

Point of Order

We share the burden and we think that the provinces should put in a lot more money, and share with us for the benefit of the farmers.

I think it is a fair offer. It is on the table. We are waiting for an answer from the provinces. We think it is possible for the provinces and the federal government to do something together.

• (1500)

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, farmers in southern Saskatchewan and Manitoba had a worse drought last summer than the previous year. They have been waiting for six months for action. All they have been getting is federal-provincial wrangling for months. When is the minister going to actually send cheques to farmers who want to put in a crop this spring? When is that going to happen?

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs) and Minister of State (Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the Minister for International Trade answered those questions yesterday.

Over the last two years we have put almost \$8 billion into agriculture. During the same period of time, the three provinces put only \$1.4 billion into agriculture. I don't think it is an equal share.

We have put the money aside and it is there. We are flexible. We are awaiting an answer from the provinces, I think the money is there. This represents a strong commitment by the federal government for Canadian farmers.

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POINT OF ORDER

SENATE AMENDMENTS TO BILL C-21

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence I would like to take this opportunity to raise points of order respecting a message from the Senate with regard to Bill C-21. I would like to present to you arguments as to why the message from the Senate is inappropriate and seek the Chair's guidance in formulating a motion for a return message to the Senate.

Over several centuries of parliamentary rule a clear division of powers and responsibilities has emerged

concerning the roles of each House in a bicameral system. These responsibilities have been documented in publications, Erskine May and Beauchesne to name just two. The division of responsibilities is also laid out in sections 53 and 54 of the Constitution Act and in Standing Orders 79 and 80 of this House which go back to 1967. I would refer hon. members and the Chair to my statement of March 12, 1990 in this House on this subject.

I would also like to add to that statement today and ask you to rule that amendments 5(a) and (b), 7 and 9 in the message from the other place are out of order because they differ in one way or another with the specific conditions laid out in the royal recommendation of Bill C-21, and because they infringe upon the financial initiative of the Crown. As I stated on March 12, 1990, I believe there are several other of their proposed amendments which also do this, but I will leave that to your consideration. I would also like to comment on the propriety of the Senate's amendments.

In particular, as the Speaker knows a major principle of Bill C-21 is to shift to full financing of the UI program through employer/employee contributions. The Senate amendments, particularly 7 and 9, would negate this principle and put the funding onus back on the general taxpayer to approximately the same degree as in the statute that Bill C-21 seeks to change.

Had these amendments come from a member of this House, I am sure that citation 698(5) of Beauchesne's sixth edition would have been invoked to rule them inadmissible. They are clearly contrary to that principle of the bill.

Thus, Mr. Speaker, is it logical for the Senate to ask this House by way of acquiescence to its message that which the House could not do directly? I would suggest no, but I would appreciate the Chair's observation. Would the Senate amendments be in order if they were proposed in our House? I do not believe they would. Would it be proper for this House to accept amendments from the Senate which would not be acceptable if they came from members of this House? Should not the Speaker rule these out of order on that basis?

Another point, Mr. Speaker, on which your views are solicited has to do with the fact that Bill C-21 arose from the budget of April 27, 1989. Starting on page 12 of the budget speech, the minister described the UI changes which contribute "\$1.9 billion to deficit reduction in the