

THE SENATE

Thursday, March 14, 1985

The Senate met at 2 p.m., the Honourable Martial Asselin, Speaker *pro tempore*, in the Chair.

Prayers.

THE SENATE

COMMITTEES—REPRESENTATIONS BY PROVINCES—NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. John M. Godfrey: Honourable senators, I give notice that on Tuesday next, March 19, 1985, I will move:

That whenever a bill or the subject-matter of a bill is being considered by a committee of the Senate in which a province or provinces have a special interest, then as a general policy, the government of such province or provinces where practicable, shall be asked by the committee as to whether or not they wish to make written and/or verbal representations to the committee, and any province that replies in the affirmative shall be given a reasonable opportunity to do so.

This motion is no doubt very familiar to honourable senators. I think it was exactly two years and nine months ago that I originally gave notice of such a motion. I have been considerably emboldened by the fact that two other motions of mine were recently passed after two years and ten months. I hope that, with another month to go, I shall get this motion passed within the same time.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. C. William Doody (Deputy Leader of the Government), with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 45(1)(g) moved:

That when the Senate adjourns today, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday next, March 19, 1985, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

Motion agreed to.

QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

REFORM OF THE SENATE

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I should like to ask the Leader of the

Government in the Senate whether he has any information on the constitutional amendment which Mr. Crosbie, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, is reported to have stated would be available for consideration possibly by the end of the month.

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I can give some more information by telling honourable senators, as they probably already know, that my colleague, the Minister of Justice, is the member of the cabinet who is conducting discussions at the present time with his provincial colleagues on this question of changes in the structure of the Senate. He has asked me to report to the chamber on a couple of developments that I think will be of interest to us.

First of all, on the question of substance, I can say that the principal item that is being reviewed at the present time is the question of time allocation in the Senate. As to the exact form the time allocation will take and to what bills it ought to apply, these are matters that are still being reviewed by the committee looking into this. I am not at the moment able to say what agreement has been reached on those points.

I can also give honourable senators some information with regard to the question of timing. While it is always dangerous to be too positive when one is dealing with matters of federal-provincial relations, particularly with respect to the Constitution, the minister is of the opinion—and I share his opinion—that there seems to be general agreement on the principle of time allocation with respect to the Senate. Based on that assumption and the progress that has been made to date, it seems probable that I will be able to make a further report, I hope next week, but I must place a caveat on that because I may be unable to deliver. So, I hope that I will be able to provide more information to the Senate as to the details in respect of this matter next week.

Senator MacEachen: I thank the Leader of the Government for that information. I have looked at the statement the Leader of the Government made on the subject a day or two ago in which he stated that there will be consultations on the timetable and on how this matter will be dealt with by Parliament. Am I correct in saying that there will be no consultation on the substance of the resolution with members of the Senate before the resolution is put down, and that the sole consultation will be with respect to how it is dealt with in Parliament?

Senator Roblin: All I can say is that until the negotiations and discussions are completed and we know the substance of the matter, I have to reserve my position with respect to the question my honourable friend has asked.