

therefore, to belong to them as much as to us? It is said they have not the power. But what is to prevent them from enforcing it?

I base my approach to this Senate on this type of philosophy.

Honourable senators, can you imagine six senators elected from Ontario, six senators elected from Quebec—and I hope they will be elected by the people of Quebec—or even six elected senators from New Brunswick? Do you think, if I were one of the six elected senators from New Brunswick and there were ten MPs in the other place, that I would not feel, and rightly so, that I have as much right to speak for my people as those elected members in the other place? It will not happen that way.

While the opponents to this proposed Senate can make a case on paper, I believe they fail to understand the human element in elected people. I am prepared to say that the new Senate will be effective once people have learned to work together in this place. There will be 62 new senators. It is far-fetched to say that there will be a government in the other place elected with a majority of more than 62. It will not happen very often. It is far-fetched to say that the elected Senate could not be effective, because if the government of the day does not see to it that there is cooperation between this place and the elected members of the other place, they will have trouble with every piece of legislation that comes to this place. The senators will, for 30 days, be able to withhold their consent to every piece of legislation that comes before them. I say this is a much better situation than we now have.

Honourable senators, I have now been in this place for 13 years. I can honestly say that never, in my wildest dreams, did I dream of becoming a senator. I had no interest in the Senate until I was appointed.

Senator Lynch-Staunton: Until there was a vacancy.

Senator Thériault: I am glad I accepted the appointment, because I met a lot of good and experienced people. I admire the ability of those who sit in this chamber, but, as an institution, I must honestly tell you that I never thought the Senate was very effective.

[Translation]

I want to be able to tell my children and grandchildren or at least read to them what I said about the debate on this amendment, when they wonder where their father or grandfather was when that decision was being made. I support this agreement. I am in favour of a yes vote in the Senate, and I beg Quebecers and above all I beg the thousands of Acadians living in Quebec to consider their compatriots who are outside Quebec and to consider this country which has been good for Quebec. In spite of what we have heard from the other side of this Chamber in the past few years, Quebecers have come a long way inside Canada. A small group that had practically no power in 1867, has expanded to include five million Quebecers who have a lot of power, a lot of energy and a great deal of influence on decisions that are made in this country.

You know, it really hurts me when I hear so many Quebecers or French Canadians, as we used to say, who are almost ashamed to admit that Wilfrid Laurier, Georges-Étienne Cartier, Saint-Laurent, Trudeau and Mulroney are Quebecers, Quebecers who helped build this country. I hope common sense will prevail on October 26, in Quebec and the rest of Canada.

In concluding, I hope that my descendants will be able to say that when this agreement was adopted, their father or grandfather was there. In fact, I have already started in my part of the country to work with Conservatives, New Democrats, men and women, it doesn't matter. I want Canadians, including Quebecers, to say yes on October 26. It will not end all further constitutional talks. There will be more, because we are a confederation with two levels of government. There will always be some discussions. However, it is time we made up our minds. And I suggest we make up our minds to stand up for Canada on October 26.

[English]

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault: Honourable senators, all of us, regardless of party, love this country, and we have nothing but good to say about its potential and its future. The strong and opposing views expressed here reflect our concern about that future, despite the fact that we may differ on a great many points.

I must say that the process which has been set in motion to produce this new constitutional package is terribly flawed. The fact is that, for well over four years, Canadian constitution building has been the main growth industry in the country. I have attended many of the conferences, and I have shared with many others dreams, hopes and ideas about the future of Canada. I have seen some magnificent ideas developed, and initiatives enunciated, yet, in this package, we see very few of them. Those ideas included excellent recommendations which came from committees where a number of honourable senators here this evening have served.

Where have we arrived after spending at least \$25 million of taxpayers' money on committees, commissions, studies, parliamentary hearings, along with costly citizen involvement sessions? In fact we have left the task of designing new federal institutions and a new Canada to a group of premiers, each with his own narrow provincial priorities. Again the question must be asked: Who spoke for Canada at those critical meetings in Charlottetown?

Now we have before us what has been described as the constitutional package, a package which is incomplete and devoid of detail. We are asked to journey into an unknown country, to take a giant leap of faith.

My friends, this is not the Grasshopper Control Act that we are discussing. This is not the Weed Abatement bill. I suspect that here in the Senate we would give more time to consider measures of those kinds. Here, we are only considering the nation's future.