

*Message from the Senate*

The Government said that if the development division is done away with another agency will pick up the slack. That is not the case. Yet the Government maintains this Bill should not be separated. The Bill has to be separated because it is two separate subjects. It is not a question of new financing for the development division provisions at all. We are doing away with that division. The Government is not providing something new, it is doing away with it.

**Mr. Boyer:** It has already been passed as a single Bill in this House.

**Mr. Speaker:** I am going to ask the Hon. Member to complete his remarks in a moment, but I want to make it very clear to Hon. Members and the watching public what I have been asked to do here. A Bill has gone from this place to the Senate. The Senate, for whatever reason, and it is not my place to comment on that, certainly not at the moment anyway, has decided to split that Bill. That, I understand, is historically speaking unusual to say the least. What I need to know from Hon. Members is their argument as to whether it is procedurally appropriate for the Senate to do so. I have been asked by the Government to comment on whether or not it is procedurally appropriate to accept a split Bill back from the Senate, and I would like some argument directed to those two points.

I am not saying at the moment I have any particular opinion on it one way or another except to say this is certainly something unusual. The Hon. Member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys could perhaps help the Speaker.

**Mr. MacLellan:** Mr. Speaker, it is perfectly acceptable for the Senate to split this Bill.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. MacLellan:** What the Senate is saying is that it wants the people of Atlantic Canada to have the benefit of the provisions governing ACOA.

**Mr. Boyer:** What is your procedural argument in support of your position?

**Mr. MacLellan:** Mr. Speaker, if we are going to have the nincompoops howling, I am not going to be able to make the point that you want made.

**Mr. Speaker:** Without necessarily accepting the description of the Hon. Member, I will ask other Hon. Members to be quiet and hear the Hon. Member out.

It seems to me that because the Bill originated in this place, the question of whether it should be accepted back as split by some other place is the issue I have to face. The substantive arguments, which I know are very important to Hon. Members on both sides, are not helping the Chair very much.

**Mr. MacLellan:** Mr. Speaker, I think essentially the principal point here is that there is nothing in this Bill which

has come back to the House that was not in it when it was passed by the House initially. Nothing.

**Mr. Boyer:** Then why split it?

**Mr. MacLellan:** The Senate wanted to send back the provisions relating to the title of the Bill. The benefit intended under the Bill has not been changed in any sense. All the Senate has done is delete the portions related to the Cape Breton Development Corporation which have absolutely nothing to do with the spirit of ACOA. Nothing whatsoever. It was a complete red herring. It was an attempt by the Government to try and piggyback the destruction of the development division of the corporation onto this Bill, believing that Atlantic Canada wants regional development assistance so much that they would accept the devastation of the corporation as well. It was a catch-22 situation that the Government tried to perpetrate on the people of Atlantic Canada.

The Senate is saying that we should call it what it is, a Bill for the development of ACOA, nothing more. The provisions governing the spirit of the Bill have not been violated. All that has been taken away is the clandestine aspect of the Government's intention to devastate the Cape Breton Development Corporation.

**Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill):** Mr. Speaker, I agree with the sentiment of the Hon. Member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys (Mr. MacLellan) with respect to what the Senate is trying to do and the concerns that the people of Cape Breton have over the Government's ill-conceived move. Having said that, I must state that we cannot accept any move by the Senate to fundamentally alter legislation in a procedural way which destroys the ability of this House of Commons to make decisions.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Murphy:** Despite the applause from across the way I am going to continue.

If the Senate is allowed to do this, we could be stuck with legislation in the future where the Senate has decided to split it into 15 or 20 or 30 different pieces in a way that would completely hamstring the House of Commons and democracy. I suggest to the Speaker that the Government should just move back to its original Bill, have the motion come back to the House, and then send it back to the Senate again.

**Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants):** Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more with my hon. friend from Churchill (Mr. Murphy). I am absolutely amazed my hon. friend from Cape Breton—The Sydneys (Mr. MacLellan) whose geographical base has obviously blinded him to any sense of reason. The House of Commons makes the laws. We democratically decide to put things in Bills or remove things from Bills. We had Bills here yesterday which did not find favour with all Members. This is the House of Commons and these things are done here. We do not go to the place down the hall