

[Translation]

Voluntarism is primarily a new school for our youth of the '80s, an initiation to the forthcoming society and a notion which young Canadians support more or less consciously: a more humane society which practises consumerism with moderation, where the economic growth takes the capacity of the environment into account and where technologies have less adverse impact on the ecology, where people are more aware of the need for moderation in their eating and drinking habits. On a planet which has become a global village, every human being would be his or her neighbour's keeper—all citizens, young and old, would get involved in the development of their country and the rest of the world.

We can never repeat too often that it is not in school that young people get their ideas about politics and society. They develop them from human, strong, concrete experiences, in a surrounding which is open, real, and where they can share responsibilities with other young people, in co-operation with grown-ups. That is why it is necessary that young people be presented with projects which are fine and noble and which call upon their generosity and enthusiasm, and to suggest effective means for them to become useful and complete citizens.

● (1600)

[English]

When we speak of youth, we are speaking of Canada's future, naturally. This is so vitally important that I would like to go on talking about it for a long time, at the risk of having to skimp on the other elements in the Speech from the Throne that captured my attention, but do not worry. Instead, I am going to succumb to another temptation: I am going to propose to you, honourable senators, that a special committee be established to study the problems facing young people and the solutions that could be adopted.

Canadians still remember the remarkable report *Child at Risk* that was published by the Standing Senate Committee on Health, Welfare and Science in 1980. The United Nations has declared 1985 to be "International Youth Year". Wouldn't the creation of a Senate committee on youth be a major contribution by Canada to this international event? Wouldn't the work of such a committee be invaluable to the new Minister of State for Youth?

[Translation]

Unfortunately, I have very little time to express my agreement with other parts of the Throne Speech. I would have liked to explain why I feel it is necessary to "preserve medicare, increase pensions for the elderly, improve public safety, extend native rights and further protect the freedom of individuals."

After sitting for two years as co-chairman on the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee, and after reading nearly 1,500 briefs on the subject and discussing 500 of those briefs at public hearings in seventeen cities across Canada, I am delighted with the Government's decision to "reinforce Canada's identity through enhanced recognition of our cultural

heritage and increased support for our creative artists by new broadcasting, telecommunications and copyright policies."

On second thought, however, I wonder whether the fundamental principle in the Throne Speech was not the government's clearly expressed intention to continue to play an active role in seeking world peace. It is true that a nuclear holocaust would make any other measures, projects and collective or individual plans entirely futile. The Government is therefore absolutely right to "devote its full resources to exploration of every possible means to restore confidence and trust to the international scene", as it is to continue to "advance proposals to slow the steady spiral of the arms race, hold the spread of nuclear weapons and create the conditions for greater security at lower levels of armament."

Further on, where it says in the Throne Speech that improving the climate among nations requires knowledge, creativity and the determination to find solutions, I am inevitably led to ponder the role the Senate might play in this activity. Considering the very substantial competence of many of our honourable senators and their considerable experience in wide-ranging areas of interest, including international affairs, I think a special committee or a subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Affairs that would devote its efforts to exploring "every possible means" to restore confidence among the peoples of this earth, could, in fact, play a historical part and be assured of the gratitude of future generations, if there are to be any!

In concluding, I would like to express my pleasure at hearing the Government give the assurance that it "will maintain its commitment to overseas development aid". Thus, "Canada will achieve aid goals of 0.5 per cent of the Gross National Product by 1985, and 0.7 per cent of the GNP by the end of this decade". Unfortunately, we are still far from the objective proposed to industrialized countries by the Pearson Report fourteen years ago! At least we are on the right track.

Furthermore, I feel that Canada should play a major role in establishing a much needed North-South dialogue. It could act as a catalyst and become the conscience of the rich countries.

[English]

The only real question to be asked is the following: Does Canada deserve to play such a great role as one which could, by contagion, change the face of the world? Surely not. But history has its foibles and, through no merit of our own, has been kind to us. With just a touch of madness, we might think we were fore-ordained.

First of all, unlike most Western countries, we have no colonial past with which to reproach ourselves, and no ambitions toward power or conquest. We could make the bomb, but we do not do it; we are more the victims of the multinationals than their accomplices; and we have old democratic traditions and respect for human rights. We are not particularly racist—not yet. As Canadians of diverse ethnic origins, we get along reasonably well together, and, without being as open-armed as we might be, we have accepted a goodly number of immigrants