

nors—statements to the effect that he might not bring the Meech Lake Accord to a vote in the House of Assembly. When I asked the Premier about those comments, as I did on several occasions, he assured me that the vote would be held on Thursday night or Friday morning. He told me that the only circumstance under which it would not come to a vote would be if the Prime Minister and the Premier of Manitoba pronounced the process dead. I told him that that would not happen. However, on Friday morning he called me specifically for the purpose of telling me that he was considering going back on his earlier undertaking to hold the vote; that he was considering not having the vote. That was the purpose of his call on Friday morning.

Senator Olson: After you heard that, you got in touch with the three leaders in Manitoba and told them something else; that is the problem. That is when they decided they would not accommodate you any more.

Senator Flynn: You don't have the right to make that assertion!

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, my friend has the chronology completely wrong. I spoke with the three leaders in Manitoba on Thursday night, having received the assurance many times from Premier Wells that the vote would be held on Thursday night or Friday morning. I discussed the vote with Premier Wells on Thursday, after Prime Minister Mulroney's speech. The Prime Minister and Premier Wells discussed the vote during dinner that night. The Prime Minister and I returned to Ottawa Thursday night, believing that a vote would be held on Friday. However, before we returned to Ottawa I spoke by telephone with the three Manitoba leaders, and, as my honourable friend has said, I told them that Premier Wells intended to vote on the matter on Friday. If I told them that, it was because I believed it; and if I believed it, it was because Premier Wells had told me.

FAILURE OF MEECH LAKE ACCORD—GOVERNMENT
STRATEGY—STATEMENT OF PRIME MINISTER—GOVERNMENT
POSITION

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault: Honourable senators, a larger question emerges as to the strategy of the government in this whole process. Certainly, one of the most appalling statements ever made by a Prime Minister was the statement the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney made to the *Globe and Mail*, to the effect that the Meech negotiations were left to the last moment in order to exert maximum pressure on the participating parties to sign the agreement. These are the kinds of statements that prime ministers leave for their biographies.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Jacques Flynn: Honourable senators, I rise on a point of order.

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault: Would you please sit down, Senator Flynn! You are a destructive influence in this place, and you are becoming increasingly so!

[Senator Murray.]

Senator Flynn: It is because you are so boring that I rise on a point of order!

Senator Perrault: Sit down!

Senator Flynn: I will not sit down! I rise on a point of order.

Senator Perrault: What's your point of order?

Senator Flynn: Sit down and I'll tell you.

Senator Perrault: I'll sit down and listen, but it won't be profound, I can assure everyone.

Senator Flynn: I don't have to be profound when talking to you, because you would not understand!

A preamble to a question, or, in the honourable senator's case, a speech, which is very often like the preambles of Senator Olson's questions, is entirely against the rules. The members opposite would not let us debate the whole question, but now they want to use the Question Period to make speeches. I ask His Honour to rule on my point, that the honourable senator cannot do what he is doing. I ask that the rules be observed. If members opposite do not want us to debate the matter, we will not let them—

Senator Perrault: That is a ridiculous observation!

Senator Flynn: It is not a ridiculous observation, it is the truth!

Senator Perrault: Honourable senators—

Senator Flynn: One moment; I am not through. I am asking the Chair to rule. If you have something to say against the rule, then say it!

Senator Perrault: It is a facetious question—

Senator Muir: Down, boy, down!

Senator Perrault:—and it has nothing to do with the matter whatsoever.

Senator Flynn: It is not a facetious question.

Senator Perrault: One would think that after all the years you have spent in this assembly—

Senator Flynn: Your Honour, I ask you to rule. I will not resume my seat!

Senator Perrault: You are frightened of the facts about the disgraceful tactics of your Prime Minister!

Senator Flynn: Who is frightened? You took an hour—

Senator Perrault: Your leader has not acted as a leader of the nation but, rather, as a minor labour negotiator!

Senator Flynn: You took an hour to decide whether you would let us speak or not.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I have been asked to make a ruling. Rule 20B reads:

A preamble to a question, whether it is asked orally or in writing, is out of order.