

total of 125 involved in the dispute. Negotiations are continuing, and it is hoped that a solution can be found shortly. If further information is available this evening it will be brought to the chamber.

Senator Argue: I should like to add my voice to that of Senators McDonald and Perrault. I just want to point out something that I am sure many of you know. The Canadian Wheat Board is daily losing sales because of this tie-up. There is involved, between now and the close of shipping, the shipment of some \$450 million worth of grain, so it is very important to the western economy, and to the whole Canadian economy. I am encouraged by the statement of the Leader of the Government, and I am sure he will speak for all senators when he relates this urgency to the government.

Senator Flynn: A senator defending regional aspirations and interests.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

MOTION FOR ADDRESS IN REPLY—DEBATE CONTINUED

The Senate resumed from Thursday, October 12, consideration of His Excellency the Governor General's Speech at the opening of the session, and the motion of Senator Rizzuto, seconded by Senator Bird, for an Address in reply thereto.

● (2020)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jacques Flynn: Honourable senators, the traditional speech I have to make on the occasion of the debate on the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne is, from all standpoints as far as I am concerned, the most distressing.

Yesterday's vote did suggest to me that I could have dispensed with participating in this debate. After all, the people spoke. They gave their opinion of the Speech from the Throne and the government's policy. But in any case that vote—and this will please my friend Senator Denis—will have shortened my comments, perhaps not enough, but yet shortened them. It will also have toned them down because, you know me, I never like to hit someone who is down. You know my very kind nature.

Senator Langlois: Angelical.

Senator Flynn: Yes, angelical—I readily accept Senator Langlois' suggestion.

In any case, we are beginning a session that should not be taking place. I believe the government will say with hindsight that it should never have taken place.

Every cloud has a silver lining. So I take consolation in the fact that last session—yes, the last one, I imagine—of this Parliament will have given their Excellencies the Governor General and Madame Léger another opportunity to come and meet Parliament before the end of their term in office. This also gives me an opportunity to extend to them on behalf of the official opposition our sincere compliments and our gratitude for the admirable, even courageous, way in which they discharged their difficult and delicate responsibilities. We wish

[Senator Perrault.]

them well on the eve of their departure from Rideau Hall for a well-deserved and, hopefully, very happy retirement.

The other consolation, of course, will be the fact that this session will have extended the term of the Honourable Renaude Lapointe. Last year at the beginning of the previous session when rumors of an election in the fall of 1977 had just been dissipated, she heard the same reaction from me. I would like to offer her our compliments and the assurance of our full co-operation.

The other night I had an opportunity to make a few comments about the speeches of the mover and the seconder of the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, and I repeat them again—my congratulations on a job well done in rather trying circumstances.

I wrote those comments only this morning following the events yesterday, because if I had done so earlier, they could have been irrelevant.

I asked myself what was the appropriate thing to say under the circumstances. If conditions had been normal, as they were last year or two years ago, I would have spoken directly about the measures described in the Speech from the Throne with regard to the economic and political conditions in the country. I will, of course, allude to those matters, taking into consideration the non-confidence vote that the government has received from almost one million electors. It is indeed a post-mortem of the defeat which it has just suffered and I would like to outline a few particulars.

Generally speaking, I would say that the government was told by the electors of fifteen constituencies throughout Canada that they are tired of its clumsy and off-handed dealings with Canadians and the way it tackles the serious problems now arising.

Let us consider first the attitude of the government towards Canadians. It has taken a cavalier attitude. Indeed for over a year, we have been facing the prospect of a general election which will probably be held only in the spring of 1979 and perhaps later as I will explain in a few minutes.

We remember that the government was on the verge of calling an election last fall and indicated afterwards that it would be held last spring. Remember the situation that prevailed in Parliament before the Easter recess. We were being pushed, we were being told: hurry up, pass the legislation, so that an election can be held in June. Then at some point, in May if I am not mistaken, the election was postponed because of a poll that did not favour the government. There was talk then of a July or early September election. With that in mind, the government tabled in early June their white paper and Bill C-60 dealing with constitutional reform. There was a clear intention to provide an election issue designed to draw the people's attention away from serious economic problems and the government's clumsiness in dealing with them.

Then came another poll that was also unfavourable. Maybe then the election should be postponed until October or early November.