

senator of this hallowed house believes that the report will be forthcoming by January 31. Why not set a realistic date now?

Hon. L. Norbert Thériault: Or no date.

Senator Riley: Or no date. Perhaps that might be better. Perhaps, if we did not set up a committee, that might avert a few arguments between the deputy leader and myself.

When I was a member of a special committee we were given a deadline; we produced our report within a few days of that deadline.

This committee deals with a very important subject.

Senator Asselin: You can amend the motion if you want to.

Senator Riley: I am afraid, if I were to give vent to my Irish feelings, I would amend the motion by having it tabled for six months.

Hon. Nathan Nurgitz: Are you looking for a seconder?

Senator Riley: Senator Godfrey just made a remark to me which I should like to repeat. He said: "I'm 'agin' reform." If I were "agin" reform, I would say that we should gather up the knowledge from the people who travel all over the world and have them relate their experiences to the Senate.

Senator Roblin: Hear, hear.

Senator Riley: This body is quite capable of reforming itself, and that reform should start here. We have shown within the past two years that we are capable of introducing procedures of reform within the Senate. That is why I suggest that we give this motion a six month's hoist.

Senator Asselin: Let's amend the motion.

Senator Riley: I would need some time to think about that. I should like to mention to Senator Asselin that this is a bilingual house and if you are unilingual, as I am, except for a little understanding of French, unless your translation equipment is working you do not get the full purport of some of the statements made by the Deputy Leader of the Government.

Senator Asselin: I accept your reasoning.

Senator Riley: I think we should give more thought to this motion, and particularly the points that were raised in respect of the deadline for a report by this new committee. If this committee is reconstituted, it should re-examine its agenda, take all the time it needs and, if there are witnesses who can add something to the report, those witnesses should be heard. When everyone has fully decided what should go into the report, we can then sit down and produce an intelligent report that reflects the recommendations and the wishes of the people of Canada.

Senator Haidasz: Honourable senators, following some of the remarks of Senator Riley and Senator McElman, I should like to ask the co-chairman of the special joint committee—

Senator Frith: There is no committee yet.

Senator Haidasz: Then, I should like to ask Senator Molgat a question. If, as intimated, the committee will no longer hear any witnesses but will conduct a study of possible draft reports

to be completed by January 31, I should like to find out from Senator Molgat whether the committee will be proposing an elected Senate based on the one in Australia. I should also like to know whether members of the special joint committee have considered studying the Senate of Australia on the spot to find out how it is working and whether it would be workable in Canada.

Senator Molgat: Honourable senators, with leave, may I answer specifically the questions that were asked of me. At the outset, I should like to say that it sounds as though I am defending a position, and, quite frankly, I am not. Admittedly, I was the co-chairman, but not by choice. A vote was taken by the committee; I did not seek the job. I might also say that the committee is a creature of this chamber and all the committee does is follow the instructions of this chamber. Honourable senators set the date of December 1 in the first instance, and our job was to try to meet that date as conscientiously as we could. When it was obvious that that date could not be met, we asked for an extension, and at that time January 31 looked like an appropriate date, and the committee members concurred. I cannot disagree with Senator Tremblay that, if the committee does not meet next week, it is unlikely that that deadline can be met; but that will be up to the committee.

What the future committee will do will obviously be up to the committee. Senator McElman mentioned the possibility of travel. Once the new committee is reconstituted, I think it would be feasible for it to do some travelling on its own; on the other hand, it might, for example, be faced with the need to call a special witness in order to obtain further details on the subject; or it might decide to appoint a subcommittee to do some travelling in order to interview certain witnesses. These are only possibilities, however, and, based on what the previous committee had been doing, are not likely to occur; but rather than having to come back for another extension, I think it would be safer to have that leeway.

In response to the specific question of Senator Haidasz, on a number of occasions suggestions were made to the committee that it might consider investigating the Australian situation.

Hon. C. William Doody: That was suggested several times.

Senator Molgat: It was suggested again in this chamber recently that this should be done. Owing to time constraints, the committee could not consider it. So the committee agreed to forgo an in-depth, on the spot study of the Australian situation.

Senator Asselin: With leave, may I ask the acting leader, considering what has been said about this motion this afternoon, if he is ready to amend it in order to extend the work of this committee until April 1, 1984?

Senator Frith: I will speak to that when I close the debate.

● (1500)

Senator Riley: Honourable senators, Senator Asselin has proposed April 1—poisson d'avril—which may be apropos if they do not produce a report by that date. I think the question of an amendment should be left open because I do not agree