

Senator MacEachen: You are the great authority.

Senator Phillips: You could not put those docile dolphins in your caucus in that room; they would be packed in like sardines or tuna if you tried to do that. Your caucus room is room 356-S. The Conservative Party has traditionally used that room for its caucus meetings. We have been holding our caucus meetings in that room for years.

That is well known to the members of the Liberal caucus. It is well known to Senator MacEachen and is well known to Senator Frith.

Senator Frith: We are there on sufferance; you just allow us to use it. That is very gracious of you.

Senator Phillips: Perhaps we should consider the demands Senator MacEachen makes on space. Senator MacEachen has five offices, yet Senator De Bané, Senator Marchand and Senator Corbin are complaining about there being no room in the Senate for Liberal senators.

Senator Frith: So, it is because Senator MacEachen has five rooms that this happened.

Senator Phillips: And in addition to that, every morning Senator MacEachen, Senator Frith and Senator Fairbairn go through what I call a turkey trot and go down to receive their instructions from the Leader of the Opposition in the other place.

Senator McElman: You are pushing your luck. Be careful!

Senator Frith: Let him go on.

Senator Phillips: After that they want the smoking room reserved for an hour to go over their instructions, then they want it reserved again. On at least three occasions during the past two weeks I have gone into the reading room and found at 1.30 in the afternoon that it was occupied by the Liberal Question Period group, and that has been done without consultation with anyone. So, don't tell me you have always used that room.

Senator Frith: Except when someone was polite enough to ask us to use the other room.

Senator Phillips: You were asked yesterday at noon to vacate that room.

I think the honourable senator is reaching and grasping for something to complain about. If he wants to do that, that is fine, that does not disturb me. In fact, I rather enjoy it. The only difficulty is that I visited the dentist at 11.30 this morning to have a tooth prepared for a crown—that is what happens to you when you give up smoking—and my lip does not move as freely as it should, but I think I can still make myself understood.

● (1410)

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Frith: Honourable senators, I understand now what Senator Phillips considers his powers to be. I am very glad I raised the point of privilege, because I do not think those are

his powers as government whip. We will have to pursue this elsewhere.

Senator Flynn: That is what you should have done in the first place.

Senator Frith: That is exactly what I tried to do. You heard the answer that was given, which made it quite clear that any pursuit was going to simply indicate the same thing as we have heard.

The opportunity was given to explain the situation, and the explanation given was that the government whip had the power to do all these things—

Senator Flynn: You could have discussed this in the lobby first.

Senator Frith: —and I do not believe that he does.

Senator Simard: You just will not accept his explanation.

Senator Frith: I do not find his explanation acceptable because it includes the implication that he does have the power to do what he did today. I know that Senator Petten, when he was government whip, never felt he had that power and never did it. He always consulted Senator Macdonald and worked it out on the basis of a request, not on the basis of a requisition.

We now know what Senator Phillips' position is. We know he is supported by his colleagues in that position, and we will have to consider what to do about it.

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): I wonder if I might be allowed to act as peacemaker in this interesting interchange and pour a little oil on the troubled waters.

Senator Perrault: Are you sure it is not gasoline?

Senator Roblin: No, it is oil this time. I will go no further than that.

I think the arrangement that has worked admirably so far in, as my friend opposite admits, the very difficult question of allocation of space around here, has been the exchange of views between the two whips.

I do not know of a single occasion on which my colleague or Senator Petten, as government whip, has had serious difficulty in arriving at a solution as to the use of the space here. That has been the record and a highly satisfactory one.

It is unfortunate that Senator Petten is not here today.

Senator Flynn: Senator Côtteau is here.

Senator Roblin: That is so, but Senator Petten has a way with him: He can charm my honourable friend off the trees without any trouble at all.

Senator Frith: I am sure Senator Côtteau has the same views.

Senator Roblin: I am simply saying that I think, having had this exchange of views, perhaps we should be satisfied to say to the two official whips—with no disrespect to Senator Côtteau—that we expect them to come to an amicable understanding in the future should a similar difficulty arise. I believe that might solve the problem in an appropriate way,