

On motion of Senator Doody, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for third reading at the next sitting of the Senate.

CANADA'S INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

APPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE—ORDER STANDS

On the Order:

Consideration of a Message from the House of Commons requesting that a special joint committee be appointed to consider Canada's international relations.—*(Honourable Senator Doody)*.

Hon. C. William Doody (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, this order was stood by me a few days ago, not because of any reluctance to join the other place in a joint committee to examine international relations, but rather because of budget restraints in terms of financing this operation.

Certainly, we have every reason to wish to join with the other place in this study. I have been given to understand that if the Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration makes the necessary references, arrangements may be made with the help of the government to provide the necessary funds for the joint committee to undertake the study.

No allowance was made for the study when the budgeting was first decided. This is a new concept that has been brought forward by the other place. Indeed, the same situation applies to the next item on the order paper, consideration of which was delayed for the same reason.

I believe that we should go ahead with this study. I have every reason to hope that funding will be arranged. I may appear to have been somewhat wishy-washy, but obviously I cannot will the money over here. If I could, I certainly would. However, I have been given an assurance that every consideration will be given to providing us with the necessary funds.

Senator Frith: You have been firmly and unequivocally wishy-washy.

Senator Doody: I have been unhesitatingly hesitant in this whole matter. The totality of the situation is that, yes, we want to get the money as soon as we can, as we would like to go ahead with this study.

Order stands.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES POLICY AND PROGRAMS

CONSIDERATION OF FIRST REPORT OF STANDING JOINT COMMITTEE—ORDER STANDS

On the Order:

Resuming the debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Wood, seconded by the Honourable Senator Barrow, for the adoption of the First Report of the Standing Joint Committee on Official Languages Policy and Programs (Report of Commissioner-1984), presented in the Senate on 29th May, 1985.—*(Honourable Senator Doody)*.

Hon. C. William Doody (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, my comments in connection with Order No. 6 apply also to this order.

Order stands.

THE BUDGET

ELIMINATION OF FULL INDEXATION OF PENSION BENEFITS—IMPACT ON SENIOR CITIZENS—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Government), pursuant to notice of June 11, 1985, moved:

That, in view of the adverse effects on the standard of living of senior citizens resulting from the elimination of full indexation of pension benefits, it is the view of the Senate of Canada that the government should rescind this particular provision of the Budget immediately.

He said: Honourable senators, should it be the view of the Senate of Canada that the government should immediately rescind this particular provision of the budget?

It is now beyond any doubt that Canada's elderly citizens feel betrayed by the Mulroney government.

This morning, on the CBC FM and AM news, there was a rather touching moment when a 69-year old citizen, who was coming from Montreal to demonstrate on Parliament Hill, said that he had never before been involved in any demonstration and had, in fact, always been against the idea of public demonstrations. However, he had given thought to the famous poem "In Flanders Fields" and the words "if we break faith with them." He said:

I feel that the government has broken faith, and although I personally am not seriously affected by the removal of full indexation, I feel it is my duty to protest because of that breach of faith.

Have senior citizens any reason to feel betrayed? Are they wrong to feel betrayed? Is it just a misunderstanding stirred up by the media and opposition politicians? Is it a form of mass paranoia stirred by peddlers of class warfare, as someone designated it?

● (1610)

Honourable senators, senior citizens have long memories. Conservative governments have a history of betraying elderly Canadians. In 1979, with interest rates and inflation climbing, Conservative Prime Minister Joe Clark told the House of Commons that senior citizens—and that included old age pensioners and those receiving the guaranteed income supplement—would simply have to, I think his word was "endure" the economic conditions creating higher costs and eroding the incomes of the elderly. In the same year, with the United States in deep recession, the Conservative government flatly refused to protect the incomes and well-being of elderly Canadians by refusing any increase in the old age pension or the GIS. The new Prime Minister has, as usual, outdone his predecessor, in this case in an act of what is perceived as callous betrayal, by first making promises to the elderly then welshing on those promises by cutting benefits to the elderly.