

**Senator Frith:** What my honourable friend's impression is of his honourable friend—namely, me—is not dealing with the question. What I do or do not do concerning the committee is not the question. The question is: Will the government be asking Parliament to pass the bill, and spend taxpayers' money in consequence, before the Estey Commission has reported? I do not think I am misinterpreting the Leader of the Government by saying he is not prepared to say one way or the other, but that the priority in the bill is to look after the depositors.

**Senator Roblin:** That is correct. Our priority is to pass this bill; and my honourable friend has it within his own power to deal with this bill when he gets it. He is raising points on policy. What is his policy? Is his policy going to be to support the bill or not? We will hear about that in due course.

**Senator Frith:** Now, just a minute. Has Question Period now changed to the point that the Leader of the Government is asking what the opposition's policy is? What I am going to do or not do in committee, or what the opposition is going to do or not do in the committee proceedings, has as much to do with the question I asked as the flowers that bloom in the spring—

**An Hon. Senator:** Tra, la!

**Senator Frith:** The question was asked and explained, and I do not know why my honourable friend insists on saying what I can or cannot do. I tried to say that if I understood his answer correctly, it is that we might very well be asked to pass the bill, rescuing the depositors, without having the report of the Estey Commission. Is that not correct—apart from what I can do? I know what I can do. Don't tell me again what I can do.

**Senator Roblin:** I will be watching to see what my honourable friend actually does.

**Senator Frith:** More flowers that bloom in the spring.

**Hon. John M. Godfrey:** Honourable senators, I have a supplementary question with respect to the appointment of Mr. Justice Estey. A report in the *Ottawa Citizen* dated August 21, 1985, says:

Canada's Chief Justice warned today that judges' independence may be compromised if they continue to sit on royal commissions and inquiries in which they're "embroiled in politically contentious disputes."

In a speech at the Canadian Bar Association's annual meeting, Mr. Justice Brian Dickson repeated one of the basic tenets of law: "Justice must be seen to be done as well as be done."

He said he's becoming "increasingly concerned" about certain extra-judicial activities which could tend to politicize the role of judges and potentially detract from their impartial and independent status.

"I think there's always a great danger of a judge engaging in a royal commission—most of which are highly political and highly contentious—that his objectivity and impartiality, his independence may be prejudiced."

My question is: Did the Prime Minister discuss with Chief Justice Dickson the question of the appointment of Mr. Justice Estey before he actually made it?

● (1410)

**Senator Roblin:** Honourable senators, I cannot answer that question, nor am I entirely sure that I can undertake to answer it. However, I shall give my honourable friend my opinion, that it is quite likely that Mr. Justice Estey discussed the matter with Chief Justice Dickson before accepting the assignment.

#### NORTHLAND BANK—COMPENSATION OF DEPOSITORS— GOVERNMENT POLICY

**Hon. H.A. Olson:** Honourable senators, on September 25, I asked the Leader of the Government whether the government had given a commitment to compensating all depositors even those with deposits in excess of \$60,000. However, the leader answered at the time that since the government was not faced with that situation he could not answer the question. However, if one reads the newspapers today one will get an indication. Can the leader indicate now whether it is government policy?

**Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government):** Is my honourable friend talking about the Northland Bank?

**Senator Olson:** Yes.

**Senator Roblin:** My honourable friend will see the government's full policy when the bill gets first reading on Thursday. At this point I do not have it, and I do not want to describe a bill that I cannot refer to accurately.

**Senator Olson:** The question is not very complicated. The Leader of the Government was able to answer that all the depositors in the CCB would be compensated. Is that also the policy of the government respecting the Northland Bank?

**Senator Roblin:** I see my honourable friend's point. I am firmly of the belief that the bill will cover both banks.

**Senator Olson:** Up to 100 per cent of all deposits?

**Senator Roblin:** Yes.

#### FISHERIES AND OCEANS

##### SALE OF CANNED TUNA UNFIT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION— CONSUMER CONFIDENCE—FUTURE OF STAR-KIST PLANT— GOVERNMENT POLICY

**Hon. Eymard G. Corbin:** Honourable senators, I have a question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. I would like to know what, if anything, the government is currently doing in order to restore in the public and in the minds of consumers, at home and abroad, confidence in the wholesomeness of Canadian fish. Also, does the government have a plan to maintain the jobs of the workers at the Star-Kist plant in St. Andrews which, as everyone knows, has been seriously affected by the publicity of the past weeks?

**Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government):** I think I can tell my honourable friend that the government is examining in