

THE BUDGET SPEECH

PROPOSALS BY MINISTER OF FINANCE—ORDER STANDS

On the Order:

Resuming the debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Frith calling the attention of the Senate to the proposals contained in the Budget Speech made by the Minister of Finance in the other place on 15th February, 1984.—(*Honourable Senator Côtteau*).

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I would ask that order No. 4 be adjourned in the name of Senator Anderson. I believe that Senator Côtteau does not wish to speak to it, while Senator Anderson does and plans to do so next week. I should also mention that that will be the eighth day of debate on the matter and will discharge that order.

Order stands.

● (1550)

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

MOTION TO ESTABLISH STANDING JOINT COMMITTEE

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Government), pursuant to notice of April 3, 1984, moved:

That Rule 67(1) of the Rules of the Senate be amended by relettering paragraphs (e) to (n) inclusive as paragraphs (f) to (o) inclusive and inserting immediately after paragraph (d), the following as new paragraph (e):

“(e) The Joint Committee on Official Languages policy and programs, to which shall be appointed nine senators.”;

That a Message be sent to the House of Commons to acquaint that House that the Senate agrees to unite with that House in the establishment of a Joint Committee of both Houses on Official Languages policy and programs; and

That the Senate will appoint nine of its members, to be designated at a later date, to serve on the said Joint Committee.

He said: Honourable senators, this motion is for the purpose of expressing our concurrence in the formation of a standing committee. As honourable senators will recall, we have had a Special Committee on Official Languages now for some years. The other place has requested the establishment of a standing joint committee and has asked us to concur in that motion.

Hon. Duff Roblin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I am not entirely sure that I recall the explanation that my honourable friend says he gave. By this motion, is he merely altering the number of senators, or is there something more involved in that?

Senator Frith: No, it does more than that. It establishes a standing joint committee where previously there existed only a special committee. It also sets the number of senators at nine. I did previously discuss the question of numbers with Senator Macdonald and Senator Petten.

[Translation]

Hon. Martial Asselin: Honourable senators, I would like to add, with respect to this motion, that I was a member of the joint committee. The purpose of the motion is to form a standing committee of the Senate and the House of Commons. I would have liked cabinet to accept other suggestions that were submitted in our report, especially the one to give more power to the Commissioner of Official Languages, and also the suggestion that we discuss the precedence of the Official Languages Act over all other government legislation.

Senator Frith: It is in the Constitution.

Senator Asselin: In any case, we had a good discussion on the subject in committee. We would have liked the government to be able to take a stand on these issues.

Hon. Paul C. Lafond: The number of senators is now set at nine. Could Senator Frith inform the Senate how many there were before on the special committee?

Senator Frith: That is a good question. I think there were seven. I am sorry I do not know the exact number. Now I am told there were six. Since it is clearly a non-partisan matter of principle, and the motion is supported by both parties in this chamber, perhaps, with leave of Senator Bosa, we could add Senator Asselin's name as co-mover.

Senator Asselin: That will enhance your motion.

Motion agreed to.

[English]

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES OF CANADA

MOTION FOR APPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL SENATE COMMITTEE— DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Charlie Watt, pursuant to notice of March 27, 1984, moved:

That a Special Committee of the Senate be appointed to examine, consider and make recommendations on the problems and issues facing Aboriginal Peoples of Canada;

That the Committee be composed of eight Senators;

That the Committee have power to report from time to time, to send for persons, papers and records, and to print such papers and evidence from day to day as may be ordered by the Committee;

That the Committee have power to travel from place to place within Canada; and

That the Committee have power to retain the services of such counsel and technical, clerical and other personnel as may be required by the said examination.

He said: Honourable senators, I am honoured to address this body. While this may be the first time I have spoken in this chamber, I can assure you that it will not be the last. As an aboriginal person and a new senator, I plan to participate fully in Senate deliberations and the important contribution that the Senate will make to the future of our country.

The motion I am presenting today concerns such a contribution. The motion calls for the establishment of a Special