

work. One of the possibilities for a reformed Senate would be to have them elected, directly or indirectly. There are various ways in which the Senate can be reformed. The Hon. Member has mentioned one which I certainly would want to see considered. But it is not a decision or matter of policy by the Government that that should happen. The policy now is that the committee should look at every possible reform, and report to both Houses.

EXAMINATION OF ELECTORAL SYSTEM—THRONE SPEECH DECLARATION

Mr. Girve Fretz (Erie): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. In the Throne Speech of April, 1980, the Prime Minister said that he was going to:

—appoint a committee of Parliament to examine the electoral system in order to ensure that the highest degree of representativeness and responsibility is achieved and that the confidence of Canadians in Parliamentary institutions is strengthened.

Does the Prime Minister have in mind the appointment of such a committee in the next session, and does he have in mind general elections by proportional representation?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): No, Madam Speaker, that provision has now been met, at least in part, by the setting up of the joint committee of the House and the Senate to look into the matter of Senate reform.

The Minister of Justice informs me that a green paper which we have been preparing will be put before that committee to indicate the various options for Senate reform. As far as reform of the House of Commons is concerned, apart from the electoral reform bill which has already been dealt with, there are no plans that this Government intends to proceed with at the present time.

● (1500)

The Hon. Member will recall, however, in days following the 1980 election that there had been a discussion between the then Leader of the Conservative Party, the Leader of the New Democratic Party, and myself, as to the possibility of seeing some elements of proportional representation introduced for a limited number of Members to be added to the present number at the beginning of this Parliament. That was not done because there was no agreement between the three leaders as to how it should be proceeded with. As far as I am concerned and, as far as I know, that matter is no longer current with this Party.

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[Translation]

PETITIONS

TABLING OF REPORTS OF CLERK OF PETITIONS

Madam Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the petitions presented by Hon. Members on Friday, June 3, 1983, meet the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

80130—6

Point of Order—Mr. Blenkarn

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

MR. BLENKARN—VOTES IN MAIN ESTIMATES ALLEGED IRREGULAR—RULING BY MADAM SPEAKER

Madam Speaker: The Chair is prepared to rule on the point of order raised by the Hon. Member for Mississauga South (Mr. Blenkarn) on Wednesday, April 27, 1983, concerning the procedural acceptability of two Votes and one statutory item in the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1984.

At the outset, I would like to observe that, although this matter was raised by the Hon. Member some weeks ago, I was unable to respond until now because at that time the Main Estimates were referred to the various committees and were therefore not before the House. As a matter of courtesy, however, and remembering that in the past I have suggested that Hon. Members would be helpful by raising points of order on the estimates in sufficient time to allow adequate study, I did not interrupt the Hon. Member. I thank him for having reported his point at that time. The estimates have now been reported or are deemed to be reported in accordance with our Standing Orders and, therefore, I am in a better position and I think I should rule on this particular point now.

The first two objections raised by the Hon. Member relate to the Export Development Corporation and appear under External Affairs in the Blue Book of estimates. They are Vote 40—Payment to the Export Development Corporation for operating losses in the amount of \$35 million and a statutory non-budgetary item of \$164 million for the purchase of shares and provision of loans and guarantees and export credit and foreign investment insurance.

The Hon. Member argued that, because the Export Development Corporation's financial statement for the year ended December 31, 1982, indicates that there are no losses, Vote 40 should be deleted from the estimates. If Hon. Members examine last year's estimates as approved by the House in the Appropriation Act No. 2, 1982-83, Chapter No. 103 of the current session's statutes, they will see, in Vote 65 under Industry, Trade and Commerce, that an amount of \$58 million was voted as payment to the Export Development Corporation for operating losses. The same description is used for this year's Vote 40.

Hon. Members will understand and rightfully agree that the Chair cannot be asked to and will not elaborate on the matter of the Corporation's losses or on the propriety to ask Parliament for money to cover unexpected losses or even on the utilization or non-utilization of that money once granted. All this is irrelevant to the function of the Chair which is to determine that the correct procedure is followed in dealing with the estimates. I see no flaw with Vote 40 and must rule that it is properly before the House. The objection raised by