

However, then some members of the committee managed to find two or three other issues which gave them the excuse to recommend that the matter remain in committee. Had the committee met during the first 10 days available to it, it would have heard the evidence that it heard on the last day and would have had plenty of time to get additional advice, if it sincerely required it.

However, the report of the committee clearly states that Bill C-69 is still alive and on the Order Paper. The only issue mentioned in the report that is based on the evidence heard is the question of uncertainty caused if there is delay in the passage of Bill C-69. If there is no delay, there is no issue.

If the committee had been interested in the constitutional or other issues mentioned in the report, those could have been tackled at any time during the substantial period the committee had the bill. There is no valid legal issue contained in the request of the committee for an undetermined and probably endless — and this is confirmed now by what Senator Lynch-Staunton has said — delay, supposedly to discuss legal issues.

In this case, foot dragging is the equivalent of attempting to kill the bill without taking the responsibility for doing it openly. We are not acting in good faith if we do not fairly and expeditiously deal with the message from the House of Commons. We must deal honestly with the legislative initiative which was developed in accordance with the expectations of the government, passed by the elected members of the House of Commons, and anticipated by the Senate during the discussions and negotiations which were carried out when we were considering Bill C-18.

Honourable senators, I urge you to accept Senator Carstairs' amendment.

**Hon. Lowell Murray:** Honourable senators, there is ample precedent, as recently as the last Parliament, for the Senate to amend bills two and three times and send those messages back to the House of Commons. It is perhaps not surprising that Senator Carstairs, as a new senator, might find this rather peculiar, even scandalous, but I must say it is very surprising that Senator Stanbury, who has a long memory for these matters, would have expressed such shock and, indeed, that he would have the temerity to invoke my name in taking his position this afternoon. After all, we have been invited by Senator Carstairs, and implicitly by Senator Stanbury, to defeat the bill.

First, the question of defeating the bill is not before us. What is before us in the amendment of the Honourable Senator Carstairs is, essentially, Senator Graham's original motion: namely, that we do not insist on our amendments. If we defeat that amendment, what will be the effect? The effect will be that a message to that effect will go forward to the House of Commons. Under some circumstances, that would be not only a normal thing to do but would be a welcome opportunity for us on this side.

The problems we face now are indeed problems of timing. Senator Carstairs has alluded to the testimony of Mr. Kingsley,

and Senator Lynch-Staunton, the Leader of the Opposition, has described, I think quite accurately, our situation.

If we insist on our amendments and send the motion forward to the House of Commons, even if the House of Commons and the government reconsider and accept our amendments, they would not be able to do so, under the present schedule, until September or October. The result would be that we would have a vastly improved process over Bill C-69, but 23 months would ensue before maps would be ready for a general election.

Clearly, because of what we have said about the bill, we do not want to vote in favour of Senator Carstairs' motion and not insist on our amendments. We do not want that bad law on the books, and the public interest in that respect is not served by our insisting on our amendments at this time.

I have no interest in defeating Bill C-69 and, as a matter of fact, I should like to see an amended Bill C-69. I should like the government to reconsider its position on some or all of the substantive amendments we proposed and to which the government gave the back of its hand.

I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that we should allow the present process to go forward. The committee should do its work and, some time later in this calendar year, I for one would be very happy to take up Bill C-69 again. I would want the government to take another look at our amendments, and I would want an improved Bill C-69 in place to take effect after the 1996 quinquennial census. That, I think, is the way in which we can best assure that the next election will be fought on the basis of the 1991 census. It is the way we can best ensure that a vastly improved process will be in place for the future, and we will thereby have served the cause of electoral democracy and of the Canadian public interest.

Honourable senators, I intend to vote against the amendment of Senator Carstairs and in favour of the motion of Senator Beaudoin.

**Hon. Marcel Prud'Homme:** Honourable senators, from day one, when I saw much hesitation on this side with regard to tackling Bill C-69 because of the uncertainty of public opinion and perhaps other reasons, I showed my total displeasure with playing with the way we redistribute seats, which has worked so well in the past.

• (1640)

Second, I am not at all of the opinion expressed by the very well-liked Senator Roblin or the very distinguished Senators Beaudoin, Murray and others when they say that the Senate should bow to the House of Commons. If you say that at all times the Senate should bow to the wishes of the House of Commons, there is no reason for the existence of the Senate. It makes no sense to me. Why is there a Senate? All the members of the House of Commons have to do, then, would be to say, "Let the Senate have fun for a while because they are reluctant at the end of the day to vote against us." I do not understand that thinking. However, I was in the other House, and maybe that helps me to better understand the process.