

and refugees, and our financial contribution to international development, while insufficient, is still above zero.

For all these reasons Canada is beyond a doubt one of the most respected countries in the world at the present time. People who have travelled know how much we are liked, even though we have done nothing special to deserve so much affection, admiration and confidence. The poorer countries love us, the rich countries love us. It is crazy. Why do we hesitate even one moment to "use" these good feelings people have about us in order to put ourselves resolutely in the service of the whole human community and, perhaps, justify our mainly unearned reputation?

In today's circumstances, the simple fact of being a country without a history constitutes a powerful advantage; it gives us perhaps the right, if not the duty, to involve ourselves to the hilt in contemporary history by playing a major role in it and emerging once and for all from our insignificance. As Paolo Freire said, "It's a question of little by little taking history into our own hands, so that we can make it, not suffer it."

[Translation]

Of course, the Speech from the Throne we heard yesterday in this house cannot meet the expectations of all Canadians. And yet, for a great many of them, it is a message of hope, proof that, in these difficult times, the government of our country has compassion for the most underprivileged Canadians, that it wants to help effectively those who can alter the course of events, and that in spite of everything it does not forget our brothers and sisters in the Third World who are infinitely more underprivileged than the most underprivileged among us.

That is why I am pleased, as a Quebec senator representing the very beautiful senatorial district of Wellington, to second the motion for an Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne moved by my colleague Senator Bosa.

Hon. Duff Roblin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I was sorry to learn yesterday that the Leader of the Government, my friend Senator Olson, has been hospitalized and will undergo surgery soon. On behalf of all members of this party, I extend to Senator Olson our best and most sincere wishes for full and prompt recovery.

To Senator Bosa I offer my warmest congratulations. Senator Bosa, like his ancestor Cicero, has a gift for making convincing pleas, particularly about peace. Because of my ancestor Cesare Alberti of Venice, good Italian blood is flowing in my veins, more rapidly in all likelihood, proud as I was to hear the senator. I must congratulate Senator Bosa on all his achievements since he made Canada his adoptive country.

To Senator Jacques Hébert I would say that we had been anxiously waiting for his first speech in the Senate. We had heard that he was a very thoughtful and competent man, and that he would make a most valuable contribution to the proceedings of the Senate. What we had heard was true. We have noted that the Speech from the Throne contains one of the ideas originally expressed by Senator Hébert; it has become the policy of the government and we will soon have a

[Senator Hébert.]

Minister of State for Youth. In the past and today still, the senator has done and is doing excellent work for young Canadians.

Senator Frith, in his new responsibilities as interim Leader, will have to respond later to what I said concerning the Throne Speech. I have no doubt he will discharge that duty very well. I have the sad conviction he will have no great difficulty refuting what I will have said concerning the merits, the depth and the credibility of the Throne Speech. By that I mean refuting my views to his group's satisfaction.

Although I have not had the pleasure of hearing the throne speech as delivered by the Governor General, you may rest assured I have since read it carefully. I took notes, I checked certain statements and I made some comparisons. I am therefore in a position to share with the House my views on that interesting document.

But before doing so, I must say that although I am proud to accept that responsibility, I would have preferred having Senator Flynn here in good health and able to do this himself. I am happy to state that Senator Flynn is very well on his way to recovery, he feels much better and, according to his physicians, he has reason to hope he can probably be here by February next.

● (1610)

[English]

The debate on the Speech from the Throne in the Senate takes place in a context different from that in the House of Commons. Our vote, if we vote at all, will not determine the fate of any government. Therefore, by that fact alone, this is somewhat less of a parliamentary occasion than that which takes place in the other house. Nonetheless, it presents a most welcome opportunity to reflect on public affairs in Canada and to offer some observations on the way in which we are to go.

The Throne Speech, like the prorogation speech which preceded it by a mere seven days, is a wide-ranging document and it is as full of promises as a pudding is full of plums. However, I confess that there are many passages in that document which had a familiar ring; it was almost as though I had heard some of them before. There were not only echoes of the prorogation speech of seven days ago, but also faint reverberations that come down to me from the Throne Speech of 1980 itself. It seems to me that this Throne Speech can best be understood in the context of its relationship to the Throne Speech of 1980 and, particularly, to the prorogation speech that we heard a short while ago. It is perhaps part two of an exercise by which the government puts its best foot forward, and who can blame them for that because they are in need of a best foot these days. I have to issue a caution that as I read the prorogation speech and as I read this Speech from the Throne, both of them are highly selective documents. But when they are read together, they can be read with profit, not only for what they contain, but for what they fail to contain. They provide for those who wish to learn a profile of this administration which is now proceeding to its final days.