

back to the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture for further consideration.

That motion was defeated. The question was then put on the main motion to adopt Senator Argue's report. The Senate divided and it was resolved in the negative. Then:

The Honourable Senator Olson, P.C.—

I am sorry that he did not intervene yesterday to help us with our procedural matter:

—moved, seconded by the Honourable Senator Eudes, that the Bill be placed on the Orders of the Day for a third reading at the next sitting of the Senate.

That question was resolved in the affirmative. So, honourable senators, in summary, if the report of the committee proposing amendments to a bill is defeated, the normal course, according to these precedents, has been to move then to consider the bill at third reading. That, of course, takes a motion, and my honourable friends could defeat it. But, then, they can defeat a bill at third reading anyway.

● (1230)

**Senator MacEachen:** Honourable senators, I do not think that the precedents that Senator Murray has cited are conclusive in any sense in dealing with this particular question. Presumably the Senate, by consent, can do anything, and presumably it acted in this particular case by consent.

**Senator Murray:** Not in one case.

**Senator MacEachen:** I must say, having reflected further upon the theoretical problem which arose yesterday—which was not realized because the members of the government were rescued from their dilemma by the members of the opposition—if that report had been defeated yesterday, the situation would be that Bill C-22 would not have received committee treatment or committee study, and a report on the committee's study would not have been made to the Senate as a whole. I do not want to develop the argument further, but I do not know how the Senate, if that report had been defeated yesterday, could overlook the fact that a report from a committee of the Senate had not been received by the Senate.

**Senator Roblin:** It had been received, and it had been approved!

**Senator MacEachen:** I am saying, what if it had not been received and approved by the Senate, because the intent and the purpose of Senator Bonnell was to report the bill from the committee. What would be the effect if the report was defeated and the bill was not reported from the committee? The bill would still be in committee. How you can overlook that point, and blithely say that it is automatic to move on to third reading, is beyond me.

**Senator Murray:** I just read the precedents.

**Senator MacEachen:** I say to Senator Murray that in his apparent reference to these precedents he has, in my view, revealed to all of us a very serious problem that is certainly not covered by these precedents. If the committee report had not been received yesterday, the Senate would never have had any

report from any committee—be it the Committee of the Whole, a standing committee or a special committee—on the committee stage of the bill. We know that the committee stage is an essential feature of the passage of any bill—

**Senator Flynn:** No.

**An Hon. Senator:** No.

**Senator MacEachen:** —through any chamber of any parliament. I do not think you can just say, "Scratch that out, forget about the committee stage, and move on to third reading," when the Senate has never been advised about the results and has never dealt with the results of the committee.

Those are my comments to Senator Murray.

**Senator Flynn:** For what they are worth!

**Senator MacEachen:** Yes, for what they are worth. My previous comments were worth quite a bit in terms of having Senator Flynn admit that his procedural position was incorrect.

**Senator Flynn:** To the extent that I have indicated.

**Senator Roblin:** Honourable senators, I must say that I find the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition less convincing than he usually is when he discusses this question of what happened to the committee's report. Let us be clear about it. The motion put by Senator Bonnell was for concurrence in the report of the committee. Therefore, to say that the committee stage had not taken place, which is the implication of the honourable senator's argument—in fact, he said it in so many words—is ridiculous.

**Senator MacEachen:** I didn't say that.

**Senator Roblin:** The honourable senator can read *Hansard*.

**Senator MacEachen:** The committee stage—

**Senator Roblin:** Get up on your feet.

**Senator MacEachen:** I am sorry, honourable senators. My point is that the committee stage is an essential part of the legislative process. The Senate must be apprised of that committee stage in dealing with the bill. Yesterday Senator Bonnell moved the adoption of the report. If that report had not been received by the Senate, the Senate would never have had the benefit of a committee study, which it approved. That is an essential step.

**Senator Roblin:** Which it approved?

**Senator MacEachen:** Yes.

**Senator Roblin:** That does not follow at all. The Senate certainly had the benefit of the committee's report. What in the name of goodness has it been debating for the past two or three days? The committee's report—

**Senator MacEachen:** But it had to approve it.

**Senator Roblin:** —and the amendments it wanted to make to the bill. The Senate received the report. Not only has the report been received but the special committee has been dissolved. Surely that indicates that its proceedings have been