

many millions of dollars without being given any time to investigate the expenditures more fully. I did not have at that time the ready answer that was given by the sponsor today, namely, that our Finance Committee has been dealing with these matters ever since the opening of the 1966 session of Parliament.

I have been a member of the Finance Committee and I think it has done excellent work.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Aseltine: I congratulate the chairman of that committee on his ability and particularly his indefatigability. I am hoping that before this debate is concluded the chairman will perhaps say a few words about what has been accomplished by the Finance Committee, since it has been operating during the whole of this session. I am quite satisfied with the results so far, and I am sure that all who have attended the meetings of that committee are also quite well satisfied.

Moreover, the Estimates have been tabled since early last spring and no member of the Senate can complain that he has not had any time to look at and deal with any estimate he was interested in. I do not think that we can raise any objection on that score.

The bill itself is in the form which the Senate approved some six, seven or eight years ago, and also the Estimates have been put in a form which was approved by the Senate and is much more satisfactory than it used to be.

There is only one other item about which I wish to speak. I am not going to review in detail the different items so well explained by the sponsor of the bill (Hon. Mr. Deschatelets) but I am not entirely satisfied with his explanation of where the money came from so suddenly a few days ago to make up the balance of the amount required to pay the salaries of civil servants and others. I hope that before this debate is concluded we shall be able to obtain more detailed information than has already been given to us. I call on the sponsor of the bill when he replies to give us all of the information he has in that regard. Other than that, I have nothing further to say at the present time.

I presume that it is the intention to have the Royal Assent given to this bill today if possible. So far as we on this side of the House are concerned, we shall do everything we can to expedite matters.

Hon. T. D'Arcy Leonard: Honourable senators, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the kind and complimentary remarks of Senator Aseltine which were directed primarily to the committee, and on its behalf I express appreciation.

Senator Aseltine suggested that I might have a few words to say on this particular bill at this time. My remarks will be brief.

Dr. Davidson, Secretary of the Treasury Board, appeared before our Finance Committee meeting on Tuesday of last week, at which time we put to him that the supply bill based on the resolution that was then before the House of Commons would soon be before us. As Senator Deschatelets said, a number of questions were asked. Indeed, it was a good meeting and well attended.

The next meeting of the committee is set for two weeks from today, when we expect to hear from the Auditor General, Mr. Henderson. I believe the Auditor General's department was one of the departments that applied for payment out of contingency Vote 15 of the Department of Finance, and received a payment out of that vote for the purposes of paying the salaries of his staff. He will therefore be familiar with the situation.

At the same time I think we ought to call Dr. Davidson back. No doubt at that time a full explanation can be given of exactly what transpired between the time of our committee meeting last Tuesday and the announcement on Thursday of the sum of money being transferred or being paid from the contingency Vote 15 of the Department of Finance to the other departments and the required funds for payment of salaries. I think that might be the best time and place to get the information.

We are also bound to have a further supply bill for December or, I presume, December and January, and no doubt some further supplementary Estimates.

I can assure the Senate that the Finance Committee will be ready and willing, and I think able, to deal with any questions relating to further supply bills and Estimates.

If there are any other questions in the minds of senators with respect to the main Estimates or the previous supplementary Estimates, they will of course be free to bring them forward at future meetings of the Finance Committee.

Hon. John J. Connolly: Honourable senators, I feel that I would indeed be remiss if I did not say a word at this point, because for many years, when the Senate has been dealing with appropriation bills, members of the