

we had made on the White Paper were not accepted or translated into the tax reform bill, and neither were we given a reasonable hearing when we attempted to move the committee's own amendments which it considered absolutely essential. What we received instead were the bland assurances of the minister—who has now been moved to another post—that he would look into our suggestions for improvement and bring in an amending bill if he deemed it necessary.

We are here primarily to review legislation when it comes to us, and to see that it is amended where deficient. We are not here to be told that we will be given another chance later when the government is in less of a hurry and can take time out to listen to us.

It amuses me to contemplate how the huge Liberal majority, so properly docile last December, would have reacted had the same piece of legislation come, under the same conditions, from a Conservative government. These walls would have trembled from the roar of indignation in this chamber. The Liberal majority would have tongue-lashed the government mercilessly. The only instances in the past thirty years of Liberal domination in which this chamber has refused legislation from the other place have occurred during a Conservative administration.

If we give in to the lightly-veiled threats of the other place—and here I mean the government—and servilely rubber-stamp any piece of legislation, be it of major or minor importance then our success in special investigations notwithstanding, we are guilty of a shameful dereliction of our primary responsibility. This chamber should resolve now that never again will this be allowed to happen, and take the measures necessary to ensure that it does not.

As to the appointments to this chamber made by the present Prime Minister, I have but little to say. I have no reason to believe other than that the people appointed will be a credit to the Senate.

However, I must express my disappointment at the fact that while the Prime Minister two years ago gave every impression of being well aware of the need for strengthening the Opposition in order to make the Senate meaningful, he seems now, with his most recent appointments—all of whom are Liberals—to have given in to pressure from various sources. In the past couple of years the number of Progressive Conservative supporters in this house has decreased by seven whereas the number of government supporters, already a huge majority, has risen by more than 15.

This government's considered opinion is that there is nothing wrong with the country that more government intervention will not fix. Government intrusion is piled upon government intrusion, bureaucracy upon bureaucracy, petty regulation upon petty regulation. The whole exercise is stifling. We are wallowing in a quagmire of useless rules and regulations, and the federal government grows ever bigger, more overbearing, omnipresent, autocratic and impersonal.

[Hon. Mr. Flynn.]

And how does the individual emerge from all of this? How can we have governments offering to do all of man's thinking for him, protect him against all the vicissitudes of life, and still expect to have men of quality?

Honourable senators, what this country needs is smaller governments and bigger people; a return to the principle that the government that governs least is best. I wish I could have read that somewhere in the Speech from the Throne. What I have read is exactly the opposite.

[Translation]

Honourable senators, I bring my speech to a close by saying that this debate gives the Leader of the Opposition in particular the opportunity to make a very general review of the policy of the government, and therefore to praise it a little—every government achieves some good—and above all to criticize the errors and omissions of the government.

Even if some should disagree with me, I feel that, under the circumstances, my criticism was very moderate indeed. It occurs to me that, had I wanted to be mean with the government, this government which for all practical purposes is the same as the one we had in 1963, even though Mr. Trudeau succeeded Mr. Pearson, had I really wanted to be mean I would have borrowed, to describe it, the remarks the present Prime Minister made about the Pearson government. I shall not quote those remarks unless I am provoked into doing so.

I shall merely say that nothing in the line of electoral political opportunism resembles more a Liberal government than another Liberal government.

[English]

Hon. Paul Martin: Honourable senators, the Leader of the Opposition will not expect me to subscribe to the essentials of his speech today. I should like to have found one or two places where he might have thought that the government did something worthy of commendation. I, in turn, would like to have been able to find with respect to his criticisms of the government something with which I could feel justified in concurring. But search as I did, I searched in vain and I found that in the characterization of the government's effort by the Leader of the Opposition, he continued to repeat what he said last year that the government was inept, that it was not well led, that it was socialist, and that it was leading Canada down byways of inferiority, and so on. These are remarks which, understandably, are often expressed by those in opposition. However, they are generally mixed, on occasion, with some words of appreciation for at least some things which the government has done.

• (1500)

Hon. Mr. Flynn: I complimented the government on their selection of government leader.

Hon. Mr. Martin: Today, however, there was nothing of that generous impulse which I usually recognize in the Leader of the Opposition. So I must deal with him on his own terms.