

before the House of Commons. Senator McElman knows more about that kind of procedure than I do. If it is the only way, I suppose the government will do what is feasible—depending on what is feasible.

Senator McElman: Honourable senators, the reason I raise this question is that, although Mr. Wilson apparently did not know what was involved in the process, his spokesman has been able to tell the media—Parliament, specifically the Senate, has not been told—that amendments to a tax bill currently in the Senate—and I assume that Bill C-28 is the bill we are talking about—will be amended.

Senator Simard: There is nothing much I can add; that is why I was seeking help and advice. If it is possible that another bill could be introduced dealing with the same subject in the House of Commons, it is conceivable that the House would consider it and then send it here, if that was faster. However, if the only way to do this is to use the Senate and deal with the matter while considering Bill C-28, I suppose we will have to do that.

I repeat that the government wants to have these amendments and will no doubt, soon enough, ask the House to proceed and will seek amendments to do what the civil servant said had to be done.

I do not know if I am answering your question.

Senator McElman: As far as I can see, the honourable senator has just added further to the confusion. I agree that the government could introduce another bill. But that is not what one is advised by bureaucrats in the department. They talk about this bill now in the Senate being amended, and of course that raises in my mind a further question.

● (1450)

We are repeatedly told that the Senate is not a legitimate body. We are not recognized as being a body that should amend bills received from the House of Commons after approval by the House of Commons. I resent that deeply. I consider that, constitutionally, I am as legitimate as any other member of Parliament. I find it most offensive hearing this repeatedly from the Prime Minister in the House of Commons and from the Minister of Justice, who is supposed to be above partisan debate but who leads the pack in demeaning the Senate, which is against the rules of the House of Commons. As I said, I become increasingly offended by these statements.

On past occasions, not very far behind us, the government has found that it has messed up legislation and it has been perfectly delighted to have the Senate move amendments; yet we are not legitimate enough to move amendments when it comes to certain bills. That is why I raised the question with the Honourable Senator Simard. He has had discussions with the minister, and I thought because of that he could elucidate and clear up our confusion, but, as I say, I suspect he has added to it.

Senator Simard: Can we agree that I will undertake to obtain an answer to the question?

[Senator Simard.]

I have had discussions with Mr. Loiselle. We were not discussing this item. We were talking about future banking legislation. So it was just in that conversation that this subject came up. I do not think Mr. Loiselle was authorized to speak for the government or for Mr. Wilson at that time—maybe tomorrow.

So I will try to get an answer to your question. In the meantime, I urge honourable senators to agree to the motion to refer this bill to committee.

Senator Gigantès: Honourable senators, I address myself to the Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate. I was not aware that there had been an agreement. Of course, I will honour the agreement that the bill be sent to committee. But I was confused, as was Senator McElman, by what Senator Simard was saying and I wanted an opportunity to read his remarks. My French is not that bad; I just could not understand what he was driving at.

Senator Olson: Nobody else could, either!

Senator Gigantès: Therefore, I thought that we should take some time to consider what he was saying. Since there is an agreement, I withdraw—

Senator Doody: I do not want to mislead the chamber. There is no agreement that precludes any senator from speaking on any subject at any time.

My point was that the Speaker had already read the admonition to the effect that Senator Simard's words would have the effect of closing debate on second reading. That is where I left it.

[Translation]

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Honourable senators, since we had not completed second reading, the Honourable Senator Simard, seconded by the Honourable Senator Doody, moved that the bill be read the second time. Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Senators: On division.

Motion agreed to on division and bill read second time.

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Honourable senators, when shall this bill be read the third time?

On motion of Senator Simard, bill referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce.

[English]

INTERNAL ECONOMY, BUDGETS AND ADMINISTRATION

THIRTY-SECOND REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the thirty-second report of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration, presented on Tuesday, January 23, 1990.