

Clark, former Prime Ministers; Frank Moores, Gerry Regan and Alex Campbell of Prince Edward Island, Mr. Bourassa of Quebec, Mr. Davis of Ontario, Mr. Lyon of Manitoba, Mr. Blakeney of Saskatchewan and Mr. Barrett of B.C.—a total of 11 if I count well. However, Mr. Bourassa is the current Liberal leader in Quebec and is pursuing other goals, so our total is reduced to 10. But one day we might have with us Messrs. Bennett of British Columbia, Lougheed of Alberta and Lévesque of Quebec. It would be an interesting group of men with which to start the cross-benchers system in our Senate. To see Mr. Trudeau, Mr. Lévesque and Mr. Lyon rubbing shoulders in this chamber would be a spectacle worth the visit of at least one reporter.

[Translation]

To go on with my discussion with Senator Le Moyne, I wonder whether this would be "*Le dialogue des dieux*", or "*Une saison en enfer*".

**Senator Le Moyne:** The dialogue of the deaf!

**Senator Riel:** You may be right. This would be a Beau risque to quote somebody I have in mind.

[English]

Honourable senators, in recent times the tradition has been to appoint to the Senate former premiers. In this capacity we have had Senator Manning, former Premier of Alberta; Senator Smith, former Premier of Nova Scotia; Senator Robichaud, former Premier of New Brunswick and Senator Roblin, former Premier of Manitoba. Of course, we also have Senator Hicks, another former Premier of Nova Scotia—I am suddenly forgetting a man whom I knew before he became premier of that province. It would have been a good thing to have had with us John Robarts of Ontario and Jean Lesage of Quebec, and probably others as well. If they had been *ex officio*, in the company of colleagues who had occupied similar positions as former premiers of provinces, perhaps they would have come.

Honourable senators, this is probably the only chance to form a group of cross-benchers of a small but influential percentage. They could coalesce around them those here who have wished for years to form a group of cross-benchers. It would give them an opportunity to make a greater contribution to the work of this house and, perhaps, to permit our Senate to demonstrate the spirit existing in the House of Lords.

This is an idea that I put forward to all honourable senators and to the present government. The realization of the idea would require an amendment to the Constitution, but it seems that, at the moment, the government in power has a clear majority and good relations with the provinces. Furthermore, those who have made a great issue about increasing provincial representation in the Senate would certainly be satisfied to see, in this chamber, so formidable a group of provincialists as the former premiers. When I conceived of this idea some months ago—when it was at the embryonic stage in my mind—I spoke of it to Senators Le Moyne and Pitfield and I received much encouragement to pursue it. I must say that I even spoke to the then Prime Minister, who said to me that, although the idea was intriguing and interesting, he could not entertain it at the

moment because he was leaving. He suggested that I pursue it with one of his successors.

**Senator Flynn:** Une fin de non recevoir.

**Senator Riel:** We will see, we will see; perhaps you are more apt than I to interpret the words of the former Prime Minister.

In any event, the Constitution allows a government to appoint 8 senators more than the figure of 104, making a total of 112. The present government could, at this time, appoint 5 senators, for a total of 104, and an additional 8, for a total of 112; 13 new senators could be joining our ranks. I suspect, however, that they will all be "*des bleus*," as a custom has existed since Confederation that the government of the day appoints supporters. I have read that, during his tenure, Sir John appointed 113 or 115 senators, of whom one was Liberal.

**Senator Flynn:** Oh, no; the first group was practically half and half.

**Senator Riel:** Do you think so?

**Senator Flynn:** I know of many Grits who were appointed to the first Senate.

**Senator Riel:** Are you going to agree, however, that Sir Wilfred Laurier appointed 95 senators, all of whom were Liberals?

**Senator Flynn:** I would agree with that.

**Senator Riel:** You agree. Are you willing to agree that Mackenzie King appointed few Conservatives?

**Senator Flynn:** None.

**Senator Riel:** Mr. St. Laurent appointed one Conservative, one Independent, Senator Molson, and one Independent-Liberal, Senator Cameron. Prime Minister Trudeau, during his tenure, appointed a number of Liberals and a few Conservatives, such as Senator Asselin, Senator Roblin, Senator Muir, Senator Marshall and others.

● (1540)

**Senator Flynn:** We have become an endangered species!

**Senator Riel:** Yes, I know; but they were persons of good character. That is why I say that it would be a good thing to have former provincial premiers appointed *ex officio* and enabled to sit in this chamber without being nominated by anyone and who would be able to maintain their liberty. I think that would provide us with the only opportunity to have a section of cross-benches. I have often discussed this matter with Senator Molson, but I can see no way out, because the Liberals will inevitably appoint Liberals and now, of course, it is the turn of the Progressive Conservatives.

I believe that if a group of the most experienced persons in this country were appointed to the Senate and were not subject to the imperious pressure of caucuses or whips, we might see in the Senate the diminution of that partisan spirit that exists in the House of Commons and which sometimes permeates the Senate. The Senate might then become more like the British House of Lords, namely, a little more serene, and we would