

Senator Flynn: What about your colleagues in the house?

Senator Hicks: I point out that the Progressive Conservative minority opposition opposed similar propositions which the Liberals wrongly tried to have passed, which was well documented by the Leader of the Opposition when he referred to the 1978 episode when the then Finance Minister Chrétien attempted to get borrowing authority for a succeeding fiscal year. He gave way when the Conservative opposition objected strongly to it. Of course, Senator Stewart documented several other instances in his speech this afternoon. I agree with all those.

Interestingly enough, Senator MacEachen also referred to the Progressive Conservatives insisting, while in opposition in 1984, that the Liberal government cut \$5 billion from the borrowing authority which otherwise would have been sustained today and would have prevented them from getting in such a hassle over the present borrowing bill before us now. The birds have come home to roost. That is ironic, but they may very well have been right in insisting that the Liberal government cut that \$5 billion.

I want to make one or two other remarks. The Minister of Finance alleges that delaying the passage of Part I of this bill may have added or may add to the cost of borrowing. I think Senator Sinclair dealt very adequately with that assertion and I cannot deal as well with it. I know something of the difficulty in predicting reliably the future cost of money. We made it clear on January 23, exactly four weeks ago today, that we would not oppose Part I of the bill. Money may cost more today or it may cost less next week. Who knows? However, if the Minister of Finance felt a month ago that delay would increase the cost of borrowing he should have accepted Part I of the bill and abandoned or, more accurately, delayed his insistence on the inclusion of Part II, and all his problems would have been solved.

Senator Guay: Right on!

Senator Hicks: Again, I repeat that that is exactly what the Liberals did in 1978 and on the other occasions to which Senator Stewart referred and documented for us this afternoon. I suggest that the present situation is due entirely or nearly entirely to the stubbornness and intransigence of the present government, particularly the Minister of Finance. I am encouraged to underline the view by the evidence that we have had today—though it is perhaps not provable in a court of law—that the main estimates have been ready for tabling for some days and they might have been before the other place and this house earlier this week. It makes one wonder if the holding up of those main estimates was not an outcome of the stubbornness and intransigence of the Minister of Finance, who wanted to see if he could force the Senate to do what he would not have allowed the Liberal government to do when he was in opposition, hold up the main estimates so we could not see them until we had granted the borrowing authority.

Senator Haidasz: Shame!

Senator Flynn: You won't even look at them.

Senator Hicks: I will look at them.

Senator Flynn: Oh no you won't.

Senator Hicks: I realize that there is some speculation—

Senator Flynn: Be serious.

Senator Argue: He wants to see what has been cut.

Senator Hicks: I am serious. I realize that there is some speculation in this assertion but it looks to me from what we have heard in this house and elsewhere today that this is true.

The other thing that amazes me about this whole debate is that there has been no explanation whatsoever and no apology for the different attitude of the Minister of Finance and some of his colleagues today compared with their views of a very few years ago which they expressed when they were in opposition. I would have thought that someone would have felt it necessary to try to justify the 180 degree turnabout on the part of the Minister of Finance, the Deputy Prime Minister and others in the Conservative Party in the other place. Also, I am not the least bit concerned—

Senator Flynn: That is not true.

Senator Hicks: Of course, it is true.

Senator Flynn: No.

Senator Hicks: Were you not here this afternoon? Did you not hear Senator Stewart?

Senator Flynn: I heard him.

Senator Hicks: How can you dispute his documentation from the records of the House of Commons?

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Senator Flynn: Oh come on! You have all of the information you need. You will not know any more when you have the blue book. That is it. You have never understood. Try to get that into your head.

Senator Hicks: This is not the view that the present Minister of Finance took in 1978 and on those other occasions already referred to. But I do not want to get into a dogfight with Senator Flynn. I did not interrupt him when he was speaking, notwithstanding the fact that he made some statements with which I disagreed violently. Perhaps he will let me finish my remarks uninterrupted.

The threat that the Senate will be interfered with if it does not bow to the majority vote in the House of Commons has no weight with me whatsoever.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Hicks: I am ashamed that threats of that type have actually been made by some honourable senators on the other side of this house. This is absurd. If that is the view we have of the Senate, then I think we should agree voluntarily to its abolition.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Hicks: If the Senate is not entitled to take a position different from that of the House of Commons, then let's agree voluntarily to its abolition.

The British North America Act sets out very clearly that, while we cannot add to money bills, we can curtail expendi-