

results of his consultations and make recommendations relating thereto.

The federal representative will also be available to provide the Minister of Transport and other ministers with advice on implementation of the western rail transportation policy including advice on required legislative measures.

The federal representative will be based in Winnipeg and will be provided with an office and support services to be funded out of an overall budget for his office. All salaries and expenses, with the exception of those of federal government employees will also be funded from this budget.

QUESTIONS ON ORDER PAPER

REQUEST FOR ANSWER

Hon. Jack Marshall: Honourable senators, I wonder if the Leader of the Government has an answer to Question No. 59 on the Order Paper, which will become a year old in a few days. This question has to do with the order of precedence, and considerations of protocol, being destroyed on Parliament Hill. I think the answer should be available by now, unless the government is embarrassed lest the answer proves that a destruction of the order of precedence and consideration of senators is, in fact, taking place.

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I regret the delay in supplying an answer to this question, and I thank Senator Marshall for reminding me of the matter.

THE ESTIMATES

DISTRIBUTION TO SENATORS—QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE

On the Orders of the Day:

Hon. Jack Marshall: Honourable senators, I wonder if the Leader of the Government in the Senate can tell us whether he has any information on the tabling of the estimates, referred to by me on February 24 last, and also whether he can give us the reason why the Senate is always the last to receive them. The leader said he would make an investigation as to why they were so late in arriving.

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, the investigation has not yet been completed.

Hon. G. I. Smith: Has it been started?

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—ORDER DISCHARGED

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. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, last week, when this order was called, Senator Macquarrie asked that we try to have some final answer for him this week, in order to avoid his having to continually ask the Senate to stand it. I undertook to do this.

Honourable senators will recall that Senator Macquarrie's reason for requesting an explanation was the problem created by the fact that the bill, being a private member's bill, stands in the name of Senator Austin, who is now a minister of the Crown.

Senator Austin is here and will speak to the matter. I just want to advise honourable senators that I had a little research done on the procedural framework for dealing with this motion and this bill.

There are three possibilities on the basis of precedents. There is precedent for a motion by a senator that his name be substituted for that of Senator Austin as sponsor of Bill S-11. I should point out that all of the precedents I could find supporting that procedure involved situations in which the sponsor had either been defeated or unseated, or had died, or something of that kind, which does not seem to be perfectly applicable in this case.

Hon. G. I. Smith: Well, from the head up, at least.

Senator Frith: A second possibility is that a motion could be made to discharge the order for the second reading of Bill S-11, and to withdraw the bill. Another senator could then present a bill exactly the same as Bill S-11, if so advised. There is a recent Commons precedent, dated January 1981, supporting that procedure.

A third possibility would be to leave the order standing on the Order Paper until the end of the session. I understand that many senators do not feel that this is a good alternative, and I do not think it is either, so it seems to me, and I think Senator Austin agrees, that the second option is the most desirable. I recommend it to Senator Austin. Of course, he will require leave to have the order discharged and to withdraw the bill.

Hon. Jack Austin: Honourable senators, I would like to ask the Senate for leave to remove Bill S-11 from the Order Paper. As I have become a minister of the Crown, I understand that it is not possible for that bill to remain a private senator's bill.

The principle of the bill is a most important one in my part of Canada, and in asking leave to withdraw the bill, which has been supported by senators on the other side of this chamber as well as on this side, I would like to say that I am pressing, and am pressing with optimism, for the introduction of a bill constructed on similar principles by the government itself.

With that, honourable senators, I ask leave to withdraw Bill S-11 from the Order Paper?

Hon. Heath Macquarrie: Honourable senators, I may say that I can hardly take exception to that proposal, since I pointed out about 11 weeks ago that something had to be done about this bill. I might say to my friend across the way that