

anticipating the unexpected and preparing intelligently for it.

In your distinguished career, Mr. President, there are also paradoxical elements. Who could have guessed that Catholic Ireland would give birth, in you, to a future President of the Promised Land? On the outbreak of the Second World War, although you were committed to ending the British mandate in Palestine, you did not hesitate to join the British Army. Although a labour stalwart, you were re-elected in 1988 as your country's Head of State by a Parliament in which the right predominated.

Israel has consistently chosen its Presidents from among politicians distinguished for their intellectual activity. After hearing your address today, here in a place where opposing ideas and positions are debated every day, we can see why your parliamentary colleagues once again entrusted you with this high office.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Charbonneau:** Well aware of the opposing currents that flow freely in your parliamentary democracy, the Knesset wanted to raise, over those currents, an ironclad guarantee that the society where such diversity of opinion can flourish will be preserved.

[*Translation*]

Mr. President, your presence here today testifies to the close relationship that exists between the governments, parliaments and peoples of our two countries. These ties should be seen, by you yourself and the people of Israel, as a guarantee of our understanding and our desire to see peace and harmony reign once more in this troubled area of the Middle East.

[*English*]

On behalf of the Senate of Canada, I thank you for sharing your thoughts with us, Mr. President.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Mr. President, colleagues of the House of Commons and the Senate, and distinguished guests: on behalf of all Members of the House of Commons, I

wish to thank you for your presence here today, and for coming to visit our country.

I had the great privilege of visiting your country on three occasions, the last being in January 1987, at which time you and I, Mr. President, had a chance to speak privately about your country's problems and our concerns with respect to those problems.

[*English*]

I think that in this House of Commons it should be remarked that democracy is a constant and open debate on the great issues which confront us. This, I suppose, is accepted by Canadians, because we have created here in our country, at least, one of the most open and free democracies that exists anywhere in the world.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Fraser:** That does not mean that there will not be discord and division, but it does mean this: that on the most difficult issues that face us there will be strong and vivid debate. Mr. President, the House of Commons is not a tea party. It is an adversarial forum and, Sir, you will understand that there is no monolithic view in our country about issues whether they are domestic or beyond our shores.

But we in Canada are deeply committed to a concept of free discussion. You are here, Sir, because you represent a sister democracy which has steadfastly maintained the principle which owes its origins back in the mists of our British heritage, that it is better to debate openly our concerns than to repress them by secrecy, or censorship, or indifference.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Fraser:** Your country, sir, which from its inception has had to maintain its democratic traditions through some terrible and difficult events, is an example to the rest of the free world.

We are not unaware of the anguish you are presently experiencing. But we are conscious of the fact that your Parliament, your Knesset, debates these issues, that your press is free, that those who support or criticize are free to speak their minds, and that the press is free to report their views. Mr. President, that cannot be said for many parts of the world.

There are here in Canada many people who care very much for your country, and who also pray and hope that with skill, intelligence, decency and compassion, you will