

I am not pessimistic, and I am not particularly optimistic either, but I can see no purpose at all in adjourning today until the 21st. I say this because in my view nobody has given any thought to the fact that the 20th is a holiday, and normally we would be spending the holiday with our families. I am thinking rather of their convenience than for our own. We have little enough time with our families, particularly those of us who come from a long distance. It is all right for those who have to travel only short distances because they can leave home in the morning of May 21 and be here in time for the sitting of the Senate at 8 o'clock in the evening, but that is of no convenience whatever to those of us who have to leave the day before to get here for an 8 o'clock sitting.

If we adjourn today until May 21, the whole thing becomes a nullity if the pessimists are right and this Parliament is dissolved. On the other hand, if that should not happen, it means we shall have to go through the motion of notifying every senator by telegram that he is required here at an earlier date, presumably tomorrow.

Regardless of what happens, and even if there should be dissolution, there will be caucus meetings tomorrow morning at 11 o'clock, and I do not think any member of this chamber or of the other place is planning to leave Ottawa this evening. So, nobody would be disadvantaged if, instead of adjourning until May 21, we merely adjourned until 2 o'clock tomorrow afternoon in the ordinary way. At that time we can meet and adjourn for whatever period seems appropriate, or it might not be necessary for us to be here at all.

Therefore, honourable senators, I suggest that the motion be resubmitted and reconsidered so that it can be amended to provide that we adjourn in the normal way.

Hon. Mr. McElman: Honourable senators, I fully support the proposition of Senator Prowse. I think that we have been quite precipitate in giving notice of adjournment to May 21.

We have in this house some who are excellent in prognostication, and some are suggesting that the events that others think will happen, will, in fact, not happen. In any event, nobody knows what is going to happen. There are those in another place who say they are prepared to carry on, while there are others who say that they are not, and still others who are saying they will defect from their party on this. In any event, it is a "come-all-ye," and nobody knows what is going to happen.

Furthermore, by our rules—and Senator O'Leary will support me on this, I am sure—we are not supposed to take any cognizance of what is done in the other house. Therefore it seems to me to be only logical and proper that when we adjourn today we should adjourn until tomorrow. If certain things do happen, that will have no effect on our adjournment. If certain things do not happen, and if we do adjourn until the 21st, there would be a very real effect on what we should be doing in this chamber.

● (1510)

In my opinion, we should, in the ordinary course of events, lead our own life in this chamber, and adjourn until tomorrow. I support fully Senator Prowse's comments.

Hon. Mr. Buckwold: Honourable senators, this debate may be out of order. I am not sure, but I wish to say that earlier in the session we endeavoured to indicate to members of this chamber that we would meet regularly for as long as necessary. At times when there was no work before the Senate, members would not have to be in attendance. For this reason we changed the routine of the Senate so that on occasions we met on Monday and Friday, as we did last week, in order to compensate for the fact that there would be times, because there was no legislative program, that we would not ask members to return.

There is nothing on the Clerk's Scroll for tomorrow, and no speakers scheduled. In normal circumstances the budget debate in the other place would proceed for some days. It is most unlikely there will be a legislative program brought forward next week. The Senate could be recalled if urgent matters arise, but in normal circumstances it would be quite logical, regardless of this spectre of dissolution, that the Senate not meet next week because of the fact that we have no legislative program before us. This is the idea behind the motion of adjournment that was presented by the acting leader. It was made to meet the demands of senators generally who have said "When we have work to do let us work and let us work hard and long, but when we do not have work to do it is not necessary for us to be here just to go through the motions."

Hon. Mr. Argue: Honourable senators, I do not believe the proposition is quite as simple as Senator Buckwold has indicated. The motion is to adjourn until May 21, but by adjourning until then we wipe out, obviously, tomorrow's sitting. We are here, and the Senate has work to do.

Hon. Mr. Buckwold: What work?

Hon. Mr. Argue: The Senate has scheduled work to do. I have in my hands the *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Senate*, which indicates that tomorrow at 9.30 a.m. the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs is to meet.

Hon. Mr. Buckwold: Perhaps the committees will meet.

Hon. Mr. Argue: I am informed that that committee has no authority to meet.

Hon. Mr. Buckwold: That committee has every authority to meet. That has just been clarified, and I indicated earlier that by resolution of this house that committee, together with the Special Senate Committee on Science Policy, which just received the authority, does have the right to meet while we are adjourned. That is the situation.

Hon. Mr. Argue: Then I stand corrected. I was under the impression that the committee could not meet tomorrow. There may be other committees that would like to meet tomorrow but which are not able to do so. I still object, however, to such a procedure being introduced to this house on this type of motion. Honourable senators can shake their heads—

Hon. Mr. Langlois: Well, it is too late.

Hon. Mr. Argue: That is all right. You have heard three or four speeches by agreement. You might hear another short contribution by agreement.

Hon. Mr. Langlois: I always like to hear you.