

My question is this: Did the government play any role in negotiating with U.S. regulatory authorities to make it possible for million-dollar executives in this country to conceal their big pay cheques from Canadians? Were any representations made to the U.S. governmental authorities or authorities concerned with the issue in the U.S., expressing the Canadian government's official support for this alleged concealment of Canadian salaries and indemnities?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): Honourable senators, what my friend is referring to here is in some ways the extra-territorial application of U.S. law, which is something that successive Canadian governments have always resisted and resisted successfully. I cannot tell the honourable senator today, because I do not know, whether the matter came to the attention of the government or our embassy in Washington, but I shall inquire.

Senator Perrault: If the Leader of the Government would take the question as notice, it would be appreciated.

Senator Murray: If my honourable friend feels that the disclosure requirements in Canada are inadequate and that he does not have sufficient information about the remuneration offered to the executives of publicly-traded Canadian corporations, then he can pursue that in the normal course of events—in debate, by a private member's bill, or in committee—as he wishes.

Senator Perrault: If the Leader of the Government will take the question as notice, that is satisfactory. There are some legitimate concerns out there, and I am sure there are senators in this chamber who are concerned.

I should like to add that in a survey of 244 organizations, it is revealed that executives last year won salary increases averaging 6.6 per cent, compared with 6.1 per cent for clerical and other administrative workers and 5.6 per cent for hourly workers.

Members of the GST committee, while travelling across the country, got the impression that, while Canadians are willing to help wage the battle against the debt and the deficit, they want to feel that they are being treated fairly regardless of the amount of money they make. The people at the lower end of the pay scale especially want to feel that they are being justly treated. Indeed, the only way in which any system of taxation will be successful is if it has public acceptance and if it is reasonably fair.

I know the Leader of the Government may not be interested in my observations, but I urge him to become concerned with this issue, as are many other Canadians.

[Translation]

CITIZEN'S FORUM

COMPOSITION OF COMMISSION—REPRESENTATION OF LINGUISTIC GROUPS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. L. Norbert Thériault: Honourable senators, I should like to return to the issues raised yesterday concerning the Spicer Commission. First of all, I must now accept the fact

that, in spite of suggestions made to the Prime Minister to the contrary, that the number of commissioners will not be increased. By raising this issue, I want to object, on behalf of all Francophones outside Quebec, to the fact that a million French-speaking Canadians, excluding Quebecers, are not represented on the Commission. It is a fact that I regret, and so do Francophones outside Quebec and Acadians.

I do not agree with my colleague Senator von Roggen. I praise the government for setting up this commission. Among the qualities which I recognize in my Prime Minister, and there are not many, I think he is thoroughly Canadian. It is probably the last quality he is left with as a Prime Minister, but he certainly has this one.

I should like to ask the Leader of the Government, in view of what is going on in Quebec, the Bélanger-Campeau Commission and what have you, if he does not feel that it would be appropriate for the Prime Minister to ask at least his Quebec ministers who are in favour of Quebec separating from the rest of Canada at least to keep their collective mouths shut for awhile. I do not think I need go any further into this. Over the past few days, ministers as well as backbenchers—I understand it would be near impossible to try and control between 50 and 75 people—have made all sorts of comments. But when they are part of a government and when a country is faced with the difficult problems we know, I am afraid we are quickly nearing the end of Canada as it has existed since Confederation.

Two years ago, I directed questions to the Leader of the Government concerning this. If Canadians outside Quebec, both Anglophones and Francophones, are currently having difficulties with Quebec's demands, it is probably due to the fact that we have had at the federal level a government made up of too many separatists who made proposals and statements which were badly received by the rest of Canadians generally and ethnic groups outside Quebec in particular.

I suggest to the Leader of the Government in the Senate that he tell the Prime Minister to ask his Quebec ministers to keep their mouths shut until the two commissions have made their findings known. As Mr. Bourassa and Mr. Parizeau were both saying yesterday, the Bélanger-Campeau Commission has nothing to do with Canada, it is only Quebec's business. In Canada, a commission will open a so-called dialogue. Would it not be proper for Quebec ministers who are not pro-Canadians to keep their mouths shut for awhile.

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government in the Senate and Minister of State (Federal-Provincial Relations)): Honourable senators, my friend has no right to call "separatists" all those he disagrees with.

Senator Thériault: Honourable senators, I may disagree with them, as you say, but when you consider what Canadians are thinking today, you must admit—if you did not, you would be the only one—that there are serious problems in this country.

Whenever I try to open a dialogue with Canadians who are not Quebecers, either Francophones, Anglophones or from any