

**Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government):** I shall have to take my honourable friend's question as notice.

**Senator Olson:** Honourable senators, I think the Leader of the Government had notice on May 28, and I gave him notice again on June 11. It is now June 20. Can he give us at least some indication of when we will get an answer?

● (1410)

**Senator Roblin:** I stand corrected. My honourable friend is right. He has raised the question on several occasions before. I am doing my best to get an answer for him, but I have not been successful in getting one so far. I think part of our problem is that it involves not only this level of government but also, to an extent, other levels of government, when it comes to formulating a policy for the sugar-beet industry in the near future. That does not alter the fact that I cannot give my honourable friend an answer right now. I have not forgotten it, and I am pursuing it as expeditiously as I can.

**Senator Olson:** I wonder if the Leader of the Government could give us some indication. What seems to be happening is that, while these representations are being made a number of other products are getting the same kind of treatment—they are all under the same management—whether it is pork, beef, sugar-beet, wheat, corn or whatever. The returns from these crops are going down all the time. What we see, of course, is a withdrawal of, I think it is \$42 million from the budget of the Department of Agriculture in an announcement made by the Minister of Finance on November 8. When the budget came out on May 23 of this year he announced a further reduction in that minister's budget of something like \$50 million. Is this the kind of reply that the agricultural community can continue to expect? In other words, is that the policy of this government, or are they going to be helpful when there are certain commodity groups who are having a rough period?

**Senator Roblin:** We are going to do our best to be as helpful as we can within the limits of the means at our disposal. I remind my honourable friend of what he already knows in connection with beef imports from the European Community. There were 50 million pounds last year; we have been able to negotiate that down to less than half the amount. Even though that might not appear to some to be a satisfactory solution, it is an improvement over what we had last year. We are going to take each one of these problems on its merits and do our best with it.

## THE BUDGET

### PREPARATION—USE OF CONSULTANT

**Hon. Ian Sinclair:** Honourable senators, I have a question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Could he inform this chamber whether the Honourable Jacques Parizeau was a consultant either to the Department of Finance or to the government prior to the last budget?

**Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government):** I have no information on that point, honourable senators.

**Senator Sinclair:** The reason I ask the question is because—

**Senator Flynn:** We all know why you asked the question.

**Senator Sinclair:** It is because of the story in *La Presse* of June 20. This is the second reference that has been made to the Honourable Jacques Parizeau. Honourable senators will recall this gentleman as the one who did irreparable harm to Quebec, Montreal and the people of Quebec, and it strikes me as somewhat amazing that he is described by the Prime Minister of this country as, if my translation is right, "the most distinguished of our finance ministers." I just wonder if that reaching out by our Prime Minister in support of the budget is a matter of government policy.

**Senator Roblin:** With respect to the gentleman in question, I am in no position to say from my own knowledge whether he is the most distinguished finance minister in Canada. That is a matter of opinion. I can say that when he appeared in this house to discuss Bill S-31, which is before the Senate, with respect to a certain organization with which my honourable friend is well acquainted, he made an indelible impression on the committee with his testimony, so I have to pay tribute to Mr. Parizeau as an able man. That does not mean I subscribe to all his opinions.

**Senator Sinclair:** Honourable senators, I am very happy that my friend has raised that point on Bill S-31. At some time I would love to debate that question with him. I think I know as much about it as he does. Maybe a little bit more.

**Senator Flynn:** You know enough about six-and-five, too.

**Senator Sinclair:** I remember what Senator Flynn had to say on that.

**Senator Flynn:** Would you share your knowledge about six-and-five?

**Senator Sinclair:** Let us stick with the knowledge of Jacques Parizeau respecting de-indexation. Is he the person the honourable Leader of the Opposition [*sic*] wants to use as the epitome of knowledge of de-indexation? Is that the man he would like to support? That is the question.

**Senator Roblin:** I think I am Leader of the Government in the Senate, up to the present time at any rate, so I will amend the description.

I do not think I ever claimed to know any more about Bill S-31 than my honourable friend. I merely quoted the impression which I think was widespread among honourable senators that, when Mr. Parizeau appeared here and made his comments on that particular bill, he struck one as being a knowledgeable man and so impressive, indeed, that the bill was abandoned.

**Senator Sinclair:** Honourable senators, I find it very difficult to see any connection between Bill S-31 and the question of fairness to elderly citizens. Perhaps the Leader of the Government in the Senate will assist us. Just because a man is eloquent about Manitoba does not necessarily make him eloquent about other areas.