

report in certain areas and also as to the importance of the dissenting views. It is true that it is a unanimous report in the sense that all members of the committee signed the document, but we were unanimous about quite a number of very important items and we were unanimous in that agreement. But we were also unanimous in disagreement.

We were unanimous in agreement and unanimous in disagreement because the signatures were attached to a report containing unanimity and dissent. For example, when one looks at the final report, particularly with respect to Senate powers, one cannot regard that as anything but as a major, substantial difference of opinion, the resolution of which in my view will determine whether we have an effective, equitable or equal, and elected Senate. I think Senator Beaudoin would agree that that dissent alone is of major consequence. It is of even more significance in the sense that the report of the committee diverged sharply from the proposals of the Government of Canada on the question of Senate powers. The Government of Canada provided in its proposal an absolute veto in the normal correspondence of the legislative process, and a suspensive veto was attached to matters of national importance, while appropriation and tax bills would not come to the Senate.

Mr. Clark, in his significant speech in Calgary on the powers of the Senate, said that an analysis of legislation which had gone through Parliament over the past three years would indicate that, had the proposals of the government been implemented, 80 per cent of that legislation would have been covered by an absolute veto. That certainly lifted my spirits, because I thought that we would have the basis of an effective second chamber.

I am still mystified personally why the members of the committee retreated from that government proposal — and it is a major one. It is a creation of the committee, not a creation of the government, unless the government changed its mind and instructed the Conservative members of the committee to go along in a certain way. But you must remember that one of the tests — at least one of the helps that one can have in examining the report of the committee—is to look at how the committee diverged from the proposals of the government. It certainly did not slavishly follow the proposals of the government at all. The Senate is a very important case.

Senator Beaudoin has referred to the recommendation on the proposal of the Government of Canada.

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Honourable senators, may I have permission not to see the clock?

Senator MacEachen: No. I want to finish by adding one other illustration as to how the committee diverged from the proposal of the Government of Canada, which was a regrettable divergence.

The Government of Canada sought a new head of power to manage the economic union. If that had been approved, there would have flowed therefrom considerable repercussions with respect to the management of fiscal policy, the consultations with the provinces on matters within the exclusive jurisdiction

[Senator MacEachen.]

of the provinces, and other matters. The federal government sought a new power — I thought a rather gentle, new power for itself. That has been modified, to use an eloquent phrase used by Senator Beaudoin, to the extent that it will not be a power at all. It will be a goal, an objective of government included in the Constitution, or a guide. But it does not empower the Government of Canada in any way to exercise the responsibilities that it sought under that proposal.

I think one has to look at how the committee, influenced in some cases by public opinion, influenced in some cases by the conference, and influenced in other cases by its own internal dynamics, reached different conclusions, and I would hope to talk about this later in more detail.

At this moment, I am wondering what the status of this report is in the constitutional process. Is it the document we thought it would be—that it would become an important basis of the proposals of the Government of Canada? Has it got, as it were, the elasticity or the sturdiness or the strength to survive, for example, the disapproving vote in the National Assembly of Quebec? Has that deprived the committee report of its ability to become a valuable document in this process? I ask that question, and I ask another question.

We were pleased to see that a multilateral meeting of provincial officials, certain premiers, and native leaders was held with Mr. Clark. One had the impression that new working groups were established as if to begin the work anew. That is the impression I received—not that I am hurt personally at all. I did, from time to time, attempt to tell my colleagues in the Liberal caucus not to exaggerate their importance, but I did not believe that we would pass into history as rapidly as we appear to have done. And I wonder whether the report which was delivered and spoken about today is the basis of the work of the multilateral officials? Or are they starting, as is my impression, from the beginning? I think it would be unfortunate if the contents of the report were overlooked.

On motion of Senator MacEachen, debate adjourned.

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Hon. John Lynch-Staunton (Deputy Leader of the Government): May I suggest that, with the exception of Motion No. 29 standing in the name of Senator Stewart and Motion No. 30 standing in the name of Senator Marshall, all remaining Orders, Motions and Inquiries be allowed to stand. There was no agreement on this by the way.

Hon. Gildas Molgat: On that point, I think if we do that, we should ensure that those that we are not calling do not lose a day in their timings. I think that would be very unfair. We should ensure that they remain at whatever number they are at now.

Hon. Eymard G. Corbin: Honourable senators, I want to add to what Senator Molgat has said. I had not thought of that aspect of it, because of our current agreement. There is also another consideration which is satisfied by today's accord between the two parties, and that is that today we did not have