

these discussions, the concurrence of the Senate will be necessary before any constitutional change can finally take place. This is simply stating what is implicit in the British North America Act, what is the law. It is, therefore, both desirable and expedient that the Senate be fully equipped and prepared for considerations and suggestions. It is for this reason particularly that I welcome the establishment of the new Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. Whether or not the provinces and the federal Government engage in a discussion of this area does not in any way, in my judgment, affect the right of the Senate at any time to initiate examination and consideration of these matters.

I wish now to mention the several recommendations in the report which refer to joint committees, both standing and special. The committee left untouched the rules of the Senate relating to standing joint committees, which rules indeed could not properly be dealt with by the Senate unilaterally. It nevertheless recommended joint discussions with the House of Commons designed to ensure that requisite improvements are made.

The committee observed at page 656, that

... there is much doubt existing as to the proper functioning of Special Joint Committees: there is no clear guide, for example, as to the procedure to be followed by such Joint Committees, as to which House should bear the expenses incurred, or as to whether such expenses should be apportioned.

I think that anyone who has served on or appeared before a joint committee will agree with these observations. They reveal inadequacies which should be rectified and which can only be rectified by action taken in concert on behalf of both houses. I personally see no reason why the Senate should not take an initiative itself in arranging for the necessary joint discussions.

Also, the committee recommended quite strongly that from time to time

... select committees of the Senate should hold committee meetings in the Senate Chamber itself. In this way the public would have an opportunity to see the Senate performing what is undoubtedly one of its most useful roles—the examination in depth of the legislation submitted to it.

I happen to know this was a view held by the chairman. Long before the committee was

set up I had an opportunity of discussing some of these matters with him, and this was a proposal he had in mind, and I strongly support it. I had talked to other senators about this proposal before the committee made its recommendation. There are some senators who understandably and properly are so dedicated to the traditions of this chamber that they find it difficult to accept the suggestion that committees should meet in this chamber. They feel that this chamber should be reserved for the consideration of bills in their first, second and third readings and, on occasion, Committee of the Whole, but that the general legislative character of the chamber should be observed. I can very well understand that viewpoint and dedication to tradition, but I think there is a very strong argument for the suggestion made by the committee that we might use this chamber for the meetings of committees. Of course they could not all sit here simultaneously. There are examples of precedents under the rules. I think that the Committee of Privileges and Elections must sit here. I know that in the United Kingdom, the Judicial Committee of the House of Lords always sits in the legislative chamber, as does one other committee.

I take it that one of the reasons why it is suggested that committees should be given the opportunity of sitting in the chamber is to fill a gap in our public presentation that I regret exists when the Senate is not sitting. When we are not here in general session the public oftentimes have the view, as they have with regard to the other place, that the Senate is not working, that the Senate is not engaged in useful consideration of matters concerning the nation. We know that is not the case. I think the suggestion of using this chamber when the Senate is not sitting is a good one, and as an individual senator I strongly support it. I endorse this proposal completely.

I do not say that the Senate should be a publicity seeker, as was suggested by one very experienced senator. On the other hand, much of the misunderstanding now existing concerning the functioning of the Senate would partially disappear if the public were made aware of how the Senate carries on its essential business. What is hidden under a bushel does not shed sufficient light.

As to the suggestions in the report at page 65 concerning party affiliations and caucuses—I want to congratulate the honourable senator on his now sitting in the front