

Senator Thériault: Well, this could triple the amount of the loans since many students, thanks to the bursaries they now receive, can go through the first four years of university, up to the bachelor's degree, without borrowing big sums.

Senator Simard: Except in New Brunswick. I cannot speak for the other provinces — if there is the same program in another province someone should tell me — but as far as I know, only New Brunswick has a bursary program which has remained almost unchanged.

Senator Thériault: Quebec has one!

Senator Simard: No. There is no bursary program in Quebec. You say they have one! Maybe we should ask Senator Bolduc to tell us.

Senator Thériault: Some of my children went to university and I have grandchildren attending the Université de Montreal. It seems to me that they have bursary programs.

Whatever, the problem remains; if, as Senator Simard says and as Senator Kinsella also claims, the whole program should be reviewed, what is the sense of having this legislation now? As Senator Simard said, it is to make students realize that governments in Canada are experiencing fiscal problems but it seems to me that students know that and that their parents know it too.

Something is wrong here! Either the rationale is wrong or the government is not sincere when it says that the whole system needs to be reviewed. If the government has nothing to gain from this bill during fiscal year 1993-1994 and if we have to review the program anyway, then it seems to me that once again we are passing legislation just for the sake of it. And one of the problems we have right now is that we have too many laws! You said it yourself, we have too many regulations!

And so, we are asked to pass an amendment to the legislation governing student loans that will do nothing! It does not make any sense! I hope that Senators Simard and Kinsella are going to get their act together and give us the facts as they see them.

In concluding, honourable senators, I repeat that I know how very disappointed New Brunswick students will be with the speech Senator Simard gave today because it is not at all what they were expecting.

[English]

Hon. Philippe Deane Gigantès: Honourable senators, the Leader of the Government spoke of cowardice on my part.

It is very brave to cut money for the students. It was very brave to deindex the pensions of the old who are poor. It was very brave, when selling us the free trade agreement, to say that they were going to look after those who might lose jobs. It was very brave to bring in Bill C-22 and Bill C-91 to increase the costs of medicine for the poor and to weaken the health service, which is needed more by the poor than by the rich. It was very brave to decrease payments to the unemployed during a recession.

Senator Simard insists that we do not vote for any of their legislation. We are not the government; they are the government.

Michael Wilson, when he was running for leader ten years ago, said that, if the Conservatives, and especially he himself, were not in charge of finances after the election that was to follow, the debt in ten years would reach \$450 billion. Well, that is where it is now.

If the debt continues to rise at the rate at which it has been rising during the last nine years under the Tories, in six years from now it will be \$800 billion, and in eight years it will be \$900 billion.

The Tories have made the rich richer, reduced the taxes of the rich, increased the taxes of the poor, and generally put the country in a mess. Mr. Wilson caused the recession deliberately, he said. Remember the soft landing?

When you ask them why all this is happening, they say, "The devil made me do it," like Flip Wilson, the comedian. Or they say, "It is all the fault of the Liberals."

For nine years they have been in power. They were the people who promised that, if elected, they would do away with the deficit and the debt would not rise to \$450 billion. They have been in power for nine years. The debt is at \$450 billion.

The only thing they have done is to make the rich richer and to take hits at the poor, the old, the unemployed, and the poorest provinces, from whom they are clawing things back. Now they are going after the students, and doing so at the same time as they tell us that education is all important.

We cannot compete in this world if we are not as well educated as, or even better educated than, our competition; but this bill will make it harder for students, especially those from poor families, to become sufficiently well-educated to compete in the world of tomorrow.

Do the Tories care for the poor? No. But they are nice, brave people. Let me tell you that hitting the poor, the weak and the old is not nice and brave; it is cowardly.