

Senator Doody: Anarchy.

Senator Lynch-Staunton: The least we can ask is a respect for Routine Proceedings, which is a tradition in Parliament. The *Rules of the Senate* must be respected.

[Translation]

Hon. Marcel Prud'homme: Honourable senators, this bill is a never-ending story. We know that the longer we wait, the greater the administrative nightmare will be during the next federal elections. The Chief Electoral Officer has said that waffling between two pieces of legislation was quite unacceptable if we really want to have an election system which is the envy of the whole world.

Your Honour, I do not understand the motion. You will explain it in your ruling, which will undoubtedly be very wise, and I will abide by your ruling.

I do not understand how we can tell a committee what it is supposed to report. Each political party, be it Conservative or Liberal, can give its members on the committee instructions regarding policy. Should the motion be adopted, the committee will report on its conclusions. Even though I do not sit on any committee, I always attend the meetings of some committees, including this one. I would find it absurd to be given prior instructions, to be told what to do at a committee meeting.

In its wisdom, the Senate has delegated its authority to a Senate committee. It is up to the committee to decide what it wants to report to the Senate.

I am trying to understand the logic of a Senate commission at this time. Why should we have a Senate committee if it is told ahead of time what its conclusions should be?

We understand the politics behind this motion. I sympathize with members of Parliament who say they are losing their riding; others claim that this piece of legislation is not the business of the Senate.

I did not get involved last time, but I can tell you that if this bill is again referred to the Senate, I will take part in the debate. I find it ludicrous for members of Parliament to hold such views about the senator who, after all, have a constitutional right.

When I was a member of the House of Commons, I used to defend the Senate, even before I knew I might be appointed here. There have been some very acrimonious debates between the Senate and the House. I submit, honourable senators, that this motion is quite out of order.

The Hon. the Speaker: I find you are speaking to the content of the bill and not to the point of order that was raised.

Senator Prud'homme: With regard to these few considerations, honourable senators, I submit that the question

has been debated during this session. A decision has been made, and a vote has been taken. According to old British traditions, once a matter has been resolved, it cannot be raised over and over again until one catches people at fault because they are not present in the Senate. The question was examined at length and a vote was duly taken on it.

Unfortunately, it is true that, for all sorts of reasons, some senators were not present at the time of the vote.

We can only wait until the next session of Parliament to study another bill.

Meanwhile, I think that we would place the Chair in an awkward position if we were to ask for reconsideration of an issue which has been decided upon.

[English]

• (1440)

Senator Graham: Honourable senators, in a moment I will ask leave to revert to Government Notices of Motion —

Senator Berntson: Do not embarrass yourself!

Senator Phillips: Forget it!

Senator Graham: — so that the notice of motion can be properly given.

Senator Doody: So you concede that it has been improperly given?

Senator Graham: Honourable senators, may I then have leave to revert to Government Notices of Motion?

The Hon. the Speaker: I regret that I cannot entertain the request at this time. There is a point of order before the Senate on that matter, and I must first deal with that point of order.

Are there any other senators who wish to speak to the point of order? If no other senator wishes to speak, I wish to look more closely at the references which have been made to parliamentary authorities and precedents both in the other house and here. I will take the matter under advisement.

Senator Murray: I take it that when Senator Graham intended to ask for leave, he was conceding the first part of Senator Lynch-Staunton's point of order?

The Hon. the Speaker: I did not hear the comments.

Senator Carstairs: Honourable senators, there appears to be some concern that I introduced this matter under the wrong heading. For that, I apologize. That was the information I was given as to the appropriate timing. In order to facilitate the proper reintroduction of the motion by the deputy leader, I will withdraw my motion.