

they wish to bring before Parliament and from taking decisions on that business. Those are the facts with which we in this house must contend. It is not a matter of whether the members of the other place are justified in their action. That is their business and, since they are an elected body, they will have to answer for that. The point I wish to make is that one of the whips is preventing the house from meeting to do public business, not that the members are staying out of the house.

Senator Donahoe: In an improper way.

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of State for Economic Development): Yes, it is improper.

Hon. Andrew Thompson: Honourable senators, my clear impression of Senator McLraith's point is the matter of procedure. Rather than direct my question to His Honour, I shall direct it to the Leader of the Government in the Senate and ask: What procedure would the Senate adopt were such a procedural difficulty to arise in this house? I think this is a matter which should be reviewed in case of any such future emergency.

Senator Perrault: Honourable senators, precisely the same situation would prevail. The adjournment motion is not debatable. If the two whips did not enter this chamber, representing the preparedness of the members to have the vote taken, then we would be in a similar situation.

However, I cannot contemplate any conjunction of events or any circumstance which would immobilize the Senate in that fashion. The traditions of this chamber and the way the senators on all sides approach their duties, I think, are such that we would want the work of the chamber to proceed.

Senator Thompson: Can the Leader of the Government tell me whether such a situation has ever occurred in the upper chamber of any parliamentary system? Also, assuming that we were not men and women of sound reasoning and that such a situation did arise, how would the deadlock be resolved?

Senator Perrault: Honourable senators, I have never heard of such a situation occurring in this fashion. I can assure honourable senators that this matter is under intensive study by parliamentary authorities at this moment. Certainly, the duration of this impasse in the other place—

Senator Donahoe: Honourable senators, on a point of privilege—

Senator Perrault: Honourable senator, I am trying to reply. You are not on your feet and you do not have the floor.

An Hon. Senator: He is trying to raise a point of privilege.

Senator Perrault: What is your point of privilege?

Senator Donahoe: I have not advanced it yet.

Hon. Peter A. Stollery: Honourable senators, I was on my feet to follow up on a question—

Senator Donahoe: My point of privilege deals with the fact that there have been assertions made by several senators that what occurs in the House of Commons is none of our business.

Senator Perrault: That is not a point of privilege.

Senator Donahoe: Notwithstanding that, the Leader of the Government continues what was begun—

Senator Perrault: May I appeal to you, honourable senators—

Senator Donahoe: —by another honourable senator on his side.

Senator Olson: Sit down!

Senator Perrault: —to recognize this for what it is.

Senator Donahoe: He continues to impute blame for the events in the House of Commons. I say that if blame is to be imputed to one side of this chamber, then that side has the right of defence.

Senator Stollery: Honourable senators—

Senator Perrault: Honourable senators, the statement by the honourable senator opposite is clearly out of order. He has already made one speech, and he is trying to make another while I am trying to reply to a question asked by an honourable senator, in which reply I have said that studies are now under way in order to determine whether or not—

Senator Donahoe: He is trying to impute blame to somebody.

An Hon. Senator: Order!

Senator Perrault: —a similar circumstance has occurred before and how impasses of this kind can be dealt with. Certainly, the situation in the other chamber, from the standpoint of the duration of time itself, is unprecedented. Attempts are being made to determine, how a parliamentary assembly—which is established to allow spokesmen from various sectors of the country to meet together, to reason together and to pass legislation on behalf of the people—can continue if one section of the members elected, or appointed, refuse to enter the chamber.

● (1500)

Senator Donahoe: There you go again.

Senator Stollery: On a point of order, I would follow up on what appears to me, by any rule under which we operate, to be a clear question of order. I should like to ask the deputy leader what will happen in the Senate if this unprecedented occurrence in the other place continues into next week. Since we have no way of knowing how long the bell will ring, at what point, and on what instruction from the Leader of the Government in the Senate, will senators have to stop their activity and go home?

Senator Frith: Honourable senators, we are dealing with an unprecedented situation, but the Senate has enough business to operate next week. There is no constitutional or procedural provision I am aware of that states that we act only derivatively from the House of Commons. Many matters can be and, indeed, have been initiated in the Senate, and we can deal with those next week. Committee work also is planned for next week.

I understand the concerns of honourable senators, but I believe we have enough work to keep us going next week, and