

## THE SENATE

Tuesday, January 30, 1990

The Senate met at 2 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.  
Prayers.

### SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON BILL C-21

#### AUTHORITY TO TRAVEL—QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE

**Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, on a question of privilege, I want to respond to the question of privilege raised by Senator Simard on Tuesday, January 23, reported in the *Debates of the Senate* at page 1009.

As honourable senators know, I was absent last week. Today Senator Doody drew my attention to that point of privilege.

Honourable senators will recall—if not, I will tell them—that the point raised by Senator Simard was that I, in the course of dealing with a report from the Special Committee on Bill C-21, had told the Senate that the report was requesting merely the approval of a budget that had already been approved by the Standing Senate Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration and did not include the power to travel; that the power to travel would have to be given by the Senate after it had given consideration to the budget.

I do not recall the exact circumstances under which I accepted what in my profession is called a “dock brief” to speak on behalf of Senator Hébert, but, clearly, I did. I had thought the request was pursuant to the *Rules of the Senate*, which require a committee to have the cost of travel presented and approved by the Internal Economy Committee before the Senate itself is asked to approve the power to travel, so that when we, the Senate, grant the power to travel we have some idea of what the costs will be. That was the stage I thought we were dealing with.

It is very difficult to explain how I so thought when I read that the report, which is not a long report, says quite clearly that the committee respectfully requests that it be empowered to adjourn from place to place within Canada. A lesson can certainly be learned by me—and perhaps it is a lesson for all of us—in underlining the fact that it is always, as I pointed out on that occasion, unusual, and to be avoided, that we be asked to approve a report before we have a chance to read it.

There is no explanation for my telling the Senate, as I did, that the report that was being adopted was only for budget and that there would have to be a separate authority or subsequent authority to travel. The only explanation is that it was a complete blunder on my part. I apologize to the Senate for it. It was quite unintentional, but it was, nevertheless, a mistake—

and that might be thought an understatement. It was a blunder, and I apologize to the Senate for it.

I do not know how many of you play chess, but when one reads the report of a chess match, or the texts wherein the moves are described, there is an accepted way of describing a blunder; for example, “Queen to Queen 4, question mark” suggests a blunder. Two question marks is a serious blunder, and if it is a really bad blunder some exclamation points might be added. So if I am let off with two question marks and two exclamation points, I shall feel myself well out of trouble. I am very sorry, honourable senators, about that, and I offer this apology with a humble and contrite heart and, I hope, a lesson learned.

**Senator Doody:** I was going to suggest a moment's silence. This is a rare occasion.

**Senator Frith:** To celebrate the occasion in some way for its rarity?

### THE GOVERNOR GENERAL

#### ADDRESSES AT INSTALLATION PRINTED AS APPENDIX

**Hon. C. William Doody (Deputy Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, I move:

That the Address of the Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, P.C., at the Installation of the Right Honourable Ray Hnatyshyn, P.C., as Governor General of Canada on January 29, 1990, together with the reply of His Excellency the Governor General thereto, be printed as an Appendix to the *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Senate* and to the *Debates of the Senate* of this day and form part of the permanent records of this house.

Motion agreed to.

(For text of addresses, see appendix, p. 1073)

**Hon. Rhéal Bélisle:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, during the speeches, those of us at the far end of the chamber could not hear anything in any language. Would it be possible to get an assurance that this will be remedied for future occasions?

### INTERNAL ECONOMY, BUDGETS AND ADMINISTRATION

#### THIRTY-THIRD REPORT OF COMMITTEE PRESENTED AND PRINTED AS APPENDIX

**Hon. Roméo LeBlanc:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to present the thirty-third report of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration