

Through this manoeuvre the government is saying it is above the law of the land. The quality of mercy is certainly strained. Merry Christmas to the Tories from the unemployed of this country.

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THE SENATE

Mr. Larry Schneider (Regina—Wascana): Mr. Speaker, as the year draws to an end, it is difficult to forget the spectacle caused by the MacEachen group in the Senate. Amidst desk thumping rhythmic accompanied by a symphony of kazoos and efforts to gain entry into the *Guinness World Book of Records* for long-windedness, the reputation and the respect of Canada's chamber of sober second thought slithered to a point that defied definition. Let us hope that the credibility given to this Chamber by the Conservative senators becomes contagious and that the 20-plus government bills currently before them are dealt with in a manner that had previously been the expectation of that place.

And to the departing interim Leader of the Opposition, who with his credibility has provided wise, respectable leadership in the House of Commons, it is unfortunate for every point he gained for his party in the polls that his Liberal counterparts in the Senate cost him a point and one-half.

• (1420)

Mr. Speaker: I just want to say to all hon. members that they will note, because of the largess of the Speaker, all members who wished to make a statement today were allowed to do so. It is part of the Christmas spirit. Do not count on it during the new year.

Mr. Gauthier: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: This is stretching Christmas spirit far too far.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, in the same spirit, would you allow for all questions to be put and answered?

Mr. Speaker: Only on one condition, that not only the minister asked but all other ministers may join in the answer.

Oral Questions

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Some hon. members: Herb, Herb, Herb.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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THE ECONOMY

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues for their applause and above all for their encouragement and support over the past several months. I certainly look forward to working with the new leader in the same co-operative and constructive spirit.

In that sense, I also want to thank the government for giving me such good material, which I say with some regret I forecast will continue to be the case in months to come.

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. I ask this question because today the Canadian Manufacturers' Association published its year-end review. It confirmed that we are in a made in Canada recession, one it said was "precipitated by rising interest and exchange rates". In other words, it is due to the misguided economic policies of this government. The report says that this recession will result in "the loss of 180,000 manufacturing jobs, of which perhaps half will be permanently lost", and "the bankruptcy and closure of hundreds of manufacturing firms".

Why is the Minister of Finance the last person in this country to recognize the carnage being caused by his own policies to the economy and the people of this country and why will he not start doing something right now to stop this carnage and devastation?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I recognized that we are coming into a difficult economic period in the budget of February, so it was something that we had anticipated. We felt it was coming, as I have indicated in the past. It is something that does happen when a country has gone through 7.5 years of very strong growth. It is happening in the United States, it is happening in the United Kingdom, it is