

question during Question Period and is interrupted with mumblings or other forms of interruption by another senator, the time taken for the interruption should not be at the expense of the questioner. Question Period is a time allocated to the opposition, essentially —

**Senator Barootes:** Not necessarily the opposition!

**Senator Frith:** I could not even, for example, get the word “essentially” out before Senator Barootes interrupted. I will say it again, probably not without interruption.

Question Period is essentially a time for the opposition and it is a time taken up mostly by the opposition. I do not think that it should be curtailed and abridged by mumblings and interruptions —

**Senator Simard:** Please get on with the question.

**Senator Frith:** —like the one we are now experiencing. Fortunately, I am able to give perfect evidence of an interruption. Go ahead, Senator Simard. You are doing it right now, interrupting and using up the time. I ask the speaker to take into account that fact.

**Senator Barootes:** What is the question!

**Senator Frith:** I would love to get it out if you would shut up, sir!

**Senator Simard:** What is the question!

**Senator Frith:** He will not shut up. If you shut up, you will hear the question. I am not going to ask the question until you shut up.

**Senator Simard:** Are you going to answer my question?

**Senator Frith:** Have you shut up?

**Senator Simard:** Yes, for the time being.

**Senator Frith:** I could not expect much more than “the time being” from you.

Now, quoting Mr. Chrétien:

The physical infrastructure of our towns and cities—the roads and bridges and sewers—is literally falling apart . . . Capital improvements are desperately needed now, and so are the jobs and economic activity that would go with them.

My first question is this: Can Senator Murray confirm whether this is only a rumour or, if not, can he tell us when to expect an announcement formally on the issue?

As for my second question, I wish to know if the Conservatives are planning to steal any more Liberal policies to subsidize their own bankrupt policy branch?

**Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, on the specific matter of the Trans-Canada Highway, there have been discussions, going back some considerable time, between the federal government and the provinces. I seem to recall that at a first ministers' meeting, held quite a few months ago, there was a discussion

of this very matter. My honourable friend will recall references in Mr. Mazankowski's budget to infrastructure in general and to highways in particular.

**Senator Frith:** That is quite true, and that was encouraging.

**Senator Murray:** There have been discussions involving particularly the premiers of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and other ministers; but the short answer to the honourable senator's question is that no decision such as described in the *Toronto Star* article to which he refers has been taken by the government.

## THE CONSTITUTION

### CONSENSUS REPORT—OFFICIAL LANGUAGES—DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ENGLISH AND FRENCH TEXTS

**Hon. Gildas L. Molgat (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, my question is to the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

On September 15 I asked the senator about the translation in the Charlottetown accord under the Canada clause and the use of “attachment” in French as a translation for “commitment”. He replied to me then that he would take this up and try to give us the information in due time.

In view of the fact that the Senate may not be sitting for much longer, and, indeed, may not sit until after October 26, when the referendum vote is to be held, and given that this matter is of substantial concern to a large number of Canadians, particularly those of the French minority living outside Quebec, I would ask my honourable friend to look at the *Constitution Acts 1867 to 1982*, the consolidation as of October 1, 1989, produced by the Department of Justice. At page 66, under item 35.1, the English text reads as follows:

The Government of Canada and the provincial governments are committed to the principal . . .

I will not read the rest. By the way, as an aside, the word “principle” is improperly spelled.

[Translation]

In French, the wording of section 35.1 is very clear:

35.1 Les gouvernements fédéral et provinciaux sont liés par l'engagement de principe—

[English]

Similarly, in 36(1) on page 67, it says:

. . . together with the government of Canada and the provincial governments, are committed to . . .

[Translation]

The French version also says, at section 36(1):

—ainsi que les gouvernements fédéral et provinciaux, s'engagent à: