would be prepared to hear if there are any new arguments in view of the Supreme Court ruling.

The point is that under these circumstances I would certainly oppose such a bill ever coming to a vote in this House, and the object of presenting any bill—even in the private members' hour, where so little ever comes to a vote—is to attempt to get people to make up their minds and decide an issue by a vote on the floor of the House. If the Chair will eventually rule that that is not possible then, theoretically, there should be no discussion.

As I say, I did not want to argue this procedural point today, because I wanted to hear from the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. However, possibly what we will do now is discuss the procedure until Black Rod appears; hopefully, not putting you in a position of having to make any ruling. Next week we can listen to the hon. member present his arguments on Senate reform, or "abolition" as he puts it. At the end of that period of time, we will probably hear from the Chair that because this matter cannot come to a vote, it should be dropped and the bill itself will be dropped from the Order Paper.

Mr. Collenette: Mr. Speaker, I had some knowledge that this subject might arise, and for a number of reasons I am in complete disagreement with my colleague, the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert) on the admissibility of Bill C-243. First of all, the Supreme Court decision on Bill C-60 in the Thirtieth Parliament concerned a bill of this House which was advocating a change in the Senate. I believe it did not receive second reading, and I stand to be corrected, but there was agreement on all sides that the bill be referred to the Special Joint Committee for pre-study. There was a division in that committee, calling on the federal government to make a reference to the Supreme Court of Canada on the ability of this House to introduce and pass a bill dealing with the change in the Senate.

As you may recall, it was not in Bill C-60, to abolish the Senate, as the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre would have, it was merely to change the method of appointment, election or nomination of senators, based on the proportional representation formula: Appointments were based half on the strength of the various parties in the House of Commons, and half on the strength of the various parties in the legislatures.

The Supreme Court ruled as a matter of law, that passage of that legislation was outside the ambit of this House. However, the Supreme Court of Canada has no right to pronounce judgment on what we may or may not discuss. It has only the right to interpret the statutes, the laws that are passed in this House, or it may give an opinion on what would be the result of a law passed by this House if the Government of Canada made a reference to the Supreme Court for that purpose. Alternatively, as we are seeing now with the Constitution, I believe the various provinces could challenge this in their courts, and then it could come up to the Supreme Court by way of appeal. It is my contention, and I may be wrong, that what the hon. member for Vaudreuil is asking you, Mr. Speaker, is really outside the purview of the Chair. I do not want you to take this as though I am lecturing the Chair. I am trying to be helpful.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Go ahead.

Mr. Collenette: I am trying to point out my understanding that the Chair has to administer the House in accordance with the Standing Orders. The consequences of legislation passed by the House, or any discussion thereof, is not a matter of the Chair to decide.

I will draw your attention to a ruling that Madam Speaker made last summer. Unfortunately, I do not have the reference at hand, but I am sure members opposite will remember it. I am sure the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) will remember it. It concerned the tabling of a ways and means motion by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) last summer, when it was argued by some members in the House, including the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark), that that ways and means motion was illegal.

I argued in the very lengthy procedural case that we had, and this argument was substantiated by Madam Speaker, that the Chair did not have the right to rule as to whether a particular piece of legislation or document tabled in this House was legal. That was for the courts to decide. The sole role of the Chair is to decide on the admissibility of motions or bills in accordance with the Standing Orders of the House.

I would say in this particular case there is no question that we are talking about a bill which has not been passed and, therefore, the Supreme Court has no jurisdiction. It is a proposed bill. It is up for second reading—

An hon. Member: Unless they have a reference.

Mr. Collenette: The Supreme Court has no jurisdiction to pronounce upon the bill by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre—

Mr. Nielsen: Unless they have a reference.

Mr. Collenette: Unless it has a reference from the Government of Canada. I feel this bill should proceed in the normal way. By the same token, I feel it is not within the ambit of the Chair to decide whether or not this bill is in order, because my hon. friend from Vaudreuil was asking you, Mr. Speaker, to pronounce on the legality of this legislation, if passed. First of all, it has not been passed. Secondly, I say that the Chair has no right to express itself on the legality of the legislation.

From time to time, the Chair does make certain pronouncements in private members' hour concerning the Royal prerogative. I think we all accept that because the Standing Orders of the House clearly state that only the government can introduce bills dealing with the expenditure of money or the raising of taxes. In that case, the Chair can obviously enter a caveat as the Speaker often does at the beginning of private members' hour, that the bill might exceed the Royal prerogative, but he or she might allow discussion to continue.