

the federal representatives. I am not there. I do not know and, even if I did, I would not tell him. However, if my honourable friend is asking me whether this particular point has been lost sight of, my reply would be no.

Hon. Paul Lucier: Honourable senators, I have a question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. I think the Leader said that he was speaking for the government in presenting the statement he just read. Would that statement be available to us today, rather than waiting for the *Debates of the Senate* to come out tomorrow?

Senator Roblin: As soon as the Senate rises, I would have no objection to running off copies of the statement for senators who might like to look at it. If my honourable friend will be so kind as to check with my office when he is ready to read it, I hope it will be ready for him.

ENERGY

NEW PRICING AGREEMENT—PROGRESS OF NEGOTIATIONS

Hon. H. A. Olson: Honourable senators, I would like to ask the Leader of the Government a question respecting a matter that I have raised a number of times; that is, the progress of the energy pricing agreement between the federal government and the provincial governments. The reason I raise this matter now is that there is growing concern—indeed, it escalated rather significantly last week—that the two levels of government are not finding common ground on which to reach an agreement. Most of the discussion is centred around the federal government's treatment of, for example, the Petroleum and Gas Revenue Tax and other arrangements of taxation between the two levels of government. Will the Leader of the Government advise us as to whether or not there is a level of optimism, so that the industry will know what to expect, and whether or not agreement will be reached by the end of this month, which is the second deadline that has been set?

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): I have to agree with my honourable friend that negotiations have been protracted. It was our hope that they would be concluded by now, but they have not been as there are still unresolved questions. However, it is still our hope and expectation that negotiations will be concluded by the deadline he referred to. If there is any change in that situation I shall let him know.

REFORM OF THE SENATE

Hon. Charles McElman: Honourable senators, I would like to return to the question I raised earlier with the Honourable Senator Roblin. I must say immediately that his reply has increased my concern, rather than alleviated it. He has stated that negotiations are going on with the premiers. I suggest to him, again, that when serious matters affecting the Constitution, particularly proposals for amending the powers of Parliament, were discussed before, the several propositions then under consideration were made known to the Canadian public and it was informed as to what the options might be. Then, a

good many of the premiers of the day publicly gave their reactions to the propositions. As a result, the public felt it was part of the discussions and the negotiations affecting the very basis of their organized society, their Parliament.

It seems that what we have in the present circumstances is a very dangerous departure from that procedure. I have to say, because it is a fact—and, believe me, I am trying not to be partisan—that we have in place—

Senator Flynn: Oh, oh.

Senator McElman: I would ask the honourable senator to take me seriously, if he would, and I will take him seriously as well.

Senator Sinclair: That is hard to believe.

Senator McElman: We have in place a Conservative Government with the largest majority in Canadian history, and it can do what it wishes, except for the Senate.

Senator Robichaud: Come on, now.

Senator Haidasz: No, it can't.

Senator McElman: Except for the Senate. Do you have a problem, my friend? If you do, solve it.

There are seven Conservative premiers. This federal government and those seven premiers meet the requirements of the Constitution, and since all those premiers have majority governments in their legislatures, in effect you have a minimum of eight Canadians deciding what their Parliament and its powers will be. I suggest to the leader, and I ask him to consider it seriously, that in this circumstance it is very important for the people of Canada that the basic negotiations, the subject matter of the proposals being considered and the reactions of those eight main players be understood by them, rather than placing before the Parliament of Canada and the provinces of Canada a resolution, agreed upon in advance in secret, behind the curtain, to be confirmed by Parliament and those seven legislatures—it could be more. I ask the leader in his capacity as a member of the government to consider very seriously raising what is in this circumstance a legitimate concern of the Canadian people.

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): I do not like to argue with my honourable friend on this point because I know where he is coming from and I respect it. However, I have to say to him in all frankness that the way in which he has described the present proceedings is not altogether dissimilar from, nor is it similar to, the process that took place when our own Constitution was agreed to.

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): But that was about the amending formula itself.

Senator Roblin: It is perfectly true that there was a great deal of public discussion, and I want to assure my honourable friend that there will be a great deal of public discussion on this issue before we get through. We are too early in the process to say that the public is not going to be consulted and informed. They most certainly are. But I must say that the Premier of the Province of Quebec must feel very badly that