

Do you think those people have just gone away? Do you think they are just statistics? They have gone bankrupt, and businesses have closed up.

• (1710)

Do you know where those people are today? They are still out there. They do not want this government to repeat that kind of performance. In fact, if honourable senators think we have had trouble with the Constitution and all that, they have not seen anything yet. In all sincerity, I say to this government that if it embarks deliberately on a monetary policy such as it did a few years ago and again cause distress to and the bankruptcy of so many people, we will have more trouble in this country than we have ever seen before.

It seems we are now to have a change. We are supposed to be having some kind of a constitutional crisis that is hurting the economy. We now have a Charlottetown package. Western Canadians, in particular those in the province from which I come, really believe they got shafted on that one. We are worse off than we were. Nothing important was dealt with in this constitutional crisis; absolutely nothing was done about the commonwealth of Canada so that trade can be initiated or free flowing between the provinces.

Where is the crisis? The one thing that we know is that Ontario and Quebec will get about 36 more members in the House of Commons and that Western Canada, and in particular Alberta and British Columbia, will not. Thus we will be worse off under this package. It is a net loss in so far as having influence in the Parliament of Canada is concerned.

In case some have not heard, Mr. Getty resigned a few days after he got back to Alberta. Do you want to know why, honourable senators? I talked to some people in Edmonton. He went to his caucus and they told him, "We're not buying it. You sold out. Maybe Bourassa out-negotiated you." I do not know what happened. Alberta is worse off than it was before, yet he comes back bragging, "I finally got a Triple-E Senate. There will be some regional balance in this country from now on."

Honourable senators, Mr. Getty found out in very short order that the people of Alberta are not that stupid. He can go out there and say that it will be better, but it will not. It will be worse.

Honourable senators should think about this: Western Canada has grown up a little bit since 1867. Since that time, there has not been any constitutional change that recognizes regional interests in this country.

If we enter into this agreement, we will have same the kind of problem as we had before, that problem being that the agreement cannot be changed because of the amending formula. It is now contained in that agreement that we cannot change any federal institutions without the unanimous consent of all the provinces. The people of Western Canada do not like it. In fact, they resent it, and they resent Premier Getty for negotiating such an agreement.

[Senator Olson.]

The Honourable Joe Clark came out west and said, "It isn't perfect, but we worked hard on it for a long time. It is probably the best we could get." He shook his fist a bit and said, "But you better vote 'yes' for it, or else." Or else what, honourable senators? What is the "or else"? Or else it is the last chance for Canada? If this kind of shafting of Western Canadians is to go on, I am not so sure they want any more of Canada.

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government): I draw the attention of the honourable senator to the fact that he is speaking to his inquiry which is supposed to be dealing with the economy, and in particular, the monetary policy. He gave notice earlier today of his inquiry regarding the Constitution. I understood he would debate that inquiry on Thursday.

Senator Olson: It is the last chance to save Canada, which is what the Honourable Joe Clark came out to tell us in Western Canada. Do you know what else he said? He said that we must get this Constitution stuff behind us before we can work on the economy. Is that not like being able to walk and chew gum at the same time? Can you not do things about the economy while you are trying to fix the Constitution?

Senator Murray: We are.

Senator Olson: That is the kind of garbage that is being passed around Alberta by the leaders of this government. The people of Alberta are getting sick and tired of it. I talked to a great many people out there over the weekend. My phone was buzzing. I do not care who is in power, I know that those people are just smarting, seething with anger. Representing the province of Alberta we have the Honourable Joe Clark, who was the Secretary of State for External Affairs and who is now responsible for the Constitution, the Honourable Don Mazankowski, who is the Minister of Finance, and the House Leader, Mr. Harvie Andre, who are all in senior positions in this government. Yet, Alberta gets shafted for what they do—what a great country we have!

Senator Murray: Are you voting "no" in the referendum?

Senator Olson: I am tempted to vote "no" and I may encourage everyone else to vote "no". I think it is wrong for Canada.

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to inform the honourable senator that his time has expired.

Senator Olson: Honourable senators, I ask leave to have but a few more minutes to finish my remarks.

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Is it agreed?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Olson: Everyone admits that this constitutional package is not perfect. What they really mean is that it is not worth a damn to anyone. Honourable senators, why not get it right before we pass it?