

*Bank of Canada Act*

which the hon. member refers calls to mind the actual situation. When we are discussing measures there are certain forms that you, Mr. Speaker, and the chairman of committees follow. I note that on April 17, at the end of the debate in committee on redistribution, the form used by the chairman was, "Shall the committee rise and report progress?" It is eminently clear to those who examine the report of that debate that there was no substantial progress to report as a result of that debate. The hon. member for Churchill (Mr. Simpson) referred to the fact that, perhaps, with the passage of time the members of the press gallery may develop a more objective style of reporting. This is a certain term which does no particular harm, and it is one with which I would not disagree.

I offer these as illustrations of certain fictions in the forms connected with our procedures in this house and the other place which we have maintained over a long period. This suggestion that someone is somehow deceived or misled or injured when we use such language or such forms is one which it is very difficult for me to accept as a member of this house. There are many other examples of the way in which the use of language has been traditionally carried over from situations that have prevailed for long periods of time. There is the message that the Governor General himself delivers in the name of Her Majesty at the opening of a session. There are certain legal fictions in connection with the passage of legislation through parliament. Certainly the role of those who have responsibility for giving advice is played down in our procedure in connection with the action that is taken in the name of the sovereign by the Governor General. This deceives no one in terms of literal meaning, but it preserves a certain form and meaning in our institution, and should not be taken literally the way the hon. member who is proposing this bill apparently takes this matter.

I recall another exercise in semantics not very long ago of a slightly different nature in this house. We had a private member's bill before us to change the name from the Old Age Security Act and Old Age Assistance Act, and the hon. member proposing the bill wanted to substitute the euphemism of the senior citizens security act and the senior citizens assistance act. One hon. member quite rightly pointed out that a mere change in name, a mere change in form, does not make anyone a day younger, does not change the content of what we are doing or trying to do. I would submit that the same kind of consideration has to be borne in mind. We have preserved certain wordings on our bills

[Mr. Francis.]

of exchange. This wording is now hallowed by usage. It has been continued for many decades in Canada.

There is, I submit, no harm in this language. No one is deceived, no one is injured. There is no one who believes that our currency is any worse because of the language which is printed upon it. So far as I know, Mr. Speaker, there is no one who really feels there is an obligation on this parliament to give precedence to measures which deal largely in a semantic way with the problems with which we are trying to deal.

As one member of this house, I have tried to argue that the wording of this bill, which has been so well developed by the proposer of the bill itself, is related to the days in which we had a currency that was convertible into gold. This was suspended in 1928 and there followed the measures which were adopted during depression years, the foreign exchange control board in the war years, all of which brought about a usage which was, on the face of it, at variance with the wording which was preserved on the currency. However, in this period the management of our currency compared very favourably with that of any other nation in the world. In this period there was the development of the Bank of Canada, the practices of the Department of Finance in working out the instruments of monetary and fiscal policy in Canada, which brought about certain practices which, in turn, have modified the original framework within which the legislation was drafted.

If we are to make changes we should not do it piecemeal and in this way. We should look at the entire context of the legislation which will be before the house when the recommendations of the Porter royal commission are implemented by the government. At that time we should look at those sections of the Bank of Canada Act and the legislation dealing with foreign exchange, and remove those particular sections which perhaps no longer are in keeping with our modern philosophy of monetary management.

But I think there is no great urgency to change the wording regarding the paper currency, which has been accepted as legal tender in Canada for some considerable time. If, at the time of revision of the act, it is the decision of the authorities to change it then I for one would be the last to oppose them, but I do not believe it is a good principle for hon. members of this house to propose legislation which is couched only in terms of semantics, which deals only in terms of wording, and which does not deal with policy and substance. For these reasons I hope the