

country as a whole and to reconcile regional and other differences.

Honourable senators, that is a quotation from an address by the Honourable Robert Stanfield in the fifth lecture in the George C. Nowlan lectureship series at Acadia University in Wolfville last month.

Are Mr. Stanfield and I overstating the consensus role of the parties in the present crisis of minority rights and provincial rights? The textbook, or classic roles of the political parties (poli-sci 100 at perhaps any university) are three: First, an effective role for men and women to do useful things together for their country, a way in which the individual can count and weigh on the collectivity; second, to clarify issues and thereby make decisions or, as economists say, illuminating alternatives; and third, to make elections possible by helping the choice by the elector among a multitude of candidates.

Have the political parties played these roles in history with reference particularly to our interest tonight, which is minority rights and provincial rights? I believe they have. Here are a few examples with reference to minority rights.

We have already referred to slow progress in minority rights outside Quebec, but would there have been any progress in minority rights in Ontario if the Conservative Party had not finally taken up minority rights in Ontario as a party issue? Would there have been any progress in New Brunswick if the party of our colleague, the Honourable Senator Robichaud, had not determined to make it a party issue to pass the New Brunswick Official Languages Act? In Canada itself, would there have been any Official Languages Act but for the support of all the political parties? As another example of minority rights protection by the parties, if the traditional parties had not failed to make plain the option between survival and assimilation, would a Parti Acadien have been necessary at all? Would Robert Stanfield's disavowal of Leonard Jones have been necessary except for his perception of the divergence between the candidate's view on minority rights and his party's views on that issue?

As for provincial rights, it was not until a rather skillful political party of team-minded footballers took power in

Alberta that those of us in the east had to worry about freezing in the dark, whether or not our parents had the benefit of holy wedlock. In history, Joseph Howe at Confederation and Joseph Smallwood in 1949 identified party with provincial aspiration rights in which the fate of the province itself was at stake.

What of separatism itself? Where would separatism be without a political party?

[*Translation*]

Before the separatist option was taken over by a coherent and disciplined party it was a dream, indeed an illusion entertained by small groups of pseudo-intellectuals and revolutionaries.

All told, honourable senators, I see in this brief analysis the revelation of a fortunate coincidence for this house: the traditional roles of the Senate, the elements of the present crisis, the classic usefulness of the parties—those three things put together set for us an important mission of popular education.

Too many Canadians mistrust parties. That, admittedly is due to the human failures that we, for the most part experienced party workers, know better than many others. But those weaknesses must not make us lose sight of the indispensable nature of political formations to clarify the alternatives and ensure the very effectiveness of political activity.

Honourable senators, let us make that reality known to Canadians. Let us make it known to them without any embarrassment nor excuse as the principal condition of a society which wants to govern itself in freedom and stability.

Regional conferences, popular publications, information tours of all kinds, that is the leadership that is demanded of the Senate by the combination of our traditions and the present crisis—an active, not passive role. No inquiry but education to put to use our experience and privileges to answer the question that thousands of Canadians are asking today: "What can I do?"

On motion of Senator Rizzuto, debate adjourned.

● (2100)

The Senate adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.