

Government Orders

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that Question No. 274 be deemed to have been made an Order for Return?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

[Text]

GOVERNMENT TRAVEL

Question No. 274—Mr. Fulton:

1. For each fiscal year from 1984 to the present (a) what was the total number of airline flights taken inside and outside Canada by all government representatives and employees (b) what was the total for each department and agency and for the House of Commons (c) what was the cost for all tickets (d) what was the (i) total number of "bonus points" accumulated through such flights (ii) policy on use of these points by individuals or departments (e) what is the total flight distance that such "bonus points" would provide if they were pooled for re-use on government, rather than private, business?

2. For each fiscal year from 1984 to the present (a) what was the (i) total amount spent on bus and train travel inside and outside Canada (ii) total of such expenses for each department and agency (b) what was the total (i) number of "cab chits" provided to departments and agencies (ii) cost of these cab fares for each department (c) what was the total cost of (i) accommodation and meals (ii) per diems for each department and agency?

Return tabled.

[English]

Mr. Cooper: Madam Speaker, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

INCOME TAX ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND—CONSIDERATION OF
AMENDMENTS MADE BY THE SENATE

The House proceeded to consideration of amendments made by the Senate to Bill C-28, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act, the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Federal Post-Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act, the Old Age Security Act, the

Public Utilities Income Tax Transfer Act, the War Veterans Allowance Act and a related Act.

Hon. Gilles Loisel (Minister of State (Finance)): Madam Speaker, today, when tabling their petitions, a number of my colleagues opposite embraced the position of the Senate. I have nothing against the Senate, a Chamber which no doubt has its purpose in life, but I hope that in future we will be able to improve on that purpose. Meanwhile, the Senate remains a non-elected chamber, and it was very surprising that, in our own democratically elected House of Commons, we should see colleagues turning to the Senate to try and amend decisions made in accordance with rules that have been in effect in this country for more than a century.

[English]

Madam Speaker, today I would like to raise two major issues with the actions of the Senate in returning Bill C-28 to this House. First, I would like to discuss the role of the Senate in proposing amendments to income tax bills. Second, I would like to take this opportunity to comment on the amendments themselves.

[Translation]

Madam Speaker, I would like to comment briefly on the role of the Senate in proposing amendments to income tax bills.

Section 53 of the Constitution Act, 1867, one of our fundamental laws, provides that bills to raise taxes must originate in the House of Commons.

Madam Speaker, I think I can say this rule is well founded. Tax legislation is one of the government's basic instruments for regulating the economy and financing its operations. What we have here is a basic tool the government can use to regulate the economy and finance its operations, on which all successive governments have been dependent. Therefore, the government's prerogative to determine the content of tax bills, based on its majority in the House of Commons, reflects the clear mandate the government received by being democratically elected.

Consequently, Madam Speaker, any attempt to amend the provisions of a tax bill passed by this House with a view to reducing the amounts the government expects to collect under those provisions, any attempt by the Senate