

believe he has just suggested, to be an institute dealing with geothermal, tidal and wind energy sources, none of which, by any possible stretch of the imagination, can be called solar energy?

Senator Austin: All the scientific literature, senator, describes solar, tidal and wind forms as part of the solar energy system.

Senator Grosart: Oh, please. I have to ask the sponsor if he really believes what he has just said, that geothermal power, which comes out of the bowels of the earth, can be described as solar energy, or that wind can be described as solar energy? There are divisions in the government service, all of which deal with these separately.

Senator Perrault: Ask your questions in committee, and then there will be no problem.

Senator Austin: Honourable senators, in the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources there is the office of renewable energy sources, and all of those items are dealt with in that one office. I wonder if Senator Grosart realizes that the sun is responsible for most forms of energy on earth.

Senator Grosart: Then I would ask the sponsor of the bill if he is really saying that because the sun is responsible for all forms of energy, this institute is going to investigate sex.

Senator Austin: I am open to an amendment from you to that effect, Senator Grosart.

Senator Grosart: You are making stupid statements.

Senator Flynn: Honourable senators, I think the motion proposed by Senator Godfrey is very reasonable in the circumstances. It would permit the Senate not to approve the principle of the bill before we have the necessary answers to the questions we are asking. The principle of this bill is not the study of solar energy, whatever that may be, but the creation of an institute. We have before us a bill which is not even a skeleton, not even half a skeleton. There is nothing there.

The Senate is asked to approve the principle of creating an institute concerning which we know nothing—nothing as to its composition, nothing as to its funding. That is insolent nonsense. All that Senator Austin, the sponsor of the bill, has given us about the intent of the institute are empty words. Nobody over there has been able to tell us exactly what the composition of this institute will be. It is the brainchild of a private member in the other place. But once it has been created, who will take it over? What will the institute do? Where will the members come from? We certainly cannot approve any bill that offers us nothing more than pious hopes that it will prove to be a good thing. We cannot incorporate any institute without knowing exactly what the definitive status of that creation will be.

I suggest that the motion made by Senator Godfrey is the only logical one. We should refer the bill to the committee. The committee would then report and we would probably say, "This bill would be acceptable if we had amendments along these lines," and so on. Then we would know what we were talking about.

I suggest to Senator Austin that he does not know what he is talking about when he expounds on the ideas behind the bill. There is nothing in this bill and nobody behind the bill which would justify his speaking in the way he has. If the Senate is going to be asked to make an act of faith, then, honourable senators, the last man I want to have broach the subject to me is Senator Austin.

Senator Choquette: As the thing stands now I suggest that we cannot even give it a solar second thought.

Senator Perrault: Senator, that isn't bad.

Honourable senators, it seems to me that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has built an almost unassailable case for getting this matter into committee as quickly as possible so that we may ask these questions. The sponsor of the bill will be there, since he has committed himself to appearing, and we can decide at that time, surely, whether it is in the public interest to proceed with the establishment of this institute. The sponsor of the bill proclaims, and has proclaimed, both in the other chamber and to anyone he has discussed the matter with, that the principle of this bill, in his assessment and view, is the furtherance of an industry producing solar energy equipment in part and also intensive research into technology. He states and proclaims that is the principle of the bill. He said that in the other place.

● (1450)

Honourable senators, you and I may disagree with his assessment of what that principle may be, but I suggest to honourable senators here who have had considerable experience in legislatures and in Parliament that it is an entirely usual and ordinary procedure to give second reading support in principle to a great range of measures, then to change them in committee, and ultimately to either approve or reject them on third reading.

Senator Flynn: I disagree.

Senator Perrault: I think we are making too much of this issue. I think this is a good bill. I think the spirit of the bill is desirable, the principle is supportable, and I suggest that we get along with the job of approving it in principle and getting it into committee. I am sure the committee can hear the important observations that Senator Grosart and others may wish to make. It really is an almost unprecedented procedure to refer the content without at least giving it approval in principle.

Senator Grosart: Honourable senators—

Senator Argue: You can speak more than once at this stage.

Senator Grosart: It is not a question of speaking more than once. I am rising to speak in support of the amendment. I have previously asked some questions.

Senator Argue: Agreed.

Senator Grosart: If honourable senators opposite care to read the proceedings, they will find that in every case I asked a specific question, and I did not go beyond it.

Senator Perrault: We are not criticizing you.