

Commons' Committee had heard. Senator Hébert suggested that they had not had the time to prepare last Summer. Often those who testified did not even take the trouble of changing the date appearing on the text of this brief to the Commons Committee. They simply provided us with a copy of their presentation to the House of Commons' Committee. This says a lot about the need for the Senate to hear all these witnesses again.

But let us deal now . . .

Hon. Philippe Deane Gigantès: Would Senator Simard entertain a question?

Senator Simard: Probably later on, Senator Gigantès. I have no problem with your doing it now, provided you do not take too much of my time!

Senator Gigantès: I was simply wondering if you were suggesting that the Senate should not carry out its own investigation but accept all which goes on in the House of Commons?

Senator Simard: I was planning to deal with this aspect and, as a matter of fact, I was coming to that.

To continue, therefore, and at the same time answer your question, Senator Gigantès, Senator Hébert suggested that . . .
[*English*]

The bad Tories—oh, the bad Tories!

Senator Frith: That's a redundancy!

Senator Simard: The Prime Minister never said that he did not really want the Senate to do its job and that they were an unnecessary evil, or whatever, and that they should not study the legislation. The Prime Minister never said any such thing. We never said such a thing. The Senate has its place in this Canadian system and the Prime Minister knows that.

Senator Frith: At least he has learned that much.

Senator Simard: He never said, "Do not study the legislation." What he said, and what we say, is that we should start by pre-studying the bill or, if not, get to the study when the legislation is tabled here, and not wait two or three weeks, as was the case with Bill C-21, when we dragged our feet through November and December and pretended to be very active suddenly in January.

Senator Frith: Pretended to be active?

Senator Simard: Yes.

Senator Frith: I thought you were pretty active in January.

Senator Simard: We were active, yes.

Senator Frith: You; you were.

Senator Simard: Being active and being constructive at the same time are two different things.

Senator Frith: That depends on the point of view.

Senator Simard: I just referred to those 40 or 50 witnesses that had been heard. To answer Senator Gigantès, yes, we should hear them.

[Senator Simard.]

[*Translation*]

Yes, Senator Gigantès, we should listen to them, look at this seriously. But I submit the committee should have gone to work earlier, hearing as many witnesses as possible, listening to the full range of Canadian views rather than only to those who almost make it a trade—some groups from the left especially—who almost make it a trade to peddle their submissions from committee to committee, from one House to the other, if not—one province to another.

I recognize the need for the Senate to work properly, but in a constructive way, to give everyone his or her chance. It must also do this in a timely fashion so as not to deprive of benefits people in my province and my Atlantic area, as is now the case.

Senator Gigantès: If I understand correctly, you have doubts about the intellectual honesty of our witnesses?

Senator Simard: No, I have been critical and I have wondered for some time and still wonder about the strategy used by the majority of the Opposition members in this House.

Senator Gigantès: We did not question the honesty of witnesses.

Senator Simard: You had a very clear strategy, it was orchestrated, planned, premeditated.

Indeed, we are hearing the same threats against coming legislation.

Senator Gigantès: Who is making threats?

Senator Simard: The Opposition. You want to show you are really at work, you are the only champions of the poor and the defenceless, as if this Conservative Government was being hard and wanted to parish everybody.

Senator Gigantès: All you have to do is join us.

Senator Simard: Honourable senators, as I said, bill C-21 enhances fairness and efficiency while reducing the costs to all Canadians.

It is my view that few Canadians, despite to wishes of Senator Thériault, supported by the Canada Labour Council study—Senator Thériault referred to perception. He does nothing to improve people's perceptions and telling them the whole truth. He keeps referring to that \$165 million figure, an estimate by the Canada Labour Council of the impact of Bill C-21 on New Brunswick.

I believe he neglected to mention that the Unemployment Insurance Commission suggested a figure of \$47 million.

Hon. L. Norbert Thériault: \$165 million.

Senator Simard: You referred to 165 million, I heard you say so earlier, and you said it in committee hearings. For the benefit of the people in the visitors' gallery or those listening to the CBC in Moncton, he keeps referring to 165 million, while in committee, he said that a more accurate figure would probably be between the two.

Senator Thériault: That's what I just said.