

for permission to sit while the Senate is sitting, but it is not expected that the Senate will be in session at that time tomorrow afternoon. Outside witnesses have been invited to appear before the committee, and this is the reason for adopting this procedure.

If the Senate is still in session, the chairman would not mind if the committee is delayed a few minutes after 4 o'clock in order not to inconvenience honourable senators.

Motion agreed to.

## PENSIONS

### REPORT OF SPECIAL INTERDEPARTMENTAL TASK FORCE— QUESTION

**Senator Haidasz:** I should like to ask the government leader whether the report of the Special Interdepartmental Task Force on Pensions has been received by the cabinet and whether it is the intention of the government to make it public and, if so, when we can expect it done?

**Senator Perrault:** Honourable senators, I take the question as notice.

## FISHERIES

### ADVERSE PUBLICITY OF SEAL HUNT—QUESTION

**Senator Bosa:** Honourable senators, in view of the adverse publicity the seal hunt has received in Canada and many other countries, with Canadians portrayed as being insensitive to the environment and showing disregard for the possible extinction of an animal species, are the Governments of Canada and Newfoundland prepared to present the facts so that Canadians may be apprised of what is really happening?

● (2100)

**Senator Perrault:** Honourable senators, far be it from me to attempt to speak on behalf of the Government of Newfoundland. However, I understand that there has been developed by the federal government an informational program on the subject of the seal hunt.

I shall take the question as notice and endeavour to obtain current information with respect to the extent of that program. I, along with many other Canadians, feel that some of those who criticize the seal hunt are doing so without being acquainted with the facts. Indeed, some of these critics come from abroad, countries where there has been a decimation of certain species of endangered wildlife—authentic threats which might more usefully command their primary concerns.

**Some Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

## OFF-TRACK BETTING

### STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE—QUESTION

**Senator Sparrow:** Honourable senators, I have a question for the Leader of the Government relating to a question asked yesterday by Senator Flynn in connection with a statement by

[Senator Langlois.]

the Minister of Agriculture pertaining to off-track betting. As was admitted by the Leader of the Government, the question was not fully answered.

If the statement attributed to the Minister of Agriculture is correct, I would consider it an embarrassment to the Leader of the Government in this chamber, who would appear to have been misled—

**Senator Flynn:** That is not easy.

**Senator Sparrow:** —by the Minister of Agriculture. The Leader of the Government, in responding to Senator Flynn's question, said:

—first of all, I do not have available to me at this time the complete statement attributed to the minister, and it would not be fair to render any kind of judgment on such a statement if, indeed, such a statement was made in the terms expressed by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Has the Leader of the Government had an opportunity to review the complete text of the statement attributed to the minister, and can he now take away any of the sting of embarrassment caused by that statement both to this chamber and to himself?

**Senator Perrault:** Honourable senators, let me say at the outset that I may have a different perspective, but I feel neither aggrieved nor insulted because the Minister of Agriculture, in his usual outspoken and unique fashion—

**Senator Flynn:** That is what I said.

**Senator Perrault:** —has chosen to offer certain comments on the subject of off-track betting. I would be willing to wager—perhaps that is the wrong way to put it; but may I speculate that the Minister of Agriculture, as I said yesterday, spoke as an individual and his comments must be viewed in that light.

He did send a note to me yesterday afternoon stating that he looks forward with great anticipation to the objective study which he knows the Senate will undertake on the subject of off-track betting.

I hardly think it necessary to say that there is a great diversity of private opinion to be found among members of Parliament, including members of cabinet. Like everyone else, the Minister of Agriculture is entitled to his own views on any given subject. I think the significant fact is that he has not attempted to impose his own personal views on the subject of off-track betting. He has not attempted to impose his personal views, through legislation in the Parliament of Canada, on the Canadian people. I do not think he can be criticized for the comments he is alleged to have made.

**Senator Grosart:** He just got his foot stuck in his mouth.

**Senator Sparrow:** Honourable senators, I apologize for rising again, but I do not think I have had an answer to my question.

The Leader of the Government, in replying to Senator Flynn yesterday, said he did not have the complete statement of the