

Government Orders

consent of the Governor General was announced at any stage nor was any resolution passed previously to the introduction of the Bill. This seems to be a precedent exactly in point.

The Bill is a consolidating and amending Bill, and, in the case of such Bills, it is only when there are clauses imposing new burdens that it is necessary to consider those first in a Committee of the Whole. The object aimed at in such Bills is to give the old law a new and more convenient form.

Therefore, this is not a new proposition that I am putting forward. I suggest that it is one that is well rooted in our parliamentary practice and tradition. The fact is that the procedure has changed over the years and perhaps I can turn briefly to that procedure to mention certain of the changes that have taken place.

I am assisted in this by an excellent study done by the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, to which I have referred the Chair previously, and certainly I have referred to it for my friend, the hon. government House Leader who could do some reading on this, I think, to advantage.

This ninth report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance presented on February 13 of this year to the Senate outlines in some detail the history of the royal recommendation as it applies to government bills in this House.

Your Honour will recall that in the years prior to 1968 the normal practice in dealing with the royal recommendation was to have a resolution introduced in Committee of the Whole that was recommended to the House by the Governor General. The debate proceeded on the resolution and Committee of the Whole and only after adoption of that resolution was a bill allowed to be introduced in this House. Indeed, just last evening Your Honour will recall we followed a very similar procedure in that prior to the introduction of the supply bills, the two of them that were introduced and passed through all stages last evening, there was a resolution first adopted by the House prior to the introduction of those bills.

Those resolutions had been recommended to the House by virtue of the messages which His Excellency had sent to this House recommending the Estimates to the House. We have the case of the royal recommendation and resolution followed in respect of those appropriation acts.

• (1130)

In 1968 the procedure in respect of public bills was changed. Instead of having a resolution, the royal recom-

mendation was attached to the bill itself and the bill was introduced at first reading with the royal recommendation attached. The resolution stage and the preceding debate in Committee of the Whole was abolished as being unnecessary and a duplication of effort.

In this case, as now is the practice with royal recommendations, the recommendation is attached but it does not say which clauses if any of the bill impose a new tax or impose or a new charge on the public revenue. In the absence of a statement of that, I suppose it is fair game to stand and ask the minister to explain where the new charge is. But we have had all these denials of new charges; indeed, Your Honour will recall that the Minister of Finance had the nerve to stand in this House and tell us there were no new taxes in the budget. It is safe to say that in the course of that silly statement he got all kinds of applause from the other side of the House.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Milliken: I am glad to see they are still applauding, Mr. Speaker, but the people of Canada did not believe him; neither did we.

Since he made the statement that there were no new taxes, why is there a royal recommendation in this bill? If this bill is reducing the charge on the public revenue, as the minister said in the budget that it is, why has he attached a royal recommendation to it? Either it is because there are new taxes or charges included in this bill, or it should not be there.

Mr. Young (Gloucester): It is because there are new taxes.

Mr. Milliken: My friend from Gloucester says that it is new taxes. I have no doubt there were new taxes in the budget. The question is whether there are any new taxes in this bill. I have examined the bill, Your Honour, and I have tried to understand it. It is clear that it reduces the increase in the charges that are already authorized by an existing law.

The Minister of Finance stated that repeatedly in his budget. I am not a gullible person and I do not swallow everything the Minister of Finance says, but it is in print in the budget that this is intended to reduce the payments by the Government of Canada.

The minister says this bill does that and it is intended to implement the provisions of the budget. If that is the case, and I invite Your Honour to read it with that in