

case to him and, indirectly, to the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration, Senator Graham.

Senator Graham and his committee have asked the senators whose offices are in the East Block to move out in preparation for the economic summit—

Hon. Stanley Haidasz: For two days only.

Senator Asselin: For two days only—this, I do not know, but in any event, the senators involved met, discussed the matter and agreed to go along with the request of the chairman and members of the committee to the effect that we would move out of the East Block on June 12 so that they could organize the summit.

We had asked them whether everybody was going to have to move out, including the members of Parliament who occupy the first floor as well as the ministers. We were told that they would.

So I would like the minister to explain how come we have recently learned that senators would have to move out, but that M.P.'s could stay in the building despite the very heavy security measures that will be taken to follow the comings and goings of the heads of state? If this information is correct, why are members of the Senate treated any different from members of the other place?

● (1420)

[English]

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I appreciate the fact that Senator Asselin provided at least some degree of prior notice of his question. I have been apprised of this situation only very recently by the honourable senator. If there is a difference in the manner in which members of Parliament from the Commons are treated as compared to members of Parliament from the Senate, that will be investigated immediately.

Hon. Joseph-Philippe Guay: Honourable senators, when we dealt with this matter at a meeting of the Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration, a question was asked of the honourable senator at that time as to whether everybody would have to vacate the building for that particular meeting. We were told that the matter would be looked into. At the next meeting of the committee we were told that everybody would have to vacate the building and, therefore, that we senators would receive equal treatment.

I have to agree with Senator Asselin: now it is an entirely different story. Only the second floor is being vacated, which results in a disadvantage to us. I hope that in the future, when we are told that a certain thing will take place, we will not be misled, as we have been in this instance.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Perrault: Honourable senators, as I stated in reply to Senator Asselin, an inquiry will go forward immediately to determine whether there has been any inequality in the treatment of members of the two chambers.

[Senator Asselin.]

ENERGY

GOVERNMENT POLICY—MOTION TO REFER SUBJECT MATTER OF INQUIRY TO BANKING, TRADE AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE

Hon. Lowell Murray: Honourable senators, on December 11 last I moved a motion, which is now item No. 8 on our order paper, which would have had the effect of referring energy matters—the national energy policy—to a committee of this house. In taking the adjournment, the Deputy Leader of the Government indicated that the government was not opposed to doing this.

Some considerable time has now elapsed. I should like to know whether the government seriously intends to allow energy matters to be discussed by a committee of this house, and whether such a committee will have the opportunity to question representatives of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, the Department of Finance, representatives of the industry, of the provincial governments and so on, as was contemplated in the motion and in the speech which I made and he heard at that time.

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, it is the intention of the government to allow the appropriate committees of the Senate to discuss the National Energy Program. When the honourable senator made his inquiry, we were not facing the likelihood of receiving the two major packages of legislation that reflect the National Energy Program as immediately as we now are. I had hoped that we would have received Bill C-57 and Bill C-48 before this time. However, it now appears likely that next week we will receive Bill C-57, which will be referred to the appropriate committee, and that we may receive Bill C-48 before the summer adjournment.

That is the reason I have been standing this order; not because I disagreed with the principle that the honourable senator advanced when he introduced the inquiry—in fact, I agreed with it, as he has pointed out—but because I think it is better for us to deal with the actual legislation rather than simply the principles of the program. In the event that we do not receive the actual legislation, I think we should go ahead with the inquiry.

Senator Murray: Does the government undertake, then, that when that legislation is referred to the appropriate committee, that committee will have sufficient latitude in calling witnesses from the industry and from the various departments of both the federal and provincial governments, and sufficient latitude to question them not only on the details of the tax bills—which is what they really are—but also on the national energy policy as a whole?

● (1425)

Senator Frith: Honourable senators, the government has no intention to try to restrict the activities of the committee in any abnormal way. So far as the government is concerned, the committee will have the right to make the decisions it always makes with respect to the witnesses it wants to call and the scope it wishes to give to its study of the bill.