

achieve decision prior to June 23, 1990." Premier Filmon clearly signed that document in good faith and in some confidence that the Constitution Amendment, 1987 and, indeed, the companion resolution could be passed by his legislature in the time left and in full observance of the rules.

What has happened in the meantime is that a single MLA, by refusing assent and various procedural tactics, has prevented other members of the legislature from debating the resolution, has prevented it from coming to a vote, and has prevented the public hearings provided for under the rules from being held.

Senator Olson: What the honourable minister also knows is that the native peoples of this country, led by a Manitoba MLA, Elijah Harper, are unhappy with what is contained in Meech Lake.

Senator Barootes: What else is new?

Senator Olson: He has left matters until there is no time to make provision for their requirements within Meech Lake.

Senator Flynn: Order!

Senator Olson: Why is Senator Flynn calling "order" about that?

Senator Flynn: That is not a question; that is a speech. If you want a debate, ask leave and I will fix you!

Senator Olson: You will have an opportunity later today, if you have the guts to rise and speak on Order No. 12, the motion I put on the order paper a few days ago.

Senator Flynn: Get up and I will follow you!

Senator Olson: To get back to the point, the Premier of Manitoba had told you—and you now admit that he did tell you on a number of occasions—that there were certain provisions to be taken into account because of the amount of time needed to get this matter through the Manitoba legislature, despite the fact that the leaders of the other parties in Manitoba had agreed to make every possible effort to ensure that this was done. Were you unaware that everyone, including the Premier of Manitoba, was obliged to follow the rules, and that, consequently, what is now happening was indeed a possibility when Premier Filmon advised you some time ago? Were you unaware that the native peoples of Canada intended to make this move if no opportunity was given to make those kinds of amendments?

Senator Simard: Where do you stand on Meech Lake?

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, I have had many discussions with Premier Filmon over the months. He has explained to me and to his counterparts in other provinces the procedural requirements in Manitoba. I repeat that Premier Filmon made the commitment that he made on June 9 in good faith and in complete confidence that this could be passed by the Manitoba legislature in full observance of the rules. He would have preferred to have three weeks in which to do it, but he was certainly willing to accept that it could be done in the space of two weeks.

The Honourable Senator Olson also purports today to be the spokesman for the Aboriginal peoples of Canada.

Senator Olson: No, Olson speaks for Olson. The chiefs can speak for themselves, and they are doing that very well.

Senator Flynn: They are certainly doing it better than you are!

Senator Murray: I thank the honourable senator for that comment. I think, however, that the record should also show that the Manitoba Métis Federation, representing a not inconsiderable number of Aboriginal peoples in Manitoba, takes a position directly contrary to that taken by the 60 or so Manitoba Indian chiefs. Indeed, Mr. Yvon Dumont, President of the Manitoba Métis Federation, together with some of his colleagues, met me yesterday to tell me that he was urging Mr. Harper to facilitate the passage of the Meech Lake Accord and the companion resolution through the Manitoba legislature.

Further to that, Mr. Dumont regards the proposals put forward in the Prime Minister's letter to Mr. Fontaine as being a considerable step forward for the Aboriginal peoples. With the permission of honourable senators, I will read the brief letter Mr. Dumont has sent to Mr. Harper, MLA in the Legislative Building in Winnipeg. It states:

Dear Elijah,

We met today with federal representatives to review the commitments made by the Prime Minister. I am writing to urge you to now permit the process on the Meech Lake Accord to proceed through the Manitoba Legislature.

As Aboriginal people of this Province we understand and share the concerns you have raised recently. Metis people have an equal stake with other Aboriginal people in the consequences of the action you have taken on our behalf. While we applaud the focus you have raised, we believe our interests now can best be addressed through the forums opened through the Companion Resolution and the recent commitments of the Prime Minister. In particular, a Royal Commission on Native Affairs represents a breakthrough for Metis. It gives us, and the country, a unique opportunity to address the issues that have beset us for so long.

Once again, we congratulate you on your determined efforts to achieve justice on our behalf. We encourage you to now continue those efforts through the democratic process in the Manitoba Legislature.

Yours Sincerely,
Yvon Dumont
President

Manitoba Metis Federation

I may say that in a news release issued yesterday Mr. Dumont and the Manitoba Métis Federation also called upon Premier Wells of Newfoundland to facilitate the passage of the Meech Lake Accord and the companion resolution through the House of Assembly in that province.