

the 1949 statute, inoperative. What I stated was that we had no objection to the discussion of an over-all procedure being over-all; but what I said this morning was intended to mean that we were not suggesting that we would be prepared, if nothing else was agreed upon, to ask for the repeal of the 1949 statute. It would disappear in an over-all procedure; but it was not intended to be an undertaking to cause it to disappear if there were to be no over-all procedure.

Mr. Frost: Our suggestion was for an over-all procedure."

And I replied:

"That was my understanding; that it was the desire to discuss the possibility of an over-all procedure which would absorb this particular subsection of section 91."

Now, as a matter of fact, no agreement was arrived at about a procedure which would apply to the whole matter and there was no violation of any promise in relying upon the amendment of 1949, nor will there be any violation of any promise in relying upon it in the future so long as no other procedure extending to the whole matter shall have been accepted by everybody and substituted for this amendment of 1949.

Now, what did I say on June 17? I said that if the Prime Minister had made such a promise as he was said to have made, it seemed to me that he had the right to do what we were doing, but that the provinces should at least have been consulted. But I went further than that, and I said something which possibly has escaped the attention of the Prime Minister or of those who are looking after the matter for him. You will find the report of what I said on page 438 of the Senate *Hansard* for June 17:

But I believe I am right in my point of view, that a promise should not be disregarded, especially when an understanding between the Prime Minister and the provincial premiers is involved, unless the requisite conditions have been fulfilled. If the promise has been implemented, well and good; if not, an official statement should be made that we intend to utilize the power we now possess because we are unable to find a better way.

What better way do we look for? An understanding between the Prime Minister and the premiers of the provinces? Such an understanding has not been reached, and the letter before me from the Prime Minister is evidence of that fact. It is the first official statement we have had to that effect.

In his letter the Prime Minister went further. I read from the translation:

As there are still to be sittings of the Senate before the adjournment, I hope you will think it fair to set the matter right and not allow the impression to persist that I have gone back on any undertaking.

Yours very truly,

Louis S. St. Laurent.

I am now doing as the Prime Minister has requested of me. I recently informed the house that I was not in good health and should not be here; but when the Prime Minister calls I deem it my duty to answer that call and to right the wrong. Beyond

that, he and I have been friends all our lives, and for that reason I am most anxious to make the record clear.

The Prime Minister has not violated any pledge or failed in any promise. Now that we have his statement of the facts, we are free to do this work in the only way it is possible to do it. I hope that the honourable gentleman will accept my answer in the friendly manner in which I give it. I have every respect for him, and I am sure that he will understand the position that I have taken. There is no doubt that he has a right to do as he has done, or that he has acted in his usual responsible way.

As the Prime Minister wrote to me in French, I desire to conclude my remarks with a few words in that language—*A bon entendeur, salut. Honi soit qui mal y pense.*

Hon. Norman P. Lambert: Honourable senators, I have listened with a great deal of interest and attention to what my honourable friend from Ponteix (Hon. Mr. Marcotte) has just said, and I am personally grateful to him for his statement in this connection.

The Hon. the Speaker: I must warn the honourable senator from Ottawa that a question of privilege is not debatable, and that the honourable senator from Ponteix spoke with leave of the Senate.

Hon. Mr. Lambert: If I may appeal to the Senate: The speech that my honourable friend made in this house some two weeks ago was based on a statement that I made a year and a half ago; therefore, as a matter of privilege I think I am entitled to comment on it.

The Hon. the Speaker: I repeat, a question of privilege is not debatable.

Hon. Mr. Lambert: Honourable senators, I should perhaps have said that I was rising on a point of privilege, and have asked for the consent of the house.

The Hon. the Speaker: With leave of the house the honourable senator may speak.

Hon. Mr. Lambert: The honourable senator from Ponteix, in his remarks of a couple of weeks ago on Bill 331, took as the basis for his observations regarding the undertakings or pledges of the Prime Minister at the Dominion-Provincial conference two years ago, an extract from a speech that I made in the debate on Senate reform a year and a half ago. I must say that I was surprised that he should remove my words from their context, on the question of Senate reform, and apply them to his remarks on the subject of redistribution, which is now being discussed in the other chamber and will come to us in the form of a finished bill: