

And this about a man, honourable senators, who told his own biographer, "You're wasting your time. I haven't got a story to tell."

Honourable senators, there certainly is a story to tell, and it is a great story. It is a story about a compelling and engaging man who made a very large and lasting contribution to the cultural life of this country, which he loved intensely.

As well, he was a very special human being. Perhaps his wife Brenda expressed it best when she said on Sunday, "He was a very humble human being. Anyone who talked to him genuinely thought so."

Honourable senators, the last time I spoke to Robertson Davies was over a year ago when he was appearing at the National Gallery reading excerpts from his latest book, *The Cunning Man*. I had the privilege of introducing him. He was generously making an appearance on behalf of literacy for the Ottawa Citizen Literacy Foundation. He was delighted to do so, and he enthralled the audience.

Although he is gone, he will never be forgotten. It is unlikely that we will ever see anyone quite like him again in Canada.

**Hon. Richard J. Doyle:** Honourable senators, there is rarely a Canadian who makes as great an impression on his fellow countrymen without earning their distaste and disownership as Robertson Davies.

I first met Robertson Davies when I went to work at *The Globe and Mail* as a copy reader in the fifties. While Davies was not on the staff of *The Globe and Mail*, as he was busy with the Peterborough *Examiner*, he covered opera for the Toronto paper. That was something which, at that point, the music editor did not do, and the drama editor would not do. No one would concede what kind of glorious entertainment or blasphemy grand opera was. However, Robertson Davies delighted in the opportunity and would come rushing in — late, of course — after each performance of the Canadian Opera Company to put his stamp upon it.

I had the opportunity to be associated with him in a number of enterprises after that. I was interested to read in the last few days, as the tributes came in, how many people spoke of what a quiet, gentle man he was; that he always spoke softly. Well, that was not the Robertson Davies I knew. He spoke quietly; he did not stamp his feet; he did not even make speeches anywhere near the Senate, but he could, in two or three words, put people down or elevate them, as he might choose.

He was the distinguished master of Massey College — the first master — and he was intensely interested in his job as a teacher. That left him lots of time, he felt, to be involved in newspaper politics, the family business, writing the Deptford Trilogy and doing all those other things he did without ever seeming to hurry.

I mentioned the Deptford Trilogy. That, as you know, was written about Thamesville and Dresden in Southwestern Ontario. It will, I think, be a monument in our literary heritage. I rejoice in praising him.

## BRITISH COLUMBIA

### PROPOSALS ON NATIONAL UNITY ISSUES— UNFAIR TREATMENT OF PROVINCE

**Hon. Gerry St. Germain:** Honourable senators, as a representative of the province of British Columbia, I am very disappointed with the Prime Minister's proposal for constitutional change and the recent unfair treatment British Columbians have been receiving from this government.

On numerous levels, British Columbians are not getting their fair share from this government. For example, an analysis of federal expenditures and procurement in B.C. prepared by Peat Marwick KPMG Management Consulting on behalf of Business and Industry Development B.C. exposes the fact that federal government spending in B.C. is significantly lower than in any other province or region in Canada. There is a widening gap between B.C.'s contribution to Canada's economy and what the province receives in return through federal government expenditures. It is estimated that B.C. receives as little as 5.2 per cent of major Crown projects. Recent legislation, such as Bills C-18 and C-69, try to deny B.C.'s proper representation in the House of Commons; Bill C-68 is opposed by the western region as a whole; and now we have Bill C-110, which fails to recognize the emerging prominence of B.C. as an important region within Canada.

I understand that today the Minister of Human Resources, the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, announced that he will reduce transfer payments to B.C. by \$47 million as a penalty to the Government of B.C. for trying to address its welfare crisis.

Fellow senators, I do not believe that the people of B.C. are getting their fair share. Nor do I believe that the Prime Minister has a mandate to make such arbitrary decisions in regard to the Constitution. In fact, during the last federal election campaign, he spoke against making changes to the Constitution as such.

By proceeding with Bill C-110 and other legislation recently introduced by this government, the Prime Minister is driving a wedge through this country instead of building a nation.

I call on all senators and members of the other place from British Columbia to put aside their partisanship and join thousands of British Columbians in opposing this unfair and divisive treatment. Let us start standing up for our people, senators and members of the House of Commons from British Columbia. Let us stand up for our province in the face of these vicious attacks against our constitutional rights and unfair treatment in this country.