

earlier involves hundreds of stevedores and CN Marine crewmen today on ships operating between Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, as well as other workers in those two provinces. All we want to know is, will they qualify for what is provided for in the bill, as Senator Neiman has suggested?

Senator Roblin: Honourable senators, again on the point of order and responding to what Senator Muir says, I should like to say that this strengthens my view that the bill should go to committee.

Senator Frith: Honourable senators, I agree with Senator Roblin. I think our general rule is that legislation always goes to committee. A bill's not going to committee should be the exception.

If Senator Muir feels that he would get answers to his questions better in committee, then I think that is decisive of the matter as far as I am concerned and that we should send it to committee. If he feels he can get an answer from the sponsor of the bill here in the Senate, that is fine, but if he has any doubts about it I think we should send it to committee.

Senator Muir: Honourable senators, I think it should go to committee, as long as it does not go this week, because I shall be in the National Defence Medical Centre for a couple of days. I hope we will have a chance to address the matter later.

Hon. Joan Neiman: Honourable senators—

The Hon. the Speaker: I wish to inform honourable senators that if the Honourable Senator Neiman speaks now her speech will have the effect of closing the debate.

● (1510)

Senator Neiman: Honourable senators, I want to thank both Senator Doody and Senator Muir for their intervention. I am inclined to agree with them, because they have both raised what I consider to be important questions, and I am not in a position to answer those questions myself.

I might just say, in reply to the remarks made by Senator Doody, that of course the bill does not provide answers to all of the economic and social problems that are facing us today. Perhaps it represents a small effort. I really do not know how small or how big it is. I would remind Senator Doody, however, that there are other bills which deal with specific problems such as unemployment among the youth and among women. This bill is part of a much larger group of bills which deals with these problems.

I do think that there are some specific areas of the bill that require clarification, and I would be happy to see the bill referred to committee.

Motion agreed to and bill read second time.

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this be read the third time?

Senator Neiman moved that the bill be referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Health, Welfare and Science.

Motion agreed to.

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—ORDER STANDS

On the Order:

Resuming the debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Austin, seconded by the Honourable Senator Goldenberg, for the second reading of the Bill S-11, intituled: "An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act".—(*Honourable Senator Macquarrie*).

Hon. Heath Macquarrie: Honourable senators, I am not a man who is usually troubled, but I am troubled over this bill. For a month now I have been asking about the procedural niceties with regard to it. I believe it is a well-known parliamentary tradition that, when a bill stands in the name of a minister, it is in fact a government bill.

Some weeks ago I asked if the Senate could be given an indication whether this has become a government bill or, if it is not a government bill, whether processes have been set in motion to make a change in the name of the mover. I do not think that we can proceed with the matter "half lost and half saved", as the Evangelists say. It is either a government bill, as is indicated by the name of Senator Austin, or it is not.

I would ask this question one more time. I do not live in British Columbia, I have no personal interests in that province; we will be voting early in P.E.I. I think, however that the matter should be clarified. There will be an election held at some point, and I understand that the Chief Electoral Officer needs all the lead time he can get in preparation for that very important event. I should like to hear from Senator Frith.

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I agree with most of what Senator Macquarrie has said. I do not think that we should proceed with the bill in the minister's name. In fact, I do not think we could proceed unless it were a government bill.

As a result of questions which were quite properly asked by Senator Macquarrie, I have sought information and have been assured that the matter is under study with a view to preparing a government bill on the subject of the so-called "electoral clock." However, because of some other electoral reforms that I think are now before the other place, I had asked for some time in order to have the picture clarified. Senator Macquarrie graciously gave me that time, but I have not yet received the answer I sought. I will, therefore, renew my efforts to clarify the procedural position of this question of legislation relating to the electoral clock, as it is called.

Order stands.

[*Translation*]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

MOTION TO ADOPT SECOND REPORT OF SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE—DEBATE ADJOURNED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the Second Report of the Special Joint Committee on Official Languages, which was presented on Wednesday, December 16, 1981.