

We will come back to that later on. Until then I urge honourable senators to set the example. We ought not to continue proposing junkets such as we had last week, on three days' notice. Somebody might suggest that \$32,000 is not much, but think of the many, many times this happens. I appreciate that it is a mere drop in the bucket. I agree that senators must have whatever they need to do their work. I have not changed my mind, but there has to be a limit to spending money on junkets, playing heroes and posing for TV cameras to make headlines. The people are not stupid. I urge my colleagues to tighten their belts and avoid useless exercises such as we had last weekend. In Canso we were told, you know, there may be abuses in the unemployment insurance system. And the Liberal senators do not question the amount either, theirs might add up to \$450 million. The Liberal senators say it does not matter. If we save money there, it will be spent elsewhere, for health care or what have you. I say that each measure or each decision must be taken or made with a view to saving the taxpayer's money, be it \$32 million or \$450 million, they all add up!

For all these reasons, honourable senators, I propose that Bill C-28 be referred to committee for study, and I hope it will report back at the earliest opportunity after it has completed its usual good work. Therefore I propose that Bill C-28 be referred to the Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce.

• (1440)

[English]

Hon. Charles McElman: Honourable senators, may I put a question to the Honourable Senator Simard?

I notice in today's *Ottawa Citizen* a reference to what were called—)

Measures to wring \$400 million from wealthy Canadians and corporations were omitted from a government motion—)

that would be the Ways and Means motion—)

paving the way for the introduction of the GST legislation.

But the Finance Department said Tuesday it has not dropped plans for the \$400 million in taxes which Wilson announced in December to replace revenues lost by dropping the GST rate from nine to seven per cent.

Finance Minister Michael Wilson was initially unable to explain the omission to reporters, but his spokesman John Fieldhouse later said the measures will be included in amendments to a tax bill currently in the Senate.

Does the Honourable Senator Simard have detailed information to give the Senate on these amendments that, apparently, the government will request the Senate to make to this bill?

[Translation]

Senator Simard: Honourable senators, I heard the news. Today I had lunch with a government minister who is very close to the issue, Mr. Loisel. Without disclosing what we talked about, I can assure you that in due time, these amend-

ments will be introduced. I don't know whether they will be discussed at the Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce, or whether this Committee will be urged to consider them during its proceedings or later.

I have been told that the government wants to go ahead. It wants to correct the omissions and confirm its willingness to replace as was its intention the \$450 million lost by dropping the GST rate from nine to seven per cent.

In answer to the question, I will say that I have been told that these amendments sooner or later will be referred to the Senate and that the government will definitely go ahead. As it has done so often in the past, the government will once again honour its commitments to the Canadian people.

[English]

Senator Gigantès: Honourable senators, I should like to adjourn this debate in my name.

Senator Doody: Honourable senators, my understanding was that the bill would receive second reading today and be referred to committee. Obviously, if it is the wish of the house to do otherwise, then we will not send it to committee today but keep it here.

In any event, the Speaker has already read the warning indicating that the speech by the Honourable Senator Simard would have the effect of closing the debate on second reading. If it is the wish of the house that that be changed, then we could ask for unanimous consent to do so. I would prefer not to do so. If the honourable senator wishes to speak, he can do so during the third reading debate. Moreover, I expect there to be lengthy committee hearings.

Senator McElman: Honourable senators, I have not finished my questions in any event. Perhaps the honourable senator will permit me to do so.

Is the Honourable Senator Simard telling us that the government has decided to submit amendments before our committee in the Senate?

Senator Simard: From the information I have it is my understanding that the government will proceed with the amendments. I do not know whether or not the amendments will be submitted to the Senate at some future date, after we have reported. Perhaps the House of Commons will make a decision in that regard.

I have no problem with the Senate's receiving the amendments first, if that is more convenient, and dealing with them while this bill is in committee. I cannot say with any certainty that the amendments will be first introduced in the Senate.

Senator McElman: The honourable senator leaves me somewhat confused. He has had a discussion about this. Surely the Senate is the only place where the amendments can now be proposed. Is that not correct?

Senator Simard: I do not know. Perhaps my honourable friend will want to put that question to a procedural expert. If that is the only way to proceed, then I suppose the government will have no other choice than to come here and ask the Senate to consider the amendments, which could then be confirmed