

consent of both governments is required before this kind of correspondence can be tabled in Parliament. I would be glad to put the question to the Prime Minister's Office.

[English]

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

FIXED LINK—STATUS OF PROJECT

Hon. M. Lorne Bonnell: Honourable senators, with respect to the province of Prince Edward Island and Charlottetown, where the latest accord was reached, the whole question of the fixed link is very important.

I understand that the Department of Public Works Canada is now removing the tourism information bureau, the handicraft shops and other little boutiques on the Wood Island Shore near the Caribou-Wood Islands ferry terminal.

Is the removal of these shops and stores and restaurants and tourist bureaus the first stage of the fixed link, which will see the removal of the ferry between Wood Island and Caribou? Could the Leader of the Government in the Senate please give me an update as to what is taking place at Wood Island and why these buildings are being removed?

● (1440)

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I am not at all aware of the activity to which the honourable senator refers at Wood Island. However, I state that there is no intention on the part of the government to terminate that ferry service.

Senator Bonnell: Honourable senators, when the minister has more time, will he dig out the details so that he can provide us tomorrow with an answer concerning what is happening at Wood Island?

Senator Murray: As I understand it, the honourable senator is speaking about changes that are being made affecting some of the concessionaires at the terminal. I will make inquiries of the responsible minister and bring in a detailed report for my honourable friend.

THE CONSTITUTION

REQUEST FOR TBLING OF CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER AND PREMIER OF QUEBEC— GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. John B. Stewart: Honourable senators, I wish to go back to the question raised by Senator De Bané. He referred to a newspaper story concerning letters which are alleged to have been exchanged between the Prime Minister of Canada and the Premier of Quebec.

Are we to understand from the minister's response that there was such an exchange of letters, that the exchange of letters dealt with proposed amendments to the Constitution of Canada, and that there is a possibility that the two governments would decline to make those letters available to this house and to the Canadian public?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government in the Senate): Honourable senators, I really do not know the answer to that question. As I came into the chamber, I had an opportunity to see a copy of *La Presse* on the desk of my colleague Senator Simard. I read the headline and the first two paragraphs of the article.

What the article said was that *La Presse* had obtained copies of an exchange of correspondence between Prime Minister Mulroney and Premier Bourassa. I would have to make inquiries as to whether there has been such an exchange of correspondence, after which I might then be in a position to answer the rest of the question as to whether the two governments think it appropriate to table that exchange of correspondence at this time.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THE CONSTITUTION

REFERENDUM QUESTION—CONCURRENCE IN MESSAGE FROM COMMONS

On the Order:

Resuming the debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Murray, P.C., seconded by the Honourable Senator Lynch-Staunton:

That, pursuant to the *Act to provide for referendums on the Constitution of Canada*, the Senate concurs with the House of Commons in approving the following text of a referendum question:

"Do you agree that the Constitution of Canada should be renewed on the basis of the agreement reached on August 28, 1992?

yes

no"

and,

That a Message be sent to the House of Commons to acquaint that House accordingly.

Hon. Douglas D. Everett: Honourable senators, I rise to take part in this debate with a certain amount of sadness. I had thought that in the negotiations on the Constitution, there would be a trade-off between the concept of a distinct society for Quebec to be contained in the Canada clause, and a greater clout at the centre for the Prairie provinces and the Maritimes in the operation of the federal government. That would be achieved, of course, by an elected, effective and equitable Senate. I must say I never agreed with the concept of an equal Senate.

Quebec did achieve its distinct society status and that interpretive clause sets the threshold for the attainment of further powers by the Province of Quebec over the next few years.

Indeed, Mr. Yves Fortier, a former ambassador to the United Nations, appeared before a legislative committee of the National Assembly and made the following statement. He