

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this report be taken into consideration?

Senator Frith: With leave, now.

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Is leave granted, honourable senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Frith: Honourable senators, I think I should provide an explanation because I have taken—

Is Senator Flynn having another seizure?

Senator Flynn: I just want to get out while leave is being given for that report.

Senator Frith: All right. I will courteously wait for my friend to make his exit.

Senator MacEachen: I don't have that effect on him!

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Honourable senators, perhaps I should put the motion again. I perhaps did not put the proper motion to the house. Leave was granted: I should then have said:

With leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 44(1)(e), it is moved by the Honourable Senator Frith, seconded by the Honourable Senator MacEachen, that this report be adopted now.

Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Senator Frith: Honourable senators, I was going to give an explanation of why I am asking for leave, because Senator Roblin, although he is certainly not alone in taking this position, has recently pointed out, with my support and the support of our colleagues, that it is unusual to ask for leave to deal with a report without giving at least one day's occasion for the examination of the report. I had asked for copies to be distributed and I am asking for leave, because the committee presented its budget and had its budget reviewed by the subcommittee. There were some reductions in its budget in the subcommittee, and it was reported to and approved by the main committee today.

So why ask for it to be dealt with today? Because I believe we are going to adjourn today until sometime in January, but the committee has meetings planned and will be using some of its approved—approved by the committee—budget before we come back. That is why I am asking that it be approved now. I believe the committee is planning to resume on January 3, which will be before the anticipated date of the return of the Senate. That is why I am asking that an exception be made in this case.

Hon. Arthur Tremblay: If I may, I should like to ask Senator Frith a question about this item. I know that we discussed this in committee and, on our side, did not agree with it.

Senator Frith: I am sorry, senator, could you begin again? To what are you referring?

[Senator Frith.]

Senator Tremblay: I am referring to the item dealing with advertising. As I said, we discussed that in committee and we did not agree on that item in view of other implicit commitments, if I may use that expression, from the chairman that the hearing of witnesses would be terminated before the end of January. Taking account of that, we do not understand the meaning of that item, which refers to advertising for witnesses to appear before the committee. I would like to know the schedule of work, taking account of the fact that you just said that all of those expenses might be incurred during the period in which the Senate will not sit. There is something I do not understand here.

Some time will be needed in which to do that advertising calling for witnesses to present their requests to be heard. I am puzzled about the commitment, or so-called commitment, that the hearing of witnesses will be completed before the end of January. There is something I do not catch here. I would like someone to explain this further.

Senator Frith: Honourable senators, I raised the same question with the chairman. I believe it was raised in the subcommittee and in the main committee, but, in any event, certainly during our proceedings it was pointed out that there did seem to be a paradox in the commitment to complete hearings by the end of January, or the commitment to attempt to do so, and advertising. The explanation given was that it was felt that there should be some advertising—although it was not felt that the full amount set aside would be used—to invite written briefs and, in some cases, to provide for the possibility that someone who was previously not aware of the committee hearings as scheduled might want to appear and that we might find a way to hear that person.

The main reason, however, was to invite written briefs from across the country. That was the way it was left, and that was the answer given to the very question raised by Senator Tremblay and by others during the committee's proceedings.

Hon. Duff Roblin: That seems to me, honourable senators, to be an explanation that does not explain very much. Here we are at the end of December. It is unlikely that it would be wise to put any of these advertisements in the paper before the beginning of January, if they are prepared and distributed to all of these media people to whom reference has been made. Then we would have to wait for the replies to come in. Then we would have to tell these people, no doubt, that we are trying to wind up by the end of January. They will have been induced to apply, yet will not be able to be heard at all.

I must say that this seems to be an unnecessary expenditure. It seems curious that about half the amount we are being asked for today is for advertising, which apparently, as far as I can see, will not be effective and may arouse false expectations.

● (1430)

Senator Frith: Well, honourable senators, I disagree. I believe we should, if we are going to have these hearings, advertise for written submissions to give people the opportunity to make their feelings known. The response could be