

its vote of confidence in British Columbia may be seen in the letting of a contract for the world's largest icebreaker to a yard in B.C.—a contract worth at least \$500 million.

The Associate Minister of National Defence, Ms. Collins, has said time and time again: "Take my word for it, this project is going ahead. You can trust this government. This government does not break its word with the people of Canada, nor does it break its word with the people of British Columbia." One of the workers said, "You know, I actually think that Ms. Collins believes what she says, because we have had reports that she has a letter of cabinet resignation in her pocket and that if British Columbia doesn't get the icebreaker contract she is quitting the cabinet." However, honourable senators, I have not heard of any press conference this morning announcing her departure from cabinet.

The attitudes and the anger of people living on the west coast are being grossly underestimated by the members of the Conservative Party. There is not one safe Conservative seat in the province of British Columbia today—not one safe Tory seat. I think, honourable senators, that is because of the cynicism which seems to have enfolded the entire Conservative Party. The other day in Toronto Dalton Camp said, "Of course the GST is regressive and unfair, but our Prime Minister is such a skillful communicator that he will be able to talk the people into accepting it by the time the next election campaign comes around." Imagine that, honourable senators—imagine one of the key advisers to the Prime Minister saying, "Of course the proposed measure is regressive and unfair, but we can 'con' the people into accepting it." Well, I will tell honourable senators that they are not going to "con" British Columbians any longer.

**Senator Simard:** Is this still the prelude?

**Senator Perrault:** Honourable senators, I accessed my computer data bank today. I thought that it would be useful to refresh my memory. On Wednesday, September 11, 1985, the Secretary of State for External Affairs announced measures to reinforce Canada's claim to sovereignty over Arctic waters and served notice that the government is prepared to defend that claim in the International Court of Justice. He made a speech that inspired the Conservative supporters in the House of Commons to rise and to enthusiastically flap their flippers in unison. He said:

The government has decided to build what will be the world's most powerful icebreaker. The ship will be much more powerful than the U.S. Coast Guard's *Polar Sea*—

At this point there were cheers by the Conservative backbenchers. Then he continued:

—whose uninvited voyage through the Northwest Passage in early August embarrassed the Mulroney administration. The icebreaker is to be serviceable, my friends, by the late 1990s.

He said there would be immediate talks with the U.S. government on cooperation in Arctic waters.

**Hon. William M. Kelly:** Honourable senators, I rise on a point of order.

I still feel very new in this chamber, but Senator Frith and others have constantly referred me to the Rules of the Senate of Canada. Rule 32 states very clearly that a debate is out of order on an oral question. It says that brief explanatory remarks may be made by the senator who asks the question and by the senator who answers it.

**Senator Frith:** You could have left me out of this, Senator Kelly.

**Senator Kelly:** With great respect, I do not feel that I am listening to brief explanatory remarks. In fairness to all of us, I should like to draw that to the attention of the chamber.

**Senator Perrault:** I hope that the brief explanatory remarks are not too painful for the honourable senator, who supports a government which has outlived its mandate in this country today.

**Senator Simard:** Your "question" is too long.

**Senator Perrault:** It is too long because you cannot stand the facts.

I should like to ask the Leader of the Government in the Senate what are the real and factual reasons for the cancellation of the icebreaker contract in British Columbia, after successive ministers—including John Crosbie, Mary Collins and a whole hoard of Conservative ministers—have descended on British Columbia and promised this contract as a sacred commitment of the Government of Canada. There are 1,000 workers in British Columbia today who are facing job loss as a result of the cancellation of this contract.

**Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations):** Honourable senators, there are more than 100 million reasons for having taken this decision, because that is the amount of the escalation in the projected costs of that project. It is a decision in keeping with the fiscal imperative that faces this government.

It should be pointed out that in today's international environment there are other more cost-effective means of securing our Arctic sovereignty. In particular, we have a proven and workable agreement with the United States under which the U.S. seeks prior consent of the Canadian government for voyages in our Arctic waters.

**Senator Perrault:** Honourable senators, may I remind you of a statement made by retired Rear Admiral Fred Crickard of the Centre for Foreign Policy Studies in Halifax? A week ago he said that the Polar 8 is critical if Canada wants to establish a presence in the increasingly important Arctic.

I am sure the Leader of the Government is aware of a statement made by the respected former Ottawa civil servant, Gordon Robertson, who chaired a working group on the subject of Arctic sovereignty. He stated: "By signing a vague agreement with Washington that lets U.S. icebreakers sail disputed Arctic waters with Canadian consent, Ottawa has accepted procedures which may in fact weaken the Canadian position in international law." This working group has dismissed absolutely the leader's argument.