

business of the House of Commons. It is not our business and it should not even be mentioned in this chamber. It has, however, been mentioned. An honourable senator has risen to his feet and has given us his views with respect to what should be done, so I will now give honourable senators my views.

In my view, the members of the opposition in the House of Commons are entirely justified in remaining out of the chamber because they are being subjected to a procedure which makes it impossible for any man of conscience to vote. I have seen such a thing happen in my day. I know that in this country we have a law with respect to abortion. I know that that law became the law of the country because it was included in an omnibus bill to amend the Criminal Code. I know that there were other matters contained in that omnibus bill to which no reasonable man could have taken objection and for which any reasonable man would have voted. However, the members were placed in a position where they could not vote for provisions of the bill they agreed with unless they also voted for a provision they disagreed with.

In the House of Commons today this situation has arisen because of the attempt to have 15 bills incorporated into one. Many of those bills are such that they might be supported. More of them, however, are such that they might not be supported. Many of them contain a principle which is objectionable in any good Parliament. That principle provides in advance for the expenditure of money by the government of the country without reference to the legislative body.

Some Hon. Senators: Order!

● (1450)

Senator Donahoe: I may be out of order, but I am no more out of order than Senator McIlraith.

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): You certainly are.

Senator Donahoe: I did not rise until he commented the rights and wrongs of what was taking place in the House of Commons, and I am sure you will give me that much credit. But I did rise when he finished his comments because I felt, though it is quite in order for the senator to say what he feels, that it was not in order for us to let his comments go without rebuttal.

Senator Frith: Honourable senators, as I understand the position we were in before Senator Donahoe spoke, I was asked to explain the motion for the adjournment of one house of Parliament, which is to continue its business next week, while there is the possibility that the other house of Parliament will not. Two honourable senators said that the matter is none of our business but then proceeded to talk about it, so I assume that to some extent it is our business.

Certainly, the procedural situation is quite clear. It is that an omnibus bill was presented, and objected to by the opposition in the other place on the grounds that it was out of order to present such a bill, for the very reasons suggested by Senator Donahoe. As a result, Madam Speaker made a ruling on the grounds that she was bound by the precedent that previous omnibus bills had been questioned and found in order.

[Senator Donahoe.]

Although the ruling was discussed, it was not appealed, and at that point a member of the opposition moved the adjournment.

It seems to me that that is a means of taking an objection to a ruling by the Speaker and to government conduct. Personally, I agree with Senator McIlraith as to the appropriateness of such a procedure, but just as do members of the other place, we too have different views on the subject. However, I believe the procedural situation is exactly as I have described it, and I believe that the political situation is as I have described it. Perhaps it is not right to use the expression "step in" in trying to deal with some of the legislation, but whether that is so or not, I feel that we in this place—as I have indicated in moving the adjournment—should wait and see, and that we should proceed next week whether we are called upon to step in or whatever.

We all have our views as to the propriety of what is happening in the other place, but in the meantime I think that we should proceed next week and wait and see what happens.

Senator McIlraith: Honourable senators, I do not think I have made myself clear.

Senator Donahoe: You certainly did not.

Senator McIlraith: I do not wish in any way to tell the House of Commons what to do with regard to their procedure. All I know is that the motion is before the House of Commons and that the bells are still ringing 48 hours later, which is unusual. The motion is very simple and very narrow in its wording.

With the greatest deference to the Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate, the motion has nothing attached to it that has anything to do with severing a bill. The procedure for severing a bill is an old one, and there are clear procedures for that. The motion has nothing to do with the procedure the honourable senator explained. The motion is "that this House do now adjourn"—nothing else.

With the greatest deference, the situation here is that Senator Donahoe began discussing the business of the other place and a grievance he alleged against the government. At the moment, I am not interested in grievances either for or against the government.

Senator Donahoe: You introduced them.

Senator McIlraith: Rather, I am interested in what we in this chamber should do in light of what has happened. I wrote down part of Senator Donahoe's remarks. He said that "they were justified in staying out of the chamber." Whether the members of the House of Commons are justified or not in staying out of the chamber is not our business, nor is it the point I sought to raise.

What is going on in the other place is not a case of the opposition staying out of the chamber. Rather, because of the motion and by virtue of the practice of voting on a motion only after the whips are seated, the members of that house are prevented from conducting their business. The whips are preventing their fellow elected representatives, whether they be for or against the government, from considering the business