

they will be able to say that this side of the House, notwithstanding our numerical strength being greater than theirs, did not show a desire to assist in promoting the business of the country. I trust that the coming Session may be one of harmony in this Chamber and advantage to the public interests.

Hon. RAOUL DANDURAND: Honourable gentlemen, in rising to address this House it should be my first duty—and a very pleasant one indeed—to congratulate ourselves upon the appointment of the honourable gentleman from British Columbia who to-day adorns the Speaker's Chair. I content myself with re-echoing what has been so aptly said by my honourable friend from Calgary (Hon. Sir James Lougheed), because his words carry the more weight, being those of an opponent. We all enjoyed most courteous and friendly treatment at his hands when he was on the floor of the House, and I am sure we shall have constant occasion to congratulate ourselves upon his presiding over us.

At the same time, I should not forget to welcome among us an old and leading parliamentarian, the honourable gentleman from Lauzon (Hon. Mr. Bolduc), who did honour to himself in the Speaker's Chair, and now returns to our midst. We shall enjoy the benefit of his experience. He knows the whole of Canada well, and the Province of Quebec perhaps still better, and I will leave in his hands the defence of the province of Quebec whenever it needs to be defended, for henceforth I shall be obliged to speak for Canada as a whole.

I join with my honourable friend opposite in congratulating the member for Kent (Hon. Mr. McCoig) and the member for Rigaud (Hon. Mr. Boyer) on their performance this afternoon. They did justice to themselves. Their reputations were already established, and I am quite sure that they, representing the farming interests of the two large provinces of Ontario and Quebec, will be a valuable addition to this Chamber, and will give us the benefit of their experience in matters with which they have been more especially concerned.

I am somewhat timid about mentioning the action of my predecessor as leader of the House, since he took the lead by showering me with compliments. Before he proceeded to wish me a hearty welcome, I had intended expressing my regrets at the loss of his leadership of this Chamber;

and I fervently hope that in the discharge of my duties I shall have his friendly co-operation.

Here, honourable gentlemen, I crave permission to take up a matter which is not contained in the Speech from the Throne. It may seem a matter personal to myself, but it bears on the conduct of affairs of this Chamber. I refer to an attitude of mind which has permeated the Senate through tradition and for a long period of years. At the root of the matter is the whole question of the function of the Senate and the exercise of its powers. Should it be administered by party groups—by a Ministerial party and an Opposition? I confess that ever since I entered this Chamber I have been reluctant to submit to party rule. I thought that the Senate should be, in appearance as well as in reality, an independent body exercising quasi-judicial functions. When reading the Debates on Confederation I felt that the role which was assigned to this Upper Chamber was, indeed, an ideal one. To cite but one of the fathers of Confederation, the then Attorney-General, since Sir John A. Macdonald, I find that at page 35 of the Debates on Confederation he stated that in his opinion the Upper House should be the controlling and regulating but not the initiating branch; the House which would have the sober, second thought in legislation. And at page 36 he added:

There would be no use of an Upper House, if it did not exercise, when it thought proper, the right of opposing or amending or postponing the legislation of the Lower House. It would be of no value whatever were it a mere Chamber for registering the decrees of the Lower House. It must be an independent House, having a free action of its own, for it is only valuable as being a regulating body, calmly considering the legislation initiated by the popular branch, and preventing any hasty or ill-considered legislation which may come to that body, but it will never set itself in opposition against the deliberate and understood wishes of the people.

When examining the proceedings of the first Sessions of this Chamber, from 1867 on, it struck me from the tone of the debates that the action of the Senators was that of independent judges. Perhaps that attitude was due to the fact that it started on its way under a coalition Government. There were but two parties at the time, and the parties were represented in the first Government of John A. Macdonald. But it was not very long, I admit, before they had drifted into the old form of party politics, which obtained in nearly every parliamentary hall.