

my notes. I will mention, however, that, when I hear Liberal senators talking about financial responsibility, it seems to me they have now become responsible. I think to myself, "Ye gods, Pierre Elliott Trudeau would never make that claim." I find myself in agreement with Mr. Trudeau for this first time in my career in Parliament. Perhaps it is too bad that he left.

The Leader of the Government referred to the effect on interest rates. Surely, honourable senators do not wish this government to return to the exorbitant interest rates of the previous government. Does Senator Argue want farmers in western Canada to return to paying interest of 16.75 per cent? Does Senator LeBlanc, who opposes this bill, want fishermen to return to paying interest of 22 per cent? Is that why he is opposing this bill?

Senator LeBlanc: I am concerned about vessel insurance.

Senator Phillips: If the honourable senator had studied the bill, he would know that it has nothing to do with vessel insurance.

Of course, we have heard a great deal about universality. All the social programs ought to be continued. Senators opposite were very busy attempting to paint the Conservative Party as being opposed to social security. Are they attempting to leave the government in a position where it will have no money and have to reduce social security payments? We may even hear Senator Sinclair's inquiry on that one of these days.

Honourable senators, I cannot see why the timing of the estimates is so urgent. Why are senators opposite so keen to see the estimates? In committee the other day they agreed to pass the legislation when the estimates were tabled. Surely, someone must be expecting something unusual in the estimates. What do they expect to find in the estimates and what do they expect to find omitted from the estimates? Can they tell us what is so magical about the blue book?

One of the honourable senators opposite suggested to me that I should give Senator MacEachen last year's blue book because he would not know the difference. Perhaps we would have solved the whole problem if we had done that. He would probably have been satisfied.

Honourable senators, later on this evening we may be asked to vote on this motion. The public is not only watching us carefully; they are watching John Turner's leadership to see what instructions he has issued to senators opposite. Between now and the time of the vote, he will have an opportunity to change his mind. If he does not change his mind, he will be labelled in the same way senators opposite have been so justly labelled.

Senator Murray mentioned the future of the Senate. I, too, will touch on that, but not in any threatening way. We all know the public's opinion of the Senate now. We know what the public will demand. You know what the public will demand. This is a government that believes in consultation, and when it gets that message from the public, you can be sure that reform will be moved to the front burner. That is too good an opportunity for the government to miss. Your vote will decide not only the future of the Senate but also the future

reputation of the Liberal Party. Perhaps many of you are like Senator Sinclair who says he does not care. Others have been around here for a long time and have respect for this institution, for the way it has behaved in the past and for the way it has handled legislation and made every effort to accommodate governments in the past. I hope the Senate will continue to show to the government that respect and co-operation it has always shown in the past.

● (1650)

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Davey: I wonder whether the honourable senator will now take a question.

Senator Phillips: If the honourable senator will guarantee that it will be better than the last one.

Senator Davey: I cannot guarantee that. The last one was so good. As the obvious Tory expert on the all-party agreement in the other place, I wonder whether the honourable senator can tell us whether in that agreement there was any reference to the Senate or to Royal Assent?

Senator Phillips: The agreement was of the Liberal Party—that is, before it was hijacked. Perhaps that is the distinction the honourable senator is trying to make.

Senator Davey: It is very simple. Is there any reference to the Senate or to Royal Assent? Either there is or there is not. Presumably the honourable senator has read the agreement.

Senator Phillips: I have already given the honourable senator an explanation, but I suppose that it takes more than one attempt. I will try once more.

Senator Davey: You are incapable of giving a "Yes" or "No" answer.

Senator Phillips: The answer is that the agreement was made by the party, by the caucus. If the honourable senator is part of the party and the caucus, he is included.

Senator Davey: The answer to my question is "No". Thank you.

Senator Phillips: I would ask the honourable senator how many different caucuses one would have to include in the agreement? Would we have to include the Quebec caucus, or the Ontario caucus? In the past, agreements have always been made by caucus and applied to that party.

Hon. John B. Stewart: Honourable senators, I believe that for the most part this has been an excellent debate. If we have to have what Senator Murray deplores as confrontation to bring forth Senator MacEachen and Senator Roblin to heights which hitherto I had not heard them reach in this chamber, and Senator Murray in the way he held forth this afternoon, then this argues that perhaps we should have more such confrontations.

I am not at all impressed with the notion that if someone happens to detect that the Senate exists, they will immediately get a flyswatter and squash us out of existence. That, it seems to me, is not the principal threat to our future. If we want to