

Hon. Mr. Robertson: Honourable senators, I move that this bill be placed at the foot of the Order Paper for second reading later this day.

Hon. Mr. Crerar: Honourable senators, before the motion is put, I think some protest should be made against the flood of legislation that has just come over to us this morning. I certainly do not wish to hold up the proceedings of this house, but honourable members here have had no opportunity to make even a most cursory examination of these bills before being asked to pass upon them. This is not the manner in which legislation should be dealt with by parliament. The Dominion Elections Bill is one that need not concern this house very much after it has passed the other place, but all the other measures are important, including one—a bill to amend the Financial Administration Act—which is most important; and we have not had a chance even to look at it. It appears to me that we are being placed in a position where we shall be simply rubber-stamping legislation as it comes across from the House of Commons. In my judgment this is not a good enough position for the Senate to be in when it comes to the discharge of its responsibilities, and I wish to enter my protest against such procedure.

The motion was agreed to.

CANADIAN BROADCASTING BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. Wishart McL. Robertson moved the second reading of Bill 17, an Act to amend the Canadian Broadcasting Act, 1936.

He said: Honourable senators, before proceeding to deal with this bill specifically, I wish to say that if and when it has been given second reading I shall move that it be referred to the Standing Committee on Banking and Commerce. I intend to make a similar motion with respect to the other bills which have been placed on our Order Paper for consideration later today. I would suggest that all these bills be referred to committee, even though it may be felt that the Senate has no particular interest in some of them—as, for instance, the Dominion Elections Bill, referred to by the senator from Churchill (Hon. Mr. Crerar). I make this suggestion because reference to committee would give our Law Clerk an opportunity to examine the bills on technical points, as to phraseology and so on.

I cannot disagree with what has been said by the senator from Churchill. In anticipation of just the situation which has developed, we had arranged for the study by the Transport Committee of railway questions prior

to our receipt of the Railway Bill; and in the light of our experience in that matter I think it might have been well to have tried to devise some generally acceptable method whereby important bills brought down in the other house, could, prior to their receipt here, be studied by committees of the Senate. As honourable senators know, it is neither entirely regular nor in keeping with our practice to consider a bill in committee before its introduction into the Senate; but if that technical objection could be overcome, in another session we might be able to avoid a situation such as we face now.

Of course, the present situation is a little different from that in which the Senate usually finds itself when approaching the end of the session, when all important legislation other than the Supply Bill has been dealt with, and that measure is the only one which we are awaiting from the other house. And the difficulty that used to arise because of the late hour at which that bill ordinarily came to us has been overcome by our study of the estimates in the Finance Committee while they are still under consideration in the Commons.

I do not know of any procedure that could have been followed here other than the one we have followed this session. I have done what I could to facilitate the placing of the present bill, and others, before the Senate as early as possible. It is of course the undoubted right of senators to take as much time as necessary in considering important bills like this one, and that is why I hope the bills to come before us today will, after second reading, be referred to the Standing Committee on Banking and Commerce.

Honourable senators, the bill before us is designed to implement certain of the more important recommendations of the Massey Commission, which require approval by Parliament.

National broadcasting in Canada has made great strides since the Canadian Broadcasting Act was enacted in 1936. From a humble beginning the national system has been developed to provide coverage of Canadian programs in almost every part of Canada, and the work of expansion and improvement is still going on. It seems axiomatic that conditions under which the C.B.C. commenced operations in 1946 have changed very substantially, and consequently it is necessary, as recommended by the Massey Commission, to provide several amendments to the Canadian Broadcasting Act which will meet conditions existing today.

Subsection (1) of section 3 of the Canadian Broadcasting Act, 1936, provides:

There shall be a Corporation to be known as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation which shall