

this chamber before we go to the Committee on National Defence for its own meeting.

I hope that the house will give permission. But since I do not think this is a matter of life or death, I will quite cheerfully abide by the wishes of honourable senators.

Senator Phillips: Honourable senators, I feel I want to follow the wishes of the Honourable Senator Frith.

Hon. C. William Doody (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I would like to say a word regarding the six o'clock meeting time, which is not only unusual but is unique. As I understand it, the time was worked out between the sponsor of the bill and the minister's office. It was a time that appeared to be convenient for these people. In discussing it with my opposite number across the way, we agreed that an afternoon or evening session would be acceptable to the Senate. However, it seems that we have managed to come up with a sitting time that is neither afternoon nor evening. To that extent, I apologize to the Senate. I can only say that the decision was not mine but was arrived at in a most circuitous way; nevertheless, I take the responsibility for it.

I have taken the liberty of asking the Senate staff to provide us with a variety of food, which will be available in the Reading Room prior to six o'clock. In some small way, this may make up for the inconvenience of not having access to the restaurant, which does not open until 6 p.m.

With regard to the meeting of the Special Committee on National Defence, it would be a nice gesture if the committee members could be here when the Minister of National Defence is appearing before us, since obviously his concerns and views should be the concerns and views of the committee. There need not necessarily be a conflict here: The Committee of the Whole sits at 6 o'clock; Senator Hicks is talking about 7 o'clock. It may well be that we will be through by that time. However, I suspect that that is not so. This is a matter of great concern to many senators, and I expect that the minister and his support staff may be expected to stay longer than that. In any event, that is the situation as it now is, and I offer it to the Senate.

● (1450)

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I have a motion. Does Senator Hicks wish to amend his motion to say, "after the Committee of the Whole has sat"—and in the event that it lasts too long, he will cancel it?

Senator Hicks: If we delay the sitting until after the Senate rises, we do not need any special permission. I would like to see the opinion of honourable senators taken on the motion.

The Hon. the Speaker: There is a motion by the Honourable Senator Hicks, seconded by the Honourable Senator Molgat, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 45(1)(a)—

Hon. Orville H. Phillips: Leave is not granted!

The Hon. the Speaker:

That the Special Committee of the Senate on National Defence have power to sit—

Senator Flynn: Leave is not granted!

The Hon. the Speaker: Leave is not granted? Leave was granted earlier.

Senator Hicks: Leave was granted earlier.

Senator Bélisle: No.

The Hon. the Speaker: Yes; leave was granted earlier.

Senator Hicks: Leave was granted earlier. Before I made my statement, I said, "If leave is granted, and if honourable senators wish, I will make an explanatory statement." Leave was granted, and I proceeded to make my explanatory statement.

Senator Phillips: But the Chair did not call for leave. Therefore, I had no opportunity to comment.

Senator Hicks: Well, surely the honourable senator means that he did not take advantage of the opportunity that he had.

Senator Phillips: No; I respect the Chair. It is the Chair's duty to ask for leave and it did not.

The Hon. the Speaker: I will put the motion to the—

Senator Phillips: No, you cannot!

The Hon. the Speaker: It was moved by the Honourable Senator Hicks, seconded by the Honourable Senator Molgat—

Senator Phillips: You cannot do that!

The Hon. the Speaker: —with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 45(1)(a):

That the Special Committee of the Senate on National Defence have power to sit at 7 o'clock in the evening today, even though the Senate may then be sitting, and that rule 76(4) be suspended in relation thereto.

Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Senator MacEachen: Adopt the motion!

Senator Phillips: Has the Chair asked for leave?

The Hon. the Speaker: Well, I did ask for leave after Senator Hicks put the motion, and leave was granted.

Senator Phillips: Leave was not granted!

Senator Doody: Honourable senators, it is a strange situation when an explanation is offered after leave, theoretically, has been granted. If leave has been granted, you do not really need an explanation, do you? If you have leave, then that is all there is to it.

My understanding was that Senator Phillips wanted to hear the reasons for this unusual meeting time and then wished to make up his mind whether or not to grant leave. Having heard the explanation, he has decided that he does not want to grant leave, and that is the end of the matter.

Senator Hicks: With respect, honourable senators, I do not think that is right. Surely, the request for leave has to do with dispensing with notice; that is all. The leave was granted to dispense with notice, and I then made the motion. If honourable senators do not want to grant the motion, then they vote it down; it is as simple as that.