

**Senator Roblin:** —because I would not get an answer that would be worth two cents, so I won't pay any attention to him. I say to my honourable friend that the position of the government is quite clear, and he can indulge in all the oratory or all the play on words he wishes to, but it does not alter the situation.

**Senator Frith:** The confusing situation.

**Senator Roblin:** You are the confused one.

**Senator MacEachen:** The Leader of the Government has stated that the government will bring in this measure. Those were his words, that it "will bring in this measure." He has added to the difficulty, because yesterday the Prime Minister said, "If we do proceed with this measure". So the Prime Minister has left the door completely open for the government not to proceed with the measure, and I would be satisfied if the Leader of the Government in the Senate were to say, "I agree with the Prime Minister. We are now in a state of mind that we may not proceed at all with the measure." I think that would be fair, because that is the meaning I read into the Prime Minister's words. However, it is clear that the Leader of the Government really does not want to say, because he does not know, and it would be better for him to admit it, or to rely on the words of the Prime Minister.

I am not going to complain any further, because if I wanted to produce additional evidence I would quote the Press Secretary of the Prime Minister, who said very clearly, "We may not proceed at all with this measure." That is all I have been asking. The Leader of the Government says, "Yes, we will proceed," and the Prime Minister says, "We may not proceed."

**Senator Roblin:** I do not think the Press Secretary is an authority on which I would care to rely. They are usually well informed, but they do not state government policy. The Prime Minister states government policy. The Prime Minister has not stated that he will not proceed with this measure. He has used the words my honourable friend has quoted, and I take my stand on precisely the same words.

**Senator Flynn:** He does not understand.

**Senator MacEachen:** I thank the Leader of the Government for that, because he has modified his previous statement—

**Senator Roblin:** I don't think so.

**Senator MacEachen:** —which was that the government would bring in this measure. He has modified that, and I think he is now consistent with what the Prime Minister has stated, which is that we may never see this measure. So much for the rule of anticipation.

**Senator Flynn:** Boring!

**Senator Roblin:** I advise my honourable friend to watch the development of events closely. I think he will see that the measures the government will provide will be consistent with the budget that we have presented, and at the same time will take into account difficulties that will arise. This is not the only subject on which I expect we will see some considerable

[Senator Frith.]

discussion, not because I particularly want to hear it, but I am perfectly sure that after we get through with the bills that come before this house with respect to taxation measures, if we do not get 199 different opinions, we will certainly get two sets of opinions as to what is good and what is bad with this budget.

If anyone thinks that the government is going to be able to proceed with this measure without a very interesting and, I hope, fruitful debate, in which different opinions will be expressed on the measures, I will be disappointed. I want to hear that debate. I have never made a claim that a government with which I have been associated is perfect. I am sure this government is not perfect. My own government in Manitoba was not perfect. We made lots of mistakes. We tried to get at least 51 per cent of our decisions right. However, I am never one to stand in my place and say that we are perfect and won't listen to sound advice, because we will. Some advice we do not take, but there is some advice that we will take.

**Senator Frith:** Like vocabulary.

**Senator MacEachen:** If one wanted to give advice, that would be one thing, but we have not reached the stage of giving advice.

**Senator Flynn:** You certainly haven't. That is quite obvious.

**Senator MacEachen:** All we are doing is trying to find out is where the government stands, and I think that is a legitimate purpose in Question Period, to know what government policy is. The Leader of the Government has confirmed what the Prime Minister stated yesterday that the government may not proceed with this measure on de-indexation. It may not proceed. So, it is not firm government policy; it is backpedalling, and we will see more of it.

**Senator Roblin:** I think that if changes are made in this matter my friend will perceive that they are not back-peddaling. I think he will perceive, if he is fair, that they are improvements, and that I think we can look forward to.

**Senator MacEachen:** We hope so.

#### IMPACT OF MEASURES

**Hon. John B. Stewart:** Honourable senators, I should like to address a question to the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Yesterday I asked him if an impact study had been made showing what the results would be for the various regions of the country of the measures included in the budget. He did not answer that question. That was not really his fault, because I went on to ask another question, and he was so busy answering that one that we both forgot the first question.

I read in the *Globe and Mail* today that prior to the budget being presented last month the Minister of Finance was given figures by his department which showed that the tax increases would hit low-income and middle-income earners harder than high-income earners.

Am I correct in assuming that if that kind of impact study was made by officials in the Department of Finance, they made a comparable impact study with regard to the way the