

equality. That is why the premiers dealt with Senate reform as they did.

Then the next step was that Quebec, perhaps understandably, could not agree to an equal Senate without gaining what could be defended in Quebec as adequate compensation. Accordingly, there are to be 18 additional members for Quebec in the House of Commons. And if Bourassa is to have 18, surely Bob Rae, too, must have 18.

Naturally, Premier Rae was absolutely delighted. He got 18 additional members in the House of Commons for Ontario in return for the virtual abolition of the Senate. No member of the New Democratic Party had ever imagined such an achievement—the virtual abolition of the Senate and 18 new seats for Ontario. What a magnificent achievement! If we are to have someone negotiate for Canada abroad, put Bob Rae's name at the top of the list. He did a great job for Ontario and the NDP.

This process is how the Prime Minister and most of his colleagues have been trapped. They have been Shanghaied. They have been caught up in an ill-conceived scheme; an ill-conceived scheme from which they cannot escape. They are being swept into a referendum fraught with risks. I suspect they see those risks clearly. That is why at times they lapse into shrill rhetoric.

Where does that leave us in the Senate? To vote in favour of Senator Murray's motion is to vote for a constitutional referendum on October 26. To vote in favour of his motion is to approve the wording of the referendum question. To vote in favour of his motion is to vote for the constitutional changes based on the Charlottetown accord.

Do not deceive yourselves, honourable senators. You are not voting only on the question of whether a referendum with certain words will take place. This referendum is intended to advance the actualization of the constitutional changes set forth in the Charlottetown accord. The advancement of that accord is what you will be voting for, honourable senators.

For example, if you vote in favour of this motion, honourable senators, you will be voting for an ineffective Senate. You will be voting for a Senate that will be nothing but an expensive nuisance. You will be voting for an option that is so bad that it would be better if there were no Senate at all.

Senator Perrault: Hear, hear!

Senator Stewart: It will be to vote that Ontario will have 18 seats in the House of Commons over and above the 99 seats now allotted to it. It will be to vote that Quebec will have 18 seats in the House of Commons over and above the 75 seats now allotted to it. That makes a combined total of 210 out of 337. That is what you will be voting for, honourable senators.

On the other hand, are there reasons why senators should not vote "no"? Yes, there are. A "no" vote here this afternoon may be misunderstood as a vote against Quebec. A "no" vote may be misunderstood as a vote against the aspirations of

[Senator Stewart.]

Canadian Aboriginal people. Alas, a "no" vote may be misunderstood as a vote for the present unreformed Senate.

I say that this referendum proposal is highly risky. It is a venture into shallow reef-strewn waters. The government decided early in July that it had no alternative to taking this risk. That is the government's decision. Fortunately for me, I do not have to say that I believe this referendum is wise. I think this referendum seriously endangers the future unity of this country. It does so because it offends against most of the rules I have set forth this afternoon.

Honourable senators, I do not want to play this government's game. I will abstain on this motion.

Hon. Finlay MacDonald: Would Senator Stewart clarify for me a couple of his remarks?

Senator Stewart: Certainly, if I can.

Senator MacDonald: I have never heard that a "yes" vote means constitutional peace, Senator Stewart, which you just said it does. I understood that this was a continuing process, something referred to by Senators Graham and Fairbairn. Where did the honourable senator get the idea that we would have constitutional peace if we have a "yes" vote? That is my first question. I have others.

Senator Stewart: I have heard it said, and I do not have texts here before me, that the people of Canada are sick and tired of hearing about the Constitution. They are distressed at the enormous sums of money that already have been expended on conferences which, as Senator Stollery has said, apparently have had little or no impact at all on the substance of the accord. They want all this behind them. They say, "Let's vote 'yes' and be done with it so that we can get on with the task of making this country prosperous again."

One lady, a very good Liberal lady, by the way, perhaps known to the Honourable Senator MacDonald, recently said to me, "I don't care what's in it. Sign it so that we can have peace and prosperity."

Senator MacDonald: Senator Stewart, you have given ways in which a "no" vote may be interpreted or misinterpreted. My question is not exactly hypothetical, but would you give us your opinion as to what would happen in the tragic event that a "no" vote—clear and absolutely unambiguous, carries the day on October 26? Can you give us some idea as to what you think the consequences might be in that case?

Senator Stewart: Honourable senators, I could guess, but let me remind Senator MacDonald of what Senator Castonguay said last night. He described in ominous language what would happen if Canadians outside Quebec vote "no". I say this referendum risks that outcome because of all the mistakes that this government has made in bringing on this referendum in this way at this time.

But when Senator Castonguay was asked by Senator Molgat what would be the consequences of a "no" vote in Quebec,