

Government Orders

expected or wanted, and of course they will take any largesse from the federal government that we can provide them—

An hon. member: No.

Mr. McDermid: Certainly they will. They relatively appreciate it but they will take it, that is for sure. I am talking about the extra equalization program that we came in with, that we negotiated with them and that they are very happy about, especially the province of Quebec.

The Minister of Finance from Quebec, the Hon. Gerard Levesque, was extremely pleased with the new negotiations and the decision that came down recently. My hon. friend from Montreal should not look quite so surprised because I was sitting beside Mr. Levesque when he sang the praises of the Minister of Finance for the Government of Canada at that particular time.

In any event, these measures are very important. They are important for the provinces. It is a two-year extension of the agreement. We will be continuing in the next two years negotiating the equalization program which I think will be very, very important.

I understand that there have been consultations and there is unanimous consent to refer this bill to the Standing Committee on Finance. Therefore, I move:

That pursuant to Standing Order 73(3), Bill C-60, an act to amend the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act and the Federal Post-Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act, be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Members have heard the terms of the motion. Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Will those members who object to the motion, please rise in their places.

Mrs. Marleau: On a point of order. You did not recognize me on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I will recognize the hon. member on a point of order, but this is the standard procedure when we have a minister rising in his place to refer the bill to a different committee. I will recognize the hon. member on a point of order.

Mrs. Marleau: Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister mentioned something about consultation. I am the critic in the House on this bill. No one has spoken to me about referring and changing the venue of the discussion for this bill. Perhaps if we did have some discussions I might be agreeable, but at this point I have not been consulted and I am not aware of anyone in my party having been consulted.

Mr. McDermid: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, it is my understanding that the agreement was between the House leaders. That was the information that was provided to me. I did not consult with my colleagues in the opposition as I was informed that consultations had in fact taken place. If they have not taken place, I will make sure they do take place, but I still would like to put that motion before the floor.

Mrs. Marleau: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the hon. minister would allow me a few minutes to consult with the members of my party before proceeding with his motion. I would beg his indulgence, please.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is there agreement?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All right, there is agreement.

• (1220)

I will wait and see what instructions the Chair receives within the next few minutes. I will carry on with the debate.

Mrs. Diane Marleau (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to debate Bill C-60, an act to amend the Federal-Provincial Arrangements and Federal Post-Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act.

I sat here and listened with a great deal of patience to the glorious renderings of the illustrious minister on the government side who was very busy telling us and Canadians how well they have behaved toward the provinces in terms of transfers and the huge increases that have come forward.

I sometimes wonder what kind of land they live in because wherever I go I hear of cutbacks. I hear from students how tuition fees have increased. I hear of massive closures in the health sector. I am not at all convinced that Canadians are prepared to acknowledge that the statements made by the minister are as optimistic as perhaps he would like us to believe.