

As it happened, given the nature of the economies and the tax system of the time, the people west of the Ottawa River paid far more into the federal treasury than the people of Quebec or the lower provinces. It was thought that, using their majority and arguing that, after all, it was their money, they would, if not restrained, cut off legitimate expenditures needed by the people in Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The representatives from those parts of the country insisted that there be a Senate with power to prevent that from happening; in other words, to prevent the representatives from Ontario from saying, "It is our money. We won't spend any on Quebec."

Senator Roblin: They could not prevent that in the Senate.

Senator Stewart: They could prevent that by refusing to permit reductions in expenditure.

Senator Roblin: That is not your point.

Senator Stewart: That is exactly my point. I am making my own point and I will interpret my own point. Senator Roblin himself can put any gloss on what he wants to say.

Senator Roblin: Quite true.

Senator Stewart: It surprises me to hear a representative from a region of the country other than Ontario taking the position that Senator Beaudoin is taking today. The reason this institution is here is to prevent precisely the sort of thing that he says we ought not to be doing, both with regard to taxation and expenditure. The UI bill is a good example.

● (1520)

Senator MacEachen: Honourable senators, Senator Beaudoin has come back again to his argument, which I think is confined to amendment No. 9. Senator Beaudoin acknowledges that. It is a factual dispute, but I am not sure because I do not have all the tables here. Furthermore, I cannot make the calculations. However, if it is proved that the amendment would increase expenditures above the current provisions of the statute, then I would bow to the logic of my own reasoning and say, "Let us kick it out."

I do not know how we establish this across the aisle, though. Shall we send the report back to the committee to deal with that point, or shall we have a discussion; or shall we have the officials privately approve it and give that information to the Speaker before he rules on that? Otherwise, the Speaker will have to rule not only on a procedural point but also on a factual point. That is an additional burden.

I am prepared to bow to the logic of my own argument. If this amendment exceeds the current expenditures, then it should be struck down.

Senator Frith: How do we determine that?

Senator Roblin: I am not sure that I can throw any light on this problem, but I have one point to raise. We have accepted the logic of the previous arguments that, if the new amendments proposed in this report are lower than the provisions made in principle in the present statute, we have no concern. The point now being raised is the reverse of that, but, using the

same logic, namely, that if the rule set out in the amendments that are before us now offers the prospect of a higher set of standards than are available in the statute, then by the same line of logic it is an expenditure that is over the statute.

Senator Frith: Yes.

Senator Roblin: All the Speaker has to do, if he is interested in this point, is to examine the exact wording of this amendment and of the statute to determine whether or not this amendment offers a more generous situation than the statute itself. That would solve the matter without having to go to the trouble of this arithmetic exercise that is being suggested. That might logically be accepted.

Senator Frith: If he could. However, I do not know if he can.

[Translation]

Senator Thériault: Honourable senators, it is not as simple as senator Roblin would like us to believe. We can get two different sets of results with this table. The first section of the table increases the income, the qualification period goes from 14 to 18 weeks. In the second section, it is reduced from 14 to 10 weeks.

We have spent hours discussing this problem with senior officials. The government told us only they had the facilities to give us the results we want.

With this in mind, the Speaker should review all the figures, to see what they mean in terms of income if the qualification period goes from 14 to 18 weeks, when only 14 weeks are stipulated in the Bill, and what they mean when that number of weeks is reduced from 14 to 10, since Bill C-21 also reduces the qualification period. It is very hard to come to an accurate figure.

I suggest that if the government officials want to know where the Speaker stands, the Chair would have to take time to review the results they would come to if the table we are referring to was applied.

[English]

Senator Roblin: The logic that we have applied to this question has not dealt in specific dollars-and-cents terms. We have accepted the implications of the logic. I am simply saying that we can do that both ways if the Speaker wishes to. However, if he wants to do something else, that will be his business. I simply offer that as a suggestion to speed up matters a good deal and to prevent possibly a serious delay in receiving any decisions.

Senator Thériault: I accept Senator Roblin's logic; the Leader of the Opposition has accepted it. In fact, we all accept that if the amendments we propose to Bill C-21 increased expenditures as they now stand under existing statutes, we would bow to that situation. We would say, "Fine. We accept that logic." However, no one has been able to prove that this will increase it. That is what I am saying.

[Translation]

Senator Beaudoin: About the factual situation, all I can add is—