

budget measures would influence people in the different regions of the country?

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): The government makes studies of many kinds and sorts, and I am sure that a great many were made in connection with the budget. Whether or not those studies will be made public, of course, is the matter my honourable friend is referring to, and I can give no undertaking that that will be the case. I can tell him, however, I have seen certain figures in newspapers that attracted my notice, and which I do not believe match the figures provided by the government on the same subject, and I intend in the course of time to make a review of those figures to do what I can to reconcile the differences.

Senator Stewart: The Leader of the Government has indicated that he will correct this kind of information if correction is in order. Will he make available to honourable senators any study showing the impact of the budget measures on the different regions of the country? Or is it the situation that no such impact study was made?

Senator Roblin: As I think I told my honourable friend yesterday, I am not in the impact study business. It is the part of other people to undertake that if they wish to do so. I can say that I have no authority at present to say that those studies will be provided to my honourable friend.

Senator Stewart: I did not expect that the Leader of the Government himself would make an impact study, but I am sure that he, as a member of the government, knows whether or not such studies were made, and the question is: Are those impact studies available to senators, as they seem to be available to the correspondents of the *Globe and Mail*?

Senator Roblin: A lot of things become available to the correspondents of the *Globe and Mail*. As a matter of fact, if one wants to be philosophical about it—and I think I probably do at this moment—I take the view that there are no secrets in government, in the sense that sooner or later all the facts, whether they should or should not, become part of the public domain. It is, nevertheless, my firm opinion—and I think I am probably at odds with the Auditor General on this point—that documents which can properly be classified as cabinet documents ought not to be made public, or else the principle of cabinet solidarity is not capable of being sustained in a parliamentary democracy. If the documents my honourable friend talks about come within that range of documents—and I include budgetary considerations in that range—I doubt that they will be made available to him.

Senator Stewart: If they are not, will they be made available?

Senator Roblin: No.

Senator Stewart: They will not, even if they are outside the ambit of cabinet documents?

Senator Roblin: If they are within the ambit of those documents that we now make available to the public, they will be produced. My honourable friend understands that there is extensive legislation on secrecy and the availability of docu-

ments to the general public. Such documents as come within those categories, my honourable friend can read for himself.

● (1440)

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre De Bané: Honourable senators, I have a supplementary for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. I must assume the Department of Finance orders impact studies on the various proposals contained in the Budget.

If my assumption is correct, could the Leader of the Government in the Senate undertake to ask his colleague, the Minister of Finance, to publish these papers?

This is not, of course, a matter of State secrets or matters affecting the country's security.

[English]

Senator Roblin: Honourable senators, that question is the same as the one that was just asked by Senator Stewart, and I give the same answer.

Senator De Bané: Would the honourable Leader of the Government in the Senate tell us by what rationale the documents that could support what Mr. Wilson said a few months ago that the budget would be tough but fair will not be made public?

Senator Frith: Because they can't find the fair ones.

Senator De Bané: The leader knows that there are only one or two reasons why documents cannot be made public—either they are cabinet secrets or they relate to the security of the state. Obviously, the impact of a budget on the taxpayers is of public interest. His government has promised an open government and I cannot understand why those documents are not being made public.

Senator Roblin: It is my impression that the documents that make up the budget are, indeed, cabinet papers, because that is the basis on which the cabinet makes its budget decisions and, therefore, are clearly covered by the conventions of this country.

Now that we are on the point, I would like to see a change in the way we prepare our budgets. I am opposed to budget secrecy in the way in which that principle is applied in this country these days. I do not think it is necessary and I think it would be helpful to governments if a different system were adopted. However, that is not the case, and as matters stand at the present time I do not think that those documents could be regarded as those which come under the legislation respecting the publication of government documents.

Hon. Philippe Deane Gigantès: Honourable senators, I should like to address my question to the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Would he kindly take under consideration and eventually give me an answer as to whether or not the measures announced in the budget will cost pensioners \$1.6 billion a year by the year 1990-91?

Senator Roblin: On that subject, I can give my friend no information other than that which is contained in the budget