

recycle themselves on the labour market. That is the only option. I assume that we will have programs of that kind.

I have stated all that I intended to on this point. I will conclude my remarks by referring to Senator Hébert's conclusion, as stated last week.

[Translation]

Senator Tremblay: Senator Hébert told us he did not like the Minister Mrs. McDougall to come and "lecture the Senators before the committee". He probably wanted to get even when he went up not to the rostrum but into the pulpit and concluded his own presentation of the report with a quotation from Monsignor Valois.

I conclude my remarks in as humorous a note, supposing he made his remark humorously.

[English]

Hon. John B. Stewart: Honourable senators, I have a few words to say, prompted by what Senator Tremblay has just now said. He has tied Bill C-21 directly to what he calls "the problem of the deficit." We have been hearing about the deficit in Canada for several years, certainly since 1984. Yet Canada's debt continues to mount ever higher year after year.

During the 1980s the tactical maxim of U.S. politicians was, "If you are going to increase the national debt, be sure to denounce the annual deficit." That was the Reagan maxim. That seems to be the maxim observed by the present Minister of Finance in Canada, namely, "increase the debt, but be sure to denounce the deficit on every occasion."

Senator Tremblay has said that in principle he is in favour of Bill C-21. In other words, he is in favour of a move toward the fiscal privatization of the unemployment insurance program. Fiscal privatization of this program is consistent with what the present government has done in other areas. I shall not question his decision to favour privatization. Clearly, however, I think he is making a serious mistake.

I want to talk chiefly and briefly about Senator Tremblay's attack upon two of the amendments made by the committee. He questions the constitutional propriety of the amendment with regard to regulations concerning fishermen's benefits. He questions the constitutional propriety of giving the Senate the statutory power to prevent changes to those regulations. Similarly, he questions the constitutional propriety of giving the Senate the power to reject the developmental plan under which hundreds of millions of dollars are to be paid out.

If I heard Senator Tremblay correctly, he said that he will not pronounce on the constitutional propriety of the House of Commons adopting provisions such as those adopted by the special committee; instead, he focuses directly on the powers of the Senate. He states that regardless of what is proper in the case of the House of Commons, when we look at what the committee's amendments to Bill C-21 do on these two matters, they go beyond what he regards as the proper powers of the Senate.

● (1610)

The honourable senator referred to the fact that some years ago a constitutional amendment was proposed that would limit

the powers of the Senate to a suspensive veto in legislation. That constitutional amendment has not been made. The powers of the Senate are the powers conferred by the Constitution Act, 1867. Our responsibilities with regard to Bill C-21 are those imposed upon us by the Constitution, not those recommended by a report of a joint committee.

Senator Tremblay: Perhaps the honourable senator will allow me to interject to avoid any misunderstanding that may lie between us. I am not questioning the constitutionality of the existing powers of the Senate. I merely mentioned a recommendation in the report of the joint committee in 1984. What is interesting about the recommendations of that committee is that they go far in the direction of the suspensive veto. However, I put those comments aside because they have no meaning in the present debate. I was not stating a constitutional position. I was trying to say that the other place will discuss this matter if it arises, when and if the amendments reach them. We have the amendments before us now, so let us discuss them. That is one point.

My other point is that I referred to the report of the committee, not to say that the recommendations have been adopted but to show that there is a contrary view, which would, rather than give more power, give less power. Since I signed the report, I still agree with it. That is what I meant to say.

Senator Stewart: Honourable senators, I do not think there is any misunderstanding between the honourable senator and me on either of these points. Senator Tremblay has said that he signed the report and that, consequently, he feels, in this instance at least, bound to behave consistently with that report.

Senator Tremblay: Bound only on the basis that I bind myself.

Senator Stewart: Very well. Senator Tremblay, in conscience, feels bound not to go beyond the powers of the Senate as described in the report he signed. Of course, many of us did not sign that report.

The fact is that if we allow Bill C-21 to pass the Senate, with or without amendment, we will have delegated great legislative power to the government to plan and to make payments. We cannot evade that fact. For years both the House of Commons and the Senate, especially the House of Commons, have grappled with the problem of controlling orders in council and regulations as a result of the delegation of legislative power. In the literature on parliamentary government probably no topic has taken up more pages since the Donoughmore Commission Report of 1932 in the United Kingdom than the problem of controlling delegated legislation.

As I read the report of the Special Committee on Bill C-21, it proposes that in this situation, where enormous powers are conferred by the Senate and the House of Commons on bureaucrats and ministers, a procedure be adopted by which the Senate can evaluate what has been done with that power. That seems reasonable to me. It is true that if we had only a suspensive veto it might be logical and consistent to cut back