

ment is essential to Canada's welfare and that only the present party—I am speaking of the present party of Mr. Trudeau, because he had had another one before—is able to give the country good government.

The government announced in the Throne Speech that it "... must ensure that a sufficient part of the funds generated by higher prices will be used for exploration and development." That smells a lot like the threat of further intervention on the part of this government—further self-defeating controls with only nuisance value.

For the government to say that it will have to see to this itself as though it might have to undertake to explore and expand that particular industry, is utter nonsense. The government has no expertise in this area. The Special Senate Committee on Science Policy in one of its reports warned against just that eventuality. Government has no business getting actively involved in the petroleum industry. The Throne Speech speaks of the government's wanting "... to create a national petroleum company which will assure greater Canadian presence and participation" in exploration and development. That is more statist nonsense. Again the government goes into competition with private enterprise. And again the taxpayer will be suffered to pick up the deficits as he has in the past. So honourable senators will excuse me if I can't work up any enthusiasm for the government's plan for solving our energy problem.

I come now to the last part of my speech—the last but not the least, since I wish to devote it to the Senate. We all know that the Senate does not, in general, get a good press. As a matter of fact, it gets very little press at all. We are also aware that there is a body of opinion which holds that an unelected Senate is an anachronism in modern society. However, I am convinced that if the question were put squarely to the Canadian people, a majority would continue to favour reform over abolition of this body. Reform is what we need, and good ideas are not lacking. Many of the recommendations made in the report of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons on the Constitution of Canada are excellent and could be implemented without amendment to the B.N.A. Act. One of these has to do with the membership.

Recommendation 39 reads as follows:

All Senators should continue to be appointed by the Federal Government: as vacancies occur in the present Senate, one-half of the Senators from each Province and Territory should be appointed in the same manner as at present; the other half from each Province and Territory should be appointed by the Federal Government from a panel of nominees submitted by the appropriate Provincial or Territorial Government.

Now, this proposition stemmed from the fact that two roles were intended for the Senate by the Fathers of Confederation: 1. Protection of provincial, minority or regional rights; 2. The review of legislation by giving it a "sober second thought." However, there was another and much more important reason behind this recommendation. The report did not spell it out because that might have been considered indiscreet. The reason is this: for the past 30 years or more, the Senate has been as close to being a one-party house as is possible in a country which consid-

ers itself democratic. The Senate has, for over a quarter of a century, had huge Liberal majorities. There has been an imbalance in the representation of public opinion, which is dangerous for a chamber of this nature. Canadians of all political persuasions should be represented in the Senate in the same proportion, or as near to it as possible, as they are represented in the House of Commons. At the beginning of the last session we welcomed to this chamber five new senators. One of them was Senator Martial Asselin and he was the first to take a seat with the official Opposition since 1963. Since those appointments, five more senators have been summoned to this place and seated on the government side. The present standing in this place, I remind you, is: Liberals, 75; Conservatives, 17; Social Credit, 1; and Independents, 2. The point I want to make again is that it is becoming increasingly difficult for the official Opposition, as well as for the Senate as a whole, to discharge properly its constitutional duties, and the main problem is this lopsided membership.

● (2050)

At one time it was thought that the present Prime Minister had adopted a policy whereby a certain proportion of the appointments to this chamber would be supporters of the official Opposition and other parties represented in the House of Commons, or a number of independents representing large segments of the population. Many in the ranks of the official Opposition resigned in the hope that the vacancies created would be filled by PC supporters. They were not. Some of those I lead would consider resigning even today, if they could hope to be replaced by someone supporting the official Opposition.

Honourable senators must also bear in mind that apart from Senator Asselin all those sitting on this side were summoned to the Senate more than 10 years ago. Therefore, our average age is higher than that on the government side, and this is an additional handicap to the huge difference in numbers.

This problem would not be so acute if there had developed within the huge majority of government supporters a real internal opposition. This would have helped the Senate to look at legislation with a critical eye, a task which it is the Senate's duty to perform. Some Liberal senators have been known to "lose their cool" and disagree with the government. But that sort of eccentric behaviour has always met with disapproving scowls from the government benches. Consequently, only very infrequent and sporadic has been the criticism of government legislation emanating from the benches opposite.

In the last 15 years or so, the Senate has assumed an increasingly important investigative role. Our committees have been very active and extremely efficient in this role, especially when matters dealt with were of a non-partisan nature. For example, the Senate has done excellent work in the areas of science policy, poverty, economic growth, employment and price stability, the Constitution, the study of tax bills, et cetera. We have the right to be proud of what we have accomplished in this area. However, by our giving too much importance to this investigative role, the people may be led to forget that our first responsibility, and by far the more important, is the review of legislation.