

Senator Graham: If I could have the kind of wisdom that other honourable senators in this place have, or if I could get inside the minds of those members in the other place who are holding up unanimous consent to proceed, I could give the honourable senator a definitive answer. Unfortunately, I cannot do that. I cannot predict what may unfold.

Honourable senators, my suggestion is that we adjourn to the call of the bell at approximately 5:30 in the hope that we will have more intelligence at that time. It may be that an agreement will have been reached by that time. I hope that by that time we will know whether or not an agreement has been reached that would require us to sit later this evening.

Senator Berntson: Honourable senators, I presume that in the event no agreement is reached today and there is no call by the bell, we would come back at two o'clock tomorrow?

Senator Graham: The rules dictate that if there is a call by the Chair, we must come back at approximately 5:30 and put the formal adjournment motion for two o'clock tomorrow afternoon.

The Hon. the Speaker: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

The Senate adjourned at pleasure.

• (1730)

At 5:30 p.m. the sitting of the Senate was resumed.

The Hon. the Speaker: The sitting of the Senate is resumed.

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Hon. B. Alasdair Graham (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, regrettably, I have to report that no agreement has yet been reached in the House of Commons with respect to Bill C-77. However, we are still hopeful that such an agreement might be possible. I must admit that the chances are somewhat remote, but they still exist.

It is my understanding that by 6:30 or 7:00 we should have a definite answer as to whether there is any chance of receiving the legislation this evening. I certainly regret the uncertainty, but I am sure that all honourable senators would agree with the importance of the legislation, and if there is any chance of receiving it this evening, that we should be here to receive it.

I therefore move that we adjourn at pleasure, to resume at the call of the bell at approximately seven o'clock.

Hon. Eric Arthur Berntson (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, naturally we will accede to the suggestion that we revisit this matter at seven o'clock. I wish to say, though, that it is a heck of a way to run a railroad.

I do not think anyone enjoys dealing with this kind of legislation, nor can the country afford the continued impact of this stoppage. Depending upon who you listen to, the impact is already anywhere from \$3 billion to \$5 billion. That is a great

deal of money. We will accommodate the speedy passage of this particular piece of legislation in any way we can.

It is understood, of course, that when the bill comes to this house, we will have some witnesses to bring before the committee. Again, we wish to accommodate them as best we can, so we would appreciate the earliest possible notice. I wished to have that comment on the record.

We do not know how quickly this bill will come from the other side, or whether or not a deal will come together. However, because of the very serious impact this work stoppage has had on the Canadian economy, we are quite prepared to sit on Thursday, Thursday night, Friday, Friday night or even on Saturday.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Graham: I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for his encouraging remarks. They are certainly in the national interest. We will do our very best to be more definitive at approximately seven o'clock.

I also acknowledge that the Deputy Leader gave us on this side advance notice that the opposition would want to call witnesses, and of course we will accommodate the witnesses as best we can.

Again, honourable senators, I move that we adjourn at pleasure, to resume at the call of the bell at approximately seven o'clock.

The Senate adjourned at pleasure.

• (1920)

At 7:20 p.m., the sitting of the Senate was resumed.

The Hon. the Speaker: The sitting of the Senate is resumed.

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Hon. B. Alasdair Graham (Deputy Leader of the Senate): Honourable senators, unfortunately there has been no agreement in the House of Commons with respect to Bill C-77. I thank all honourable senators for their courtesy and patience.

I regret the uncertainty surrounding our activities in this place. You know that the other place is beyond our control. We will revisit the situation tomorrow. We have had discussions with the leadership opposite and, consequently, I move that the Senate do now adjourn.

Hon. John Lynch-Staunton (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, before doing so, and without committing the government side, I understand that tomorrow is Opposition Day in the House. It may be that the bill cannot be brought back to the House before Friday, which would mean that the bill would not come to us until Monday. Am I correct in that, unless there is unanimous consent to change the rules?

Senator Graham: The Leader of the Opposition is absolutely correct in his statement.

As you know, I am not yet an expert on procedure. I should tell honourable senators that when I was asked how I was getting along in my new post as deputy leader, I responded by saying that I was reminded of the story of the world champion ski