

Members. I asked a Page to find one, but according to the Order Paper they are listed in *Votes and Proceedings* of last Thursday. Perhaps we can spend a minute until the House is able to review what these amendments coming back from the Senate are. I do understand that they are technical amendments and should be treated in that way.

On a procedural point, I am not sure whether the motion allows us to consider these amendments or whether it is for the acceptance of the amendments which have been sent back to the House by the Senate.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of State and Minister of State (Treasury Board)): Mr. Speaker, my understanding from the other Parties was, that there was no necessity to debate these amendments. However, if my friend wishes to debate them, I am perfectly prepared to suggest that the House not proceed with these amendments immediately so as to give my friend an opportunity to review them. Instead, we could move to the second item on the Order Paper, which is an item which we intend to debate, and there are members from the other Parties here who are prepared to debate it. We can take up Bill C-137 after Question Period, if my friend wishes.

Mr. Cassidy: Agreed. Mr. Speaker, I have consulted with my colleague from Yorkton—Melville, who is acting as House Leader today. It might make sense to ensure that the members of the Opposition have at least reviewed the amendments coming back from the Senate.

Mr. Speaker: Under the circumstances, I think that the suggestion made by the Hon. Minister of State may be a very good one. It seems to be agreed to by the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Cassidy). I must ask if there is consent in the House to adjourn this matter and to proceed with another matter on the understanding that we could revert back later today or at another appropriate time.

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the Hon. Members. I will call the next order.

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CANADIAN ORGANIZATION ACT, ATLANTIC CANADA, 1987

MEASURE TO ENACT—NON-CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of State and Minister of State (Treasury Board)) moved:

That a Message be sent to the Senate to acquaint Their Honours that this House disagrees with the text of the Message made by the Senate to Bill C-103, an Act to increase opportunity for economic development in Atlantic Canada, to establish the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts, because this House believes that in dividing the Bill, the Senate has altered the ends, purposes, considerations, conditions,

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limitations and qualifications of the grants of aid and supplies set out in the Bill, contrary to Standing Order 87, as recommended by Her Excellency the Governor General to this House, and has therefore infringed the privileges of this House, and asks that the Senate return Bill C-103 in an undivided form.

He said: Mr. Speaker, one normally starts these speeches by thanking the House for an opportunity to address the matter. I have to say to the House that I regret very much the necessity to make this speech and move a motion of reply. Recent actions of the Senate have caused Members of the House of Commons grave concern, and I think that we should send a signal of that concern to the Senate and to the Canadian public.

First of all, I want to set the debate by explaining what happened. The Government introduced and passed Bill C-103, an Act to increase opportunity for economic development in Atlantic Canada, to establish the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation, on May the 10th, 1988. By this Act our Government established the principle that we wanted Atlantic Canada to grow through federal government assistance directed regionally and not directed from Ottawa.

This was a new and innovative step by our Government—a departure from the “Ottawa knows best” attitude of the previous Liberal administrations. When the Bill reached the Senate the Liberal majority instructed the Senate Finance Committee to divide Bill C-103. The procedural acceptability of this move was challenged and the Speaker of the Senate ruled the motion out of order.

The Speaker of the Senate based his ruling on the fact that Bill C-103 involves the payment of taxpayers' funds and the sound legislative theory that the Senate could split Bills originating in the Senate but not Bills originating in the House of Commons.

The decision of the Speaker of the Senate was challenged by the Liberal majority in the Senate and overturned by that majority. The Bill was split by the Finance Committee and Part I was reported back to this House on Friday, July 8, 1988.

Progressive Conservative Members of Parliament immediately objected to this high-handed action by the appointed Liberal Senators.

I must say that we were pleased to be joined by our colleagues from the New Democratic Party, in a rare demonstration of non-partisanship, in order to establish the rights of the elected representatives over the rights of the appointed Senators. We were distressed that the Liberals in the House refused to back the democratic principle that elected representatives have pre-eminence when it comes to spending the taxpayers' money. I suggest that we are indebted to the Chair for the strength of the arguments put forward by Mr. Speaker in the ruling. I want to refer to some of them.