

My question to the Honourable Leader of the Government in the Senate is: Have Her Majesty the Queen and Her Excellency the Governor General been advised of this startling development?

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): I would not care to be the one to advise Her Majesty the Queen of this startling development, believe me. I think it is obviously a slip of the tongue, and I am sure that the Prime Minister will take an opportunity to rectify it when he is able.

HEALTH AND WELFARE

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS—UNIVERSALITY— GOVERNMENT POLICY

Hon. Gildas L. Molgat: Honourable senators, yesterday I asked a question of the Leader of the Government with regard to universality and, in the light of a newspaper report, I asked whether there was a possibility of a major debate coming up on the subject. Quite properly, the government leader replied, "I do not make myself responsible for newspaper reports." I do not quarrel with that because, admittedly, my question was based on a newspaper story. However, prompted by his reply, I went and sought the original source of the information and I now have quotations directly from the Prime Minister. They are taken from a Canadian Press story of January 29, and are as follows:

"We will have to readjust our social philosophy.

We are not in a position to do everything for everyone, but we can do more for the less fortunate in our society."

And later he is quoted as saying:

... "it will take us more time than we thought to have this debate on the great social questions." But, "we have not ceased our efforts, as you will see in the budget."

I repeat again that these were in quotation marks. Admittedly, this is in the English translation and it refers to a lengthy interview with *Le Devoir* in Montreal, so I sought out the French text and again there, c'est la même chose.

[Translation]

The Prime Minister stated:

"We will have to readjust our social philosophy. We are not in a position to do everything for everyone, but we can do more for the less fortunate in our society."

It is difficult to engage in a serious debate on matters that become highly political. It will take us more time than we thought to have this debate on the great social questions. Meanwhile, our efforts have been unrelenting, as you will see in the Budget.

My question is as follows: Does the government intend to launch a debate very shortly on the question of universality of social services in Canada? Is that the position of the Government?

● (1430)

[English]

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I think that my honourable friend has answered his own question. Obviously, the reference was made to what may be contained in the forthcoming budget. When my honourable friend is in a position to listen to the budget proposals, he may then form his own conclusions. I am sure that if he wants to debate the question of universality after he has heard the budget proposals, this house will be able to afford him that opportunity.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

PHILIPPINES PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION—STATUS OF CANADA-PHILIPPINES RELATIONS

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I should like to follow up on an answer that was given yesterday to Senator Graham. He had asked whether we might expect some kind of formal statement from the Government of Canada with respect to the Philippines situation. Senator Roblin replied as follows:

I share my honourable friend's concern about the legitimacy of the elections in the Philippines.

That, in itself, constitutes a statement of government policy.

I wonder whether, now that the Leader of the Government has made this statement which questions the legitimacy of the election in the Philippines, he will arrange to have that view transmitted to the Government of the Philippines? I think that is a view which is justified. I think it would be useful if the Government of the Philippines were made aware of the existence of these concerns about the legitimacy of the election—concerns not only in the minds of Senator Graham, at least four U.S. senators and the President of the United States, but also in that of the Government of Canada.

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): I am sure that the Secretary of State for External Affairs will be a little surprised at my honourable friend's interpretation of my remark on that occasion as representing a statement of government policy, although I suppose that it might be interpreted that way. I must confess, however, that it was more a statement of my own feelings on the matter. I have not consulted with my colleagues on this particular point. The question, however, is this: Is the Government of Canada going to make a statement about the Philippines? I said yesterday that I would find out the intention of my cabinet colleagues in that respect.

Senator MacEachen: Honourable senators, I think that I would want to encourage the Leader of the Government to have his own feelings, which he expressed so candidly yesterday, transformed into a statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, who must be considering the matter and who, with the support of the Leader of the Government, might be able to make a statement to the effect that we are concerned about the legitimacy of the election in the Philippines.