

answered. He had put his views on this point in writing for the Minister of Finance. I will read what he says. It will enlighten the House:

I have been frequently asked to recommend its repeal,—

That is referring to the 4 per cent provision.

—but have declined to do so on the ground that until all transfers to the fund are effected and a valuation of the fund made I am not in a position to say that the cost to the Government will not be in excess of 50 per cent of the total cost. It is impossible to say what the effect of the repeal of the provision will be. I cannot tell, nor can any person tell, how much money will be lost to the Government, because no person can tell how many men will transfer because of its repeal who would not have otherwise transferred.

He states that whatever we take from the fund will have to be made up from the Treasury.

Hon. Mr. SCHAFFNER: Will the honourable gentleman tell me about how many have come in since the 4 per cent interest requirement was introduced?

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: About 18,000.

Hon. Mr. SCHAFFNER: And about how many will come in if this amendment is made?

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: It is expected that if it carries it will bring in 7,000 or 8,000 more.

Hon. Mr. McMEANS: Will those who came in first and paid their money be in the same position as those who come in now?

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: Yes, I think that is the effect of the amendment.

Hon. Mr. McMEANS: Is it the intention that those who paid in their money should get a rebate of 4 per cent of what they paid in?

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: No, no. The whole Civil Service have put themselves on record. There is no objection, on the part of the 18,000 who have come in, that this favour be granted to those who may come in.

Hon. Mr. BELAND: If they agree, they will submit no claim for a refund.

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: They are quite willing that the fund should be reduced by the amount necessary to pay the 4 per cent.

The Hon. the SPEAKER: The honourable gentleman from Regina (Hon. Mr. Laird) has asked whether, this being a money Bill, the Senate can deal with it. As has been stated

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND.

by an honourable gentleman, the Senate decided that question in May of 1918, when it adopted a Report dealing with the whole question of the rules of the Senate in regard to money Bills. Upon reading these amendments, as proposed, it does seem to me that if we adopt them we shall be creating a charge which will have to be borne by the Government, and which therefore will be a charge on the revenue. I read from page 418 of the 13th edition of May, where, in dealing with this question, he says:

On consideration of a Bill on report, no clause or amendment may be proposed which creates a charge upon the public revenue, or upon rates or local burthens upon the people, or which increases taxation, but the Bill may be recommitted in respect of any such proposed clause or amendment.

This is dealing with the action of the House of Commons when they have before them a Bill which has been amended in Committee, and the charge has not been sanctioned by the Government.

In respect of a charge upon rates or local burthens, a bill may be recommitted and considered in Committee forthwith: but in the case of a clause or amendment which creates a charge upon the public revenue, this course cannot be taken unless previously such charge has been recommended by the Crown, and sanctioned by a resolution of a Committee of the whole House, which has been agreed to by the House upon report.

It seems to me that that is to some extent the position that we are in. There is no doubt that the Senate has a right to amend a Money Bill, but it has no right to increase the charge upon the public. Whether it would be advisable in the interest of the Senate that it should send this Bill back with a recommendation that these changes be made by the House of Commons is a matter for the Senate to consider. I do not consider that the Senate should pass this report and commit the country to a change of this kind.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: The honourable the Speaker decides that the point of order is well taken?

The Hon. the SPEAKER: Unfortunately, the point of order was put to me on the ground that this was a Money Bill and therefore we could not deal with it. That point of order, I think, was not well taken, because the Senate has decided, long ago, that it can amend Money Bills. The difficulty is that in what we are doing we increase the charge on the country, and I have to rule on that point.

Hon. Mr. BEIQUÉ: That is the point raised. The question was whether that was in order or not.