

**Senator Frith:** Well said, sir.

**Senator Roblin:** My honourable friend need not become indignant until he sees how the facts develop. My suspicion is that he will find himself well satisfied.

### AGRICULTURE

#### WESTERN CANADA—DROUGHT CONDITIONS—GOVERNMENT ACTION

**Hon. Hazen Argue:** Honourable senators, I have a question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. As he may know, a major rally is to be held in Saskatchewan, in front of the legislative buildings, this coming Friday at about noon. Farmers and their leaders are very concerned that the government has made no announcement of assistance, particularly to the grain producers in the drought areas in western Canada and especially the drought area in Saskatchewan.

I am wondering if the Leader of the Government can tell the Senate whether or not there will likely be an announcement before the rally or even at the rally. The producers anticipated an announcement before this time and are certainly anticipating one by the time of the rally. Can the leader say whether some encouraging news may be forthcoming?

**Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, this must be the second, third, or is it the fourth time, that my honourable friend has encouraged me to make some announcement on behalf of the government with respect to this very serious problem. I think I told him on the first occasion that the matter is being studied by a special committee that is on the spot and that its recommendations will be available shortly. I think I told him that it is unlikely that that report will be available for the end of the month, and I have no information that would indicate any change.

**Senator Argue:** Honourable senators, I might just say that that is disappointing news to me. For the information of the Leader of the Government, this rally was originally to be staged on September 6. It was postponed for three weeks in the belief that there would be an announcement forthcoming from the government within that period and that the producers would have something of a positive nature to discuss at that rally. I learned this information from those who are leading the rally.

**Senator Roblin:** Without being able to give any detail, I am under the impression that, when the statement is made, it will be found to be a considerable improvement over the present situation. However, I have to tell my honourable friend that, while I appreciate his interest, there is no use in nagging me, if I may use his expression, to get the answer before it is ready. It cannot be produced without full consideration by a number of government departments, and from his own experience my honourable friend knows that this is not always a quick and easy process. We are sympathetic and we intend to do the best we can, but I will have to ask my friend to be patient until we have the information.

[Senator Davey.]

**Senator Argue:** I understand what the Leader of the Government is saying, but I do think that individual senators have a duty to raise these questions in the Senate. From past experience I am quite certain that what we say filters through to the authorities and sometimes may result in some action a little earlier than would have been the case if we had not raised the matter.

**Senator Roblin:** I would not like my honourable friend to think I was trying to discourage him. I regard that as an impossible task, to begin with. Even if it were possible, I would not like to try it.

**Senator Frith:** You are on the right track.

**Senator Roblin:** I have no objection to his asking the questions, but I am trying to be as candid as I can with him about the timing of the answers that I am able to give.

**Senator Argue:** We will weep for another 48 hours, then.

**Senator Flynn:** You can do that for a much longer period. You can weep all the time.

### CROWN CORPORATIONS

#### POSSIBLE PRIVATIZATION OF PETRO-CANADA

**Hon. Stanley Haidasz:** Honourable senators, I have a question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. I would like to ask whether the federal government's policy on privatization of crown corporations applies also to Petro-Canada.

**Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government):** In a general way, I can say that the principle of privatization will be considered in respect of any crown corporation. However, I am not in a position at the present moment to deal with his specific request for information about Petro-Canada, because that is a matter which, if and when it becomes ripe, is one which the minister in that department will be the first to announce, although I may be given the second chance at it. I cannot give my friend any information of a positive nature at the moment.

**Senator Haidasz:** I have a further question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Are we, then, to understand that the present rumour on Bay Street that blocks of shares of Petro-Canada are imminently for sale is false?

**Senator Roblin:** I know my honourable friend does not expect me to confirm or deny rumours on Bay Street.

### BANKING

#### COLLAPSE OF CANADIAN COMMERCIAL BANK—PROTECTION OF PENSION FUNDS

**Hon. Charles Turner:** Honourable senators, I have a question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Last Friday, I attended a banquet to mark the fortieth anniversary of the CNR Credit Union, in London, Ontario. At that banquet I was asked a great many questions about the CNR