

Senator Roblin: I shall be glad to table any material that is available for the information of honourable senators.

REFORM OF THE SENATE

APPOINTMENTS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Hon. Stanley Haidasz: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

I am wondering whether there is included in his government's proposals for Senate reform a review of his government's appointments, by the appropriate committee of the Senate.

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): Before I answer the question, I should like to thank my honourable friend for the suggestion he made last week about the propriety of asking Senator Cools to represent the Senate at the funeral of the late Prime Minister of Barbados. I am glad to say that we have been able to act on that, and I want to express my appreciation for the suggestion.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Roblin: With respect to the question concerning a review of appointments by a Senate committee, I can say that this is a subject that is being studied by a committee of the House of Commons. Once that committee tables its reports, we may be able to have further information on the subject.

THE PRIME MINISTER

CRITICISM OF APPOINTMENTS—REQUEST FOR APOLOGY

• (1420)

Hon. L. Norbert Thériault: Honourable senators, I have a question for the Leader of the Government. In view of the way that the Prime Minister spoke of so-called patronage appointments prior to the election, and in view of the way he spoke of former Prime Minister Turner and the way he treated, at least in words, those who were appointed by the former Prime Minister to various posts, will the Leader of the Government ask the Prime Minister to have the decency to apologize to those people?

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I do not believe the Prime Minister has said anything that could be construed as a personal reflection. I believe his observations were of a general character, and I must say with respect to some of them that his observations are widely shared by the public.

Hon. Jean Le Moine: Honourable senators, would the Leader of the Government accept that the Prime Minister's words should be understood in a Pickwickian sense?

Senator Roblin: That is the nicest question I have heard today. I think I will answer by saying "Yes".

[Senator Marsden.]

AIR CANADA

BOARD OF DIRECTORS—REPLACEMENT OF MEMBERS

Hon. Keith Davey: Honourable senators, I apologize to the Leader of the Government for returning to the subject of Air Canada appointments, but I am wondering why the government did not follow the precedent set by Prime Minister Trudeau and Prime Minister Clark of allowing the terms to expire, rather than conducting some sort of purge. When Mr. Clark and Mr. Trudeau were in office, the terms were allowed to expire. I am wondering why that did not happen in this case.

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I am not able to give a considered reply to that question, because it is a matter that does not fall within my purview. But I believe it is generally recognized that the change of administration that took place on September 4 was a most unusual event in Canadian history, in that the Progressive Conservative Party, for the first time in living memory, apart from Mr. Diefenbaker's noble example, had a majority, and the recent changes, following an election of that kind, would seem to me to be quite reasonable.

Senator Davey: Prime Minister Trudeau had a majority, but he did not purge those who had been appointed during the tenure of the Clark administration.

Senator Roblin: They were very few on the ground, I'm afraid. As a matter of fact, there were some complaints in certain circles that they were a little slow on that.

THE ECONOMY

NATIONAL CONFERENCE—AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION

Hon. Philippe Deane Gigantès: Honourable senators, since, in answer to a question asked by Senator Marsden, the Leader of the Government said he would supply us with papers on what happened at the economic summit, can he assure this chamber that such papers will contain at least some information, unlike the paper on trade published following the so-called Shamrock Summit?

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, if that is my friend's opinion of the paper on trade following the Shamrock Summit, then I do not think I should spend my time worrying about his grasp of the essentials. I can tell him that I do not know what is going to be in the papers to be dealt with at the economic summit. I have not seen them and I will have to wait until they are delivered. But when they are delivered, I will be glad to send them to my honourable friend. I think he will find them worthy of his consideration.

Senator Gigantès: The view that the paper on trade contains no substance whatsoever is widely held in the country, at least among editorial writers. Would the Leader of the Government advise his colleagues in the cabinet that they should give some flesh to this paper, so that people of miserable intellect, who are not members of the Tory hierarchy, but who are still citizens of this country, will understand what it is that the government and President Reagan are saying?