

[Translation]

You, my respected friend, you are the Speaker. I think you are the one who should report, and here I call upon the Government Leader in the Senate to report to the Prime Minister of Canada the subject of this debate today.

However, the Right Honourable Prime Minister of Canada, whom I stood up to applaud yesterday in the House of Commons —

[English]

I applauded the speech of the Prime Minister of Canada yesterday, as I stood in the gallery, and in that I was imitating, believe it or not, the new leader of the Reform Party.

• (1450)

He acted differently. When we talk about Canada, there should not be any partisanship. This country is too good to play politics with.

[Translation]

Your Honour, I am seeking your guidance. I would like one of these two alternatives: we either amend this report — I am not demanding it.

[English]

I am afraid I will have no one to second my motion, for the time being.

[Translation]

I looked at the list of members of the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, and I can tell you that I will be there all the time, which might prove embarrassing for those who stay away.

[English]

I repeat in English. I will be present in my favourite committee, the Foreign Affairs Committee, even though I am not a member of that committee. Because I intend to be there, it will be embarrassing for those who may never show up, or who may only show up from time to time.

However, that is not the right way to proceed, sir. I thought I was coming to the Senate to give the rest of my days to the greatest cause of my life — Canada. Is that clear, honourable senators? This country is still the last great hope on earth, on a troubled planet. With all our differences and all our languages, it is still the best land. We cannot play politics with it. We cannot have little shots against each other. Perhaps I was not the subject of that shot. However, I find it strange that I was not informed that my name was not to be submitted to any committee.

[Translation]

Hon. Gildas L. Molgat (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I do not think we should carry on the debate on this issue. I look favourably upon the position of Senator Prud'homme. I simply want to say that all

[Senator Prud'homme]

senators definitely have the right to sit on all of the committees. No senator is excluded, and that is just as true for committees meeting *in camera* as it is for committees open to everyone. It applies to all committees. There is no rule to keep him from participating.

However, I do believe that, in the other House as well as in this one, the official parties were the ones to determine the membership. This is not new; it has always been the procedure. I fully understand the honourable senator's position. I think we should discuss that point. Maybe we could reach an agreement whereby independent senators might be included. I do not know. The question has some merit.

[English]

Hon. Jack Marshall: Honourable senators, I should like to ask a question of Senator Molgat. Has any consideration been given to the organizational meetings of these committees? I ask because we are to be away from this place for three weeks, or so I understand. There are many important subjects that should be raised and discussed.

Senator Molgat: Honourable senators, I do not think that is a question which should properly fall to me to address. Our group does not have the majority on the committees. He might address his question to those who have such a majority.

Hon. C. William Doody: The Leader of the Opposition does not accept questions.

Senator Marshall: Would my leader respond?

Hon. John Lynch-Staunton (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, the answer to the honourable senator's question is that the clerk of the respective committee is responsible for calling the first meeting of that committee so that a chairman, a deputy chairman and a steering committee can be selected. That will happen when all the committee members are available.

[Translation]

Senator Hébert: Honourable senators, if some of you are wondering why the report does not mention the important Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration, I want to say that both parties have agreed that the new committee would be established after the present committee has completed the budget study. Therefore, that committee will be mentioned in a future report.

[English]

Senator Marshall: May I appeal to His Honour, honourable senators? We are to be away from this place for three weeks.

Senator Molgat: Two weeks.

Senator Marshall: I have figured out that it is about 19 days from today until February 8. Nevertheless, we have been off for six or seven months. In the Throne Speech there was talk about the commemoration of D-day, which is an important and historic event. We are now about two years too late in planning for that event, but I will be telling honourable senators what the United States and Britain are doing in that regard.