

**The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*:** Honourable senator, I have been very patient, but your time is up. I am being told that you should conclude your remarks.

[*English*]

**Hon. H. A. Olson:** Honourable senators, I will not withhold consent, but I do want to point out that if we have rules like the 15-minute rule, we should apply them uniformly to all senators.

• (1720)

However, it has not been applied that fashion. In several cases honourable senators opposite have prevented me from speaking longer than 15 minutes. Let us not be confused. Justice for some senators should be the same as for all senators. I will not refuse leave now, but there will be times. You will find out how stupid this rule is.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Eymard G. Corbin:** On the same point of order, honourable senators, while subscribing to Senator Olson's comments, I want to say that I think also it is appalling to break a rule considering the circumstances in which these rules were imposed on the Senate without the participation of the official opposition.

Whatever argument the other side can serve, these are your rules, you asked for it. You wanted to curb the opposition. You wanted to limit our democratic right of speech. It is a sad situation, and the more so because when we get into a major debate like this one, a fundamentally important one, we will use a double standard. Leaves will be granted and we will not dare object because we would be regarded as mean-spirited if we did, seeing of the importance of the debate.

Since last Fall, the Committee on Standing Rules was supposed to meet, but it did not for good reasons. Although the chairperson was ill, the Committee should have met and set about to amend these rules that are seriously harming the operation of this institution. We feel hurt in our right to speak and in turn you are too, you could be hurt too without the generosity and open-mindedness of senators sitting on this side of the House, and for this reason I will not oppose an extension of time for Senator Beaudoin.

[*English*]

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen:** Honourable senators, while I share the point of view expressed by my colleagues, I think it would be unfortunate if we did not permit Senator Beaudoin to complete his statement. I would suggest that, in light of the importance of the debate on the Canadian Constitution and the report, we ought to agree now that whatever rule exists with respect to time limits should be waived to those senators who are speaking on this particular item. That would apply to Senator Beaudoin and to any other senators.

**Hon. John Lynch-Staunton (Deputy Leader of the Government):** I think I am partly at fault here. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition and I agreed that both the co-chairmen of the joint committee and Senator MacEachen, assuming that he would start off for the other side, would have pretty well

unlimited time. I guess I assumed that word would have been passed on on both sides. I know now that I should have made an announcement about this matter before, and we would have avoided this unfortunate discussion.

**Senator Stewart:** What about the rest of us?

**Senator Olson:** What about the rest of us? Are we to be second class senators? We have just as much right as any other senator, with the exception of the Leaders on each side. That is all.

**Senator Lynch-Staunton:** I am talking about an agreement between the deputy leader and myself.

**Senator Olson:** I don't know what your agreement is. I don't want to hear it.

**Senator Lynch-Staunton:** If we cannot agree on an agreement then we cannot agree on anything.

**Senator Olson:** We will not be second class citizens; that is my point.

**Senator Lynch-Staunton:** You did not let me finish my statement.

**Senator Olson:** I heard your statement and I know what it is.

**Hon. Duff Roblin:** I think Senator MacEachen has offered a constructive suggestion which we ought to seriously consider. I thank him for it and I feel pretty sure it will meet with the approval of all members of this house without exception.

While I am on my feet I want to express a personal opinion on one item of the rules. On the whole I like the rules. They are just fine. However, I do think we ought to revisit the question of time limits with respect to 15 minutes on senators' speeches. It seems to me that it is more draconian than we need to accept. Indeed, it is in the best interests of this chamber that we not do so. A time limit more in the neighbourhood of 30 minutes would deal with any question of efficiency that we might be concerned with and, at the same time, allow a little more elbow room for those who have something to say and want to say it.

While I am not a member of the committee that will deal with this matter, I cherish the hope that they will take this particular topic under consideration. As far as I am concerned, I would not be opposed if we changed this 15-minute rule to something a little more convenient for the purposes and operations of the Senate.

**The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*:** Honourable senators, before asking for consent for the honourable senator to continue, I must tell you that I was not aware that there was an agreement made between the leaders, but as a rule I have been lenient to a certain extent—

**Senator Lynch-Staunton:** Let us not belabour it. I apologized for not having informed the chamber. Let's get on with the more important subject.

**Senator Olson:** Let us be fair to senators all over this chamber and not start to set up special classes of senators. As