

Government Orders

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richardson): Are there questions or comments? The hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie.

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, I agree again with 90 per cent of what my hon. colleague said. He took the New Democrats to task for what appeared to be our inconsistency with the Senate.

He himself suggested that the Senate, and I will use his words, was an undemocratic body. I am just wondering how we are to take these amendments brought forward by the Senate. If he recognizes the Senate as undemocratic, then do we accept one amendment but not the other? I am not quite sure.

The basic logic here is that if you defend the actions of the Senate the corollary would be: Do the Liberals support the \$153 per diem pay raise for the senators?

Mr. Manley: As always, Mr. Speaker, the NDP is long on rhetoric and short on thought.

It seems a very simple proposition to me. The Senate has sent us a proposal. Here it is. It has emanated from an unelected body. Therefore, I agree, it is not democratic.

As my friend knows, we also had proposals that came from various groups and organizations in Canada when the committee sat. They are not democratically organized groups. They represent interests.

Each one of us as members of the House of Commons can read what is proposed, evaluate its merits and say whether it is good or bad. I do not really care that the senators have done things now or in the past that I agree or disagree with.

My question earlier to the member for Sault Ste. Marie was based on his philosophical position that the Senate should be abolished. If it should be abolished, then why would he urge it to take stronger measures than it has already taken?

Rather what I am asking all members of this House to do is to say that, yes, we have a Senate. It has put something forward. I am capable of reading and understanding what it put forward. I know the member for Sault Ste. Marie is also capable of reading and understanding it. If it is good, then we should simply apply it. It is as simple as that.

I do not think that it has to be implied that because it came from a body which is more largely one party than another that therefore you take these things totally on a partisan basis. I think that we should be willing to sit in this House and to say: "Let's look at the merits of the proposal".

The National Council on Welfare made propositions. I think some of them show great merit. I do not even know what political party that association may be affiliated with, if any.

It seems to me that the minimum we are called upon to do in this Chamber is to use whatever native intelligence we might have and evaluate proposals that come forward. That is the challenge I have, not only for the NDP, but in these difficult days for the government. If they would at least read them, then perhaps it would find them less offensive.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, first, I want to thank my colleague for the very eloquent remarks that he made today. Seldom, if ever, has such eloquence been heard in this House. We can really tell that our learned and distinguished colleague obviously knows this subject very well.

I want to ask my colleague about the old age security tax of which he spoke with such knowledge and eloquence and of its application in recent years.

Our equally eloquent colleague from Kingston and the Islands today in Question Period raised an issue which involves a court which has decided in relation to another bill that the trust of a government is so fundamental to our system that if Canadians do not believe that their governments can be trusted when they have made commitments, then, similarly, how can we ask Canadians to pay their taxes voluntarily based on the same kind of trust that should be there?

I think there is an analogy here. There is definitely a parallel. These are, in certain cases, the same people who are paying income taxes now from whom a number of years ago we collected moneys. At that time we promised them certain benefits under the old age security tax.

I want to ask my colleague who is so learned in the law if he will not agree with me that there is something inherently wrong from a justice point of view, as well as everything else, with a government that makes promises and does not keep them. I ask our colleague, the Minister of Health who is diligently taking notes of all of