

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Pickersgill: No, sir, I understand there are no paid articles appearing in the publication. There are certain contributions from members of the department and from other people interested in Indians, and quite a number from the Indians themselves. The whole purpose of this newspaper is to provide news about the activities of Indians for the other Indians. It is true that the newspaper has a very limited circulation, among people who are specially interested in the activities of the Indians. It has no general circulation whatsoever, and it is not intended to have.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS**LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT—INQUIRY AS TO COMPLETION OF RECONSTRUCTION**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. M. Macdonnell (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Minister of Public Works if he can tell us when the reconstruction of the parliamentary library is likely to be completed and when the library will be open for reoccupation?

Hon. Robert H. Winters (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, as I recall, the contractor will have completed his work on the library by about April of next year. It will, I understand, be ready for use next fall. Both of those dates are subject to correction; I have not reviewed them.

Mr. Fulton: When will the hammering cease?

FLOODS**MANITOBA—INQUIRY AS TO REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. William Bryce (Selkirk): I should like to direct a question to the Prime Minister. Has the government yet had any request from the Manitoba government for assistance owing to flood conditions in Manitoba?

Hon. W. E. Harris (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has, of course, been considering the problem of flood conditions in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. I think perhaps we ought to leave it to him to deal with the matter.

SUPPLY

The house resumed, from Wednesday, June 29, consideration of the motion of Mr. Harris for committee of supply, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Rowe.

SENATE REFORM

Mr. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, when this debate was interrupted [Mr. Dufresne.]

at the hour of adjournment the other night we were engaged in an exchange that suggested that I might be guilty of making some uncomplimentary remarks concerning the other house. As I renew the discussion this morning, I want to point out again that such was not my intention but rather that I was trying to indicate that I believe the Senate has a useful function to perform in our parliamentary system, one that could be performed much more effectively and efficiently if reforms were carried out in that body.

Some of the other hon. members who have spoken in this debate have already suggested some reforms that might be made. Just to indicate that I have no desire to stand alone in my opinion on this subject, I want to refer to MacGregor Dawson's book, "The Government of Canada", which suggests that his viewpoint, from a non-partisan, objective position, is much the same as that being expressed by hon. members on this side of the house who have spoken on this matter. The author has an excellent chapter dealing with the whole subject of Senate reform. I feel that the opening paragraph expresses the heart of the matter and I should like to place on record just a few sentences from it. At page 329 he says:

The Senate—the upper house in the legislature—is all too clearly being undermined by forces which threaten to lead to eventual obscurity and obsolescence. Some years ago its end as an effective branch of government seemed imminent; it had, through the acts of others and its own lack of assertiveness, become so sluggish and inert that it seemed capable of performing only the most nominal functions. Recently, however, there have appeared periods of industry; and it would now seem possible to hope that the patient may be emerging from the long coma and might, if given the proper stimulants, become a useful, even though not an extremely active, member of political society.

I submit that emphasizes the point I was trying to make in the discussion, that there are certain features of the other place as it exists today which should be considered very carefully. There are excellent members of the other chamber, and if we instituted the necessary reforms the Senate could be an outstanding part of our political society.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, discussions on the reform of the Senate tend to be limited to members of the opposition. I say that is unfortunate because the position of members of the other place does not enable them to deal directly with some of the observations made in this chamber. They are dependent upon the government and its supporters for any defence of the other place that might be made in this house. This being the case, I for one hope that we will hear from government supporters on this important matter, and in view of the number of vacancies existing in the

Proposed Senate Reform

Senate at the present time, some 22, it would be particularly helpful if we could hear from the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent). There have been hints in the newspapers from time to time that reform is being contemplated. Certain groups in the country, particularly organized labour, have made representations to the Prime Minister and other members of the cabinet. As a result of these representations there has been the gentle hint that reform, particularly in the method of appointment by making appointments on other than a partisan basis, might be the result. Unfortunately nothing has happened in this chamber to suggest that these hints appearing in the press from time to time are other than the usual rumours. I am having difficulty, Mr. Speaker, hearing myself, to say nothing of others being able to hear.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Dinsdale: It is quite obvious that a subject that has been debated so frequently and over such a long period of time is in urgent need of consideration. The possibility of attracting men and women of the desired calibre to the upper chamber has become somewhat easier as a result of the recent increase in the indemnity. When the subject of Senate reform has been discussed formerly the suggestion has been put forward that it would be a fine thing to have outstanding men and women sitting in the upper house deliberating on the affairs of state, men and women of the necessary moral and intellectual qualities, men and women who would consider the issues of the moment from the standpoint of the actual circumstances rather than from any party viewpoint. I feel that should be assured as a result of the recent increase in the indemnity.

It is a truism that the Senate is only as good as the men and women who make it up. Here, in regard to the second chamber, we are in an excellent position, because the selection is made not on a basis of election but rather of appointment. Because of that we are in a position to have an outstanding group of men and women brought together, thereby enhancing and embellishing the deliberations of Canada's parliament. We can have leaders from all walks of life and all areas of human endeavour, men and women who have already established themselves in their respective fields.

There are special categories from which suitable selections might be made. During the past four years, while I have had the privilege of being a member of the House of Commons, I have received representations on this subject from time to time. I have discovered that most frequently these representations

come from women's groups in Canada. I believe the first appointment of a woman to the Senate was made in 1930, and since that time other appointments have been made. The suggestions, which I have received from groups such as the Manitoba women's institute, the Manitoba provincial council of women, the university women's clubs of Canada and the league of women voters of the city of Winnipeg suggest that there should be at least one woman representative from each of the provinces; and I would not disagree with that viewpoint.

The women members of the Senate already in that place have been the more active members; and it would seem to me that the position of women in Canadian society today would justify the appointment of at least one woman representative from each of the provinces.

Then another suggestion has been made. It has been pointed out that one of the basic functions of the Senate is to protect the interests of minority groups; and in the selections of personnel for the upper house that function has been taken into consideration. However, it seems remarkable and strange that we have not had a representative in the other place of the first citizens of this country. I refer of course to a representative of the North American Canadian Indian group.

More recently, as the result of legislation passed in this chamber, the emphasis in our treatment of the Indian population has been toward the removal of paternalism that has tended to keep our Indian population segregated and in an inferior position. Both in the special committee on estimates and in later discussion in this chamber the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (Mr. Pickersgill) pointed out that it is the desire of his department to do something, and to do it quickly, by way of ending the long period of segregation and the paternalistic attitude toward our Indian population.

I feel that if this program is going to be carried out successfully there could be no greater assurance than to have a representative of this native group appointed to the upper house, to keep this desirable and very important objective continuously before the other place, so that it would have a continuing influence on the thinking of members of both houses of parliament.

Unfortunately the Indian belongs to a group who tend to be neglected, because the general public of Canada is not too keenly aware of his inferior position. The very policy of segregation on reserves has tended to place him outside general participation in the life of the community, with the result that there has been public apathy toward the problem.

Proposed Senate Reform

Anyone who has had occasion to visit our reserves—and I realize of course that there are exceptions to this suggestion—becomes aware of the gross deficiencies in housing and sanitation. These are matters that could be solved more easily if a representative of our Indian population were appointed to the other place. Already in one or two instances the North American Canadian Indians have succeeded, on their own initiative, in finding places in the provincial legislature. Indian affairs are of course federal matters. If we have an earnest desire to have their voice heard in both the upper chamber and the lower house, this problem would be greatly helped by having a spokesman in the other place continuously.

So much for special categories. One could of course mention other groups who might well be represented there. However, under the regulations now prevailing, this is a problem for the governor in council. I believe Senate reform could be carried out on three levels, the first of which would be a change in the method of appointment; secondly, there should be some restriction in the period of tenure of occupancy of position in the other place; and, thirdly, there should be an increase in the amount and kind of work performed by the upper house.

The method of appointment has been one of the chief drawbacks in providing an efficient and effective upper chamber. This subject has been discussed many times in the House of Commons, when it has been pointed out that down through the years appointments have been made on a partisan basis. Those appointments have resulted in a fairly balanced upper chamber so long as from time to time there was a change in administration in the lower house. However, as a result of the problems of sectionalism, regionalism and diversification in Canada, political parties, once selected, tend to perpetuate themselves in office for some considerable period of time. The result has been that, both before and since the turn of the century, the Senate chamber has repeatedly moved toward a condition of party lopsidedness. This situation has been the cause of the cry for reform by the "outs" down through the years. However, the situation today, when one party has been in power for so long, is such that I think it would be in a safe position to make the necessary changes in the method of appointment, and thus place the upper chamber in a position to serve well the people of Canada.

At the present time we have heard the hints, to which I have referred, that there be a series of non-partisan appointments to the upper chamber. I would heartily support

such a suggestion. Perhaps there is some validity in the point of view that is expressed from time to time. It has been expressed by MacGregor Dawson, for example, in chapter 15 of his book on "The Government of Canada", that we might find a suitable solution for the dilemma by placing the task of appointments in the hands of the provincial governors in council. Certainly, with appointments coming closer to the local level of the scheme of things in this country, we might realize a state of affairs where men and women of the necessary qualifications would find their way to the upper house.

The period of tenure has been the chief drawback, however, because with appointment for life it is inevitable that the psychology to rest on one's oars becomes the dominant attitude among the members of the upper chamber. I feel this has been expressed very pointedly on page 341 of Dr. Dawson's book in poetic form when he said:

Surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind, and
wave, and oar;

Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander
more.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, it is inevitable, where we have appointments for life, that there is going to be a tendency on the part of those thus involved to relax and take an easy-going attitude towards the responsibilities and the discussions that are in hand. The formula for determining a suitable period of tenure could easily be worked out. The one complaint is that in thus restricting membership by age we might lose a representative of outstanding ability. Various examples are given of statesmen who have served their day and generation longer than the biblical three score and ten years. I feel that if it is a problem to consider at all, we certainly can work out some method of reappointment in exceptional cases. If we had new faces, if we had younger representatives, if we had a more rapidly changing personnel in the upper chamber, without doubt some of the criticisms that it has fallen heir to would be rapidly overcome.

Even the House of Lords at Westminster has a more regular infusion of new ideas, new blood, than does our own upper chamber. If we can thus revitalize the membership, I feel that the third reform would almost take care of itself. That is the type of work that is assigned to our upper chamber. The upper chamber at the present time is fairly restricted in its legislative program. It is well, of course, that it be kept in an inferior position to the lower house because the House of Commons, as we all realize, is the

Proposed Senate Reform

more important legislative body. However, we hear the complaint in this chamber that we are bogged down in legislative congestion. The increasing complexity of the country has produced a program of legislation quite impossible for the House of Commons to cope with adequately and thoroughly.

As far as I can see, there is no reason at all why some of the government's legislative program could not be initiated in the upper house and given the very careful consideration that that chamber is capable of and has demonstrated down through the years, before being passed on to the lower chamber. Certainly, it would relieve the problem of growing congestion in the House of Commons.

There is also the need from time to time for investigations to be carried on. We are aware that the committee work of the Commons is increasing with each passing year. This year we have a committee on estimates for the first time. It seems to me that in this lower chamber we are becoming so burdened with committee work that there is hardly time, when the committees are going full blast, to give attention to the regular work of this chamber as well as to the constituency responsibilities and the many other duties that lie within the field of a member of the House of Commons. The other place has demonstrated outstanding ability in its committee and investigation work. For example, the special committee on public expenditures, which meets from time to time, has done outstanding work in reviewing and examining our program of public spending. Therefore, if it is necessary to provide a more challenging work-load for the upper chamber, there is certainly no shortage of work to be done in that direction. With these two suggestions, Mr. Speaker, I think we have something that would add immeasurably to the prestige and to the effectiveness of the upper house.

Finally, I should like to point out that just because this problem has been with us all these years is no reason why it should be ignored. Very often the more we talk about a subject the less direct attention it needs. The solution is within the hands of the Canadian parliament. The need is obviously there. Any authority you read on the subject is strong in his demands that we should do something to bring the upper chamber into esteem and into greater prestige in the deliberations of public affairs in this country. We have groped and we have hoped long enough. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that action is needed and urgently needed at this time.

Mr. R. R. Knight (Saskatoon): Mr. Speaker, I shall not detain the house very long on

this question. I would say at the outset that I have the greatest respect for the ladies and gentlemen who now occupy Senate positions. I do not think it is their fault that the circumstances are such that they find themselves impotent and have nothing to do.

I stand, of course, for the abolition of the Senate, and if not abolition then, of course, very drastic reform. Certainly, if the Senate is to be constituted as it now is, it should be abolished. To me, it is a ridiculous thing that there are in the Senate at the present time—I shall be corrected if my figures are wrong—only six people who have been appointed by a Conservative regime. No one, irrespective of his political opinions, would say that is a fair division. As for the other parties in this house, they are not represented at all. I am speaking now of course from the point of view of appointments to the Senate being political, with which of course I do not agree.

One reason why I think the Senate should be abolished or drastically reformed is that it has ceased to perform the function for which it was created, that is to give a wise after-look as it were to the legislation which we young sprouts in this House of Commons pass, we who are inclined at times to be carried away by our enthusiasm. I suggest that the Senate has ceased to do that, and one reason is that it is composed of men who favour the political party which for the moment is in power.

I would say that at present the chief function of the Senate is the consideration of divorce cases. If you pick up any document relating to the Senate, such as the report of the Senate debates, you will find that most of the space is taken up with decisions in regard to divorce. The attitude of my party is well known in that regard. We think that that particular thing should not be the function of the Senate, nor should it be the function of this house.

As I said, the Senate has become a completely one-party chamber and that will have to be altered. If this government is to stay in power for some time to come, and apparently it thinks it can, then by the course of nature there will be no one in the Senate who is not of Liberal persuasion. I shall not accuse the government, but I have heard rumours, certainly in my constituency—it is an unfortunate thing that the Senate, this body of fine men and women, should have become simply a jest in this country, should have become the subject of jokes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I recall that, when this debate was last under way, a similar remark was made and it was suggested to the hon. member that under standing order

Proposed Senate Reform

41 and various authorities, which I shall be glad to quote to the hon. member, such remarks really have no place in this debate.

Mr. Knight: I was not present when the debate took place before and therefore was not aware that that ruling had been made. I shall not transgress any further. It comes to my mind that there are many vacancies in the Senate at the moment, the reason for which I do not know. I suggest that the government and the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) have not too high an opinion of the necessity of such a chamber when they do not keep it manned with the personnel it should have. I think under the present set-up the total personnel should be 102, and I believe that there are about 26 vacancies.

Mr. Harris: Twenty-two vacancies.

Mr. Knight: Twenty-two vacancies at the present time. I know that if I had a crew of some sort working for me I would not want it to be so completely under strength if its work were particularly important. If the Senate is to be retained as a sort of career and reward for service rendered to the country, then I would suggest that the reason for appointment should not be political, that the politics of a person should not be considered in any way. I suggest that it is a luxury which this country cannot afford; but if it is thought it is a luxury that can be afforded then I submit that appointments to the Senate should be on the basis of service to the country rather than service in the political field. Men in business, those who have performed great service in connection with labour, outstanding men in the arts and sciences, in the professions and in education, in literature and so on should be appointed. That is the way appointments should be made. Unless the other parties are to be given something like a *pro rata* representation, I think the idea of political appointments should be stopped entirely.

I should have mentioned that I do not believe in an appointed body of any sort having to do with the legislation of this country. I think it is out-moded, I think it is out-dated, and I think it is undemocratic. Starting with the parliament act of 1911, the power of the House of Lords has been constantly lessened until now I do not think anyone contends that that august body, with the many fine personalities that go to make up its membership, has any great function to perform. I believe the total membership of the House of Lords is in the vicinity of 600 and I am informed,

[Mr. Deputy Speaker.]

and I speak from my own experience gained by sitting in the galleries, that the average attendance is around 30.

There are other ways in which the Senate could be reformed but I am not going into them. I think there should be an age limit. I was going to say that I would favour some form of election rather than appointment, but since I am in favour of abolishing the Senate completely I do not think I shall say more at this time. I have tried in these few words to make my opinion clear on the broad matter without going into any further detail at the moment.

Mr. McIvor: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, there is one thing that I think we should do. We should cast the beam out of our own eye and then we might be able to see clearly to cast the mote out of our brother's eye. To be spending the time of the house at this time in trying to reform the Senate is out of order.

Mr. J. H. Blackmore (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, the Senate is entitled to be judged on the basis of its performance. I should like to give some attention to a piece of work which the Senate finished recently. Under date of June 16, 1955, the Senate issued to the public the proceedings of its standing committee on finance which sat under the chairmanship of Hon. T. A. Crerar.

On March 16, 1955, the Senate passed the following reference to the Senate finance committee, and I quote from page 295 of the Senate *Hansard* of March 16, as follows:

That the standing committee on finance be authorized to examine the expenditures proposed by the estimates laid before parliament for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1956, in advance of the bills based on the said estimates reaching the Senate; that the said committee be empowered to send for records of revenues from taxation collected by the federal, provincial and municipal governments in Canada and the incidence of this taxation in its effect upon different income groups, and records of expenditures by such governments, showing sources of income and expenditures of same under appropriate headings, together with estimates of gross national production, net national income and movement of the cost-of-living index, and their relation to such total expenditures, for the year 1939 and for the latest year for which the information is available and such other matters as may be pertinent to the examination of the estimates, and to report upon the same.

That the said committee be empowered to send for persons, papers and records.

I submit that with a reference like that a body of members of the Senate, having no particular responsibility upon them except that of acquiring information, understanding and soberly contemplating the information available to them, ought to have been able to turn in a job which would be of the greatest benefit to the whole Dominion of Canada if not to the world.

Proposed Senate Reform

I have read through the report several times endeavouring to determine the purpose of those who prepared it. The committee recognizes that the report falls short of discharging the responsibilities imposed upon the committee by the wording of the Senate reference. The reasons given are, first, that many of the members of the committee were engaged in other duties, and, second, that the reference was delayed in reaching the Senate.

In paragraph 1 of the report, page 143, it is indicated that in previous reports the committee had given considerable attention to "the effect of inflation". The words "that factor is still at work" appear. It is cause for surprise and regret that the hon. members of the committee do not confide to their readers what Their Honours consider the word "inflation" to mean. One gathers they would say that any rise in price of any commodity would be inflation regardless of what factors might have caused that price rise.

Let us consider a case in point which, of course, was not before Their Honours at the time they were considering the matter. Within the last few days in the United States a strike threat for higher wages caused an increase of \$7 and more per ton in the price of steel. Would Their Honours of the Senate committee call that price rise inflation, and would the members of this house call it inflation? That is an exceedingly important question at this particular juncture in Canada's history. That increase in steel prices will force up ultimately the price of nearly every commodity in the United States by directly increasing the costs of production. Would Their Honours characterize all those secondary price rises as inflation?

Let us all bear in mind that there was no increase of money supply in circulation in the United States, no increase that had anything to do with that rise in the price of steel. The labourers demanded more money; that was all, with certain other increases in the cost of producing the steel. So I repeat, it is cause for regret that Their Honours of the other place have omitted to define more precisely the meaning of inflation. Real inflation is a rise in prices resulting from too many dollars chasing too few goods, to put it in common understandable terms; there is involved in genuine inflation, first, a relative scarcity of goods, and second, a relative surplus of money. Of tremendous importance is clear and accurate comprehension of the true meaning of inflation; and the causes of actual inflation cannot be too emphatically impressed upon the whole country today.

At the close of paragraph 4 of the report, on page 145, Their Honours indicate an awareness of the true definition of inflation.

I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if we could have the members who want to talk so much go somewhere else where they can talk in peace. I do not see why a member speaking should have to face the opposition of five other members speaking at the same time. In that paragraph of the report it is stated:

A progression of years with "deficit financing" will mean ruinous inflation.

I feel certain that on second thought the members of Their Honours' committee would agree, though, that if a surplus of goods had accumulated in an economy, as has happened in Canada, together with a relative shortage of purchasing power in the hands of the people, resulting in falling prices, unemployment and bankruptcy, as has happened in Canada, then the addition of the right amount of money by even deficit financing might not cause that rise in prices which they seem to call inflation.

I say this in defence of the position taken by the Minister of Finance in his budget address and in his budget this year. The remark which appears in the Senate report would seem to call in question the wisdom of the Minister of Finance in his position this year. I shall not say that the Minister of Finance needs to be defended, but he is on sound ground on this occasion.

In paragraph 5 of their report, on page 146, the members of the Senate committee indicate that they realize that inflation is a rise in price resulting from too much money in circulation in relation to the goods available for purchase. They write the following two sentences:

It should not be forgotten, however, that inflation is still a powerful factor in our economy. The important thing here for all governments is to strive to keep their spending within their income.

That certainly indicates that they have in mind the monetary consideration and also the goods consideration. Nevertheless one gathers from the report that Their Honours would do well to give more consideration to goods and services available for purchase in relation to money supply whenever hereafter they meditate upon inflation. I would suggest that to them, in connection with all future activities of the kind which we are now discussing.

Apparently, to support their position in respect of inflation and its causes, Their Honours have included certain statistics under the headings of exhibit 6, page 161 of the report, and exhibit 7, page 162 of the report. Exhibit 7 gives us the consumer price index for Canada from 1945 to 1955. One cannot help asking why this index did not begin with 1939, as did the index given by the Minister of Finance at page 30 of his budget papers for 1955. The members of

Proposed Senate Reform

the House of Commons need to ask that question quite trenchantly. The purpose of giving this index in the Senate report, presumably, is to enable us to see how prices have risen. Why not have the picture from the outbreak of world war II, as the Minister of Finance wisely gave it to us? This would help us to see what has happened to our prices, at least partly as a result of world war II.

May I take the liberty of quoting the index under exhibit 6, and of supplementing it with the figures from 1939 on, and of placing alongside the so-called consumer price index—which the minister used and which they in part quote—the much more enlightening cost of living index as it was employed before 1949? I am giving first in this citation the consumer index which is now being used, followed by the cost of living index as was used before 1949:

1939	63.2	=	101.625600
1940	65.7	=	105.645600
1941	69.6	=	111.916800
1942	72.9	=	117.223200
1943	74.2	=	119.474400
1944	74.6	=	119.956800
1945	75.0	=	120.600000
1946	77.5	=	124.620000
1947	84.8	=	136.358400
1948	97.0	=	155.976000
1949	100.0	=	160.800000
1950	102.9	=	165.463200
1951	113.7	=	182.829600
1952	116.5	=	187.332000
1953	115.5	=	185.724000
1954	116.2	=	186.849600
1955	116.0	=	186.528000

May I now draw attention—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. For some time now I have been listening to the hon. member and hoping that he would finish laying his groundwork and would proceed to the amendment which we have before the house at the present time. I am afraid that he is making a speech on inflation which has little, if any, relevancy to the amendment of the hon. member for Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Rowe) which is before the house. I feel sure that, after I have resumed my seat, the hon. member will rise and assure me that his remarks are relevant to the amendment and that I will soon see the relevancy. May I tell the hon. member that I would consider that he has already had an ample opportunity to lay any necessary groundwork. I would ask him to co-operate with the Chair in discussing the amendment which merely relates to reform of the Senate. The reading of these long statistics confirmed me in my opinion that there was little, if any, relevancy in the remarks which the hon. member had been making.

[Mr. Blackmore.]

Mr. Blackmore: As I recall it, Mr. Speaker, the amendment offered by the hon. member for Dufferin-Simcoe was a resolution in favour of reform of the Senate. In my opening remarks I said that the Senate ought to be judged by their performance. I have taken one example of their performance. I am analysing that performance and am endeavouring to assess it and appraise its value as a performance of the Senate worthy of the Senate or unworthy of the Senate. If that is not discussing the matter before the house, it is hard to see how we can discuss it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: May I point out to the hon. member one fallacy in his argument which immediately presents itself to my mind. The committees of this hon. chamber make many reports in the course of the session. If the hon. member carried his line of argument to its logical conclusion, if he disagreed with any paragraph in any report of any committee of the House of Commons, it seems to me that he could make a speech on it advocating reform of the House of Commons. As he says, I think the hon. member is entitled, when speaking to the matter of reform of the Senate, to refer to the actions of the Senate. That is admitted. But at the same time I do not think that an amendment of this kind gives the hon. member an opportunity to make a complete speech on a subject which, after all, is not directly related to the amendment.

Mr. Blackmore: Mr. Speaker, I would agree with you completely but I maintain that this discussion is directly related to the amendment. It is far more related to the amendment than is 99 per cent of the argument that has been presented to us up to the present time concerning this matter; and if necessary I will go right through what has been said, page by page, to prove my point. If the Senate is doing a job which it ought to be able to do, and is doing it in a manner in which it ought to do it so that its work is of value to the country, to this house and to the Senate, then by all means that fact constitutes an argument for retention of the Senate even as it is. If it has fallen short, then that fact certainly constitutes an argument for doing something about the Senate, either in the way of reforming it or of suggesting a means by which it might improve its effectiveness before the country. So on that basis, Mr. Speaker, I maintain that I am perfectly in order in considering this piece of work which was submitted to the country as recently as June 16. I will now proceed, and if Your Honour still feels that I am out of order in discussing a thing which is eminently

Proposed Senate Reform

in order, then I must defer to your ruling and leave unfinished this job which I have only just started to do.

May I draw attention to the cost of living figures for 1943, 1944 and 1945. I would ask you to notice that they are 119·47, 119·95 and 120·6, while in the consumer index they are 74·2, 74·6 and 75, thus indicating only a most moderate increase in prices during those years of relative scarcity of goods when we were at war—1943, 1944 and 1945—and indicating that there was during those three years nothing that could be called inflation to speak of, even though a rise in price alone might be termed inflation. But notice what happens in the next three years, namely 1946, 1947 and 1948, when certainly there was a rapidly growing supply of goods. Let it be remembered that I am discussing a report which purports to advise this house and this country on the matter of inflation. May I draw attention to the figures for the next three years, 1947, 1948 and 1949. The cost of living index indicates a figure of 124·62 for 1946, 136·35 for 1947, and 155·97 for 1948, showing an enormous increase in prices in those three years, 1946, 1947 and 1948. Something serious happened after 1945. What was it? Do Their Honours point out just exactly what it was or do they not?

Do you men across the floor have a speech you wish to deliver? If you have not, why talk loudly enough to get on *Hansard*?

An hon. Member: We were not intending to.

Mr. Blackmore: I accept your apology.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, just a word—and I may be slightly out of order in this connection—let me say there is a tremendous importance to be attached to the question whether we use the realistic cost of living index based on 1939 as 100, or whether we use this artificial consumer price index based on 1949 as 100. The picture which is given is absolutely different. In the case of using the 1939 cost of living index, one can see exactly what occurred to prices, as a result of world war II, but in the case of the consumer index based on 1949 as 100, almost the whole of the increase is covered up or at least is blurred. I wonder why Their Honours saw fit to choose the consumer index based on 1949 which in large measure covered up what had occurred, rather than to take the minister's index going back to 1939. Why did they choose the consumer index, which takes 1949 as a base and indicates that 1939 prices were away down the scale, instead of using the cost of living index showing that 1939 was up to a sort of point of normalcy? I think this matter has a good deal of significance with respect to

what we can judge of the attitude to their work taken by the hon. members of the other place.

No mention is made in the report of the Senate committee, which was appointed to do this very kind of work, of the fact that in 1945 controls were removed perhaps two years too soon, two years before supply caught up with consumer effective demands, whereas up to 1945 they had been retained. Consequently the increase in prices after 1945 would be due to the removal of controls before goods were sufficiently plentiful, and not to spending too much money into circulation, as Their Honours endeavour to indicate. It is interesting to note that Their Honours do not tell us that in April of 1946 there was an increase of \$5 a ton in the price of steel agreed to by the Ottawa government, and that there was a successful strike of the steel workers for higher wages. This increase in price and of wages resulted in an increase in the cost of production all across Canada in every industry and was a direct reason for the tremendous increase in prices during 1946, an increase which however one would gather from the general tenor of the remarks of Their Honours, was the result of spending too much money into circulation! Surely I have gone far enough to show now that in a general way Their Honours adopted an attitude to their problem which was fundamentally unsound.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. May I accept that opportunity to say that the hon. member has also gone far enough to convince me that he is still not directing his remarks to the amendment. I feel sure that if the hon. member considers his remarks carefully he will agree with me that they are directed to inflation, controls and other financial matters. The hon. member has certainly referred from time to time to the report of the standing committee on finance of the other place, which report I now have in my hand. But I feel sure the hon. member will agree, as I am sure other hon. members will, that his speech is not directed to Senate reform but rather to the particular financial matter which he has pursued.

The hon. member invited me to interrupt him if I felt that was still the case, and I do so at this time in the hope that he will co-operate and direct his remarks particularly to the subject matter of the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Rowe).

Mr. Blackmore: Mr. Speaker, if you want me to say a whole lot of unkind things about the Senate I can do that. It will not be a bit difficult for me to arraign them before the

Proposed Senate Reform

court of parliament in a way that will humiliate them. I can do that. If that can be in order while the kind of thing about which I am talking cannot be in order, I must submit there is something wrong with the rules of the house. I can build up the Senate and laud it to the skies. I can talk about what fine fellows the senators are, how valuable the Senate is and all that kind of thing. If that can be any more in order than to talk about a problem considered by the finance committee of the Senate, examine the way in which the Senate committee has addressed itself to the problem, and the efficiency, effectiveness and value of the report—or the lack of these—based upon their studies, then all I can say is that the fact constitutes a most damaging reflection on the rules of the house.

Mr. Harris: On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether my hon. friend is not confusing two points of view. He is in fact criticizing the decisions of a committee of the Senate. That is, of course, the privilege of a member of this house when he is considering a subject matter that the Senate has considered. On the other hand, that is not the point at issue in this debate. What is at issue in this debate is whether or not the Senate ought to be reformed and the manner in which reformation may take place. The issue is as to the constitution of the Senate, its powers, and all other constitutional matters. It is not as to its conduct of its present powers. I think my hon. friend is perhaps not in order. I have followed the discussion fairly closely because I know it affects my own department and I may be called upon to answer the points raised some day. However, I think the hon. member should confine himself to a discussion of whether the constitution of the Senate should be altered and not discuss its conduct of its powers.

Mr. Nicholson: On the point of order, I think the Minister of Finance has raised an important point. He has invited the hon. member for Lethbridge to discuss the issue he has raised when the minister's estimates are before the house. Although the discussion is very interesting, it would appear to me that it would be in order then and is not in order now.

Mr. Blackmore: Mr. Speaker, after these bits of timely, brotherly counsel from my fellow members I will read the amendment. If I feel then that I should defer all the rest I have to say, except for condemnation or fulsome praise of the Senate, then I will

[Mr. Blackmore.]

probably discontinue. The amendment is found at page 5335 of *Hansard* of June 27, and reads as follows:

That all the words after "That" to the end of the question be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

"the government should give consideration to initiating the necessary consultation and inquiry respecting reform of the Senate so that all appropriate steps may be taken, including such matters as the method by which the members of the Senate should be chosen and their tenure of office so that the Senate may more effectively discharge the constitutional function it was intended to serve as an integral part of our parliamentary system."

You will notice that the two items which have been mentioned are only two parts of a general statement.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. May I assist the hon. member in this respect. In his reading of the amendment I noticed that he used the words "and their tenure of office". I understand that those particular words are no longer included in the amendment before the house which, if the hon. member will forgive me, reads as follows:

"the government should give consideration to initiating the necessary consultation and inquiry respecting reform of the Senate including such matters as the method by which the members of the Senate should be chosen so that all appropriate steps may be taken in order that the Senate may more effectively discharge the constitutional function it was intended to serve as an integral part of our parliamentary system."

Those are the exact terms of the amendment as it is now before the chair.

Mr. Blackmore: Mr. Speaker, I will admit I was discussing the Conservative amendment rather than the later C.C.F. amendment, inasmuch as I felt that the whole debate had been precipitated by the Conservatives. If it is your ruling, Mr. Speaker, that it would be out of order for me to discuss the performance of the Senate—

Mr. Rowe: Oh, it is, definitely.

Mr. Blackmore: All right. I must say that it would seem the amendment is a very shoddy kind of thing to be discussing. After all, what we need to know is how to make the Senate just as efficient as possible, whether or not it is possible to make it efficient, whether or not it is efficient today, and all that sort of thing. I am not now going to pursue my study before the house any further, because there will be plenty of opportunity later.

Perhaps I should say that in my judgment the Senate is all right. There is not anything wrong with the Senate. Perhaps we should have a different method of selecting it, but I say that, in a general way, it is a constitutional part of the parliament of Canada; and all the talking we do here is not going to

Proposed Senate Reform

change that. The way matters stand today, we would be unable to abolish the Senate, even if we wanted to, without referring the matter to the British parliament. And if we did abolish the Senate without referring the matter to the British parliament we would be amending the constitution of Canada without reference to that British parliament, and would be confronted with all the irregularities to which that would lead. So that the discussion we have had to the present time has been absolutely idle and futile, so far as anything we can do is concerned.

But when it comes to taking the Senate as it stands today, I would point out that it consists of a number of men and women of the highest character, of fine qualifications, high ideals, great information and standing, wide experience in public affairs, and generally of sound judgment, men and women who are sober and serious, and who in the main, I know, take their responsibility seriously. If we are discussing the question of how we might help that group of people by using them more or co-operating with them, with the object of making them more efficient in the year 1956, and after that, then we will be talking about something that is thoroughly worth while.

Apparently your ruling, Mr. Speaker, indicates that I would be out of order in discussing anything that is worth while, though I would be quite in order if I were not to discuss what is worth while. Therefore I bow to your implied ruling, and defer my discussion of the subject.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. May I thank the hon. member for his co-operation. However, I would like to clarify just one point. He indicated that my ruling was to the effect that I did not allow him to discuss the performance of the Senate. Actually, my ruling was only to the effect that I did not wish him to discuss one particular subject matter which had been under discussion, and was the subject matter of a report of the committee of the other place. I would just like to clarify that part of my ruling.

The hon. member for Digby-Annapolis-Kings (Mr. Nowlan) may proceed.

Mr. Blackmore: May I say just a word. If a person undertakes to discuss the performance of the other place, he should discuss something they have done that he is in a position to know something about. Now, it just so happens that I have given 25 years of my life to a study of the subject of finance and, if I may say so modestly, I know my way around a little bit in that subject. Consequently I am in a position to judge their performance in connection with that matter.

I will say this, that half of the material uttered in this debate has been uttered by people who did not know anything about what they were talking about. So, Mr. Speaker, that is the reason I chose this opportunity to speak about a piece of work the Senate has done; namely the preparation and submission of a report on inflation.

By the time I got through I had intended to show the good, as well as the poor, work the Senate committee has done in this case, and the danger the Senate is in when it takes dictation and direction from some higher master-minding source, which is clearly indicated in this report; and the danger we and the country are in if we accept the findings of the Senate in a report, just because that report comes from the Senate.

Those are matters I wished to talk about, and I suggest they are quite important matters. So now, having made that clear, I give way to the hon. member who has the floor.

Mr. G. C. Nowlan (Digby-Annapolis-Kings): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member who has just taken his seat has discussed certain operations or work carried out by the Senate. I am not going to attempt to enter that field of discussion; I shall be content to discuss briefly and in a general way the resolution before us.

The Senate is an operative part of the parliament of Canada. While the hon. member who has just taken his seat suggested that this discussion would not be worth while, I would point out that there are many distinguished precedents for a discussion such as that in which we are now engaged. Because when one looks at the records of the Quebec conference, where the foundation for confederation was established, he finds some interesting material. I did some reading in the matter over the week end and I find that, of the 14 days spent in those preliminary discussions, more than six were spent in a discussion of the creation of the Senate chamber. In other words, all the other matters, including the division of powers between the provinces and the dominion, and the relationships which developed in laying the foundations for the completely new experiment of a dominion, took only eight of those 14 days.

Within one year after the Senate was set up, I find, a resolution was passed by that body suggesting how it could improve its procedure and perform more efficiently its functions as part of the parliament of Canada. In 1874 there was a resolution, such as we have before us today, suggesting that a joint committee be set up; and there were other resolutions all through the years. So

Proposed Senate Reform

it is a matter which one might say is somewhat threadbare and shopworn; and yet it is a discussion concerning part of the parliament of Canada, and one in which I believe the people generally are interested.

Certainly, from a political standpoint, it has been assumed in the past that it is a subject of particular interest because if one reads *Hansard* of some years ago, and the election speeches on public platforms of the right hon. gentleman who was at one time the prime minister of Canada and the leader of the Liberal party, he will find that that gentleman and his followers spent days and weeks in the House of Commons and on the hustings in urging what he described as reform of the Senate.

It is interesting now to read the reports of some of those speeches, where it was suggested that the Senate was a refuge for privilege and a gathering of wealthy men—and of course the suggestion is that the right hon. gentleman was opposed to privilege and wealthy men. When one goes through the Parliamentary Guide today—and let it be understood that I am not criticizing privilege at the moment—and sees the larger number of directorships listed on the part of the members in the other place, I think one would say that, whatever may have been the propaganda of the past about the Conservative party being the party of privilege and wealthy men, that situation has greatly changed today. I say that because we find listed in the Parliamentary Guide over a hundred directorships, largely of national corporations, held by representatives in the other place. So I suppose that shows simply that there is nothing new under the sun, and that the wheel turns.

These discussions still go on. Regardless of what may have been said in the past, I think the people of Canada are interested in this matter today, and I suggested that it would be well if we were to consider this matter, not critically, but coolly and dispassionately, and that it would be wise to have a committee set up to consider ways and means of dealing with the matter—because I am sure there are differences of opinion among all of us with respect to it.

I have heard views expressed by hon. gentlemen opposite, and some on this side of the house, with which I am not entirely in accord, so far as the Senate is concerned. Let me say at the outset that I am not in favour of the abolition of the Senate—and one would expect that I would take that position, coming from the maritime provinces—because the Senate did play some

little part in the thinking which motivated the people in the maritime provinces when they entered confederation.

I think one reason there has been criticism of the other place is that its functions have not been properly understood. Sometimes people say that the Senate does not do enough, or that it does not understand this or that. If they read the discussions which took place at the Quebec conference, if they understood the working of our constitutional system, they would realize that the second place is supposed to be a place—I think Sir John A. Macdonald or Cartier said it should be a counterpoise, which I think is a very fortunate expression, to the more hasty action which may be taken in the lower chamber.

It has been called a judicial body, which I do not think is a very happy term or an appropriate term. It has been called a body of review, and at least that is the primary function of the second place. It is not the place where one initiates all sorts of legislation, although it has the constitutional right to do so. It is a body which is supposed to sit in consideration and in review of legislation which is passed in this house. Criticisms are sometimes made of that body without realizing its limitation. Whatever may be said whether one criticizes the membership of the body or whether one praises it, the fact remains that the hon. gentlemen sitting in the other place have no control over that whatsoever. They have no choice in the appointments that are to be made to that body. These appointments are made on the prerogative of the Prime Minister. So far as the work which they do is concerned, we are the body which considers and debates matters—perhaps people sometimes think too long—and then they are sent down to the other place where they receive their final passage.

I have sometimes thought it might be very appropriate if the people in the other place decided they would spend more time in considering legislation and we might have to stop and wait for the three knocks to come on the door. We might be delayed sometime waiting for the three knocks to come, but at least they have not done that. That would be their prerogative in giving more consideration to legislation which we pass and send down there.

A great deal of legislation has been initiated there and a great deal of good work done there. As I recall, the shipping act and the Bankruptcy Act were initiated there. I think about three years were spent in considering the Bankruptcy Act. It was non-contentious. It was very involved and very technical. It ran into hundreds of sections.

Proposed Senate Reform

An exhaustive study was made of that legislation by committees in the other place. Finally, that act was approved and sent down here. As I recall, we passed it in a relatively short time. The same thing applies to the Criminal Code, which was a non-contentious matter in so far as partisan politics is concerned at any rate. A great deal of time was spent and a great deal of work was done by Their Honours in the other place in reviewing and considering the Criminal Code. It is true that when it came here, because it was a matter of great concern to the public, we spent considerable time going over the same matter. The work done in the other place certainly facilitated the work which we did here. In other words, we would have spent much longer on it had it not been for the work done in the Senate.

Something was said about appointments to the Senate and the various classes of people who should be appointed there. I quite agree with that. It is desirable to appoint representation from as many classes of people as possible. But we must not forget, sir, that the fundamental basis on which the Senate was established was a reasonable one. When the fathers of confederation met, and in the preliminary discussions which took place prior to that time, they were faced with very great problems. You had the province of united Canada following the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, and you had the cry of representation by population, which created a great deal of doubt, particularly in the minds of those from Lower Canada. Yet it was realized it was hard to work out and achieve a democratic parliament unless we did recognize the so-called principle of representation by population. But there were associations with that, particularly in the province of Upper Canada, which raised the greatest doubts in what was then the province of Lower Canada. The people there felt, I think properly—we would all think the same way if we were in their position—that to come into confederation you were going to have a lower house and probably an upper house elected on the some population basis. Then the fathers of confederation also saw the problem between Upper and Lower Canada, and they saw another problem as well.

We in the east were separated by hundreds of miles of what was then woods and forests. The provinces in the east were, as the name implied, maritime in outlook, maritime in discipline. We were looking toward the sea. We had no great economic associations. Originally the area looked with a great deal

of doubt upon entering confederation. They felt that if they did, because of their relatively small population, they might be entering a government which was based on a popular assembly or an elected lower and upper house, where their voices and their views would be completely submerged and their section would be ignored. It was because of that that the two fundamental principles were accepted: One, that the Senate was to be appointed and not elected—one could develop the reason for that at length but time does not permit it; second, and more important, there should be a regional basis of appointment, namely, 24 members from what had been the province of Upper Canada, 24 from Lower Canada, and 24 from what had been the maritime provinces. There were these three divisions of 24, and it was written right into our constitution that there could be no increase in that number except one for each one of the areas, and even when that one had been appointed by the governor in council an additional one could not be appointed until another one died. In other words, you are keeping in balance the 24 members between the three areas. Otherwise, if the number had not been limited, one can easily see what could have happened.

I well remember what happened in the province of Nova Scotia. I happened to be a member of the legislature there when it was decided to abolish the legislative council. The government went to the privy council and found there was no restriction whatsoever on the number of legislative councillors who could be appointed. The government of that day proceeded to appoint a large number of legislative councillors. When the measure came before that body to abolish it they passed the measure and the legislative council was abolished. As the hon. member for Lethbridge pointed out a little while ago, that could not be done in the parliament of Canada because we could not abolish the Senate, even if we wanted to, unless the legislation was passed by the upper house as well, and under our constitution there is no possibility of increasing the number of senators. The number is fixed.

We did finally achieve confederation because of that. That is the thing that one should remember when discussing the Senate. Some people ask: is it worth while? Does it cost too much? Is it efficient? A whole lot of other questions are asked which could be answered in the affirmative or negative, depending upon one's views upon the subject.

I want to say this, sir. It is my considered opinion—in fact, I am sure it is the opinion of anyone who studies the matter at all—that if it had not been for the Senate there

Proposed Senate Reform

would be no Canada today. I think we have to accept that as a fact. One may question its efficiency today, or the wisdom of its actions. But it is because there is a Senate that we have confederation. If there had been no Senate, if there had not been some similar body—you may call it anything you like, but it had to be an upper house on a regional basis—if it had not been for that, Lower Canada would never have come in. Cartier makes that very plain in his statement at the time of the conference at Quebec and afterwards. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick leaders also made it very plain at the time. In fact, the province of Prince Edward Island was so suspicious of the matter that it would not come into confederation at all at the time because it felt that, even with a Senate, its views might be overlooked.

From my own point of view, Mr. Speaker, the investment was worth while. It is those who served this nation in which we all have pride and which has developed from the Atlantic to the Pacific and is now rolling northward. It is a contribution which we believe we are making, but I think we should remember, when we are inclined to be critical of that other place, that at least it was on that cornerstone, even more so than in this chamber, that Canada was established as a nation. The price which we have paid is very little for what we have obtained.

As far as checks and balances are concerned, when one studies the record he finds that very often it has reviewed legislation which this house has passed rather hurriedly. I remember reading a debate which took place in the late 1890's. At that time bicycles were more numerous than automobiles are today. There were cyclists' associations all over the country and these groups brought pressure to bear upon the House of Commons and legislation was passed providing that the railroads had to carry bicycles free of charge. In other words, you could put your bicycle on a train, carry it anywhere, cycle back home and the railroad could not charge any freight. Obviously that was a situation where the House of Commons had been under some pressure and had made a rather hasty reaction to public opinion. The Senate promptly threw out the bill and the railroads were able to charge freight for bicycles carried. It is not for me to say whether that was a good or a bad thing. I cite it simply as an example of one check which was made.

It is within the memory of some hon. members that a certain bank in the province of Ontario failed not very many years ago. It was suggested, and I think partially politically, that the bank had failed because the government of the day had failed to scrutinize

its charter as carefully as it should have done. Political pressure was brought to bear upon the House of Commons to say whether the failure had been due to the fact that the charter had not been checked sufficiently in order to avoid this bankruptcy. People lost a lot of money because of this failure and a bill was passed through this house under which the Dominion of Canada would pay the depositors what they had lost. I do not think anyone looking back will say other than that that was a piece of clumsy political manoeuvring. The Senate threw out that bill as well.

One could go on and give many examples where the same thing has been done. I think all of us realize that pressure groups do exist in this country as evidenced by the number of resolutions and the propaganda and material which we are getting every day. These organized groups are growing up in this country and they bring pressure to bear on the House of Commons and the same things could happen in the future as happened in the case of the bicycles or the bank depositors. So I say that there is justification for a second body to review the legislation which is passed.

When one compares the situation which existed when Canada was established with the situation which exists today he can easily see why a study should be made. For instance, in those days all the government of Canada was carried on in the building which stood where this building stands today and the east and west blocks. Those buildings housed all the machinery of the government of Canada. Today you cannot wander anywhere around Ottawa without running into government buildings, new buildings which are being erected or old buildings which are being torn down to be replaced by new government buildings. In addition, there are many buildings being rented by the government. The same thing applies to other cities in Canada. It used to be that the main objective was to get a post office, but now they want a federal building, or maybe two or three of them, and then other buildings must be rented as well. I am not saying this in any critical sense but simply to indicate what is now necessary to take care of the machinery of government.

Then there is the situation with respect to the prerogative of the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent). Undoubtedly at the time the Senate was created it was thought that appointments, besides having to be on a geographical basis, would be much more regional than is the case today. The situation which has developed in the last 80 years in respect to the office of prime minister is entirely different. Perhaps one of the most

important changes is the length of time a government may be in office.

We must remember that when the fathers of confederation laid the foundation for the British North America Act they had had the experience of governments in Upper and Lower Canada where governments rose and fell like mad. You would have a government of one party in power today, then that government would be defeated and the government of another party came in tomorrow. You would have a coalition in order to get the budget through. Then parliament would be dissolved and there would be another election. In the days of Upper and Lower Canada a government which stayed in office for six months gained a reputation for longevity.

It was with that experience in mind that it was decided that senators should be appointed by the governor in council. It was assumed that there would be a fairly rapid change in the political situation from year to year. However, since Canada was established we have had a long history of stable political government. There was one period from 1867 to 1896, with the exception of four years, in which one government was in office, and now we have had a government in office for at least 20 years.

Then the machinery of the Senate set-up under our democratic government could be much different. At one time at least two prime ministers sat in the Senate, and at nearly all times there was a minister or two who sat in the other place. As I say, we have the machinery of government spread all over this great nation and today we find no more than one minister, generally without portfolio, sitting in the other place. He is the only means of contact between the whole government of Canada and the members of the Senate.

It is because of these changing conditions that I think it is most appropriate that a committee should be set up to consider this whole problem of what should be done in connection with the Senate. I hope that that committee can be set up. If it is, I know that something constructive will come out of its studies. There are some suggestions which I should like to make with respect to the work of the committee, and I would now move the adjournment of the debate.

On motion of Mr. Nowlan the debate was adjourned.

At one o'clock the house took recess.

50433—376

Defence Production Act

The house resumed at 2.30 p.m.

DEFENCE PRODUCTION ACT

AMENDMENTS RESPECTING SALARY OF MINISTER AND EXPIRY OF ACT

The house resumed, from Thursday, July 7, consideration of the motion of Mr. Howe, Port Arthur (for Mr. St. Laurent) for the second reading of Bill No. 256, to amend the Defence Production Act, and the proposed motion of the Minister of Finance: "That this question be now put".

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I would be mistaken in my appreciation of the processes of the minds of members of this house and of the gentlemen up above us who represent the press if many of them had not been assuming that the Leader of the Opposition and I had been conferring in the last few days about the way in which it might be possible to bridge what seemed to be the narrowing and narrowed gap that existed between the suggestions that had been made from this side of the house with respect to the bill that has given rise to quite a long protracted debate and the requests or suggestions that had come from the other side of the house.

Hon. members will remember that the Minister of Defence Production (Mr. Howe) declared on the 13th of June, almost a month ago now, that it was the intention of the government, when the bill reached the committee stage, to propose the addition of a third section to provide that orders made under the Defence Production Act, either by the governor in council or by the minister, shall, in addition to the normal publication in the *Canada Gazette*, be laid upon the table of both houses of parliament at the earliest possible moment after they are made and that a notice of motion signed by 10 members praying for the repeal or amendment of any such order if given within seven days of the tabling of the order in either house shall be debated at the first convenient opportunity within the next four sitting days.

Then, just a week ago today, in view of the propriety that I think everyone conceded of there being from time to time a review of the existing circumstances to determine whether it required powers as extensive as those which are now provided in the Defence Production Act, I suggested in that connection that we would undertake, if any private member moved for the repeal or amending of those provisions, after the bill had been introduced, to provide for its consideration in its various stages as expeditiously as could be conveniently arranged. That seemed