

Senator Roblin: But were the reports themselves debated when they were presented? That is what I am talking about.

Senator Frith: By way of inquiry the report of the Lamontagne committee was debated, but the report itself was not debated.

Senator Roblin: My memory may be inaccurate, but perhaps Senator van Roggen will research *Hansard* to see what happened to those two reports. After he has conducted that research, if he wants to submit an inquiry that will highlight the points he has in mind, we could then discuss that. That of course, would be the traditional way in which we ventilate issues in the Senate. While I cannot, before knowing what is proposed, offer any encouragement or discouragement as to what my own views or the government's views might be, if there is the usual Senate debate, there will, in all likelihood, be a frank exchange of opinion, and I would not be surprised if there were different views expressed by senators from the same party.

So, that is a good idea and I encourage the Honourable Senator van Roggen to do something about it.

Hon. Jeremiah S. Grafstein: On an historical footnote to the Leader of the Government in the Senate, perhaps I took his statement out of context today, but he seemed to isolate the Liberal senators for their actions taken in the committee. Before allowing the Government of Canada to rewrite history of the events and the catalyst that provoked Mr. Mulroney's calling this action "historic obstruction," did the Leader of the Government in the Senate bring to the cabinet's attention the fact that the report of the committee that was, in effect, the cause of this debate was a unanimous report? It was a report that was unanimously adopted, that is to say, not only by Liberal senators, but by Conservative senators.

Perhaps the Leader of the Government might read the last issue of *Hansard* which we have before us. At page 618 of *Senate Debates* the report of the committee is reproduced and it states, in part:

The Committee recommends that the Senate remain reluctant to approve any request for borrowing authority if such a request is not supported by a budget or by main estimates for the period for which the borrowing authority is being requested.

Perhaps the Leader of the Government in the Senate might advise us whether or not he brought to the attention of the cabinet that Conservative senators joined in that recommendation unanimously.

Senator Roblin: Honourable senators, I can assure my honourable friend that the appropriate authorities in the House of Commons scrutinize carefully the record of what transpires in the Senate.

Senator MacEachen: That is new.

Senator Frith: A new breed, obviously.

Hon. Philippe Deane Gigantès: Honourable senators, the Senate could no doubt benefit from reform, but even as currently constituted, it is considerable protection for the

[Senator Frith.]

provinces against derogation by some House of Commons majority from equitable regional development. Part III of the Constitution Act, 1982 states that the federal Parliament, which includes the House of Commons and the Senate—the provincial legislatures, and Canada's 11 governments, "are committed to furthering economic development to reduce disparity in opportunities." I have left some words out, but that is the gist of it.

There is nothing, however, in Part III to define how much regional disparity should be reduced. Some House of Commons majority might have a view different from that of provincial governments as to what is tolerable disparity. The Senate, in defence of the regions, could block House of Commons legislation, and perhaps should block House of Commons legislation, that affected adversely the principle that regional disparity should be reduced.

I ask the honourable Leader of the Government in the Senate whether he would be kind enough to bring this aspect—the implications of Part III—to the attention of his colleagues in the government and to the attention of the provincial premiers with whom discussions are now being held.

Senator Roblin: I am sure that the import of that particular section was carefully examined by the previous administration which sponsored it, and also by all of the various provinces who are concerned with it. I really think it is a bit impertinent for me, at this moment, to try to rewrite that record.

● (1540)

Hon. Sidney L. Buckwold: Honourable senators, I have a question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. I hope that when a decision is made by the government that they will not completely ignore the recommendations that were presented a few months ago by the Joint Committee of the House of Commons and the Senate on the Reform of the Senate. There is an opportunity for considering now some of the matters that were studied very carefully and recommended by that committee which heard representations from across the country. There are some of us who still feel—I look at my colleague Senator van Roggen who does not feel that way—that there is room for an elected Senate with much stronger representation from western Canada and the Atlantic provinces.

Senator Sinclair: And Ontario.

Senator Buckwold: Not Ontario and not Quebec. I feel, in considering the fit of pique being displayed by the cabinet today, that the recommendations of that committee, and they are still new, should not be completely ignored.

Senator Roblin: I can tell my honourable friend that this report to which he refers hardly ever leaves my hand. I study it carefully and am cognizant of some of the good points that it makes. I hope that he will find some of them reflected in the decisions that may be made in due course.

Senator Haidasz: Give us an opportunity.