

recommendations made by the Davey committee are useful and are ones that I think the people of Canada could support. A Senate committee headed by Senator Lamontagne looked into science policy and carried out the most in-depth survey of scientific research ever undertaken in this country. A tremendous amount of useful information was gathered by that committee. Their first report is interesting and contains a number of valuable suggestions.

We now have the Senate finance committee, which is headed by Senator Everett, one of the younger Senators from my own province, looking into the state of Canada's economy. I notice the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Mahoney) is in his seat. I wish he would read the testimony that is being given to that Senate committee. I have not been keeping an exact scorecard but I am willing to bet the parliamentary secretary a dinner in the parliamentary restaurant that 90 per cent of the economists who have been appearing before the committee are opposed to the economic policies of the federal government. I think Senator Everett's committee is doing an excellent job.

Mr. Mahoney: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The parliamentary secretary is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Mahoney: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would take time out from reading the Senate reports in order to read the speech I gave yesterday in the House, he would find not only have I read that evidence but that I quoted from it.

Mr. Orlikow: Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I not only read the parliamentary secretary's speech, I heard it, and a more selective choosing of so-called evidence I have yet to hear. The only quotations he made were of the one or two economists who happened to agree with government policy. There was not a word about what Professor Barber or Harry Johnson said, or what was said by the vast majority of those who disagree with the government.

So as I say, Senate committees have been doing a very useful job. But, Mr. Speaker, what happens to the recommendations that are made? Have any of the recommendations made by Senator Croll's committee on the aged been implemented into legislation? Of course not! What has happened to the recommendations made by Senator Davey's committee on the mass media? Have any of these been implemented? If they have, then I do not know about it. What about Senator Lamontagne's committee's recommendation on science policy? They are gathering dust, like the thousands of pages of evidence given to that committee.

We know from the speech made by the parliamentary secretary yesterday and also the speech made yesterday by the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Lang) how much attention they are going to pay to the evidence given before the Senate committee headed by Senator Everett. Perhaps the government will be rescued from its own folly by the Senate committee, in that the

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Senate committee will ignore all the evidence given by the experts they have heard and will endorse the economic policies of the government in its report. But if the committee does this it can only do so by ignoring the evidence of the experts that the committee itself chose to testify before it.

I say quite seriously that these kinds of studies could be much better done by parliamentary committees, task forces and royal commissions. No government, not even this government, could ignore reports and recommendations made by task forces and royal commissions appointed by it, or the recommendations of parliamentary committees staffed by members the majority of whom came from government benches, as completely as the present government has ignored the recommendations of the Senate committees I have just mentioned.

Other suggestions in regard to the Senate have been made, such as that the Senate's composition ought to be changed, that there ought to be Senators appointed on the recommendations of the provinces. Personally, I cannot think of a better way to hamstring the running of this country than to give the provinces what is virtually a veto power over what is done by a Senate which, as I have already said, has power equal to that of the House of Commons.

Some have suggested that Senators should be replaced by representatives of various occupational groups. Again, I do not know who would decide which occupational group should be represented or in what proportion the representation should be. One thing that could be said of that kind of Senate is that it could not possibly have more representatives of business than the present Senate. Neither could it possibly have more representatives from one political party than the present Senate. But in my opinion such a Senate could create just as many difficulties and problems as the Senate we now have.

• (4:20 p.m.)

As I said when I rose to introduce this resolution, knowing as I do that there is such hostility on the part of government members and most, if not all, of the members of the official opposition to a proposal to abolish the Senate, I feel that we should either abolish the Senate or give the Senate a useful role to perform. I also make the moderate suggestion that we should appoint a parliamentary committee with power to employ staff and adjourn from place to place to hear witnesses and evidence and decide whether there is a useful role for the Senate.

There has been some indication as a result of hearings over the years that the overwhelming majority of Canadians believe the Senate plays no useful role and should be abolished. I do not think members of this Chamber are prepared to take such a position. I am sure members realize there would be difficulty if such a change were made, particularly in respect of the British North America Act.

At this time, the role of the government and the Senate is becoming increasingly difficult. As the situation changes in the world, the role of the government in this House and in the other place becomes very difficult. In