

with respect to what I view to be the abridgement of rights accorded to Susan Nelles and Phyllis Trayner. My chief concern focuses on the judgment which was rendered this morning by Mr. Justice Grange to the effect that counsel for the police and counsel for the Attorney General of Ontario were entitled to cross-examine Susan Nelles.

It is my view that it is one thing to allow Mr. Lamek, who is a neutral counsel acting on behalf of the Commission, to cross-examine these nurses. It is quite another thing to allow counsel for the police, and counsel for the Attorney General of Ontario, to cross-examine in circumstances where they have a vested interest and where they may very well have an axe to grind. To recall the facts of this particular case—

Mr. Speaker: The Chair has some concern. This is a proceeding in provincial jurisdiction before a semi-judicial body—

Mr. Speyer: There was a decision this morning.

Mr. Speaker: There is a decision rendered by the body?

Mr. Speyer: This is a matter, Sir, of criminal law and the criminal law power.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair will let the Hon. Member continue but must express some concern.

Mr. Speyer: This is a matter which affects the rights of all people and deals with the criminal law power, Mr. Speaker. My sense of concern, as I say, stems for these facts. There was a preliminary inquiry and there was not sufficient evidence at that preliminary inquiry to put Miss Nelles to a trial. There was not sufficient evidence. A law suit was then commenced by Miss Nelles with respect to the propriety of the police action and the action of the Attorney General of Ontario.

It is my view that they are not getting to the issue of the inquiry, which is what happened to the babies, how did they die? What we have is vested interest in the police defending their own conduct, and Miss Nelles does not have the safeguards she should have to protect her own interests.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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SENATE REFORM

LENGTH OF SENATORIAL TENURE

Mr. Bill Yurko (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, one year after I introduced a resolution in this House, the Government established a joint committee of Parliament to consider Senate structural reform. That committee's commendable report now rests neglected. The initial excitement has died down, but the need for action remains. The committee recommended a nine-year non-renewable term, an elected Senate, and more equitable provincial and regional representation in a reformed Senate of 144 members.

Oral Questions

All recommended changes are subject to the new constitutional amending formula requiring the agreement of seven provinces having at least 50 per cent of the Canadian population, with one exception. Constitutional change affecting the tenure of existing, newly appointed, or newly elected Senators, requires only the approval of Parliament. Therefore, this House should act now to adjust senatorial tenure.

● (1415)

Today, Mr. Speaker, I will introduce in this House a Bill to provide for a nine-year maximum non-renewable term for all Senators, both existing and new appointments, so that only one class of Senators will prevail. The Hon. Member for York Scarborough (Mr. Cosgrove), who was joint chairman of that committee, has agreed to second and support that Bill. Such a constitutional change will be a signal to western Canada, in fact to all of Canada, that Parliament is serious about Senate reform. It would be another major step on the road to national unity.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member's time has expired.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

AGRICULTURE

WESTERN GRAIN STABILIZATION ACT

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brian Mulroney (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Members opposite for the warmth of their welcome. I was in their constituencies, saying good-bye for them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: You are paid to be here.

Mr. Mulroney: The Prime Minister is aware of the growing concern of western grain farmers because of the Government's delay in carrying out its commitment to amend the Grain Stabilization Act to permit desperately needed cash payments this spring. Will the Prime Minister prod his lethargic Ministers to bring down the legislation so that hard-pressed grain farmers in western Canada can have the assurance right now of desperately needed cash flow at this time?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I would be in a better position to give that assurance to the Hon. Leader of the Opposition if he were to assure me that his Party would co-operate with the Government House Leader in get-