

THE SENATE

Tuesday, April 20, 1971

The Senate met at 8 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.

Prayers.

POVERTY COMMITTEE

RESIGNATIONS OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Hon. David A. Croll: Honourable senators, recent developments concerning the Special Senate Committee on Poverty, of which no doubt you are aware, make it necessary for me as chairman to give some facts concerning what has transpired.

Four members of the staff of the committee resigned on Monday, April 5. Mr. Ian Adams, who joined the staff on November 1, 1970, is a professional writer who has published a book on poverty. Mr. William Cameron, who joined the staff on December 14, 1970, is a professional journalist. Mr. Peter Penz, who joined the committee when it was first organized, is an economist who was seconded from the Department of Manpower. Mr. Brian Hill, also an economist, joined the staff on December 1, 1969. All are competent in their fields of endeavour.

On March 9 the first partial draft of a portion of the committee report became available. Senator Edgar Fournier was ill and I asked Senator Carter to act as vice-chairman for the purpose of studying the document. He and I each independently studied it from Wednesday to Monday. We then compared our notes and spent a day re-studying the same draft. We agreed on changes that we felt had to be made before presentation to the whole committee.

I then met with all the members of the writing staff, the research staff and administration staff of the committee and spent considerable time outlining the changes that we thought had to be made and asked that the document be redrafted setting out our thinking.

The second partial draft was in my hands on March 29. Again the same routine was followed. Senator Carter and I re-studied it. We agreed the second draft was still unsatisfactory.

Meetings were then held with Ian Adams, Fred Joyce the Director, Senator Carter and myself, and we thoroughly examined and studied the revised draft document page by page. In fact, every page was read in the presence of the four of us. This took about two and a half days and we were about three-quarters finished when we adjourned to meet again on Monday, April 5.

On Monday morning, April 5, Mr. Adams said he was not prepared to proceed any further, that he had lost confidence in the committee and was tendering his resignation.

Later it became obvious that the decision had been agreed on by these four members of the staff. Mr. William Cameron, who had been brought in on Mr. Adams'

recommendations to assist him, also resigned, as did Mr. Peter Penz and Mr. Brian Hill.

All this happened on Monday morning, April 5. I immediately convened a meeting of the committee on Monday, April 5, at 4 o'clock and Senator Carter and I explained the situation to the members of the committee. The members were quite determined that the report had to be the committee's report and that the committee would be the sole judge of what it would contain. That position has been maintained.

It became clear that the resignations had been planned to bring pressure to bear upon the committee. Earlier Mr. Adams had advised me that the second portion of the draft report was already under way and would be available the first week in April. It was not available and, as it turned out, he had not even started to draft it. It appears now that he did not intend to finish the work he undertook until his views prevailed and he was given his own way.

A committee report must be politically realistic, politics being defined as "the art of the possible." The recommendations of the committee's report must also be capable of being implemented. Although these men are competent within their own discipline, they are not "with it" in a realistic sense.

In all the circumstances, considering the over-publicized appearance on TV, the spoken words on the radio and the press conference, it becomes important to the Senate now and in the future that the terms of employment under which these men work should be placed before the Senate. These are the terms of employment, the conditions under which they were engaged. This is the document to which each subscribed, and I quote:

It is understood and agreed that this agreement is a contract for the performance of a service and that the contractor is engaged as an independent contractor providing services to the Senate of Canada and is not engaged as an employee of the Senate of Canada.

The Contractor shall treat as confidential, during as well as after the rendering of the services contracted for, any information of a character confidential to the affairs of the Senate of Canada to which he becomes privy as a result of his acting as a Contractor.

I quote now from May, 17th edition, at page 652:

It is a breach of privilege for any person to publish any portion of the evidence given before, or any document presented to, a Select Committee before such evidence or document has been reported to the House.

All resource and research material which was gathered by the committee staff at considerable expense to the committee was made available to them. The rights to