

Senator Roblin: Honourable senators, I have to admit that I understand very well what my honourable friend is saying to me, but I have to tell him that I do not like it.

Senator Olson: I do not happen to care very much whether you like it or not.

Senator Flynn: Are you chairing the Committee on Economic Development?

Senator Olson: Honourable senators, my honourable friends opposite are trying to get me to say something I have already said I am not going to say. I think they might as well stop.

Senator Flynn: We might as well cancel Question Period as far as you are concerned.

Senator Frith: Is that a motion?

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, today we are enduring an incredibly inquisitive assault by the official opposition. The Leader of the Opposition said a moment ago that it pains him that certain information is not available, or makes him unhappy that this information is not available. I might say he demonstrated a very high threshold of pain during the tenure of the Progressive Conservative Government, a government which refused to reveal very much about the make-up of its committees.

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, this is not the first time that the Leader of the Government has made that statement. We let it go by several times the other day. I do think, in fairness and for the record, it should be pointed out that a very quick examination of Senate *Hansard* of the last Parliament will show that, in reply to questions concerning the Cabinet Committee on Economic Development, Senator de Cotret not only elaborated on the terms of reference of that committee, but stated which ministers were members of it.

Senator Perrault: The point I make, honourable senators, is that all of the matters relating to the operation of cabinet committees and the minutiae that are being demanded of this government—

Senator Roblin: Just give us the names.

Senator Perrault:—were never provided at any time by the previous government. There were names bandied about from time to time, but we were never given a list.

Senator Flynn: Did you ever ask?

Senator Perrault: Honourable senators certainly are aware that this is nothing more than an exercise in political gamesmanship. No government provides information of this kind.

Senator Roblin: You are off base.

Hon. William J. Petten moved that the report be now adopted.

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, before the question is put I should like to raise the matter of a co-ordinating body for Senate committees. It will be recalled that some time ago the question of co-ordinating the activities of committees was raised, there being some concern that the meetings of Senate committees required some co-ordination. It will also be recalled that our late colleague Senator Bourget undertook that task for a period of time. It was a new idea and one which, while it had not then matured, more or less worked to the satisfaction of honourable senators, and as well there were expectations that it would grow in effectiveness.

I have discussed with my colleagues opposite the possibility of re-establishing such a co-ordinating role for a committee of senators, and the suggestion is that Senator Lafond serve as the chairman of such a co-ordinating committee, working with the two whips and, subject to their wishes, other honourable senators they wish to add. The basic objective of that committee's work will be the co-ordinating of times of meetings so that there will be no undue duplication, and that honourable senators, as much as possible, will not find themselves required to attend two committee meetings at the same time.

There will be other aspects to this activity, and I respectfully suggest that we at least have recorded the fact that such a co-ordinating group will be working. We can let them define the extent of their jurisdiction and activities within the framework of the objective, namely, the efficient co-ordination of the activities of the committees of the Senate during this session.

Senator Roblin: Honourable senators, I would like to thank Honourable Senator Frith for giving me prior notice of his intention in this matter, and I would like to say that we entirely concur in the proposition. We are delighted to know that Senator Lafond will be the chairman of this committee, which performs a very useful service indeed. The whip of the official opposition, Senator Macdonald, has instructed me to volunteer his good offices in connection with it.

Senator Macdonald: When did I instruct you to do that?

Senator Roblin: When did you not instruct me? I am under orders here. I know that whip when I hear it. In any case, honourable senators, I am sure that this is a move that can be very useful, and I welcome the nomination of Senator Lafond for the task.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Lafond: Honourable senators, I accept this assignment on faith and in the knowledge that I can count on the co-operation of all honourable senators. I believe that there can indeed be more to this task of co-ordination than just setting a timetable and assigning rooms, and I shall do my best to further the maturity of this responsibility. For the immediate future I would like, as soon as the committees have had their organization meetings, to have a meeting with the com-

STANDING COMMITTEES

FIRST REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF SELECTION ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the First Report of the Committee of Selection, which was presented yesterday.

[Senator Olson.]