

In setting out his views as to what the Senate should do, the mover of the present resolution (Hon. Mr. Robertson) said:

The Senate should undertake at least one public inquiry each session into some problem of current public interest, and it should report its conclusions.

Well, one must speak from his own experience. Since I became a member of this house an inquiry of that kind was instituted by the honourable gentleman from Toronto (Hon. Mr. Campbell), and it—I will not say revolutionized, but materially changed and greatly improved our federal income tax law. Now I will mention a couple of inquiries which I was instrumental in having made. I believe it was in my first session here that I moved the appointment of a committee of inquiry into immigration. My motion was approved by the Senate, and in the inquiry I had the support of the then Chairman of the Standing Committee on Immigration and Labour, as well as of many members of that committee who faithfully and industriously attended its sittings. I am not assuming too much when I say that we in this house brought about a change of public opinion on immigration, and followed that with a change in the substantive law on the subject. I believe the change that we made was a good one, and I know you all agree with me. In the course of time it may help to make Canada the important international force which its resources entitle it to be.

Then in the second session of 1949, and the main session of last year, I initiated an inquiry into human rights and fundamental freedoms, and since I did a great deal of work on that subject you may permit me to assume a little. I think that by that inquiry the Senate was endeared to a larger number of good, thoughtful, patriotic people in Canada than it was, perhaps, by anything else it ever did since it was constituted. Thousands upon thousands of people read the discussions that took place in this chamber and in the Committee on Human Rights, and the committee's current reports of its proceedings, including the evidence heard, and thanked the Fathers of Confederation that there was a Senate interested in the rights of man, the fundamental freedoms of our people. You just cannot over-estimate the importance of what we did when dealing with that subject, nor can you over-estimate the importance of things that we may do in future. Work to do! Why, honourable senators, there is an abundance of it. It is merely a matter of our taking hold with courage and industry, seeing the things required to be done, and doing them. For heaven's sake let us cease this

plaintive bleat to the House of Commons to give us work to do. We should find our own work.

I am concerned about this resolution, because if you read it you cannot help concluding that it expresses the thought—perhaps not too plainly, but by implication—that the Senate is not now performing its maximum service to the people of Canada. That is implicit in the resolution; and I think that to the extent that it is there the resolution is unjustified by the facts. I feel that it is not wise to have the subject before us as a matter of debate. However, it is here now and of course we must debate it. I would not wish to preclude anyone from having the privilege which I have enjoyed, but I am going to take the liberty of making a very friendly suggestion, and that is that as soon as this general debate is concluded the honourable mover should withdraw the resolution.

Hon. Mr. Duff: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: I would suggest that he do not put it to the house. We want no committee to tell us what we already know. As the leader of the opposition (Hon. Mr. Haig) asked yesterday: What is there for a committee to determine about the Senate that we do not already know? Nothing can be accomplished by keeping up this talk, and some evil may result.

Thank you, honourable members.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Farris: Honourable senators, I move adjournment of the debate.

The motion was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Senate resumed from yesterday consideration of His Excellency the Governor General's Speech at the opening of the session, and the motion of Hon. Mr. Stambaugh for an Address in reply thereto.

Hon. Thomas Reid: Honourable senators, in rising to take part in the debate on the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, I do not expect all honourable members to agree entirely with what I say. However, my remarks will be sincere and based on my own beliefs and convictions.

First, I wish to refer briefly to the legislative program outlined in the Speech from the Throne, and to deal particularly with two or three matters mentioned therein: defence, conscription and price control.