

Honourable senators will be pleased to hear that I am now reaching a conclusion. I will happily resume my seat in a few moments.

As I listened to the Speech from the Throne, I could hardly identify a single sentence that I had not heard in more or less the same terms in previous speeches; and when the next day I read in our *Debates* the customary phrase, "His Excellency was pleased to retire," I could not resist concluding that those words must never have been truer than on this occasion.

● (2050)

In any event, as we commence this last session with the consolation that it is the last I want to assure honourable senators that we in the opposition will do our very best to review and criticize objectively the legislation that the government sends us. If we are able to pass only the most important bills which died on the Order Paper, we will be accomplishing a lot.

Those bills, along with the ones promised in the Speech from the Throne, would keep Parliament in session for a lengthy period. This prospect may appeal to the Prime Minister, who is so reluctant to call a general election, which normally should have taken place by now, but I repeat that his hesitation and his governing by polls are contributing more than any other factor to the political and economic difficulties we are faced with.

I sincerely believe that only a general election will clear the air, and it is obvious that only a new government will satisfy the electorate.

On motion of Senator Perrault, debate adjourned.

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Senator Perrault: Honourable senators, I have information with respect to the measure we are expecting to receive. I have been advised that the members of the other place have stood clause 5 and are now discussing clause 6. There is a total of 11 clauses in this bill.

I suggest that the Senate do now adjourn during pleasure until the call of the bell at approximately 9.45 p.m.

The Senate adjourned during pleasure.

At 12 midnight the sitting was resumed.

POSTAL SERVICES CONTINUATION BILL

FIRST READING

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-8, to provide for the resumption and continuation of postal services.

Bill read first time.

[Senator Flynn.]

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this bill be read the second time?

Senator McIlraith: I should like to make one or two suggestions to honourable senators for their consideration.

Senator Flynn: Are you moving second reading?

Senator McIlraith: Yes. I was proposing to ask for leave to move second reading now, but in doing so I wanted to—

Senator Flynn: You should deal with the question of leave.

Senator McIlraith: That is what I was proposing to do. I now propose to ask for leave to proceed with second reading, and if the bill should be given second reading tonight I intend to ask for leave to proceed with third reading so that the bill can be given royal assent tonight. The effect of clause 11 is that this measure will come into force at 12.01 Thursday morning. The House of Commons is standing by.

Senator Flynn: Let it stand by.

Senator McIlraith: The Deputy to the Governor General is in the building and available to give royal assent. Therefore, if it commends itself to honourable senators, I would ask leave to proceed with second reading and our intention would be, if agreeable, to proceed through all stages now.

Senator Flynn: Go ahead.

Senator McIlraith: Thank you very much, honourable senators.

Senator Flynn: I understand you are asking if leave is granted. Before leave is granted, I would like some explanation from the sponsor of the bill. He tells us he wants this bill to be passed because the House of Commons is waiting. In my perspective, that is not a very good reason. The second reason is that the Deputy of His Excellency the Governor General is also waiting. I did not call him, I do not know who did, but I do not think that is at all relevant.

The problem is that you are asking us, without any legal consequence, to deal with this bill after 12 o'clock midnight. It is too late now for the bill to come into force on Wednesday, and even if you obtained royal assent at two minutes before midnight, do you think it would be fair to tell the workers who are on a legal strike to go back to work within two minutes?

Is it reasonable for the Senate to discuss this bill at this late hour rather than discuss it tomorrow? I say it is ridiculous to ask us to deal with this bill at this time of night, because the practical consequences will be the same. I am very sorry for the Deputy of His Excellency. I do not see why we should be asked to grant leave.

I would like the Leader of the Government to tell us the advantage of passing this bill at this time instead of in the morning.

Senator Perrault: Honourable senator, it had been anticipated earlier today that it would be possible to obtain royal assent for this proposed measure by midnight tonight. However, members of the other place determined that they wished to discuss this important bill at greater length than had