

voice its opinion on any amendment to the Constitution and, consequently, on abolishing, retaining or reforming the Senate. Hence the urgency for us senators to take a position in the near future. I am quite confident that we do have within this chamber all the necessary elements to recommend the changes to be made. I know that all honourable senators are more concerned with the constitutional future of the country than with their own future. It is in that nonpartisan and unbiased spirit that we should pursue the debate.

In November 1980, the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, under the outstanding chairmanship of the Honourable Senator H. Carl Goldenberg, submitted a report which could surely be used as a basic working document. As you know, that report is entitled "Certain Aspects of the Canadian Constitution."

I particularly want to congratulate the Honourable Maurice Lamontagne, the chairman of a subcommittee on which I had the privilege of sitting. There are two parts to that report: Part I, "Toward A Renewed Federation: A New Federal-Provincial Council", and Part II, "Toward A Renewed Senate".

It is possible, and surely it must be true, that several senators do not agree with all its recommendations, and in particular, the Honourable Senator Duff Roblin who advocates an elected Senate, contrary to the recommendation contained in the report.

Senator Asselin: That possibility is also dealt with in the report.

Senator Leblanc: Yes, it is. I believe the recommendations advocate that present procedures be maintained but that, in addition, the provinces be asked to assist with the appointments.

Some honourable senators may not agree fully with Part I. It might be interesting to hear them on the subject, and also to find out what their own proposals might be in this respect.

● (1530)

Some senators may not agree with all the recommendations of Part II. Some may wish to present recommendations not included in this report. Now is the time and the opportunity to express and to command them to the Senate and thus to all Canadians.

Perhaps right from the start we should stick to reforms which require neither changes to our Constitution nor amendments to existing legislation and concentrate on the fourth conclusion of the report which is that the internal operation of the Senate should be improved.

Sad to say, there are 14 vacancies in the Senate at the present time. I believe that this lack of human resources should be corrected as soon as possible so that we can discuss this problem with people who also have opinions on the main objective, namely, to see that the Senate becomes a more efficient tool of federalism through which regional interests of all citizens could be represented.

I, for one, endorse the report's recommendations, although I am open and receptive to any further recommendations that might be put forward in this chamber. I hope that for the

[Senator Leblanc.]

benefit of all Canadians and our political system, the government and the provinces will heed us and retain the bicameral system which has proved successful politically, socially and economically in this country and which many other countries have envied and, indeed, often copied. One thing is sure: the Senate in its present form is now on its way out and any changes made will have an impact on the whole Canadian parliamentary system.

Honourable senators, I had many misgivings when drawing up the conclusion to my brief remarks. Since I am convinced of the usefulness of the Senate in the Canadian system, I wondered if, as an accountant and a Canadian citizen, I should reply to the argument often made in some circles that the Senate is not worth the money it costs the Canadian people. In reply—and I repeat that I was not without misgivings, but I believe that these figures are rather significant just the same—I should like to say to the Canadian people that each senator, including the 375 or so members of the Senate staff, costs every citizen of Canada \$1 per year, since our budget for 1982-83 is \$24 billion and Canada has a population of over 24 million, which means that it costs one third of a cent per Canadian per day.

Proceeding with this financial analogy, I might determine the cost per year per taxpayer. As there are approximately 14 million taxpayers, the cost per year per taxpayer would be about \$1.70 per day. And proceeding with this financial analogy even further, I might say that the budget of the Senate represents 3/10 thousandths of 1 per cent of the total \$74 billion budget of the Canadian government.

Senator Haidasz: That is all?

Senator Leblanc: Yes, that is all. Of course, I do not mean to suggest that the 90 honourable senators and 375 employees are not worth more than the figures I have quoted. But I think it is important to provide such information while the question of Senate reform is being debated and to emphasize that it would be impossible to find within a single institution so many highly qualified Canadians at so small a cost, even in the private sector.

● (1540)

[English]

On motion of Senator Asselin, for Senator Macdonald, debate adjourned.

EL SALVADOR

POLITICAL, MILITARY AND SOCIAL SITUATION—DEBATE CONCLUDED

The Senate resumed from Thursday, June 11, 1981, the debate on the inquiry of Senator Macquarrie calling the attention of the Senate to:

(1) the increasingly dangerous political, military and social situation in El Salvador;

(2) the compelling hazards of third party interventions and the possibility of the escalation of hostile actions within El Salvador;