

arguing that because the Senators spend so little time in the actual Chamber the Senate is not worth keeping.

How many hours has the Hon. Member spent in this Chamber this week? Indeed, how many hours has he spent in this Chamber since the House reconvened? Is it fair to argue that if one divides his salary by the number of hours that he has actually sat in this Chamber, he is not worth that amount of money? Will the Hon. Member agree with me that a considerable amount of work done by a Member of Parliament and indeed by a Senator is not done in this Chamber or the Upper Chamber but in committee and in individual offices?

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, I am not quite prepared to go through my index to tell the House what I have done since September 4—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I hope not.

Mr. Murphy: Yes, I recognize that it would probably take more than 20 hours to read through the list. However, today I suspect that I have spoken longer than the Senate has sat. In fact, the Senate did not sit today. I made a statement, I asked a question, I tabled petitions, I made a speech and in a few moments I will be speaking on Private Members' Hour. The point is—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. I am afraid the Hon. Member's time has expired. The time for questions and comments has now expired.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Valcourt (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, the constitutional resolution introduced by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Crosbie) has two objectives: first, through a constitutional amendment, of course, to limit the powers of the Senate so as to prevent it from exercising its absolute right of veto on Bills adopted by the House of Commons; two, to commit the Government to convene a conference of First Ministers before the end of 1987 with a view to examining in depth the various options available with respect to the future of the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, earlier today I listened to the speech of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) in reply to the Minister of Justice and the resolution introduced in the House. I am a rather inexperienced parliamentarian compared to the Leader of the Opposition, but I must say I was surprised—

An Hon. Member: He did not impress you?

Mr. Valcourt: No, he did not impress me, but what did impress me is the fact that he completely failed to speak to the main issue inherent in this resolution. As far as I and, I am sure, many of my colleagues are concerned, that is the crux of the matter. We are talking about a principle whereby the respective powers of the two Houses must be balanced so that the mandate of those who are directly elected not be unduly restricted or that the principles inherent in responsible govern-

ment not be destroyed. Well, Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what can happen with the powers now enjoyed by the Senate. They have an absolute right of veto and with that alone they can frustrate the will of all elected Members of the House of Commons.

Earlier when he explained why he is against this resolution, the Leader of the Opposition had the gall to say that he would not be party to this because Quebec did not subscribe to the constitutional agreement and therefore will not take position either way. I have no idea what logical principle can prompt the Leader of the Opposition to rise in this House today and tell the Government: We are against resolution because Quebec will not have anything to do with it. Yet it is no secret that Quebec was left out of the constitutional agreement by the federal Liberal Party in the first place. That is history now, yet they use that as an argument to say they object because Quebec is not included. Mr. Lévesque's position is clear, for he told our Prime Minister: We are not against restricting the powers of the Senate, in keeping with democratic principles, but we will not even discuss the matter until we become party to the constitutional agreement. That is a fair proposition, Mr. Speaker.

The question of the Canadian Senate has been the subject of numerous propositions and criticisms in recent years, Mr. Speaker, and again a moment ago the Leader of the Opposition said they would seek to amend the resolution and ask that a federal-provincial conference be convened in 1985. Yet he had hardly finished saying that he just did not understand why this resolution was on the Order Paper. Why would the Government want to have a constitutional resolution on the Order Paper at this time? First he blames us for proposing that a conference be held in 1987—a commitment of our Prime Minister—then in the same breath he asks: What is this resolution doing on the Order Paper?

Mr. Speaker, it is all very simple. This draft resolution is before the House because the Senate abused its powers under the Constitution in dealing with Bill C-11. The Senate's attitude to the subject matter of Bill C-11 served as a clear warning. It reminded us of something that is an anachronism, something I am sure does not exist in any democracy, which is that the Parliament of Canada, the elected Members of this House, can adopt a Bill, and if the majority of the Senate does not agree with the legislation passed by the House of Commons, it can say no, on the basis of its absolute veto right.

Mr. Rossi: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Hon. Member for Bourassa, on a point of order.

Mr. Rossi: Mr. Speaker, I would not like to encroach on the Hon. Member's time, but just the same, I would like to check the speech by the Leader of the Opposition, because the Hon. Member has just said that in his speech, the Leader of the