

What more can I say about this proposition other than referring to what I said earlier, a kind of common sense.

[English]

Senator Frith: It is called *reductio ad absurdum*, and it was meant to be!

[Translation]

Hon. Pietro Rizzutto: Honourable senators, I have a question for the Leader of the Government. The government is proposing to have twelve members of the other place and five senators on the joint committee. Has there been any thought given to how many of the five senators will be chosen from the government side and how many from this side? Will there be a co-chairman from the Senate? If so, would the joint committee agree to have a senator from this side of the House act as co-chairman?

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, I have taken down the questions asked by my honourable friend. I shall try to reply to these questions when we are concluding this debate.

Senator Rizzutto: Honourable senators, I have asked these questions because they are extremely important for many of us here today. I believe that the Senate will be very well represented. If we could have a senator from this side of the house as co-chairman, it could help many senators when the time comes for them to decide whether to vote for or against the proposal. If the Senate agrees, I would like to adjourn the debate until tomorrow afternoon.

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, we shall follow the normal process. The resolution mentions twelve Members of the House of Commons and five senators. There will naturally be a co-chairman from the Senate. As for the distribution of senatorial seats on the committee, this remains to be negotiated between the leaders of the parties.

Senator Rizzutto: Honourable senators, it is very important for some senators on this side to know how senators will be distributed on this committee. If the honourable senators agree, I propose to adjourn the debate until tomorrow so that you may provide us with further information on this matter. I find this very important. I think that we might agree to vote for your resolution if we had the assurance that the concerns and the objectives of the honourable senators can really be defended on the joint committee, without obstructing the work of our own committee which could sit at the same time. We could propose that the joint committee report on September 14. If the Senate finds this report inadequate, we could then continue our examination in a Committee of the Whole. This might be a valid solution. I suggest to the honourable senators that we could agree to have both committees. One could sit during the summer and continue to sit later if we find that the amendments proposed by the joint committee do not meet all the objectives of the honourable senators. It is extremely important for me to know how senators from this side will be represented. First, how many of the five senators chosen to sit on the joint committee will be from this side, and second, would it be possible for the co-chairman to be chosen among the senators from this side?

[Senator Tremblay.]

Honourable senators, I propose that the debate be adjourned until the next sitting of the Senate.

● (1440)

[English]

Hon. John M. Godfrey: Honourable senators, before the debate is adjourned, I would like to say a few words about Senator Frith's argument. Back in 1978, Senator Frith said it was a joint address, and therefore it was proper to have a joint committee. But in spite of that fact, the Senate then had a separate committee as well.

Senator Frith: Honourable senators, that was with reference to the Senate aspects only. Read Senator Connolly's speech at the time.

Senator Godfrey: It was on the question of Senate reform, but, in any event it was a separate committee. As far as I am concerned, there is no precedent. We simply approach it on an individual case basis and decide whether, in certain cases, we want to have a separate committee as well as a joint committee.

[Translation]

Senator Le Moynes: Mr. Speaker, the debate has been adjourned.

Some Hon. Senators: No.

[English]

Senator Godfrey: I am sorry, I did not hear the interjection. In any event, it is not a question of precedent.

Honourable senators, I would like to say one other thing. I notice in the press that they seem to take for granted that the fact that the Senate is having a separate committee is a criticism of Mr. Turner and a criticism of the Meech Lake accord. As far as I am concerned, although I recognize some of the weaknesses of the Meech Lake accord, I support the accord, and I support Mr. Turner. When I was supporting the formation of a separate committee, it never occurred to me that I was in any way criticizing Mr. Turner or his position. I have talked to several other senators, and they say exactly the same.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Charles McElman: Honourable senators, before the adjournment of this debate takes place, I would like to draw to the attention of the Leader of the Government in the Senate that there appears to be at least one flaw in his motion, and perhaps a second.

The flaw that is clear is that with respect to substitutions on the joint committee, he has taken, word for word, the clause from the motion as passed in the House of Commons, which provides only for substitution of members from the House of Commons. There should be an addition to that paragraph, or, alternatively, there should be a second paragraph, which should precede the paragraph with respect to the House of Commons, to correct that shortcoming in the motion.

The other difference in the two motions is in the preceding paragraph of the motion of the House of Commons, and it is