

work day after day. If they cannot sit while the Senate is sitting, and if they have to sit on Mondays, Tuesday mornings and Fridays, I do not think that the work assigned to them will be done properly. I am quite sure that the Special Committee on Science Policy could not have done so much or accomplished the progress it has, if we had not been able to sit during sittings of the Senate.

The Committee on Science Policy is not going to interfere further with the work of the Senate, because now we will have to write a report and we can meet at night. But I think that by adopting the attitude that it would seem we are about to adopt, judging from what has been said here, we are weakening unduly this new role of the Senate, this new usefulness which will affirm itself through committee work and not through debating here in the chamber.

Hon. Mr. Grosart: Before the Leader of the Government rises, I believe that under the rules I am entitled to make an explanation of the position that I took.

I was only suggesting that we observe our rules. I was not in any way discussing the substance of the debate which subsequently developed. I was not saying that committees should not ever sit when the Senate is sitting. The whole point on which I rose was merely that if we have rules, let us keep them.

In this particular case all that was necessary was that the mover of the motion in respect to the Poverty Committee state, as our rules require, that in doing so he is proposing that Rule 3 be suspended. That is all that is necessary for the senator to do in order to bring this motion within our Rules.

Hon. Muriel McQ. Fergusson: Honourable senators, I wish to make a short contribution to the discussion of this topic because I do not think it is desirable to have this chamber as empty as it was many times last year.

I would like to point out to honourable Senator Lamontagne that there have been occasions when senators who were dedicated to the work which they felt they must do, attended committee meetings on Mondays and Fridays. This was the situation in dealing with the work of the Divorce Committee. It may not have been in your opinion an important committee, but it was work that was required by the Senate, and for years many of the members of that committee attended not only the normal sitting days of the Senate but on Monday and Friday as well. I am

saying this to point out that the work can be done if honourable senators are interested in the work they are doing.

Hon. Paul Martin: Honourable senators, we are grateful to Senator Grosart for raising this question, not only because he has correctly pointed to the purport of our new rules, but because he enables us to examine, as we should, a problem that has been of concern to those who have to organize the business of the Senate. This discussion can take place without trying in any way to derogate from what Senator Lamontagne has said about the very important work in the field of his inquiry.

Our task is to reconcile our legislative responsibilities, for we are a house of sober second thought, with opportunity for making contributions in the field of inquiry. No one wants to restrict the work of any committee. Certainly, as I listen to Senator Croll, I am sure none of us would want to restrict the important work which the Committee on Poverty has undertaken. Nevertheless, we do have responsibilities in this chamber. One of the historic functions of the Senate, indeed one of the conditions under which Confederation came into being, was that the Senate would discharge certain functions in its legislative capacity. We cannot shrink from that responsibility. None of us would wish to do so. We have to reconcile that responsibility with the obligations that confront the chairman, particularly of a committee as important as that on poverty.

I agree with Senator Grosart that rules are made to help us to dispatch our business in an orderly way. It would have been an idle effort to have spent all the time last year in Senator Molson's committee if we were to disregard the rules. But the fault is not that of Senator Croll. Perhaps it is my fault, inasmuch as I did not draw attention to Rule 76(4) and also to the enabling provision in Rule 3. I think it is well that we should provide in our Rules that "A select committee shall not sit during a sitting of the Senate" as a statement of principle.

As honourable senators are aware, we had situations last year that were very difficult. We had a vote in this chamber which I am sure did not represent the consensus of the views of the Senate. The vote was taken when there was barely a quorum present and when members were engaged in three committees of this house which were sitting simultaneously. Two of those committees