

Chamber now, I have never attended a caucus of the Conservative Party with the members of the House of Commons; and the caucus that I did attend the other day was a caucus of the members of the Senate to decide upon affairs on this side of the House, and not for the purpose of combining with the Conservative Party in the House of Commons as to what should be done with regard to this legislation or for any other purpose. I expect that my honourable friend will declare that he had not been properly advised and did not properly understand the position, and that he will say to those of us who have made the sacrifice of abstaining from any part in the caucuses in another place that it was an unfair insinuation for him, or any other person, or any newspaper, to make. I repeat that the Banking and Commerce Committee in this matter and in every other, for the last seven years, have been, as they were for years before, above suspicion. They have not played politics; their Chairman has not played politics; and if honourable gentlemen in the heat of the excitement that fills this House and this city to-day, forget themselves to the point of doing an injustice to their colleagues, I for one repudiate their unfair statements and challenge their right to make these insinuations.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I am very glad, honourable gentlemen, to hear that statement, for it was declared to me, and it was stated elsewhere and in the newspapers, that the Conservative Senators had caucused with the Conservative Commons. For my part, since I was made a Minister, I have attended one caucus of the Liberals in Parliament. That was four and a half years ago. Since then not only have I not attended any caucus, but I have asked the whips on the other side not to send notices to the Senators to attend caucuses, because I preferred that we should remain away from the political atmosphere of the Commons.

Right Hon. Sir GEORGE E. FOSTER: My honourable friend has alluded to what took place in the Committee prior to the request that the Board of Grain Commissioners come down to Ottawa and give evidence, but I do not think he has stated all that took place on that special occasion. The question was raised whether we should proceed to an examination of the Bill and a conclusion upon it, or whether any further evidence should be brought. It was suggested that the Grain Commissioners should be brought down, because as to section 1 they were very intimately connected with the controversy, if you call it so, as to how that

Hon. Mr. FOSTER.

originated, and, in the second place, it was material to have their evidence on section 2, a very important section of the Bill. When the proposition was made what my honourable friend has stated really took place. He did not see the necessity for calling the Commissioners, and urged that it was unnecessary to do so. Amongst others, I took the view that the second section of the Bill was equally important with the first section, though of course along different lines, and I hold that opinion still. I said that, whilst I would not care particularly whether or not the Commission came to give evidence on the first section, I did think it was very important that they should be present for the second section. That is why I pressed for the Grain Commissioners' attendance, and I think it was perfectly legitimate to do that. I am glad to see that my honourable friend admits that it was important to have the Commissioners present to give evidence on the second section of the Bill.

Now, as regards the little political or party flurry that we have had here this morning, it does not often take place in the Senate. Maybe we are slightly solemn and overdrawn at times, and a little exciting flurry of this kind stirs the waters and perhaps contributes to their ultimate purity. I am not finding any fault with that; but I am going to protest against what may be an impression that party politics is a game played in the Banking and Commerce Committee of the Senate. I distinctly say that from my becoming a member of the Senate and of several of its Committees, I have been rather surprised at the very commendable absence of party spirit amongst honourable members when taking up measures that come from the Commons. The experience has been, I may say, somewhat refreshing as compared with the experience in like Committees of the Commons, where, I think it is agreed, party politics do sometimes enter into the consideration of their measures. I am anxious that the Senate should keep its reputation in respect to the manner in which it deals with business that comes before it.

As to attendance at party caucuses or meetings of that sort, it is not necessary for me to make a confession, but I have not attended a caucus of Conservatives of the House of Commons during this whole Session. A Senator who is a member of the party has a right to attend if he so desires. Each can exercise his own judgment, however, as to whether or not it is wise to attend.

Where are we at this particular time? The impression was strong in this Committee yesterday, and I think it is equally strong now, that we can get through with this measure