

situation in which it would consider itself subject to being outvoted. What it would like, and I do not believe it can get it, is a one-on-one situation in which the rest of Canada has one vote and Quebec has one vote. I do not think that is achievable. It is a tragedy but I do not think it is achievable.

● (1230)

For the rest of Canada, or if by some strange miracle Canada survives, we are going to have to go to something like the Australian model.

**Senator Fairbairn:** May I ask another question, Senator Gigantès? I am very disturbed to hear your pessimism about the future of Canada and your feeling that separation is inevitable for the province of Quebec. I find that hard to accept from you, because, at your core, you have always indicated a feeling of optimism that problems can be worked out. I am wondering if you could tell me—and I hope it will be a positive answer—that you have not completely abandoned either your efforts or your conviction that it is still possible to keep this country together?

**Senator Gigantès:** I would like to think it is possible to keep the country together, but look at the circumstances. The strongest federalist force in Quebec right now is Premier Robert Bourassa. I am very worried about how long he is staying in the hospital. He did have a malignant melanoma. We do know that it was metastasized into his lymphatic system. He then went back for a check-up. He was operated on again and he has been in the hospital a considerably long time.

I am not a medical doctor. I have read the statistics. Some people survive, but they are few. Most people do not survive this. Therefore, we have the dominant Liberal federalist force in Quebec, Premier Bourassa, having to think of what happens next, and, because of the failing of his health, he will not be considered by the rest of Canada as a good long-term prospect for negotiating. The chances of the rest of Canada having to negotiate with Parizeau are very great.

**Senator Fairbairn:** What about Rémillard?

**Senator Gigantès:** Well, who knows? He might surprise us. Harry Truman surprised people. I hope he does. My main worry is on the federal side. We are in opposition and Mr. Chrétien is the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Government of Canada is someone utterly distrusted by English Canadians. They will have nightmares at the thought that he might be negotiating with Quebec on anything. They consider him, and quite rightly, a prisoner of the separatists in the Quebec caucus. I do not see how, under these practical circumstances, we can find an accommodation in which English Canada will be wise enough to accept Quebec's demands and Quebec will be wise enough not to start feeling humiliated every time somebody questions the position of a comma or a full stop.

That is why I was giving the example that I am afraid the political scientists and columnists on both sides will construct a wall on Victoria Island, where the Champlain bridge passes; and the wall will be called, on one side, the "wall of the humiliations", and, on the other, the "wall of the ingrati-

[Senator Gigantès.]

tudes". And the first humiliation described will be how Lucien Bouchard was humiliated by Canada by being made Ambassador to Paris and then a member of the cabinet. On the other side of the wall some columnists from the *Ottawa Sun* will be filling in the ingratitude, and the first one will be that Bouchard was made an ambassador and a minister. He was dragged out of his little backwater and made Ambassador to Paris. That will be an ingratitude. There will be a period when we will be lobbing ingratitude and humiliations over that wall, and it is going to make it very, very difficult for people of good will and reason to reach a decent accommodation.

Of course, I enjoy taking shots at Mr. Mulroney, but I wish he were better, even though his being better might doom my party to another term in opposition. I do wish he were better, because Canada in the next two years preceding the election needs a decent Prime Minister, and we do not have one. That is why I am afraid.

Now I will continue.

To sum up, developments during the last two parliaments have had a mixed impact on the fortunes of political oppositions in Canada. The major overhaul of House of Commons rules begun in 1982 and completed in 1987, and the renewed activism of the Senate after 1984, have provided new opportunities for opposition members to contribute to the policy process, at least at the margins. The presence of television cameras in the Commons and the possible expansion of electronic coverage to committee hearings are also innovations which offer advantages to a skilled opposition. At the same time, some of the procedural reforms, such as the streamlining of debates and the taking of votes, primarily aid the government by making it harder for opposition parties to sustain the use of dilatory or obstructionist tactics. Moreover, the opposition must be careful that in resorting to time-wasting devices and theatrical outbursts in Question Period it is not creating an unfavourable impression of parliament among the general public.

The two parliamentary oppositions in Ottawa must also consider their role in relation to other extra-parliamentary circumstances and forms of political opposition. Our electoral system frequently results in sharp regional imbalances in the parties' caucus representation, in a high electoral casualty rate for caucus dissidents and independents, and in the exclusion of a growing number of minor or so-called "fringe" parties from parliamentary life.

That may not be the case in the next Parliament. That will only make matters worse.

A significant number of Canadians probably feel that their views are not adequately represented in the ranks of either the government or the opposition. At the same time, non-party protest and lobby groups have become increasingly active at all stages of the political process. In constitutional matters, the major oppositional roles now tend to be played by provincial governments and legislatures. The opposition caucuses, therefore, cannot just fix