

Senator Macquarrie prefaced his first question quite properly by saying "Did you not know the exact wording?" Clearly had I known the exact wording—as perhaps I should have known—we could have avoided the risk of having different wording. I still believe that the reason for the practice of allowing one chamber or the other to initiate a matter, and to send a message requesting concurrence, is to avoid the possibility of having conflicting instructions on the same question.

Senator Flynn: It's dépassé.

Hon. Richard A. Donahoe: Honourable senators, I should like to direct an inquiry to the Deputy Leader of the Government.

Senator Frith: Please do.

Senator Donahoe: I would make the following suggestion: If there is a likelihood that by not waiting until the message is received, we should use different phraseology or different wording, what is wrong with our initiating our own wording and striking the first blow for democracy, and sending our message to the other place, asking them to concur in it?

Senator Flynn: Yes.

Senator Donahoe: Surely that would solve the question, because it would then be up to them to decide whether they agreed with us, and we would not be in the position of having to sit around here for the rest of the afternoon, waiting for them to decide what they want to ask us to do.

Senator Frith: Honourable senators, that is exactly what I believe the present practice hopes to avoid—namely, the possibility of crossed messages. It seems that that does not bother many honourable senators. But to me it is more efficient to follow the procedure of not sending a message when we know there is a message forthcoming from the other place. I understand that the motion is being, or has been, dealt with in the other place, and therefore I would ask honourable senators to accept my undertaking that I will have the message before the chamber as soon as possible; and that we can adjourn during pleasure, to resume at the call of the bell, and to deal with what now looks like a message that we shall definitely receive.

Senator Donahoe: Can we have an assurance that the message will be sent by hand and not through the mail?

Senator Frith: Yes.

Senator Macquarrie: Honourable senators, my colleagues in the House of Commons know that I do not like engaging in procedural discussions; but it might be that if there is a disposition to adjourn during pleasure, I could be placed in a benedictory role. I was at a church meeting all day yesterday, and it falls lightly upon me. In my opinion, this half-hour discussion demonstrates the importance of some thought being given to the channels of communication between the two houses. It is an area that has been neglected since Confederation, and in the United States it is not too clear.

I was a little upset when I heard over the radio, saw on the TV and read in the press, that the house leaders in the other place had decided that there would be a motion and that there

[Senator Frith.]

would be no debate; and yet they were talking about a joint committee. I am of the opinion that Senator Frith should have been in on those discussions from the very beginning, and that the resolution should not only have been in his hand but in part constructed by him, because this house, to use a familiar expression, is either the father or the mother—and in these days one has to be careful—because this house is a parent of the committee and the Deputy Leader of the Government should have been involved.

Senator Donahoe: Amen.

Senator Macquarrie: We are not proud old men and women. We are here to do our job, and we want our government leader and deputy leader to be involved. We could have saved a great deal of trouble had there been closer and fuller discussion, and I would like that message to get back to the other place.

Senator Frith: Honourable senators, I assure Senator Macquarrie that I have heard what he had to say. His comments are well founded, and he made a very good presentation of a good case.

Hon. Allister Grosart: Honourable senators, I wonder if the Deputy Leader of the Government would cite the authority for some of the pronouncements he has been making on procedure as between the two houses, and the authority of this house?

He has told us that it is a practice, a tradition, that if one house knows that the other house is considering sending a message, then the house to which the message is to be sent takes no action. I suggest to him that that is nonsense, that there is no such tradition. The authority for that is, of course, that in the practice of inter-house relations we have no knowledge whatsoever of what is going on in the other house until it is communicated to us. That is the principle, as I understand it, of relations between the two houses. It certainly applies to a bill and to points of order. There have been many cases where any discussion of a bill before one house or the other has been found to be out of order.

Secondly, we have been informed, if I understood the deputy leader correctly, that the Senate could not send an instruction to a joint committee. I do not know what the authority for that is. The Senate is master of its own rules, and obviously it can send such an instruction within certain limitations. There are limitations laid down. There was a limitation laid down in a recent decision of the Speaker of this chamber. There are limitations. But, on the other hand, I suggest to the Deputy Leader of the Government that it is absolutely incorrect, and there is no foundation whatsoever, for him to say that this house cannot, within certain limitations, instruct a joint committee. Where is his authority? The Deputy Leader of the Government has a habit—

Hon. George J. McIlraith: May I ask a question of the honourable senator, so that I will better understand the point being made?

Senator Grosart: Perhaps the honourable senator would ask his question after I have finished. I would say to the Deputy Leader of the Government that he has a habit of saying "This is the rule, this is the procedure," but very seldom does he cite