

members of Parliament, as well as to members of the public, why is not the same discipline being imposed on the Newfoundland company?

I received no satisfactory answer to that question. That is a matter which the government should take under advisement because it is well within its power, in my opinion, to see that these two companies report on the same basis. If the Nova Scotia company reports its activities on an annual and quarterly basis, why not impose the same discipline on the company located in Newfoundland, particularly when the government is stubbornly refusing to allow the Auditor General to keep an eye on these things? It seems to me that we should insist that the companies themselves should make reports on their activities so that we have a better way of measuring progress, so that we will not be told five years from now that they need another \$140 million in order to keep afloat.

I conclude my remarks by saying that I intend to support this bill. I regret that the provisions for parliamentary supervision and parliamentary responsibility are not as good as they should and ought to be and could be. I think that is a serious flaw in the bill. I do take satisfaction in seeing that the bill lays down, in my opinion, some new principles that could be applied in respect of government intervention in the private sector. I would certainly like to see those principles employed in any other activities the government might get into.

I would go further and say that it ought to be made retroactive, because that represents the best way I have seen so far for the government to get into these various economic activities and reducing the risk to a minimum.

I am well aware that the activities of government in the commercial sector are fraught with peril, so I am always glad to see people take reasonable precautions to ensure that those risks are minimized.

So, as a non-fishermen, but one interested in those dependent for their livelihood on this great industry, I am prepared to support the bill.

Hon. William J. Petten: Honourable senators—

The Hon. the Speaker: I advise honourable senators that if the Honourable Senator Petten speaks now, his speech will have the effect of closing the debate on the motion for third reading of this bill.

Senator Petten:—I would like to thank Senator Roblin for his participation in this debate and to thank Senator Asselin for his comments. He can rest assured that his remarks will be brought to the attention of the minister.

Senator Thériault asked me to obtain an answer to a question he asked during the debate on second reading of this bill.

I have been informed by officials from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans that Mr. Gerry Nickerson owns six per cent of National Sea Products Limited free and clear. The negotiating team, headed by Dr. Micheal Kirby, has reached a tentative agreement to purchase his shares. The amount is not firm because of the ongoing negotiations with the province. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the Honourable Pierre

[Senator Roblin.]

de Bané, has agreed to make a statement giving details of the financial arrangements when the negotiations have been completed.

Motion agreed to and bill read third time and passed.

• (1210)

SENATE REFORM

FIRST REPORT OF SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the report of the Special Joint Committee on the Reform of the Senate of Canada which was presented yesterday.

Hon. Gildas L. Molgat moved that the report be adopted.

He said: Honourable senators, you will recall that the motion to establish the committee was originally agreed to by the Senate on December 22, 1982. However, the committee was not actually structured until April 31, 1983. I do not question the whys or wherefors for the time lag, but the four-month delay meant that the committee was faced with some difficult timing problems. Unfortunately, we only had two months prior to the adjournment of Parliament for the summer recess, which made it extremely difficult to schedule our committee meetings. However, the committee has worked steadily, and I should like to thank my colleagues who have been so willing to spend a great deal of their time in travelling across the country in the process.

Earlier this fall, with the agreement of the steering committee, and the full committee subsequently, it was agreed that all parties would be approached in both houses to determine whether an extension could be agreed to. Earlier, we had indications that there was agreement to this, and that we could bring forward our suggestion now, which requests an extension to the end of January next.

I have to put in a word of caution because the committee has not yet started its interim discussion on the first draft report. The committee has met on a number of occasions to determine the direction in which it wanted to go, and has given instructions as to the type of draft report it wished. That draft report, according to the timetable that we had established for ourselves, was sent to the members of the committee last Thursday, a day ahead of the date originally agreed, and the final translation was prepared yesterday.

We had hoped to have a meeting tomorrow, but because of prorogation we cancelled it. We also attempted to have a short meeting at 1 o'clock today, but because of the limited amount of time that was found to be impossible. Therefore, we will probably not be able to meet until the committee is reconstituted. It is our urgent wish that that take place as soon as the two houses reconvene. If that is done, we can then proceed to meet immediately and go into a detailed discussion of our report.

Our original deadline was to have everything ready for the printers on Friday, December 16. We were told that the printers would have worked through the Christmas period and we would have had the report ready for tabling in both houses when we reconvene on, as I assume, January 16. We have left