

not, in fact, be exemptions at all. I wonder if the Leader of the Government is in a position to confirm or deny any of these rumours, and if he is not, what is the earliest date, on which he can provide some information to this chamber which has quite a number of people who have direct interest in this matter.

**Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations):** Honourable senators, I am always glad to hear the honourable senator's rumours. I agree it is probably time to put some facts on the record. I undertake to do so as soon as possible.

### CITIZENS' FORUM

COMPOSITION OF COMMISSION—NORTHERN REPRESENTATION—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Hon. Paul Lucier:** Honourable senators, I have a question on the Citizens' Forum. I am just wondering if we are seeing a repeat of the Meech Lake Accord process here, or is it the case that there was no one around from the north when the committee was being made up, and here we go again! We now have the committee made up to go and find out what Canadians think. It would appear that those who live below the Sixtieth Parallel can be members of that committee. Why have you again neglected the people of the north? Why is there not one northerner on that commission? After the Meech Lake fiasco—you found out at that time that Canadians north of the Sixtieth Parallel do count—why could you not, this one time, do something right? Why couldn't you put someone from the north on the commission?

**Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations):** Honourable senators, the panel itself is not in the form of a traditional royal commission. We did not try to appoint a panel that could begin to be fully representative of all parts of Canada and of all facets of Canadian society. The important thing is that the exercise, the Citizens' Forum, gives Canadians everywhere in Canada and of all backgrounds an opportunity to express their views and to exchange views with other Canadians about how they see the future of Canada. That is the purpose of the forum, and no significance should be attached to the fact that various geographical ethnic or language groups may not be represented on the panel. The panel was not intended to be representative in that sense.

**Senator Lucier:** Honourable senators, that is exactly the opposite of the truth. The fact is that the representatives on the panel come from Eastern Canada, Western Canada, Ontario, Quebec, the Prairie Provinces. They come from all the different regions. We have an aboriginal person on the panel and you are bragging about that token aboriginal. The Prime Minister yesterday was telling some lady in Toronto from the Italian community, "Oh gee, we forgot to put an Italian on; maybe we will put somebody on from one of those communities." What you are saying is exactly the opposite of the truth. The committee is made up of people from different parts of Canada representing different cultures, and that is the way it is supposed to be made up. The only problem is that you

[Senator Marsden.]

stopped short again. You stopped at the Sixtieth parallel. For God's sake, don't you know there is a north in this country!

**Senator Murray:** Honourable senators, I would have thought that the honourable senator would take some satisfaction from the fact that the panel is not stopping at the sixtieth. It is going north of the sixtieth for its very first series of meetings. Second, I regret very much the manner in which the honourable senator speaks of the "token" aboriginal on the panel. That person is there because of the personal qualities and background she brings to the task. And what his question suggests is that what he is looking for is a token northerner.

**Senator Lucier:** Senators, here we go again. I know who the token aboriginal on the committee is. I was repeating what you were saying to Senator Marchand. The aboriginal lady who is on the committee is a very qualified, very intelligent, strong representative and I welcome her to the committee.

**Senator Murray:** You are changing your tone.

**Senator Lucier:** Why don't you just sit down and be quiet for a minute and listen. You might learn something. You are trying to suggest now that sending Keith Spicer to Tuktoyaktuk should really satisfy the people of the north. Well, I am going to tell you, it is not going to satisfy them, and I am telling you that you are back on the road to making the same damn stupid mistake that you made the last time. You ignore the north, and then you send somebody up there and you say, "By the way, what do you think? Send us your information down south of the border and let us know what you are thinking." This is just a continuation of the stupidity that we have seen from this government since they have been in power.

**Senator Murray:** Honourable senators, by the time this exercise is over, the honourable senator will be trying to pretend that he thought of it.

**Senator Lucier:** That will be the day! I would like to say, honourable senators, that if I had thought of it—and I did not—it would have been structured a little bit differently. It would have represented all areas of Canada. I am not at all surprised that the minister, who is supposedly the Minister of Federal/Provincial Relations, who is supposed to consider the north when commissions of this type are put together, who is supposed to represent us, does not have the slightest idea what we are all about and has no interest in us. He has shown us this before.

### GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

COMMITMENT TO EASE EFFECT ON READING MATERIAL—STATEMENT OF PRIME MINISTER—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Hon. Eymard G. Corbin:** Honourable senators, in the course of the debate yesterday on the GST, some comments were made to the effect—and I don't have the precise quotes in front of me, but I think in this context loose quotes are sufficient to understand what I am coming to—comments were made to the effect that, "Oh, by golly, we never seriously looked at the effects the tax is going to have on reading material," and as the Prime Minister said in Burnaby, when