

that were made to me by responsible political leaders in Manitoba were to the effect that there was a solid majority in that legislature who were prepared to vote, when the time came, in favour of the Meech Lake Accord.

Senator Molgat: My honourable friend may think that, but he does not know how the people of Manitoba think. I can assure you that if the hearings had gone on, they would have shown that the vast majority of the people in Manitoba were opposed to it. In any case, there was absolutely no guarantee that it would pass Manitoba.

I would like to go on to a second question in response to—
[Translation]

QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE

Hon. Paul David: Honourable senators, I am amazed that an emergency debate motion on Meech Lake has been blocked while for an hour we have been hearing opposition members ask questions on a problem that was not supposed to be either urgent or of national interest.

I would really like someone to explain such a peculiar, strange, bizarre situation to me. My question of privilege is very simple: on one hand, we are refused an emergency debate and on the other, only questions about Meech Lake are being asked. I consider that wrong and incredibly stupid. I just wanted to say so.

[English]

Hon. D.G. Steuart: Honourable senators, I would like to make a point on the question of privilege. I would like to ask Senator David or the Leader of the Government this question: Senator David moved a motion that this house do now adjourn to consider an emergency debate. That is simply a device, and the debate takes place on that motion. When the debate is over, that is it. Tell me how you would have had the debate, because if we had voted in favour of your motion the house would have adjourned. I presume we would have had the emergency debate the next day.

Senator Barootes: No. You withdraw the motion.

Hon. Duff Roblin: This is an interesting point of order, but I am astonished that a gentleman who has spent the years in the Saskatchewan legislature that my honourable friend has does not understand the normal course of events when motions to adjourn to discuss a matter of urgent public importance are accepted. When the debate is over and all members have had their say, the mover asks for leave to withdraw the motion. That is nothing new. That is the standard procedure in all legislatures in the British Commonwealth. My friend knows that.

Senator Steuart: Exactly, and that is the point I am making. When the motion was put, Senator David got up to speak, and to do exactly what you said and what we all expected—namely, to have that debate. But the Leader of the Government wanted a vote on the motion, and it was all over. If we on this side of the house had voted in favour of the motion, the house would have adjourned. The debate should have taken place when that motion was put. That is the normal procedure.

Senator Roblin: My friend is talking out of the back of his head, and I regret it because I have great respect for him. He knows perfectly well that if the speaker had allowed the motion, or not as the case may be, then the debate should have taken place.

Senator Steuart: Then!

Senator Roblin: But my friend opposite did not allow us to debate it.

Senator Steuart: That is nonsense! The motion was put.

Senator Roblin: It is not nonsense.

Senator Steuart: Senator David knew better than you people to get up and debate it, but they allowed the question to go and we voted on it.

Senator Roblin: My honourable friend forgets in an extraordinary fashion that his leader got up and said that he would not allow the debate to take place at that particular time. That is why we had a vote, as my friend knows.

Senator Steuart: Honourable senators, it does not matter what our honourable leader did or did not say. As soon as Senator David moved the motion, it was debatable. You asked for a vote and we had a vote. Senator David got up to speak. He is the only one over there who was awake. The rest of you were sound asleep. You missed your chance.

Some Hon. Senators: Oh, oh!

Senator Steuart: You should have debated it. I agree with you, that we used to put these motions every third day in Saskatchewan. We would have the debate, and then the mover would get up and withdraw the motion. You missed your chance, and you know it. You do not even know what you are doing over there!

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Roblin: I would be very surprised if in the legislature of Saskatchewan, when a motion of this kind was introduced, the Leader of the Opposition, who did not want to debate it, would ask for and receive time to go and caucus the thing. What for? In this case it was in order to decide whether or not the Senate would proceed with it. You came back and told us that you were not going to allow us to debate it. Now my friend brings up this cockamamie argument that my friend missed his opportunity. What nonsense!

Senator Steuart: Will you please tell me how we could have stopped Senator David from getting up and debating the motion? He got up, he could have debated it, and we could have done nothing about it. We could have answered him and had the debate. Don't tell me we have had this motion to try to put together a smarmy little deal. You missed the boat, and if you don't know it then you are even more stupid than I thought you were!

Senator Roblin: The trouble with my honourable friend is that he cannot count! He does not know where the majority lies in this house. It certainly does not lie over here. When ladies and gentlemen on the other side of the chamber say that