

Honourable senators, I have been considering this inquiry for some time, as a number of you are aware. I was not aware until a few weeks ago that members of the opposition had discussed this proposal informally in their caucus and were generally prepared to support the idea, provided that such an inquiry or if it goes beyond that to a formal study, would be on a non-partisan basis.

The Leader of the Opposition informed me that Senator Lavoie-Roux was particularly interested in this subject-matter and had also done a great deal of work on it. I look forward to joining with our colleagues on the other side on this matter. I trust that we will have an interesting and useful examination of this difficult subject.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

MOTION FOR ADDRESS IN REPLY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming the debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Gigantès, seconded by the Honourable Senator Cools, for an Address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the Opening of the First Session of the Thirty-fifth Parliament. — (*1st day of resuming debate.*)

Hon. John Lynch-Staunton (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I know that I speak for all my colleagues in offering to you, Senator LeBlanc, our warmest congratulations on your being chosen Speaker of the Senate.

[*Translation*]

For more than 26 years, our colleague has played a very active role in Canadian parliamentary life, having been first elected to the House of Commons in 1972, then sworn in as a member of the Privy Council two years later, and finally summoned to the Senate at the end of June 1984.

[*English*]

He therefore brings to these new responsibilities a great deal of practical experience which can but benefit us all, as long as all of us, in turn, assure him of our cooperation as he presides over our deliberations.

As far as this side is concerned, the meaning of cooperation can be found in a quote from a speech given by a former Leader of the Opposition, whose comments were made on an occasion similar to this one, and which I hasten to make ours.

It was in November 1984. The Progressive Conservative Party had just been elected with a comfortable majority, while the Liberal Party was in the majority in the Senate. As Leader of the Opposition, Senator MacEachen said of the newly selected presiding officer that, "I certainly want to congratulate him and

assure him of my full cooperation in carrying out his responsibilities."

These are the sentiments of the entire Progressive Conservative caucus, sentiments which we certainly do not intend to set aside, no matter how great the temptation.

[*Translation*]

I would be remiss if I did not pay my respects to and congratulate the senator who served as our presiding officer, an office he held for eight years; by far a record of which he himself and this house can justly be proud.

[*English*]

While Senator Charbonneau's tenure as Speaker was marked by unfortunate controversy, he faced it with uncommon equanimity and in the best tradition of a parliamentary presiding officer.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Lynch-Staunton: I want to express to Senator Charbonneau our deepest appreciation, not only for his conduct as Speaker, but also for his representing Canada abroad with much distinction, as befits one whose office ranks fourth in the order of official precedence after the Governor General, the Prime Minister and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

May I also be allowed to make mention of one other colleague? Whenever I discuss my present role I make it quite plain that I am not replacing Senator Murray; rather, I am following him. There is — to me, anyway — more than a semantic nuance in this choice of words, for far be it from me to suggest that I could meet the very high standards that he has always set for himself.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Senator Lynch-Staunton: Senator Murray has been with us since 1979. Having worked closely with Davie Fulton, Wallace McCutcheon, Robert Stanfield and Richard Hatfield, he arrived here with a rich political background that quickly led him to play key roles in three governments.

[*English*]

One had to have the privilege, as I have for some two years, of being closely associated with Senator Murray to appreciate the tremendous energy and dedication which he brought to his responsibilities, not only as Leader of the Government in the Senate, but also as a cabinet minister, chairman of important cabinet committees, and advisor to prime ministers and cabinet colleagues on many issues. He did all of this with patience, cool-headedness and even good humour — most of the time, anyway — despite the tremendous pressures brought on by a number of particularly sensitive issues which he was called on to handle. We should all be relieved to know that he intends to remain an active participant in this place, as all of us can benefit from his experience, knowledge and unshakeable optimism.