

stood him, he felt that that reform would give us assurance that no person could be elected to a seat in the House of Commons except by the consent of a majority of those voting in his own constituency. The honourable gentleman is not in favour of minority representation. Neither am I. In my view, the representation of a majority rather than of a minority in a constituency is a most important principle, and I wish to suggest to my fellow members that the time has come when we should cease considering this measure purely from a viewpoint of party advantage. To my knowledge and experience, it has been so considered, not only in this Parliament but in the legislatures as well, over a number of years.

The time has arrived in the political development of Canada when we must consider this measure from the standpoint of principle and not of party advantage. I myself am a democrat. I believe in the rule of the majority. I am prepared to accept the decision of a majority, even when I do not agree with it. I would go so far as to accept a government of the opposite political persuasion if, God forbid, the people of this Dominion determined in favour of it. My honourable friend to my right (Hon. Mr. Leger) will admit that in this I am going pretty far. If the people of this country make a decision, I, as a democrat, am prepared to accept that decision with the best grace possible under the circumstances, and willingly, knowing that people learn by making mistakes and that there is no substitute for experience. I will take my place with my fellow citizens in accepting any decision of the majority of the people.

But what I fear, honourable senators, is the election in this country of a government which does not possess the confidence of a majority of the people, a government attempting to rule although it has not been elected by a majority of the votes cast. I tremble at the thought of what might happen in Canada did a government representing a minority attempt to enforce views and policies to which the majority is opposed. It is that possibility, because of a wrong principle involved in our present method of voting, which so impresses me in favour of this measure of the alternative vote in single-member constituencies. And if honourable members will bear in mind that possibility—of a majority in the other House representing a minority in the country endeavouring to impose on the rest of us policies and practices of which we not only do not approve but actively disapprove—then we may count upon the support of that measure by the Senate.

Honourable senators, in the Speech from the Throne there are a number of points which to me are of exceptional interest. To begin with, the Speech gives notice of the end of the most terrible war in history, and it expresses humble thanks for our deliverance. It expresses remembrance of and pays reverent tribute to those who have paid the price of conflict. It acknowledges Canada's tremendous war contribution, the result of that glorious partnership between our warriors and our workers. In the victory over the Axis powers, the authors of the Speech say, "We find the assurance of the ultimate triumph of righteousness as we seek to bring into being a new order founded upon world security and social justice." "World security and social justice", those are fine words. And they are used in earnest, for His Excellency assures us that the Government will shortly bring in measures to assist the starving millions in Europe and to expedite the rehabilitation of their devastated areas.

Fortunately the Speech comes nearer home when it deals with the demobilization of the men and women of our armed forces and their rehabilitation in civil life. It also speaks of the maintenance of a high level of employment and national income. When a Government sets out to establish what it calls "a national minimum of social security and human welfare" it is quite natural that it should in the first instance turn to the work of men's hands, such as the building of homes, the construction of public works, and similar activities. In furthering social security and human welfare it is also natural that the Government should turn to humanitarian legislation, such as providing for floor prices for farm and fishery products, old age pensions, health insurance, family allowances, preventive medicine, and of course the re-establishment of war veterans. These are splendid measures, and because of their paternalistic but beneficial nature, in my judgment the Prime Minister and his colleagues will go down in history as the most humanitarian government of our time.

Some Hon. SENATORS: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. ROEBUCK: I commend these measures most heartily, for in common with all honourable members I have seen something of the shady side of life, I know something of what goes on in the poorer homes of our nation.

But while with all my heart I approve such measures, at the same time I recognize their limitations. No hand-out, no sop, no charity, and no pump priming, however generous it may be or however vigorously applied, is sufficient to establish permanent prosperity or the highest type of social welfare.