

ter of Canada. We know that last week he met the President of the United States. We have received only bits and pieces of information about this meeting. The press reported that the Prime Minister's reception had been on the cool side, but we don't know. Why not? It is because the Prime Minister embarked on his peace mission without submitting his objectives to Parliament. It would have been very easy for the Prime Minister to obtain a clear mandate from the Canadian people, if he had consulted Parliament on the objectives he was going to pursue, although all parties in Parliament are supporting his peace efforts. The Prime Minister announced in the other House that he had received an invitation from the Soviet leaders to come to Moscow. He would not be able to meet the Secretary of the Communist Party, Mr. Andropov, at this time because of Mr. Andropov's illness. The Prime Minister did not indicate when he would be able to go and whom he would be able to meet when he would at last be able to finish his tour of the capitals of the world. Has the fact that he is unable to go to the Soviet Union at this time, with possibly a message from President Reagan or any other message from the heads of state he has visited, put an end to his peace mission?

Hon. Royce Frith (Acting Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, regarding the meeting between the President of the United States and our Prime Minister, my impression is not the same as that of Senator Asselin. In my view, the reception was warm and encouraging. Should I receive further details, such as a press conference or other events, I will let my colleague know. According to my information and according to what the Prime Minister said, those are the only facts we know at the present time about this meeting.

As for a mandate, it is my impression the Prime Minister explained his intentions. He received the support of all three parties, as Senator Asselin pointed out. He has been encouraged in his mission by every group in this country, and that is enough. He has received support for his peace mission almost everywhere in Canada.

As for the meeting in the Soviet Union, if I understood the press reports correctly, it was pointed out that the Soviet praesidium had made it clear the Prime Minister was to come on an official visit. On the other hand, Mr. Andropov is unable to set a date for such a meeting because of health problems.

Senator Asselin: Could the Acting Leader confirm a statement by the Prime Minister, which is a bit confusing, to the effect that after meeting with the heads of State of the nuclear powers, he reached the conclusion that they were willing to have round table talks to discuss disarmament? Did I understand the Prime Minister's statement correctly, or does it mean something else? Until now, the Prime Minister has never confirmed that when he visited the heads of state of China, Great Britain, France and the United States, he was very clearly given the assurance that all five nuclear powers were willing to meet to discuss disarmament. Do I understand the Prime Minister correctly when he says those were his conclusions after meeting with the heads of state?

Senator Frith: The words used on the program I heard on the radio this morning were: "Conditional approval". In my

[Senator Asselin.]

view, the five powers mentioned by Senator Asselin agreed on the usefulness of such a meeting. However, approval for participating is subject to certain conditions. That is the impression I received from what I heard this morning. If any details on the conditions of the agreement are available, I will see that you receive them.

Senator Asselin: Could the Acting Leader of the Government in the Senate ask the Prime Minister whether he could reveal the conditions set by the heads of state for a summit meeting?

Senator Frith: I will try to get all the details on those conditions.

[English]

MARRIAGE ACT

SUGGESTED AMENDMENT

Hon. John M. Godfrey: Honourable senators, I would like to ask a question of the Deputy Leader of the Government. The Senate has just given first reading to four private bills concerning marriage law exemptions. I think it ridiculous that the time of Parliament is taken up with such matters. Would the acting leader attempt to persuade the government to introduce an amendment to the Marriage Act to put in place a procedure for dealing with such exemptions, which would not involve Parliament?

Hon. Royce Frith (Acting Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, judging from the applause that greeted Senator Godfrey's question, many honourable senators are of the same opinion. I undertake to raise the question with the government.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE—MESSAGE TO HOUSE OF COMMONS

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the Message from the House of Commons requesting that a Special Joint Committee be appointed to consider the Reports of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Government) moved:

That the Senate do unite with the House of Commons in the appointment of a Special Joint Committee to consider the Reports of the Commissioner of Official Languages;

That all such reports be deemed to have been or to be upon tabling referred to the Committee;

That the following Senators be appointed to act on behalf of the Senate on the said Special Joint Committee, namely, the Honourable Senators Asselin, Guay, Murray, Riley, Robichaud and Wood;

That the Committee have power to sit during sittings and adjournments of the Senate;