

Hon. Jacques Flynn (Leader of the Opposition): That does not apply.

Hon. Lowell Murray: In answer to the question, I can only tell the minister that a motion was moved, seconded and passed in committee that the Special Joint Committee on Official Languages meet again tomorrow afternoon. Upon that motion being passed, I instructed the clerk of the committee to so notify the members of the committee.

Senator Olson: Is it not a fact that you did not comply with any of the rules with which every other committee has to comply?

Hon. G. I. Smith: What are you talking about? You were not there.

Senator Olson: I am asking if he did it; that is all.

Senator Flynn: If you want to attend, go.

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Did you have a long, tough debate in committee?

Senator Olson: The rules apply to everyone except Senator Murray.

Senator Murray: On the point that has just been raised by the Minister of State for Economic Development, and on a number of spurious points made by the Leader of the Government in the Senate, I should point out that the Standing Joint Committee on Regulations and other Statutory Instruments met within the last few days while the bell was ringing summoning the members of the other place to their places.

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Government): We are talking about while the Senate is sitting.

Senator Olson: Have you asked for permission to sit while the Senate is sitting?

Hon. Joseph-Philippe Guay: Honourable senators, I would point out that ever since I have been a member of the Special Joint Committee on Official Languages, now over a year, a procedure has been followed whereby members are informed of committee meetings ahead of time.

My question, to the Leader of the Government in the Senate or, alternatively, to Senator Murray, is: Is it not appropriate that permission should be sought from the Senate for that committee to sit while the Senate is sitting tomorrow afternoon? Our usual procedure has been to ask for permission for a committee to sit while the Senate is sitting. We may be instigating a new procedure if Senator Murray calls a meeting of the Special Joint Committee on Official Languages for tomorrow, Wednesday, since that committee does not usually sit on that day of the week.

Hon. Peter A. Stollery: What about the steering committee?

Senator Guay: As a rule, it deals with such matters prior to a committee meeting. I am sure that Senator Murray is aware of that, because he sits on the steering committee.

● (2030)

So, my second question is: Has the steering committee also agreed to this?

[Senator Olson.]

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, a number of questions arise because of the—

Senator Frith: Deal with the one he asked.

Senator Murray: —events of today.

As the honourable senator has just pointed out, the steering committee decided on a schedule of meetings some time ago, and that schedule was adopted by the full committee when the full committee adopted, I think, the ninth report of the steering committee. Included in that schedule was a meeting for today, Tuesday, March 9, 1982. That was a decision of the steering committee and it was adopted by the full committee.

Of course, the first question I had to face, as a member of the Senate and as joint chairman of that committee, was whether—in view of the decision taken by the steering committee and the full committee to hold the meeting today, Tuesday, March 9—it was in order for one of the joint chairmen—that is to say, Mr. Corbin of the House of Commons—to cancel the meeting unilaterally.

Senator Flynn: He could have attended.

Senator Murray: To his assertion that he was authorized to do so, honourable senators, I, as a representative of the Senate and as joint chairman, took the position that he was not, and that I was going to show up at the committee meeting. When I attended the committee meeting there was a quorum, a quorum representing both houses. That being the case, I saw no choice but to call the meeting to order. Four members, according to our—

Senator Olson: Without the other joint chairman?

Senator Smith: That often happens.

Senator Perrault: Without the other joint chairman?

Senator Frith: You were going to go ahead without his being present?

Senator Murray: There was a quorum present representing both houses, so I called the meeting to order. I noted the absence of the witnesses who had been invited, and—

Senator Perrault: A kangaroo committee!

An Hon. Senator: We've got a kangaroo government.

Senator Murray: —in due course, a motion was moved, seconded and passed by a quorum—that is to say, by the full committee—calling a meeting for tomorrow afternoon. That decision was taken by a quorum, the full committee. As joint chairman, I had no choice but to put the motion. It carried unanimously.

Senator Perrault: That was a tough decision.

Senator Guay: I have a supplementary question.

Hon. R. James Balfour: Are you already in opposition?

Senator Guay: My supplementary question is this: Ever since I have been in Ottawa, in the other place and in the Senate, it has been the common practice of all committees that I have sat on to wait for all parties to be represented, or at