

**Senator Flynn:** To stay where you are.

**Senator Bonnell:**—that my name be removed from the record of the statement made by Senator Jean-Paul Deschatelets on June 10, 1981, which is to be found at page 2501 of *Debates of the Senate*, line 6, with respect to the senators who authorized Senator Deschatelets to say they subscribed to a declaration of independence.

**Hon. Jean-Paul Deschatelets:** Honourable senators, I rise on a question of privilege. What I have to say covers two points.

First, may I say that the statement made by the Honourable Senator Bonnell speaks for itself, and, of course, I accept it.

Secondly, last Wednesday I asked, on behalf of a number of senators, that we be seated together in the chamber, and I am told that though the matter has been discussed by both whips a decision has been delayed. Would the government leader, or his deputy, inform us of the reason for this delay?

**Senator Perrault:** Honourable senators, apart from the fact that I have received no formal, personal request from any senator to relocate in this chamber, the matter is clearly within the jurisdiction of the Honourable Senator Petten, who is the government whip.

**Senator Flynn:** No, no.

**Senator Frith:** And within the jurisdiction of the Honourable Senator Macdonald, the opposition whip.

**Senator Perrault:** Senator Petten may wish to discuss the matter.

**Hon. William J. Petten:** Honourable senators, Senator Macdonald and I did discuss briefly the matter of relocating senators in this chamber. However, in light of what Senator Bonnell has just had to say, I do not think he has left us in any doubt that his name was included in error.

**Senator Flynn:** We thought at the time that it was in error.

**Senator Perrault:** Let Senator Petten make his statement.

**Senator Asselin:** You're so nervous, Ray.

**Senator Petten:** I think, in light of what we have just heard, each individual senator who would like his seat moved should speak to me directly, and I, together with Senator Macdonald, will try to accommodate such honourable senators.

**Senator Deschatelets:** Honourable senators, I should like to know if the Honourable Senator Petten could see that the seating arrangements are completed for Thursday next at 2 o'clock. Although Senator Bonnell has explained that his name should not be included in the list, I should imagine that the Honourable Senator Petten could make room for about 16 honourable senators.

**Senator Petten:** Honourable senators, I will do my best to accommodate honourable senators, but I cannot give an undertaking now that it will be accomplished by next Thursday, or even the following Thursday. Senators who wish to be seated in a different place in this chamber must also realize that we have to get other senators to move in order to accommodate

[Senator Bonnell.]

them. It will therefore take more than two or three days to do this.

**Senator Flynn:** On this question of privilege, it seems to me that the government whip is attributing to himself much more authority than he in fact has. Of course, I am willing to give him a lot of authority, but the decision in this matter is up to His Honour the Speaker. Of course, His Honour will require co-operation from the whips and from the leaders on both sides of the house. That is what was offered last week. However, when Senator Petten says that nobody spoke to him, and they must come to him and beg—

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**Senator Petten:** I did not say that.

**Senator Flynn:**—I suggest that that is somewhat exaggerated. Senator Deschatelets made a request of the Speaker. I suggest that the whips should have gone to see the Speaker to offer their co-operation if he needed it, because the Speaker can decide these matters. It has been the tradition of the British Parliament that whenever a member wants to sit in a different seat, the matter is resolved by the Speaker.

**Senator Petten:** Honourable senators, I was not suggesting that anybody should come to me on bended knee and ask for a seat. I have been doing this job on behalf of the government for some six and a half years now.

**Senator Perrault:** And you have been doing it very well.

**Senator Petten:** It was my understanding, rightly or wrongly, that the government whip has the responsibility—and it is a responsibility that I have shared jointly with my friend, Senator John Macdonald, for the past six and a half years—for the seating of senators in the chamber. If I am in error I stand subject to correction.

**Senator Flynn:** Well, this is a correction.

**Senator Petten:** That may well be. I repeat what I said earlier; I have always tried to accommodate honourable senators to the best of my ability in any of their requests. I cannot say to my honourable colleague, Senator Deschatelets, that his request will be complied with by next Thursday. Again, I have to refer to what our colleague, Senator Bonnell, has said. His name was used in error, and perhaps there are others—I do not know, and I am not suggesting there are. If honourable senators would make individual requests, I am sure things would be made a lot easier.

**Senator Flynn:** A request directed to His Honour the Speaker or to you?

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, although I am not ready to say that I have authority or do not have authority, I will say that I have never been consulted about the seating arrangement of the Senate. I was informed of it at the first sitting. I saw where you were seated. That is the only role I played. I do not know if my predecessor had a different experience. However, I would like the Honourable Leader of the Opposition to find a precedent that indicates that I have