

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, this would not be the first time that I have been contradicted in public, even by eminent authorities. I am sure that it will not be the last time. With the greatest of respect to the letter writer in the *Globe and Mail*, I cannot be expected to impose upon the law officers by asking them to produce an analysis or an opinion of a letter to the editor. As the honourable senator suggests, that opinion may come from someone eminent in the field, but—and I am trying to find a way to say it and not sound arrogant—it is irrelevant.

Senator Gigantès: Would the Leader of the Government get an opinion from a public servant other than a law officer of the Crown?

Senator Flynn: Not for you.

Senator Gigantès: Or is this subject not a subject that we can discuss any longer? Are you trying to preclude discussion of the effects on the country of the Meech Lake Accord?

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, I am not trying to preclude discussion about anything. The opinion of the professor expressed in a letter to the editor of the *Globe and Mail* is hardly one that Parliament or the government is required to take official notice of. I cannot help my honourable friend. The Senate chapter on Meech Lake is closed.

● (1410)

Senator Gigantès: However, Canada is not closed, I hope, and its Constitution is not closed. Is the minister saying to me that, if I took each of these questions and asked one of them for some 30 seconds per meeting, he would reply to me, "The chapter is closed"?

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, my friend is surrounded—

Senator Flynn: He does not understand!

Senator Murray:—in the Liberal caucus by Queen's Counsel to the left of him, Queen's Counsel to the right of him, Queen's Counsel all around him. I see a number of them here today. Let him seek a legal opinion from them as to the bien fondé of the opinion put forward by the professor.

Frankly, I do not wish to lecture the honourable senator on procedure, but this is not a proper matter for raising on the Orders of the Day. I should not be expected to comment, nor should the public servants or law officers of the Crown be expected to comment, on opinions in a letter to the editor of the *Globe and Mail*.

PRIVILEGE

Hon. Charles McElman: Honourable senators, may I raise a question of privilege? In the discussion that has just taken place the Honourable Senator Gigantès commented that he was a new Canadian.

Hon. Jacques Flynn: Yes.

Senator McElman: Senator Flynn interjected, "And you look like one, too!"

Senator Flynn: Yes.

Senator McElman: There is an inference to that, honourable senators—

Senator Flynn: Well, it's yours!

Senator McElman: Please, let me finish the point.

Senator Flynn: That's not your problem.

Senator McElman: It is; it is the problem of the Senate.

If I heard correctly, I would like Senator Flynn to take the opportunity to clear away any misconception that might be placed upon his remarks—

Senator Flynn: Which misconception?

Senator McElman:—as to how new Canadians might look. That is an inference that this Senate should not permit on its record.

Senator Flynn: Which misconception do you have about what I said? I meant that he does not know much about Canada. That is what I meant.

Hon. Philippe Deane Gigantès: Honourable senators—

Senator Flynn: Or especially about Quebec! That misconception is wrong.

Senator Gigantès:—since this matter of privilege concerns me, I should like to say that, if what Senator Flynn said can be interpreted as meaning that I do not look like him, I am quite prepared to accept that gratefully.

Senator Flynn: I had hoped that you would say that.

Senator McElman: I insist that there is an inference—

Senator Flynn: I insist that I said—

Senator McElman: I have the floor. Will you sit down? I have the floor! For once, obey the rules of the Senate and sit down! You cannot stand when another senator is standing and speaking.

Hon. William J. Petten (Acting Leader of the Opposition): Call "Order!"

Senator McElman: I am speaking to a question of privilege. You sit down.

Senator Flynn: So am I!

Senator McElman: You are not. I am speaking on a question of privilege. You should have the courtesy to clear the Senate record of any disparaging remarks that you made. You get away with too much!

Senator Flynn: And you do, too!

You said that there was a misconception. I asked you, "What misconception?" You did not answer. I explained what I meant by saying that Senator Gigantès looks like a new Canadian. That has been cleared; yet you come up again and try to continue the debate on this matter, which is of no concern to you.

Senator McElman: Oh?

Senator Petten: But it is.