall elect the directors, but it does not determine who shall be the members of the institute. In other words, the Governor in Council, who previously created the members, has now withdrawn and is not even to create the members of the institute. Only the Lord knows, I presume, who shall be the members who shall elect the directors of the institute.

This is a serious defect and ought to be corrected in a committee of the Senate if the bill is to have any effect whatever. That is my first observation, which I described as legal and technical. It seems to me that the bill as it now stands is completely a "nothing" bill.

Secondly, I want to say that I doubt very much the necessity or usefulness of an enactment like this, in any event. I have been distressed in other connections by the whittling away of the authority, power and responsibility of the National Research Council in Canada. Indeed, if things go as they are expected to, I suppose that we shall have before us, before too many weeks, legislation which will split the National Research Council and divide its responsibilities among two other councils; but the NRC in Canada has had an excellent record in research in many, many endeavours, including research into the application, use and development of solar energy. I question whether we are going to add anything to the research resources of Canada by creating another corporation such as is envisaged by this bill. I do not want to ask for a vote to shoot this bill down on second reading but it seems to me that when the bill was introduced in the House of Commons it was barely viable, and that the way it emerged from the House of Commons makes it not viable at all. It seems to me that it is quite unnecessary, and so I hope that if the bill is referred to a committee of the Senate some of these points will be inquired into.

I do not think this is an important matter. I doubt if this corporation can accomplish anything, in any event, but if it is in fact created, and should it have the effect of whittling away the powers, authorities, accomplishments and responsibilities of the National Research Council, then I think we are doing a disservice to the nation.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

On motion of Senator Grosart, debate adjourned.

NATIONAL UNITY

REGIONAL ASPIRATIONS—DEBATE CONTINUED

The Senate resumed from Thursday, May 19, the debate on the inquiry of Senator Perrault, calling the attention of the Senate to the question of meeting more effectively the economic and cultural aspirations of the various regions of Canada.

Hon. Royce Frith: Honourable senators, I am pleased on this my first occasion to address you to have the opportunity of speaking to the inquiry of the Leader of the Government calling the attention of the Senate to the question of meeting more effectively the economic and cultural aspirations of the various regions of Canada.

[Translation]

In the most distinguished of assemblies, tradition reassures the old-timers and intimidates the newcomer. One of the most fraternal of traditions is that of the French Academy. Under Cardinal, the Grey Eminence, the newcomer takes his inspiration directly from the old-timer who is his predecessor. It is by praising the former occupant of his chair that the future academician earns the right to take his succession.

Here, in the Red Chamber, the chair is not transferred from man to man and not even, Madam Speaker, from man to woman.

However, another tradition of the "Immortels" seems worthy of our interest. It was the custom of Richelieu, which is at the very origin of the academy, deliberately to transform the secret to the public for the benefit of the nation. This great 17th century statesman transformed a sacred cénacle of eight poets into a prestigious assembly of 40 cultured minds. Our house is not a secret coterie, but it is largely unknown to the Canadian public and deserves to have its potential and its relevancy known.

Honourable senators, I would like to plead for a progressive change in our traditions: from a little-known and often-ignored "council", we can become a dynamic and more manifestly democratic public institution.

[English]

Honourable senators, I say democratic because I shall try to show, first, that our constitutional mission fits the demands of today's crisis; and, second, that our individual and collective experience in the political party system gives us an important opportunity, and that is to encourage Canadians to participate in politics. And by politics, I mean party politics.

The heart of the present crisis, in my opinion, is a confrontation of political power. In our country such power confrontations are settled at the ballot box, the culmination of party activity. When all the conferences and study groups have resolved and dissolved, the decision will still be the consensus in the polling booths. Many organizations can, will and should seek consensus, but the only organizations whose very nature