

the pretence of preserving the French language which is disappearing. It is inconceivable to witness an intensification of this campaign at a time when the French language is secure under the blanket of a legislative instrument known as the Official Languages Act, at a time when Quebec artists attain international and national recognition, thanks very often to federal grants, and at a time when the economic and political future of French-speaking Quebecers is improving to such an extent that it is no longer a case of survival but of complete achievement.

We can only hope that the Quebec government will act in an equitable fashion in the area of languages, but with the necessary tact and wisdom which circumstances command, never disregarding the rights of all their citizens or the rights of French-speaking Canadians outside Quebec, and remembering that the French-speaking community in Quebec has always foiled the expectations of prophesiers of evil and victoriously accepted any challenge.

To my mind, the senator was right in putting the question because I noticed this morning, in the newspapers, that the Quebec Premier said that he did not intend to encourage the extremists. I know the Quebec Premier very well: he is a moderate man, who knows Canada well, who has great confidence in the bilingualism program throughout Canada; I know full well that he is absolutely convinced of the merits of Confederation.

● (2150)

[English]

I agree with the statements of the Leader of the Opposition regarding the recommendations made by the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and of the House of Commons for changes in the Constitution and, in particular, I agree with him that most of their recommendations are worthy of the support which he gave them tonight. He himself was a distinguished member of that committee.

I wish to say that whatever criticism is levelled at this body, let us not forget that criticism is levelled not only at the Senate but at Parliament itself. One has only to read articles that recently appeared in the *Parliamentarian* to see that all over the Commonwealth, particularly in the United Kingdom, criticisms are made of the parliamentary institution. They are also made in the United States and in particular against the Senate of the United States. Many

believe that the parliamentary system and the deliberative method is no longer valuable nor meaningful and has no longer any relevance. However, we are here as a result of the decisions made in 1864 and 1867 by the Fathers of Confederation. We are a confederation, and almost every confederation in the world has an upper house. I do not fear for the support on the part of provincial governments or of the people of Canada for this institution.

We, however, can make changes; we do not need to wait for constitutional agreement nor for government decision. We do not need to wait for action by Parliament, either in one house or in the other. We ourselves, as senators, have in our hands the opportunity of enriching our contribution toward making this an even better place than we believe fundamentally it is. Each of us knows that by observing our obligations here, paying them not peripheral attention but primary attention, we will perhaps be putting forward the best reform. I have no doubt that that is the intention of us all, as we begin this new session. That, at any rate, I hope is the intention.

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the nice things he said about me; I am not used to receiving them. With regard to the criticism he made tonight, there may be some justification. I assure him that whatever I have done has been with only the best of intentions, because I share with him, as I share with everyone else here, the belief that, in a confederation such as ours, an institution of this type renders an important service to the country in protecting, recognizing and discussing provincial rights—in the national interest, of course, if they meet that test. I wish to state as strongly as I can, however, that while I agree with what Senator Flynn had, in the main, to say, I do not agree with the nature of his political criticisms tonight. I found little merit whatsoever in them. I commend him to read the Speech from the Throne again.

Hon. Mr. Flynn: This time I will fall asleep.

Hon. Mr. Martin: My honourable friend said he would fall asleep, but he should not fall asleep over a document which contains such a good record and gives promise for such constructive action for the welfare of Canada.

Hon. Mr. Flynn: You are making a good joke.

On motion of Senator Langlois, debate adjourned.

The Senate adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.