

Where have all the people gone? There is one man in this chamber who was around in 1945, and he was a student at the University of Toronto when I was running for Parliament in Toronto. He was out shouting, "You have to elect Davey Croll!" He now sits here as Senator Turner. I do not think he made one class during the last month of the campaign. That is probably why he did not become a lawyer or a doctor, or something. But I have never forgotten his friendship at that time. He had heard of me from the suburbs of London. We have been good friends ever since.

● (1430)

These days I look back a bit, but I also look forward. Even today I see the causes that we still need to fight for. I want you to know one thing: no man can say that he alone was responsible for the advances we have made. Similarly, no party can say that they alone were responsible for them. Even those in opposition make a contribution.

The only good luck we have is when we join together and do what we do cooperatively. That benefits everyone. I have seen this country when it was really poor. However, we did not think of it as poverty because we were all in about the same position. But we came along. This is a kindlier, more responsible country, with compassion for fellowman. I have seen it all happen. You would be surprised what a lift you get from that.

We have done well in the sphere of social justice in Canada. Over the last 50 or 60 years we have built a social safety net. I saw it all happen. I helped a little. I participated in it and I am proud of it.

My political and social life began with the poor during the depression. I know that you have heard about the depression—your father and mother might have told you about it. Don't forget that in your father's and mother's home during the depression, if there was not enough to eat it was the wife who did not eat. Those are the kinds of people we have in this country.

My political and social work has revolved about the poor and unfortunate for the last 60 years. I am particularly proud of our medicare system.

In 1919 I was a student at university, when Mr. King held a convention of the Liberal Party. The various regions were entitled to send delegates. In Windsor people were lucky to have enough money to ride on streetcars, let alone send a delegate to Toronto. But someone said, "Dave Croll lives there. He is a good Liberal. Let us appoint him a delegate." So they phoned me and sent me up to Toronto as a delegate.

I was a loud delegate in those days. At the convention Mackenzie King spoke of a national health service that had been put into effect four years before by Lloyd George in England. I supported that concept throughout the years, knowing that we did not have the necessary hospitals, doctors, research or beds and that we would have to wait for what we needed. I did not fully realize the cost, but I knew what it meant, because during the time I was mayor I saw what serious illness did to a family. So I stuck with the idea, and one of the happiest days of my life was in 1965—50 years after-

[Senator Croll.]

wards—when Parliament passed the medicare legislation. That act alone entitles Parliament to wear a laurel wreath for excellence. There is nothing like it any other place in the world. Neither Sweden nor Denmark—in fact, none of the other countries—has the kind of medicare that we have in this country or the universality of our system, which should be given the Nobel Prize for achievement. It is the best in the world. It is not often that we can stand up and speak about having something of value that belongs to us and is characteristic of us. But this is part of our makeup; it is part of our Canadianism. It is, in essence, Canadians. But we cannot rest on our laurels; we cannot take our social justice for granted. We must be very careful not to dismantle the system.

The little wisdom I have achieved over my 90 years tells me that we can never stop fighting for social justice. Social justice is the most important aspect of our life in Parliament; everything emanates from that. We, as politicians, are eminently capable of dealing with the problem because we in this Parliament understand what it is all about, as do other parliaments.

I want to thank you for listening. I hope the things that I have felt are important you also have found important. If so, bless you, for this is one of the blessings and repayments that have come to me over many years. I am thankful for having had the opportunity to tell you this.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

● (1440)

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Honourable senators, may I simply add that I look forward to receiving all of you later this day in the Speaker's Chambers for the reception. I am sure we will hear a great deal more about our colleague at that time.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

THE ESTIMATES, 1990-91—PRIVY COUNCIL VOTE 20—REFERRAL TO JOINT COMMITTEE—MESSAGE FROM COMMONS

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore informed the Senate that the following message had been received:

HOUSE OF COMMONS
CANADA

Tuesday, February 22, 1990

Ordered,—That Privy Council Vote 20, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1991 be referred to the Standing Joint Committee on Official Languages; and

That a Message be sent to the Senate to acquaint Their Honours thereof.

Attest

ROBERT MARLEAU
The Clerk of the House of Commons