

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Leader of the Opposition):**  
Honourable senators—

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Honourable senators, if the Honourable Senator MacEachen speaks now, his speech will have the effect of closing the debate on the motion.

**Senator MacEachen:** Honourable senators, I will not take a long time in closing the debate, because I think the major points have been made.

I listened with great interest yesterday to the Leader of the Government in the Senate on the motion to set up a Committee of the Whole to examine the Meech Lake accord and subsequent texts. Of course, his address consisted mainly of political comment and analysis of the alleged situation with the Liberal Party, a puff piece on the Prime Minister, and an effort to elicit my views on the Meech Lake accord. He suggested that there was a break between the leader of our party, Mr. Turner, and the Liberal caucus, and between Mr. Turner and myself on the Meech Lake accord. Nothing that has been said justifies that allegation whatsoever.

However, if there were a break between the leader of our party and a member of the party, it ought not to scandalize the Leader of the Government, because he has been an adept practitioner at breaking with the leader of his own party. I cite only two occasions when he did so.

Yesterday he talked about the Prime Minister, and I quote him:

And as I have said before, we must not forget the extraordinary leadership and national vision of Prime Minister Mulroney, without whom this Accord would not have been achieved.

**Some Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

**Senator MacEachen:** That is what I call "puffing up" the Prime Minister.

But he did not always have that view about this man of "extraordinary leadership and national vision." I remember reading in *One-Eyed Kings* Mr. Murray's assessment of Brian Mulroney's constitutional views when Mr. Trudeau's amendments were before the country, and I quote:

"Brian tends to be pretty simplistic when it comes to strategy," said Lowell Murray, who had gone to university in Nova Scotia with him.

Who would know better? The simplistic approach has been exchanged now for "extraordinary leadership and national vision." His appreciation for the Prime Minister will undoubtedly increase as his standing in the cabinet and his assignments improve and are enhanced.

Maybe I should read another one. He stated:

"He goes for the big splash. He supported Trudeau's constitutional position not because he had thought about it for five minutes, but because he was so thrilled by the sheer bravado of it all. That position would not have served us very well."

I do not mind that. Why not have a different view from the leader of your party? But surely a man who has that kind of

skeleton in his closet should not twit the rest of us. One should look in the closet first to see what is there.

Then, again, we have the case of the constitutional changes, with the votes in the House of Commons and the Senate in December 1981. It is interesting to look back, because memory is faulty. The actions of an obscure senator like Senator Murray in those days did not attract great attention, but now they are of even historical interest, because he has become an architect of our nation. So what did this architect do in 1981 when his leader, Mr. Clark, supported the constitutional resolution in the House of Commons? Well, when it came to the Senate, he voted against it. He voted against his own leader, as did the then Leader of the Opposition, Senator Flynn. They voted against the view of the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons. When I get to that point—

• (1440)

**Senator Murray:** We are waiting.

**Senator MacEachen:** —it will be time to talk about breaks. So I just say, don't raise these questions at all, because there is no validity in them with respect to this particular caucus and with respect to this motion that is before us.

The motion seeks to have an examination on the Meech Lake accord and the subsequent texts. It makes no judgment upon the substance. It makes no pre-judgment of how the Senate or any individual senator will deal with the resolution when it comes. That resolution will be the moment of truth for each one of us, because at that point each senator will either vote for or against it. In my experience, it would be unwise to anticipate the results, for example, of the examination that will be made by the House of Commons and the possible amendments that might be made in the House of Commons. It is conceivable that the present government will be as amenable to amendments sought by opposition parties as was the former government, when it changed its proposals as a result of public hearings and after hearing the views of the opposition. So it is conceivable that there will be amendments. The Constitution-makers, in assigning a role to the Senate—it is quite true, as the Leader of the Government said yesterday, that it may be a different role from that of the House of Commons—assigned it a different role which envisages that the Senate will take into account the constitutional resolution as it is finally passed by the House of Commons, because the clock starts ticking on the Senate when the constitutional resolutions are passed in the House of Commons.

When the resolution is dealt with in the House of Commons, the Senate has 180 days within which to deal with the constitutional proposals. As the Leader of the Government said yesterday, if the proposals fail to pass in that period, the Senate would not block nor could it block the conclusions reached by the House of Commons. So, today, it is quite impossible to know what will be before the Senate or, indeed, what will finally be passed by the House of Commons. However, what we are interested in is to hear witnesses so that we will understand better the meaning, the implications and the impact of this important agreement. Presumably, if we establish an inquiry, senators will be listening carefully and will