

system that will be fairer, more effective and less expensive. I think it remains close to regional circumstances.

However, before considering the bill itself, I would like to make a few comments on the speech we have just heard. Of course, after nearly 20 years, Senator Thériault's comments are always a source of great interest and sometimes of amusement.

Hon. Joseph-Philippe Guay: You weren't smiling a while ago.

Senator Simard: Honourable senators, we appreciate his sincerity and his talents as a good speaker. We admire the passion he puts into his comments. However, he does not always draw the logical conclusions of his premises.

He told us earlier that many Canadians were calling to let him know that Bill C-21 was a disaster and that it would have a disastrous impact on the economy of the Atlantic Provinces and on private citizens.

He added that all these people asked him to "kill" the bill. We heard the same message from witnesses who were chosen, I must say, rather selectively, by the committee chairman, Senator Hébert and often by him alone or by his Liberal colleagues, often without any consultation with conservative senators, and I will get back to that later on. Out of the 100 or so witnesses who came, I would say, at the invitation of Liberal senators who almost without fail, in the course of their testimony or in concluding their testimony, when asked by the Liberal senators whether the Senate should kill the bill, I would say that 90 per cent of these witnesses who, I repeat, were carefully selected by the Liberal senators, said yes, that is the best solution, that is what we want you to do.

Hon. Azellus Denis: What about the unions, Senator Simard?

Senator Simard: Throughout his speech, Senator Thériault told us he had the pulse of Canadians, unlike the Conservative senators who merely followed the path indicated by Mrs. McDougall and the Prime Minister. He told us that even if all these people asked the Liberal senators to kill the bill, he would not do it. Where is the logic in all this?

I was disappointed in Senator Thériault's speech for a number of reasons. He did not make sense. I think we all had a right to expect him to say he would not support the Opposition's amendments, following the report by Senator Hébert. But no, it would seem that he decided to give us another example of blind partisanship. He did not practice what he preached. He ignored all the pleas and requests he received, he said, and he would be satisfied with amendments. I will not say any more about Senator Thériault's logic.

Senator Joseph-Philippe Guay: That doesn't mean a thing, Senator Simard.

Senator Simard: No, it is significant. Senator Thériault explained why the Conservatives have a 20 per cent support among Canadians and he tells us that it must be because of the public's perception that the government only listens to big corporations and is only interested in giving money to big

corporations. We know, honourable senators, that Liberal senators and probably the entire Liberal Party like to play on perceptions and skew our perceptions of reality.

I would rather believe that the public knows what it is doing. It probably thinks it is hard to accept and hard to understand why the government must take several measures aimed at raising more money to reduce the deficit. I prefer this interpretation. It continues to wait for alternative solutions from the opposition. I am confident that the Liberals, even if they go up in the pools during the next three years, when they see no serious alternative proposals coming from the opposition, will take a good look at their record and say, yes, three years ago, we thought it was hard, but maybe this is the only group that can manage, realistically, effectively and in a businesslike manner, the destiny and the finances of this country.

• (1700)

[English]

Honourable senators, there is no quick fix. The Liberals would have us believe that since 1984 they have discovered that there are quick fixes; that they have all the answers. However, apart from scrapping the free trade deal and threatening to scrap the proposed GST legislation, they have nothing else to offer. They seem to think that, while continuing to print and dish out money, somehow interest rates will go down. They seem to think that by cutting taxes they will somehow get more money. That, too, is a quick fix. It is rhetoric. I do not think there are any quick fixes.

Since we were talking of Atlantic Canada and the effect that Bill C-21 might have on that region, thinking of quick fixes reminds me of another quick fix that is proposed by Vince McLean, the Leader of the Opposition in the Nova Scotia legislature. His quick fix is this: "Let's get three Nova Scotia Tory MLAs and have them cross the floor to our side. I will then be Premier of Nova Scotia. That will then quick-fix the depleted fish stock." That, honourable senators, is his version of the quick fix.

Senator Thériault: That is what Mr. Hatfield did!

Senator Simard: Honourable senators, it is as if making Mr. McLean the Leader of the Government of Nova Scotia could resolve the problem of the fish shortage in that area. I am using that example to show that these types of arguments and quick fixes will not work in relation to the public. They might work for a couple of years, but unless there is a proper alternative to this government they will not work.

However, if this government continues to manage this country to the best of its ability, keeping in mind the limited resources that we have and the fact that the deficit must go down and interest rates decrease, then that means we must tighten things up, including the unemployment insurance fund.

Honourable senators, Senator Thériault tells me I have been on my feet too long. He also tells me that when we were in Canso I should have known better than to play to the crowd and seek the headlines. I say to Senator Thériault that he should know that I was in the newspaper business for three months in 1988, before I left that job. However, while in that