

A bum rap on the Senate

Lately the Canadian Senate has been in the news a lot, a shock to most Canadians since the word was that it had actually been abolished in 1972 and buried with Lester B. Pearson as a small token of our appreciation to this fine and honest man.

Recently Prime Minister Brian Mulroney has been stuffing the senate with Conservatives bridging its number of members to 112 from the traditional total of 104.

Oddly enough, I find myself fully supporting our prime minister on this one, though we differ ever so slightly on intent.

You see, Brian Mulroney

William J. Thomas

All The World's A Circus

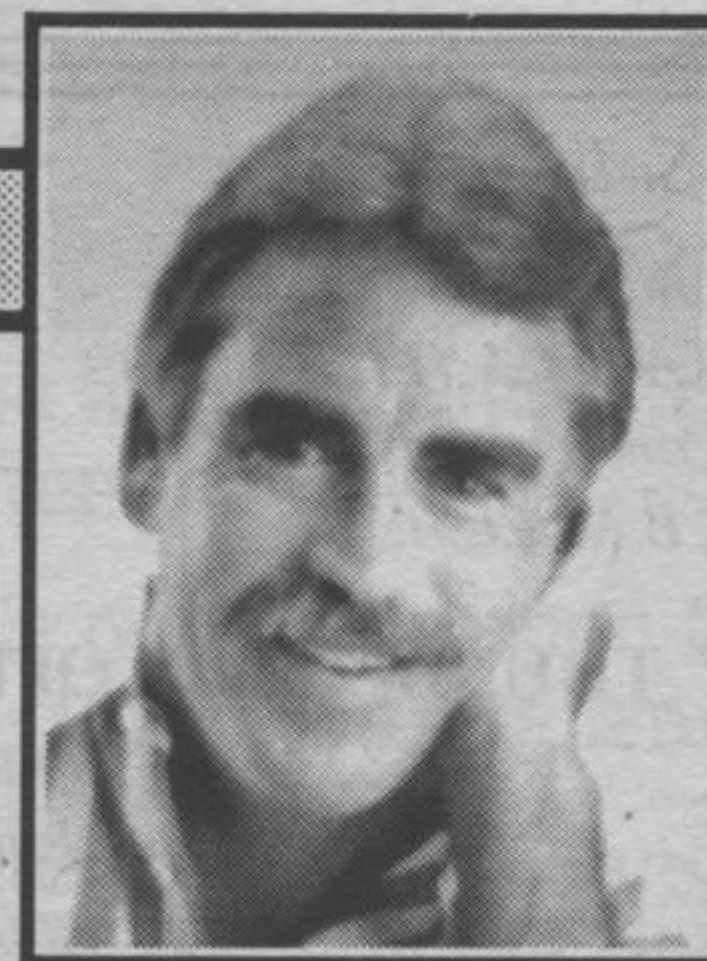
wants to stuff the Senate so he can ramrod an inevitable loathesome and prohibitive tax down the throats of those Canadians who have so far managed to dodge the bullet of Free Trade and hang on to a job.

I, on the other hand would like to stuff the Senate down an abandoned mine shaft near Schumacher, Ontario unless the abandoned mine shafts near Elliot Lake prove to be deeper and more toxic in which case we could do it there.

And in doing so, I believe we taxpayers have the right to expect the full weight of this esteemed and judicious body 100% behind our prime minister on the way down.

Much like the House of Lords of the British Parliament, the Canadian Senate is essentially a place where rich lawyers go to die in the style they've become accustomed to.

Senators in Canada come in three sizes - small, medium and largess.



It's not just that Senators are old, ours have actually seized up and are rusting.

The problem with Canadian Senators is not the perceived problem of discriminatory democratic principles. In fact our

prime minister has proven time and time again, and I believe the record bears him out, that he is dead against them. Democratic principles, that is.

No, the problem with the senate is one of redundancy. Senators are a bunch of useless, arthritic, freeloaders who in no way represent nor implement the wishes of the Canadian people. You see the problem don't you? That's right - we already have people like that in the House of Commons. Why would we need two futile factions of government when one is already doing such a great job of screwing up this

continued on page 13

Summits can be a waste

Don't you sometimes wish that all those people who attend all those conferences, summits, seminars and think-tanks dealing with the 'poverty and despair' problems of the world, would just stay at home and stop wasting so much money?

It's the expenditure of monies on the darn things which really gets to yer ole Baba. Here they are, supposedly meeting to discuss seriously how to alleviate the poverty and despair of too many peoples in this benighted world of ours, while, at the same time, horrendous amounts are being spent to get them there and keep them there for a few days.

A think-tank on 'Poverty' where the 'esteemed delegates' then go out and feast hugely on the delicacies of the host capital city, is such a horse's laugh as to be almost pathetic. Each time I read of such a meeting and consider the menu so nicely spelt out for us by the media, I want to throw up out of sheer disgust.

Olga Landiak

Life, According to Baba

They should be given a glass of water, and a crust of moldy bread or a rotted bone from the nearest garbage dump (the fare of too many poverty stricken people), to really drive the point home, and maybe convince an old cynic like me that they are really serious about what they are discussing. That would make more sense than the mounds of useless paper proposals which come out of such meetings.

Consider the recent meeting in New York City of the 'World Summit for Children' which was billed as 'the largest gathering of monarchs, presidents and prime ministers in history'. Bully for them, but when you stop and consider all the money spent on feeding, accommodating, transporting and protecting said monarchs, presidents and prime ministers (and staff!), plus all the

other many perks so necessary to uphold their 'elevated status' in life, well I don't think I need to spell it out for you. I think most of us would be shocked at the TOTAL amount spent on one of these unnecessary summits, conferences, what-have-you's.

Yes, unnecessary. Don't tell me all these 'monarchs, presidents and prime ministers' couldn't just as easily stay at home and issue their individual statements and thereby save all that amount of money spent to gather them together in one place. That amount of cash would surely make a big dint in somebody's poverty and despair somewhere in the world.

Yep, apart from political summits where I believe it's necessary to meet your allies or opponents in an eye-ball



confrontation (how else to get a sense of that other person's personality so that you know what kind of mixed bag of humanity you're dealing with?), I do think that all other such high-level meetings on the ills of the world should be abolished as mere political and publicity ploys to enhance the reputations and images of the participants. Have you seen any diminution in the poverty and despair around the world because of one of these conferences, summits? I haven't.

If they were really serious, they would stay home and wage

these so-called 'Wars of Poverty and Despair' in their own backyards first. Then, with whatever financial resources available, give succour and assistance to those less fortunate. Even the governments of the poorer countries could make more of an effort to alleviate some of the daily misery on their budgets on armaments which only keep world hatred and suspicion fueled and at the ready.

And, right here at home, we could ALL start by making a concerted effort to stop wasting all our precious resources. We could begin by teaching our children NOT to throw away uneaten sandwiches, cookies and fruit into the lunchroom waste baskets of their schools. A small thing perhaps, in this country, but in the light of the excruciating hunger of so many million others, something to be seriously thought about.

And tell those monarchs, presidents and prime ministers, and others, to STAY AT HOME!

A corrective perspective

Lois Wilson's head just barel it over the lectern. To make her points, every once in a while she had to move her head around the bouquet of flowers in front of her. It was Sunday night (October 28), and she was giving a lecture organized by two women's organizations at Lakehead University: the Status of Women Committee and the Women's Studies Advisory Committee.

Wilson's diminutive stature didn't detract from the power of her ideas. She used the title "Rocking The Cradle, Rocking The World" to punch holes in several traditional assumptions about the place of women in the world, and how to bring about a new order.

Wilson is a northerner who has "made it" in a man's world. She was the pastor of First Church United in West Fort William between 1960 and 1969. Her father was also a United Church



NORTHERN INSIGHTS

by Larry Sanders



pastor, at St. Paul's in Port Arthur. In 1980, she became Moderator of the United Church - the equivalent, in the secular world, of being elected Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. After two yers as Moderator, she moved on to the world stage and became one of seven Presidents of the World Council of Churches. The World Council is the formal manifestation of the ecumenical movement, representing over 300 Protestant and Orthodox churches around the globe. Wilson's election to one of the seven President's chairs (one for every

continent) marked the first time a Canadian filled that job. Until then, North America's representative had always been an American, and, as Wilson is quick to point out, "usually a man".

Wilson's now at work re-writing ?Bible Stories for children, applying what she calls "feminist theological perspectives" to old chestnuts like the story of Adam & Eve and Noah's Ark. Fundamentalist Christians would not be happy to hear her, since she rejects the notion that everything in the Bible is "God's Word", and can't be re-

crafted in modern terms. "Everything in the Bible comes out of a community context", she argues, "and we have to recognize that." She compares her work to that of feminists in the late 60's, who re-wrote secular fairy tales with a feminist perspective by applying the philosophy "don't wait for the Prince to come".

But Wilson is not a strident, uncompromising "bra-burning" feminist (if there is such a person). Rather, she is proud to be a wife, mother and grandmother. One of the women in the audience at Lakehead

suggested that, in order to strengthen their resolve to deal with and change this man's world, women need to "bond with each other" more often, to reject anything but the perspectives offered by other women. Wilson politely but firmly rejected that argument, pointing out that "some of my best friends are men". She also rejected that stereotype that all women have to agree, just because they are women. "There's a lot of blackmailing going on, you know, to make every woman say the same thing, just because we're women. If I disagree with you, I'm going to stand up and say so. I'm not going to keep quiet just because you're a woman".

Wilson argued that woman need to become "housekeepers to the world". She described current world problems as "housekeeping, on a global scale." Her world

continued on page 7