

Senator MacEachen: I do not personally envisage a parade either. There may be a number of witnesses. For that reason it occurred to me that the task of discussing the question of witnesses could be delegated to a steering committee. Consequently, I was suggesting that the whips be empowered to select the members from each side under the chairmanship of the chairman of the committee.

Senator Doody: Agreed.

The Chairman: Is there any further discussion? Is that a motion you are making, Senator MacEachen?

Senator MacEachen: I would make it a motion.

The Chairman: It is moved by Senator MacEachen that a steering committee be established, being five and three, and that the whips be empowered to select the members. Is there any further discussion? There being no further discussion, are you ready for the question?

Some Hon. Senators: Question!

The Chairman: Will those honourable senators in favour of the motion please say "yea"?

Some Hon. Senators: Yea.

The Chairman: Will those honourable senators who are against the motion please say "nay"?

Some Hon. Senators: Nay.

The Chairman: In my opinion, the "nays" have it. Would you like to have a standing vote?

Senator Bosa: Why don't you call the vote again?

The Chairman: I am not empowered to call it again unless that is the wish of the committee.

Senator Barootes: Mr. Chairman, I have a suggestion to make. Why don't we entertain the minister, receive his thoughts and then make the decision that the honourable senator wishes following that? If we have satisfaction from this level, we may not need a vote. If we do not have satisfaction, perhaps, then, that would be the appropriate time to say we will form a steering committee or subcommittee.

Senator Doody: Honourable senators, that is what I had in mind. We may be heading into a procedural wrangle or a vote that may not be necessary. I am not suggesting it will not be necessary. It may well be that we will have other meetings and other witnesses in this forum or another forum, but perhaps we could forestall the vote, or the confrontation or whatever, until after we hear the minister. Then we could decide what course of action the committee should take.

Senator MacEachen: Mr. Chairman, that is agreeable to me. I understood that the deputy leader had agreed previously to the notion of a steering committee. It was a surprise to me that a number of "nays" were uttered from the other side.

Senator Doody: I had, honourable senators, and then I heard that the numbers were back to five and three and the steering committee was to be the same sort of committee that would be preordained and preorganized. As I say, it may not

be necessary to take a vote on the numbers and on the times and so on, but if it is the wish of the committee to do that, then that is what we will do. However, we would be better served by asking the minister to come before us now and then deal with the procedural aspects later.

Senator MacEachen: It is the government that wishes this bill. Therefore, it might begin to show some cooperation in accommodating the committee rather than taking this attitude.

Senator Doody: I do not think the government is taking an attitude. The government is trying to accommodate the committee. We have tried to accede to the requests of the Senate in asking the minister to attend before us at the earliest possible opportunity. That he has done. He is now waiting outside the chamber. He wants to answer any questions that senators may have. Whatever the Senate wishes to do, obviously history and tradition point in the direction the Senate should take.

The government is not trying to be uncooperative. I thought we were trying to be most accommodating. I cannot quite understand what the problem is. If it will facilitate the movement of this bill through the Senate, then it will be three and five or eight and three or whatever. I just do not think it is necessary to get into that phase of it right now.

The Chairman: Is it your wish, honourable senators, to defer the matter for now and return to it later?

Some Hon. Senators: Agreed.

● (1810)

Pursuant to rule 18 of the Rules of the Senate, the Honourable Perrin Beatty, P.C., Minister of National Defence, Mr. W. Snarr, Executive Director, Emergency Preparedness Canada and Mr. H.J.L. Molot, General Counsel, Advisory and Administrative Law Section, Department of Justice were escorted to seats in the chamber.

Senator Doody: Honourable senators, I would like to welcome the Minister of National Defence to our chamber this evening, the Honourable Perrin Beatty, and his officials, Mr. Snarr and Mr. Molot.

In the event that honourable senators wish to ask questions directly of the officials, it will be necessary to have leave of the Senate to do so. If so, then I request that leave at this point. Certainly the minister is prepared to answer any or all questions honourable senators might have.

The Chairman: Thank you very much, Senator Doody.

Mr. Beatty, I want to add my words of welcome on behalf of the committee. I believe it is your first visit to the Senate. Following our normal procedure, we will hear your opening statement, if you have one, and then proceed to questions, if that is agreeable.

Hon. Perrin Beatty, Minister of National Defence: I thank you very much.

The Chairman: You have the floor.