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MR. WHITLAM'S SENATE OPENING

Comment by the Prime Minister, Mr. John Gorton

Speaking beneath a banner inscribed "A Labor Senate Makes Sense" Mr. Whitlam, who is pledged to the abolition of the Senate, last night delivered a lack-lustre rehash of denigration and generalisation.

While doing so he was divided from the Opposition Leader in the Senate. This gentleman was absent owing, it is said, to the divisive effects of a discussion on who got what television time.

Nevertheless the dull and stodgy speech contained as many falsehoods as a suet pudding contains currants.

It is simply not true that there was a 5% cost of living increase last year.

It is simply not true that the Treasurer ever "admitted" that there was.

It is simply not true that the National Liberation Front is recognised as a principal party in the negotiations at Paris, or that the approach of the Government to helping the sick aged is discriminatory, or that if a Government does not do what the Opposition demands it is therefore being divisive.

But perhaps the most intriguing part of the address, which was singularly free from constructive proposals, was that wherein Mr Whitlam appointed himself as the only man with a conscience and as the sole custodian of the national conscience. The implication of course is that anyone who disagrees with him on anything must be acting against the dictates of conscience. This may be most consoling to this all-Australian Jiminy Cricket. But it isn't necessarily true.

If it is thought that this is not a particularly serious comment, it is because Mr. Whitlam's contribution could not be regarded as a particularly serious speech.

CANBERRA
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