

Senate support the principle of this bill. We would like the questions put by the Leader of the Opposition to receive adequate answers from experts in criminal law from the Department of Justice.

[English]

On motion of Senator Langlois, debate adjourned.

## LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

### COMMITTEE MEETING "IN CAMERA"—QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE

**Senator Croll:** Honourable senators, I rise on a question of privilege with respect to a statement made by Senator Goldenberg.

A meeting of the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs was called for this afternoon. We were delayed by the weather in Toronto this morning, and finally a group of us motored here, arriving at 5 o'clock and too late for the meeting. In any event, I understand the meeting did not take place.

When I had an opportunity to look more closely at the notice I discerned that it indicated the meeting was to be held *in camera*. Whether the committee met or not, the meeting was to be held *in camera*.

I am not only perplexed but astounded to learn that such a meeting would be held *in camera*. I have been present at all the committee meetings, and I know of no resolution authorizing the chairman to do this. This is not a matter that lends itself to consideration and decision behind closed doors. I think he owes us an explanation.

**Senator Flynn:** You are the only one who needs an explanation.

**Senator Croll:** Does everyone else understand it?

**Senator Flynn:** Yes.

**Senator Croll:** As to why the meeting should be behind closed doors?

**Senator Flynn:** Yes.

**Senator Asselin:** We are drafting a report.

**Senator Croll:** It says here, "Consideration of proposals . . ."

**Senator Asselin:** We are drafting a report.

**Senator Goldenberg:** That is exactly what it is, honourable senator. Mine was not my sole responsibility for this

decision. We held a meeting. There was a quorum of the steering committee, and it was unanimously agreed last week that the meetings be held *in camera* because what we are actually doing is arriving at our decision.

Senator Croll knows perhaps better than any other senator that when a committee has finished its public hearings, and sits to consider its conclusions, it sits *in camera* and not in public.

**Senator Asselin:** Hear, hear.

**Senator Croll:** Honourable senators, the very fact that the steering committee decides on something is not in itself final. The matter has to go to the whole committee for decision. If the whole committee endorses it, then that is another matter. Until then, an undertaking of this nature is highly improper.

**Senator Flynn:** Senator Croll could have raised that point of order when the committee met this afternoon, if indeed it had a quorum. He can still do that. However, making a fuss in the Senate about that point is entirely irrelevant.

**Senator Croll:** When a committee meeting is held *in camera*, the committee deliberately meets without a reporter and therefore nothing is reported. I want it reported, and that is why I have raised the matter here. I intend to raise it time and again until it is placed out in the open so everyone can hear and see decisions being made.

If this is the beginning, then I serve notice now that none of this committee's deliberations will be behind closed doors. I serve notice so that you will know that whatever is said and whatever is done will be said and done openly.

**Senator Flynn:** Of course, everyone knows that anyone attending the meetings of this committee on conflict of interest must declare his interest before coming to a conclusion. Even Senator Croll should do that.

**Senator Croll:** I shall be delighted. My interest is to see that justice is done to the Senate.

**Senator Flynn:** It is just a fuss.

**Senator Goldenberg:** If Senator Croll had been at the meeting today he would have seen that there was a reporter present.

**Senator Asselin:** Hear, hear.

**Senator Croll:** Most unusual, because that is the first time. There will be one there tomorrow, and that is okay with me.

**Senator Flynn:** I hope the press is here to hear you.

**Senator Croll:** If they are not, they will hear about it.

**Senator Flynn:** That is your only point?