

relatively new senator, having been summoned to this chamber last November, I have been greatly impressed with the dedication of my fellow senators to their duties and responsibilities of government. I came to this chamber at a most interesting time, since there was a very great deal of activity during the period of November and December. I was privileged to participate in the tabling of the reports of certain Senate committees, first that of Senator Croll's Special Committee on Poverty, and then Senator Everett's National Finance Committee report entitled "Growth, Employment and Price Stability." Since that time we have received copies of Volume II of the report of Senator Lamontagne's Special Committee on Science Policy. I think all honourable senators will agree with me that these are very important documents and the work that has gone into their preparation has made a significant contribution to the well-being and development of Canada. I believe they have greatly enhanced the reputation of this upper chamber. It was a privilege to be present as a member of this chamber when these reports were tabled and to participate in the discussion of them. I was impressed by the reception which was given these reports across the nation.

I also had the opportunity of receiving my baptism by fire when the controversial Bill C-259, to amend the Income Tax Act, was considered and debated. At times the debate was heated; nevertheless, I believe the Senate performed its duty in respect to that legislation. The debate on the Farm Products Marketing Agencies bill also added to the excitement of the period. It provided an opportunity for becoming acquainted rather quickly with many of my colleagues, including both supporters of the government and those worthy honourable senators who sit opposite. I especially appreciate the leadership given by the Leader of the Government, the Honourable Paul Martin. I have known the honourable senator for many years. When I am in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, many people ask after Senator Martin, and they ask me to pass on their regards to him. He is a respected Canadian, an outstanding parliamentarian who is dedicated to the service of his country. It is a privilege for me to serve with him on the government side of this chamber. I was impressed by the advice he gave me when I became a member here. He was convinced of the importance of the Senate as part of the Parliament of Canada, and he advised me to speak up and to bring before the Senate important items of interest to the citizens of Canada. He indicated that as Leader of the Government he was anxious to ensure that the Senate fulfilled its proper role in Parliament. I hope I will be able to live up to his advice.

I should also like to comment on the leadership given by my colleague on the opposite side, the Honourable Jacques Flynn. I have enjoyed him very much. He is a clever debater, an entertaining speaker, and a gentleman of good humour who carries out his duties in an exemplary manner.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Buckwold: I also express thanks to His Honour the Speaker for the guidance and counsel he gives in his difficult role in maintaining proper procedure and order in this chamber.

[Hon. Mr. Buckwold.]

The Speech from the Throne, delivered by His Excellency the Governor General last Thursday, is a wide-ranging human document, basically concerned with people and their well-being. To me the whole tone of the message contained in this Throne Speech is found in the following excerpt:

In a period dominated by bigness, in an increasingly impersonal social system, one of the major challenges facing government is to remove the impression of isolation which so often surrounds men and women, depriving them of their sense of worth, of accomplishment, of fulfilment, and removing from them their identity as individuals.

Isolation takes many forms in Canada—physical distance, social stigma, economic deprivation. In each of those forms it represents a degree of rejection, of exclusion, of estrangement. This country fails in its essential purpose if it does not ensure that its most precious resource, human talent, is not wasted away. Our challenge is to remove the barriers that create isolation, to permit each Canadian to detect—even if not always able to fulfil—his own potential, to ensure that his image of Canada is one of promise and compassion.

• (2030)

In my opinion the key word in this whole statement is "isolation." The objective of the Government of Canada as outlined in the Throne Speech is the elimination or minimization of isolation in the Canadian nation. The word "isolation" is used eleven times in the Speech. Webster defines it as a state of being set apart from others. A government concerned with people is to be greatly admired for using this approach which represents, I believe, a major step in achieving a just society.

Honourable senators, let me discuss in general terms this isolation to which reference was made, and how absolutely essential it is that action be taken to change the present situation. I shall deal first with economic isolation, the setting apart of people who seek employment and cannot find it. This is indicated as one of the top priorities of proposed government action. Every possible means will be taken to stimulate the economy in order to provide jobs for our people. Admittedly, we have heavy unemployment today. There is no greater tragedy in the life of any individual than to be unable to find gainful employment. It is not easy to be a statistic, and statistics become impersonal in relation to the tragedy of the individual who is unemployed.

The government has been accused of deliberately creating unemployment. I suggest that it is irresponsible to make such a statement. There has been a tremendous growth in our work force. In a recent address Mr. Fred H. McNeil, the Executive Vice-President and General Manager of the Bank of Montreal, said:

We have a labour force growing at almost twice the rate of any other industrialized nation. During the present decade, in fact, it has been calculated that more people in absolute numbers, not percentages, will enter the work force in Canada than in the United Kingdom, France, Belgium and the Netherlands combined.