

We are aware of the situation that exists in certain countries where the poor do not have anything to eat and where others cannot live serenely for fear of retaliation against themselves or their families. I do not want to dramatize but I think that if we thought about it for a minute we could really appreciate the advantages of our position.

Obviously we too have problems, but with goodwill and ponderation we should certainly find some answers. Indeed the reforms now advocated make Canadians feel protected and considered as first class citizens. But to reach that objective it is obvious that some compromise and sacrifices must be made on both sides.

We cannot ask the Province of Quebec to grant full rights and privileges to the English-speaking minority if major French-speaking minorities in the rest of the country, in Ontario or New Brunswick for instance, are not treated equally. The rights of minorities should not be respected at the expense of the majority. I believe that the fate of Quebec Anglophones does not depend on the Quebec government alone but mainly on the Ontario and New Brunswick governments. Obviously, unless those governments guarantee certain privileges to the French-speaking minority under their jurisdiction, the English-speaking minority in Quebec will be treated on the same basis.

I do not understand some people who stand as fervent champions of French Canadians when they ask for the separation of the Province of Quebec, as they are certainly aware that if they achieve separation they will abandon more than 1,000,000 French Canadians living outside Quebec.

I believe, honourable senators, that we in this house should act as guardians ready to intervene every time the rights of the minority are threatened.

As concerns the reform of the Senate, we should show some wisdom while taking into account the opinion and the demands of the people.

Personally, I partially agree on proposals contained in Bill C-60 concerning the Senate. I would accept that 50 per cent of senators be appointed by the federal government and the other 50 per cent by provinces for a term of ten years. But I entirely disagree with the proposal that senators be appointed by political parties, federal and provincial. In fact, I consider that this procedure would encourage patronage with no regard for the needs of the country and Parliament. You could reply that my proposal holds the same risk. It is true but it is much easier to detect and consequently easier to prevent as it is more limited and easier to identify.

● (1420)

[English]

But I persist in believing that the Senate should continue its work, redouble its efforts in its role as guardian of fundamental liberties and promoter of social justice and peace.

[Translation]

Allow me, honourable senators, to call upon all the mass media, which will have a very important role to play in the coming months as reporters of the great constitutional debates

that we foresee. Their role will be to inform the population, in a constructive way, and to shun the temptation of bias and prejudice, and that goes for the French and English sides alike.

I remain convinced that given co-operation and goodwill on everybody's part, we will preserve the social peace and unity of our country.

I thank you, honourable senators, for the attention you have paid to my brief speech.

[English]

Hon. Florence Bird: Honourable senators, I am honoured to be asked to second the motion for an Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. It is a privilege for which I am grateful and a responsibility which I hope I can fulfil.

I congratulate Senator Rizzuto for his well considered and pertinent analysis of the problems threatening the unity of our country.

This is, I think, a fitting occasion for me to express my satisfaction in being designated to Carleton. I chose Carleton because it was the place of the Honourable Senator Gratton O'Leary. Senator O'Leary and I did not share the same political loyalties, but he was, nonetheless, a valued friend who was always helpful and kind to me. I admired him because he was a first-class working newspaperman, a credit to the fourth estate to which my late husband and I belonged for so many years.

I know, alas, that I can never bring to this historic house the wit and humour, the Irish warmth, and the earthy wisdom of my predecessor. Only in love of our country can I presume to equal him. In that, I am as steadfast as he ever was.

The Throne Speech has outlined a heavy burden of business essential to the good government of our country.

The need for serious retrenchment and spending restraint by the federal government is a harsh necessity. The proposed stern austerity measures must be carried out with efficiency, with courage, and with dispatch, no matter how painful the process may be. For too long Canada has been living beyond her income and, for a nation, as for a family, that can only spell inevitable disaster.

I support the government's decision to transfer funds into programs of economic and social development. I feel strongly that social services designed to assist deprived people in our society must not be reduced. I, therefore, applaud the concrete proposals that have been made by the Minister of National Health and Welfare, the Honourable Monique Bégin. They should help to provide an improved standard of living for many people now living on the edge of poverty. They may also help to keep our economy on an even keel.

The proposed \$20 increase in benefits to old age pensioners who are receiving the guaranteed annual income supplement will enable 1,200,000 people to buy a few necessities that they have been forced to do without. Inflation, and especially the high cost of food, has brought real hardship to over half of Canada's old people who rely on the guaranteed income supplement to supply their daily bread. The projected increase