

House of Commons, and the document itself says that the definition of what sort of legislation would be involved here is still to be determined.

In terms of tax legislation, there really is no rational reason for that particular legislation to be subject to the veto of the Senate without reference to the double majority. It is obviously there for political reasons, to get Mr. Getty onside. I accept that as one of the realities, but it is not very good reasoning in terms of tax legislation.

The final piece of legislation that will be dealt with by the Senate is legislation materially affecting the French language and culture. Again, the originator of the bill will determine if a bill falls under that category. In this case there will be an appeal to the Speaker of the Senate, who will operate under rules to be established by the Senate.

It is interesting that in the case of supply bills the Speaker of the House of Commons makes the determination. There are no rules. However in the case of the Senate, with regard to French language and culture, the Speaker of the Senate will make the decision but there will be rules. I think that is preferable and should be applied to the determination of what is a supply bill in the House of Commons.

It is intended that those rules of the Senate will provide adequate protection for francophones and, indeed, upon induction into the Senate, senators will declare whether or not they are francophones for the purposes of this legislation. They can be challenged and, again, that challenge will be determined by the rules of the Senate.

All legislation materially affecting the French language and culture will be decided by a double majority; that is, a majority of the Senate and a majority of the francophone senators. There will be no appeal from that decision. I find that hardly democratic when one considers that perhaps as few as six or seven francophone senators, at least five of whom will come from the province of Quebec, having been appointed by the National Assembly and not elected, will determine all legislation that materially affects the French language and culture. That is not good democracy, in anyone's terms.

Finally, the Senate will be responsible for the ratification of certain appointments. The one that is mentioned in the legislation is the ratification of the appointment of the Governor of the Bank of Canada. There will be other key appointments to be ratified by the Senate, but what those appointments are is to be determined by federal legislation. These will include the heads of national cultural institutions and the heads of federal regulatory boards and agencies. Again, a majority of the Senate decides. There is no appeal from that decision.

It may be a good idea; I do not know. I am somewhat apprehensive about it. With regard to the Governor of the Bank of Canada, as much as I have disagreed with some of the policies of the present Governor of the Bank of Canada, I am not so sure that it is a good idea to try to get commitments in advance from the Governor in respect of what policy he would exercise if certain conditions arose. I just do not think

[Senator Everett.]

that that would be good business, and I do not think he should be put through that grilling, although I admit that there are arguments on the other side.

I think we could see the kind of circus we have seen in the United States Congress as a result of this change, because that will be the main opportunity for the senators who will grace this place to have public visibility, and they will most certainly use it.

Finally, one wonders whether a Senate of this size can really do its job. There will be 62 senators. Ordinary legislation has to be dealt with in 30 sitting days after the Commons disposes of it, and supply bills in 30 calendars days after the Commons disposes of them. Time will have to be allotted for the joint sittings. There will be the ratification of appointments, which will involve lengthy hearings. Then there is the normal committee work of the Senate, both in respect of legislation and in respect of providing a forum for future legislation. I think the senators under that scenario will be very busy people. They may rise to the occasion but, by the same token, an awful lot might not get done.

In short, honourable senators, we certainly did not get what I hoped for. I think we have ended up with a Senate with greatly reduced power. The west has lost out on the deal and power has moved from the west and the Maritimes to the central provinces which, in my judgment, was never intended. We got our equal Senate, but we got precious little else.

I will vote for the question in the referendum because I think the question should be dealt with. I would only hope that in the period leading up to the referendum, an explanation, not just of how the Senate works but of how this whole deal is to work, is given to the public so that the decision is made on the facts. People should not make their decision on the basis that if we do not make a deal now, the country will go down the drain.

In other words, I believe there should be a rational examination of the very complicated agreement that was reached between the Premiers and the Prime Minister so that the Canadian public can understand what they are getting into. It is fine if they decide that this is what they want, but I hope to goodness that they decide on what is contained in the deal and not on some concept that if you vote against it, you are against Canada and if you vote for it, you are for Canada.

[Translation]

Hon. Solange Chaput-Rolland: Honourable senators, I will not try your patience too much because my text is only three pages long.

Today, I will not speak as a Conservative senator, if possible. I would like to speak as a Quebecer who is a Canadian and one of Quebec's older generation. You must remember that I have seen a lot. Like all my fellow citizens from here and elsewhere, I am very aware of the seriousness of the situation in Canada.