

house who speaks on this bill, no matter to what party he belongs, will approach the consideration of the measure in exactly the same spirit.

We suggest to the house that it would be wise, after second reading of the bill, to refer it to a special committee for study. We think that the best type of committee would be a joint committee of the senate and of this house. We make this suggestion believing that this is the most important subject for legislation which has been before a Canadian parliament perhaps since confederation, certainly since the turn of the century. We believe that very careful consideration should be given to the bills which have been brought in in the United States and in the United Kingdom, and we do not believe that that can be properly and thoroughly done with the house in committee of the whole.

The minister has been kind enough to lend me a copy of the United Kingdom Act. One cannot get a copy of that act in the parliamentary library. Nor can one get a copy of the bill, known as the McMahon bill, which has just passed the United States senate; I believe the minister has a copy but copies are not available in the library. I have here the *Congressional Digest* for May 1946, which features what congress is doing to solve the problem of atomic control, (1) domestic, (2) international, and I recommend to any members who are interested in the subject that they look at this copy of the *Congressional Digest*. It gives a very fine review of the legislation and of the discussions which have taken place in the United States. I think it would be helpful if the minister could have printed in the *Votes and Proceedings* of the house for to-day a copy of the United Kingdom bill and also a copy of the McMahon bill. If that were done, every member who wished to do so would be in a position to study these bills.

The minister has told me that the United Kingdom bill to which I have referred has been passed by the United Kingdom parliament. I am not sure of this; perhaps he will confirm that to-day. I am unable to find from the records in our library whether or not the bill has actually gone through the House of Commons and the House of Lords. It was presented to the House of Commons on May 1, but the copies of the British *Hansard* which have come to hand so far do not contain any discussion on the bill, and so far as I can find, although I may be wrong, it has not yet actually become law.

Another reason for our suggestion that this bill be studied by a special committee is that the drafting of atomic energy legislation

is very difficult. The Americans found that. For example, I quote from page 143 of the *Congressional Digest* this statement:

Just what is the problem in drafting atomic legislation? The chief difficulty is the fact that never before in history has any government attempted to make a law governing the forces of nature. It presents a multitude of technical and legal problems.

At page 139 of the same issue is a statement by Doctor Vannevar Bush. As hon. members know, Doctor Bush was a member of the committee which was appointed by the late President Roosevelt, two and a half months before the atom bomb was used, to consider atomic legislation. Doctor Bush is the chairman of the United States office of scientific research and development. This is what he has to say about the legislative difficulties involved in atomic energy legislation:

No more intricate and exacting problem was ever posed to government than this one. It is inherently complex because the science of the atom is complex. . . . The fact that the deadly military potentialities of the atomic bomb and the beneficent industrial applications of atomic power are inextricably intermixed complicates it further. Preventing war is a long task, which must be done bit by bit, step by step; so also is the development of peaceful atomic power. The two must be related in our thinking, and what we do toward achievement of the one must be weighed in the balance of its effect on the other.

Again, there is an almost complete lack of knowledge of this whole question, not only in this house but, I submit, throughout the country. There have not been discussions on the radio and in open forums across Canada such as those that have taken place in the United States. Our people are not informed on all the facts in connection with atomic energy. It should be fundamental that the people as a whole have some understanding of these problems before legislation is passed in this house; otherwise our democracy is not functioning properly. It cannot function properly if there is not a chance for the people to understand something at least of what is being discussed in the legislatures.

I think it would be most unwise to rush this bill through, to put it through second reading this afternoon and through committee to-night and to-morrow. Instead of doing that, we should give the bill second reading to-day and send it to a special committee. It can be dealt with again by this house in committee when it comes back from that special committee. But no matter where or how the bill is to be considered, there are many features which should be borne in mind, and this afternoon I propose to deal with eight of them. There will be many more, but I have picked out the eight which in my opinion are of vital importance.