

in the country such a matter of urgent public importance within the rule?

[*Translation*]

Senator Thériault: Honourable senators, all precedents show that an emergency debate is requested to allow a legislature, Parliament or the government to solve a problem. That is the parliamentary basis for an emergency debate.

If senator David or any other senator wants an emergency debate, he must prove to the satisfaction of the Senate that it will bring about changes in the country. But I fear that such a debate would arouse passions on both sides of the issue. I would be curious and anxious to hear his or her arguments.

I submit that nothing that can be said in an emergency debate on Meech Lake in the Senate could help matters in any way. It would be foolhardy and dangerous to heat up passions and end up with a situation even worse than the one we now face.

Senator Simard: Then, senator Thériault, go and discuss it with your own caucus.

[*English*]

Senator Frith: Does anyone want to add anything else?

Senator Flynn: I might just say—

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Flynn: I do not mean that the events in Calgary are that important, but yesterday and last night—

Senator Guay: That is what you went on about.

Senator Flynn: Senator Guay, please! We have not had a fight recently. I hope we can continue this way.

If anyone who watched what happened in Montreal yesterday and last night—

Senator Thériault: Great!

Senator Flynn: —does not believe that it is of importance, I will say to him that there were consequences of the Meech Lake failure last night in Montreal. Of course, Senator Thériault may not have seen them, but, if he had, I think he would realize what I am saying, as did his friend, Edith Butler, that there is some movement here that needs to be addressed.

Senator Thériault: De quelle manière!

The Hon. the Speaker: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to allow the opposition to have caucus for ten minutes?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

The Senate adjourned during pleasure.

● (1430)

● (1520)

The sitting of the Senate was resumed.

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, Senator David's motion is:

... for the adjournment of the Senate for the purposes of raising a matter of urgent public importance (which the mover shall state on rising to speak)—

which he has done with his motion—

before the House proceeds to the Orders of the Day;

It is clear that the intention of the rule is to provide an occasion for the Senate to adjourn in order to move to a matter of that character, and not to proceed to its ordinary business that day. That leads one to ask the question: What does "urgency" mean?. *Beauchesne's* Fifth Edition is of some help to us on that score. At page 92, paragraph 287, it says:

"Urgency" within this rule does not apply to the matter itself, but means "urgency of debate", when the ordinary opportunities provided by the rules of the House do not permit the subject to be brought on early enough and public interest demands that discussion take place immediately.

It seems to me that Parliament is dividing this question today. In the other place there is a sense of urgency on the question of Hibernia. Here Senator David is making a motion, asking us to find that there is urgency—to paraphrase paragraph 287, not with respect to the matter itself, namely, the failure of Meech Lake, but respecting the urgency of debate when the ordinary opportunities provided by the rules of the house do not permit the subject to be brought forward early enough when public interest demands that discussion take place immediately.

I did not hear anything from either Senator Ottenheimer or Senator David that would indicate that there is urgency with respect to a debate of this particular matter, that it should be dealt with immediately, particularly when we are in the fortunate position of having order no. 19 on our order paper, which widely defines the question of the debate and the process concerning the Meech Lake Accord. That order stands in the name of Senator Olson, but he is prepared to yield to Senator David when that order is called. The motion Senator David moved does not qualify under "urgency" as it is defined, in view of the fact that we have on our order paper a similar item for debate later this day.

I ask my colleagues to vote against this motion because I think it would set a bad precedent, and I invite Senator David and others to continue the debate under order no. 19.

Senator Simard: You really have your priorities straight!

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): Honourable senators, I shall not take more time than it takes to say how incredible I find it, that the Liberal Party, the party of Laurier, Lapointe and St. Laurent—

Senator Olson: We thought you were going to say that.

Senator Perrault: We predicted that. We want a Question Period today!

Senator Murray: —would not agree that there is an urgency to debating the failure of a constitutional accord—

Senator Frith: Between now and five o'clock?