indictment. The charge is made every day in many ways, on television, in the newspapers, and in the university lecture room, that Parliament is an irrelevant institution. I do not believe that we should indulge in self-praise; I think we should be aware, as Senator Choquette is, of our shortcomings and of the need to correct ourselves and our operations to justify confidence in the mandate given us. I think at the same time we should recognize that we have, in this chamber particularly, an opportunity to meet the challenge that is directed against Parliament.

The suggestion that great issues in this country should be resolved by a public d alogue in which Parliament does not take part is a threat to our free society. Let no one think that the dialogue does take place only between Parliament and the people. The dialogue, as I see it, in this contracted society of ours, with television and other communications media, is oftentimes between the people and those who are set up to report the activities of those who were either elected or appointed to do the job involved in the enacting of legislation. But the dialogue should not be only between them. They should report the dialogue—and are free to comment on it—that ought to be between Parliament and the people on all the great issues. We in this house have a special opportunity since we are not bogged down by heavy government programs. It need not mean that we must reach decisions on every matter; it need not mean that we have to have a concensus on every subject. That is not the nature of a deliberative assembly. In the United Nations they are now learning that there is a value in debate and in discussion and in that kind of projection even though it may not lead always to firm conclusions. This Senate can take an additional step forward by addressing itself to these vital issues, thereby making a contribution as well as justifying its existence in this federation of ours.

Honourable senators, the debate on the Speech from the Throne is intended to enable us not necessarily to discuss all the measures mentioned in the speech—there is nothing to preclude such a detailed examination if one wishes to make it—but it is an occasion on which we are entitled to address ourselves, as Senator Choquette and I have sought to do this evening, to some of the major issues that confront the country. Having done that, and before I take my seat, let me assure Senator Choquette of one thing that is certain. It is that this government of which I am a member is alive to its problems, has a purpose and a plan for Canada. It includes in that plan the preservation of the unity of this country. And because we hope to be able to preserve the unity of this country, we hope at the same time to continue the Canadian tradition of making a contribution to the peace of the world.

On motion of Hon. Mr. Phillips (Rigaud), debate adjourned.

The Senate adjourned until tomorrow at 3 p.m.