

from the Pepin-Robarts Commission. However, in the meantime, the government has irritated provincial governments and many segments of the population. In this exercise the government has shown the same lack of flexibility as it has in so many other areas. It has shown contempt for the provinces and for Parliament.

We can only hope that the new attitude which the government promises to adopt will clear the air and provide a more favourable climate for a renewal of the federation, a climate devoid of the obvious electoral objectives inherent in Bill C-60 and the explanatory documents which accompanied it.

One last word in this chapter.

In the Speech from the Throne, the government repeats something that was in the white paper entitled, *A Time for Action*, and I quote:

In particular, the government believes it essential that clear and important progress be made before Quebecers are asked by their provincial government to vote in a referendum about their future.

In the joint committee and elsewhere, it was repeatedly pointed out to the government that Bill C-60 did not offer Quebecers anything that could incite them to vote one way or the other in the coming referendum. Certainly not the abolition of the Senate and its replacement by the House of the Federation; certainly not the changes in the Supreme Court and the appointment of its judges; certainly not the insertion of a Charter of Human Rights in the Constitution; none of these would have any influence upon the attitude of Quebecers towards the federation, not even the provision respecting linguistic rights.

Only a solution of the problems surrounding clarification of the division of powers between the two levels of government can have an effect. The suggestion that Bill C-60 was a major tool in fighting the separatist movement in Quebec indicated contempt for the intelligence of Quebecers.

Let us hope that some progress will be made in this respect in the coming conference of first ministers. We should not forget that a new Constitution created in haste could be more divisive than the present situation. Let us take the time we need to properly structure our new Constitution and in the process let us not use it for sheer electoral gains.

● (2040)

I come now to the behaviour of the government regarding that special aspect of constitutional reform dealing with the Senate. Bill C-60 would have abolished the Senate purely and simply, and replaced it with an entirely new chamber called "The House of the Federation." The white paper gave the following reasons for this proposal:

There is a further institution of our federal system in need of major change. The Canadian Senate does not now serve the need of the Federation for a House where the full range and depth of our regional problems, and the effect of national policies on those problems, can be discussed with—

And I emphasize the words that come next.

[Senator Flynn.]

—independence and authority. The House of Commons cannot fully serve this function, as party discipline—

And I might emphasize that, too.

—under the Parliamentary system requires that a national viewpoint be adopted. The Senate, appointed as it now is entirely by the federal government, has not been able to provide that recognized forum for the achievement of genuine understanding of the sometimes conflicting natures of our national and regional objectives—and for the search for solutions.

The government believes that to meet these needs a new legislative body, the House of the Federation, should be provided for in our Constitution as a replacement for the Senate. Essential features of the new House would be the recognition of a role for the provinces in the selection of its members, and provision for proportionately greater representation to the eastern and western parts of the country, with substantial adjustment to ensure adequate representation for western Canada which, until now, has not received a share commensurate with its growing importance.

I, for one, disagree with the premise that the Senate, appointed as it now is, has been unable to provide a forum for the expression of regional aspirations. It may not have done all it should have done, but it certainly did more than is suggested in this blunt accusation of the government's.

On the matter of whether or not this proposed House of the Federation really provides a meaningful alternative to the valid criticism made of the Senate, I have grave doubts that the special committee of the Senate which dealt with this matter shares this opinion. That is a matter that can be addressed on other occasions, and in the reconstituted Special Senate Committee on the Constitution.

What I wish to underline at this time is the fact that the government has accused the Senate, and more specifically the large Liberal majority in this house, of not having discharged the duties that were assigned to this institution. It is rather ironic that the government should be making this accusation when you consider that the government supporters in this house were merely acting in the way the government expected, or, should I say, required them to act.

Senator Forsey: Not all!

Senator Flynn: Who said, "Not all"? I should like to identify the one who claims to be impervious to government influence. Senator Forsey. Of course! And I would guess you are not alone, Senator Forsey. I wish there were more of you.

The instances in which the Senate may have failed to play its role as representative of regional interests and aspirations have involved cases where the government commanded the Senate majority not to create any difficulty by amending or delaying legislation which had ramifications on the provincial level.

The only serious criticism of the Senate has been to question its credibility because it is an appointed body rather than an elected one. The House of the Federation does not change that