

**Senator Frith:** It was a different amending formula.

**Senator Olson:** I want to tell Senator Murray that what troubles me more than anything else about this Meech Lake accord is that if the changes to the Constitution are carried to their ultimate conclusion, there are a number of things in there that I do not believe can be remedied, even when there is a more responsible government in office federally. The most important problem is the requirement of unanimity for any further amendments to the Constitution in a number of areas. That will put us back into the straitjacket that we suffered for more than 50 years.

● (1510)

Senator Murray came before the Senate and made comment after comment about what he thinks Mr. Turner thinks. Has he anything written down on which to base his opinion that that is what Mr. Turner thinks? Or has he simply gained that impression from what is reported in the newspapers, and then superimposed his own interpretation on that, which has been demonstrated to be faulty over and over again?

**Senator Murray:** Is Mr. Turner not in favour of this accord, and did he not say that he would vote for it?

**Senator Olson:** That is not the point. The leader went into more detail, and one of the things he said was, "In the second round we can consider a number of other things." I suppose that was to be the great persuasive argument.

I will ask the Leader of the Government now whether there is going to be another opportunity to remedy the unanimity required in the amending formula in the second round? The answer is, "No." He knows very well that the amending formula, and asking the provinces to give back the veto, is not going to be on the agenda for the second round, or what he has described as the second round. That, honourable senators, is the danger of accepting the Meech Lake accord.

**Senator Murray:** What is your preferred amending formula?

**Senator Olson:** There is an excellent one in place now. That is one amending formula. There may be other modifications made, because no government, no matter how good—and the last one was a good one; it lasted 21 years, so it must have been fairly good—and no matter how smart its members are, can predict what the requirements will be of a Constitution, of a government, of a federal structure, and so forth, forever into the future. Therefore, there needs to be a reasonable amending formula.

The problem we had prior to 1982 was that there was the assertion, the concept, or what have you, that there had to be unanimity. When one gets right down to it, that was not really the case. The Supreme Court of Canada was asked to decide that, and said, "Yes, the provinces need to agree." But it did not say how many of the provinces needed to agree.

**Senator Murray:** You provided for unanimity on some subjects.

**Senator Olson:** On some, yes.

[Senator Olson.]

**Senator Murray:** So we are adding to the number of subjects.

**Senator Frith:** Like all!

**Senator Olson:** Senator Murray is the Leader of the Government in the Senate. He is also the minister the members of this chamber and the members of the other place look to to lead the discussion, although I know that the Prime Minister is the boss—I have been there before. Is the amending formula going to be on the agenda when the second round takes place?

**Senator Murray:** It says, "Other subjects." If somebody wants to bring that up—

**Senator Olson:** Did the leader ask the provinces if they wanted a veto for a little while?

**Senator Murray:** Well, I told you.

**Senator Olson:** No, you did not—well, I will accept that. I do not believe that any province is going to give the veto back, and I do not think the leader believes that either. That is what makes this dangerous. I do not believe that we can correct or remedy the straitjacket position that we will have been put into.

Many people blame this on Quebec. It was not always Quebec that held up amending or patriating the Constitution. There have been attempts to amend the Constitution on more than one occasion when it was not Quebec that was the hold out. My own province, once or twice, and even before my political career began, held out. I only need to read history to know that.

**Senator Bosa:** And Saskatchewan.

**Senator Olson:** Yes, Saskatchewan and others.

Honourable senators, to be brief, I am not prepared to subordinate the Senate's responsibility to a joint committee of Parliament that will be dominated by members of the House of Commons. Senator Murray's amendment, even if it is found to be in order, is absolutely unacceptable to me, and I hope that my colleagues will share that view, because we have an obligation, and I think it is the Senate's profound responsibility, to take a sober second look at this. Here, in my opinion, is a government going ahead with something as vital to the country as amending the Constitution, and, in my view, doing it in such a way that when this government is tossed out of office—which will be as soon as an election is held—a new government will not be able to remedy the defects, because that unanimity, that straitjacket, will then be in the Constitution if we accept what is now being proposed. A new government will not be able to remedy the situation, because the provinces will not give the veto back.

The Senate's responsibility is to take a sober second look once in a while, and, if not necessarily to stop, then at least to place some stumbling blocks in the way of a government that is proceeding down what I regard to be an irresponsible track.

You do not need to say that someone who does that is not in favour of Quebec joining the Constitution; that is not true. I