

the study that is now being given to the Free Trade Agreement by our Foreign Affairs Committee, it seems to me that that committee is in an excellent position to give a thorough study to the provisions of this bill. I do not say that it is an unduly complicated bill, and some have argued that the important thing is the principle: Do you want a free trade treaty with the United States or do you not?

Nevertheless, the legislation to implement such an agreement is very far-reaching. If I am not mistaken, the bill would amend 27 existing statutes. It is not for me or for anybody here, I suppose, to comment on a debate that has hardly begun in the House of Commons, but I do observe that it has already taken on quite a partisan character. As we well know, one party in that place is opposed in principle to a free trade arrangement with the United States. Another has undertaken to tear up the agreement if it takes power. Consideration of the matter seems to be threatened by delays occasioned by various parliamentary tactics, procedural disputes and the like. When they will get to the substance of the bill and how they will deal with it, if and when they do, who knows?

Therefore, it seems to me, honourable senators, that the Senate can and should take up the substance of this free trade bill, do it now by way of a pre-study and perform a valuable service to Parliament and to the country.

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, I have listened with interest to Senator Murray's historical overview of the free trade negotiations, the activities of the Senate, comments in the House of Commons and the omission of the comments of the Minister of International Trade with respect to the Senate. I think he has raised an important point that requires, to some extent, a comment from me. I would like to adjourn the debate and return to the matter at an early opportunity.

**Senator Murray:** Well, he didn't say no!

On motion of Senator MacEachen, debate adjourned.

The Senate adjourned during pleasure.

At 6 p.m. the sitting was resumed.

## EMERGENCIES BILL

### CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ADJOURNED

Pursuant to order adopted by the Senate on Thursday, May 26, 1988, the Senate was adjourned during pleasure and put into a Committee of the Whole on Bill C-77, to authorize the taking of special temporary measures to ensure safety and security during national emergencies and to amend other Acts in consequence thereof, the Honourable Senator Molgat in the Chair.

**The Chairman:** Honourable senators, the Senate is now in Committee of the Whole to consider Bill C-77, to authorize the taking of special temporary measures to ensure safety and

[Senator Murray.]

security during national emergencies and to amend other Acts in consequence thereof.

**Senator Doody:** Honourable senators, I ask leave to invite the Honourable Perrin Beatty, Minister of National Defence, and Messrs. Snarr and Molot, his advisors, to participate in the deliberations.

**Senator MacEachen:** Honourable senators, before we ask the minister to come in I should like to make a suggestion regarding a method we have employed in the past which would facilitate the work of the Committee of the Whole on this particular bill.

Would it be agreeable if we asked our whips to establish a steering committee that could do some of the work required to plan for the meetings? For example, do we need other witnesses? If that is agreeable, we could have a smaller committee than we had for the Meech Lake hearings. In this case, five and three might be an appropriate number.

**Senator Phillips:** May I ask the Leader of the Opposition if he envisages the Committee of the Whole continuing for some time, or are we going to have one session only?

**Senator MacEachen:** Honourable senators, I have no way of knowing. It is not my intention to have a long set of hearings. However, I do think it might be worthwhile to have a steering committee consider whether or not we need additional witnesses and to plan the work of the committee. It proved useful in the case of Meech Lake and it might be useful in this case.

**Senator Hicks:** Honourable senators, perhaps I can add something that may be useful in coming to a decision on the suggestion of the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate.

On the assumption that the bill might have been referred to the Special Committee on National Defence, as was Bill C-76, the national office of the Red Cross organization have written to me and submitted a brief. I have not known how to reply to them. I now propose that I shall write and tell them that the bill is being dealt with in Committee of the Whole of the Senate and that I have handed their correspondence over to the chairman of that committee. It may well be that we will have to hear these people, who, I think, are anxious to come before a committee.

**Senator Doody:** Honourable senators, that is a slightly different vision of the activities of this committee than I had believed was the intention of the Senate when I discussed this matter with my counterpart. I thought the minister would be the witness for this committee and that there would not be a parade of witnesses. That may very well still be the case, and perhaps a smaller committee would be necessary to talk to the Red Cross and others. Toward that end, I see nothing wrong with having the whips and chairman meet to discuss the forming of a subcommittee or a steering committee, or any other committee.

At this point I can say that I did not envisage a parade of witnesses through the Committee of the Whole on this particular piece of legislation.