

THE SENATE

Tuesday, November 8, 1949

The Senate met at 8.30 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.

Prayers and routine proceedings.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

ADDRESS IN REPLY—MESSAGE OF THANKS
FROM HIS EXCELLENCY

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that he had received a message from His Excellency the Governor General reading as follows:

The Honourable
The Members of the Senate:

I have received with great pleasure the Address that you have voted in reply to my speech at the opening of parliament. I thank you sincerely for this Address.

Alexander of Tunis

ATOMIC ENERGY COMMITTEE

INQUIRY

On the Orders of the Day:

Hon. Thomas Reid: Honourable senators, I should like to direct a question to the honourable leader of the government.

Has the government given any consideration to the appointment of senators to the Atomic Energy Committee? If not, why not?

Hon. Mr. Robertson: The honourable senator from New Westminster (Hon. Mr. Reid) did me the courtesy of advising me that he intended to ask this question tonight, and I am happy to answer him at once. When notice of the motion to appoint a Committee on Atomic Energy was given in the other place, I discussed with the government the possibility of establishing a joint committee. It was suggested to me that, everything being taken into consideration, it would be desirable to let a committee of the other house carry on for this session. It was stated that the Senate, if it saw fit to do so, could appoint an Atomic Energy Committee of its own, and that the government would be quite willing to create a joint committee next year. I have been assured that should we appoint a committee of our own, all the evidence gathered by the committee of the other place would be made available to us. I have spoken to several honourable senators about the appointment of a Senate committee this session, and they have differed as to whether or not it would be advisable. Therefore, while I am willing that a committee be appointed, I myself feel that because of the pressure of other business it might be unwise.

PENSION FUND SOCIETIES BILL

THIRD READING

Hon. Mr. Robertson moved the third reading of Bill V-4, an Act to amend the Pension Fund Societies Act.

The motion was agreed to, and the bill was read the third time, and passed.

NATIONAL DEFENCE BILL

SECOND READING

On the Order:

Second reading of Bill J-5, an Act respecting National Defence.

Hon. Wishart McL. Robertson (Leader of the Government) withdrew from the Senate to return accompanied by Honourable Brooke Claxton, Minister of National Defence, whom he escorted to a seat in the chamber.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I think it is proper and fitting that I should tender an official welcome to the Honourable Mr. Claxton, Minister of National Defence, and thank him for coming to this chamber to explain this bill.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Robertson moved the second reading of the bill.

Hon. Brooke Claxton (Minister of National Defence): Honourable senators, I must say that I deeply appreciate the privilege of appearing before this honourable house to discuss with you this important measure. I realize that I am the second minister to appear before you to explain legislation. My colleague, Mr. Chevrier, appeared here on the 16th of March, 1948, in consequence of the change made in your rules the year before, and since then he has appeared on another occasion. I hope that, if it is necessary, you will permit me to appear again before you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Claxton: The Speech from the Throne at the opening of parliament in 1948, and again this year, announced legislation to deal comprehensively with the armed forces. The bill now before you gives effect to these announcements, and will be another step in the unification and co-ordination of all the defence forces of Canada. In this work of unification and co-ordination Canada is taking a leading place.

The bill is a large one, perhaps the bulkiest to be put before you since the session of 1934. I hope, however, that any misgivings you may have on account of its size will be overcome by the fact that here we are not only streamlining the legislation relative to