

*Government Orders*

would immediately lose its powers and be unable to pursue any further activities. The Senate therefore proposes an amendment that would provide for intersessional authority, so that senators would be able to continue to work during a period of prorogation of Parliament.

In fact, during the debate in the Senate, there was some discussion on section 52.7.

[English]

I will use my second language so that members of the House will understand there was no plot and no cover up. There was absolutely nothing done to try and change the spirit and the objectives that we had all tried to reach in getting Bill C-79 before Parliament.

I think it is a first in terms of parliamentary democracy that we now have a bill that guarantees in the House of Commons full representation to all parties on the Board of Internal Economy. One only has to look back some years ago when the government was in total command of that committee.

Today all parties have a representative on the Board of Internal Economy and that assures some justice and some equity in matters dealing with all parties and all members.

In my view there is no other way of assuring a non-partisan approach to the issues we deal with on the Board of Internal Economy, of which I am a member, and so is the member for Kamloops, who is the representative of his party.

The question arose in debate in the Senate as to our intent, our motive, our purpose. It was to give members of this House and of the Senate an opportunity to have an adjudication by their peers, by the Board of Internal Economy, of the expenditure of public funds entrusted to them to administer their offices and other things. We also wanted to put in place a system which would allow us, members of Parliament, to ask the board for an interpretation, an opinion as to the expenditures of funds in the operations of our constituency and House of Commons offices.

I see nothing wrong with that. I see absolutely nothing wrong with that. I think it is a step in the right direction.

If a member is concerned or has doubt about what he is about to do in terms of expenditure or what he is about to do in terms of administering his office, then he can go to the board and ask for its opinion. He can say to the board: "What do you think of this proposal", and the board will answer either that it is okay or: "No, we do not agree, therefore you cannot do it".

The question that arose in the Senate and arose in my mind, because when we passed the bill at third reading an amendment was passed about which I had some hesitation, but nevertheless with the assurance of all parties, I thought I will not pursue that. I will not pursue it because maybe the Senate will agree that there could be here a review of that clause, which is clause 52.7.

Clause 52.7(2) read this way: "Where an opinion is provided to a peace officer, pursuant to subsection (1)", and the text went on to say, "or", and I underline "or", "the peace officer has been advised by the board that an application under subsection 52.6(2) has been made by the member of the House of Commons to whom the investigation relates and where an application for a process is made to a judge, the judge shall be provided with the opinion and shall consider it in determining whether to issue the process".

The difficulty that I had and that some other members of this group had, was with the "or the peace officer having been advised by the board that an application under subsection 52.6". I am not a lawyer, but I am told that members of Parliament and senators sometimes get wind that an investigation is ongoing on matters pertaining to the administration of their funds, that is the funds given to them to administer their office. They get wind of this.

The possibility which I objected to, and I am thinking here in terms of an all-party position, the difficulty of that position was that if a member heard or got wind of an investigation on his administration of public funds, he could immediately ask the board for an opinion. In my judgment and the judgment of many others in the Senate, that would have stopped the process there and then. That would have prevented due process because that would have prevented the completion in my view and in the view of others of that investigation by the police officer.