

*The Constitution*

the veto power of the Senate over this Chamber is removed. It should also be kept in mind that we are not considering all aspects of the Senate on this occasion. This is a limited measure and the broader questions will be considered later.

**Mr. Nunziata:** I have a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** I believe it is getting awfully close to one o'clock. If I received unanimous consent we could carry on.

**Mr. Nunziata:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** All right. It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock p.m. this day.

At one o'clock the House took recess.

**AFTER RECESS**

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** When the House rose at one o'clock, the Hon. Minister of Justice (Mr. Crosbie) had the floor.

**Mr. Crosbie:** Mr. Speaker, I will only be a few minutes in finishing my remarks. Although there must be a quorum, only the Leader of the Opposition is on the Liberal benches. The rest of them are gone.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** Order, please. I believe there is a quorum in the Chamber and I hope that Hon. Members will not reflect on the attendance in the Chamber. I see a sufficient number of my colleagues in the House. I hope the Hon. Minister will carry on with debate.

**Mr. Rossi:** There are only 10 Tory Members.

**Mr. Crosbie:** Mr. Speaker, normally the Liberal MPs are here and the Leader is not. Today, the Leader is here and none of his MPs are present—I am glad that four have struggled in.

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** Listening to you is a struggle.

**Mr. Crosbie:** I saw a movie on TV recently. It was about the last little band of gorillas left on Borneo. I must say that they had a lot in looks over you guys.

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** I noticed the Minister's knuckles scraping the ground every time he walks down the street.

**Mr. Crosbie:** Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Senate, I hope we are proven wrong when the NDP spokesman makes his remarks. If a Party wishes to have the Senate abolished totally, surely the logic of at least reducing the power of the Senate becomes overwhelming. I am expecting that before our

debate is finished we will hear that the NDP, even if it is reluctantly, will join us both here and in the legislatures of the provinces to see that the powers of the unelected Senate are curbed so that we may move on to debate in the next several years what should happen to the Senate in the ultimate sense.

For members of the NDP to take the position that they do not want a Senate at all and then refuse to help curb the powers of that same unelected body that they object to is so inconsistent and illogical that one does not expect even the NDP to stick to it.

You are no doubt aware that this amendment will require the consent of the legislative assemblies of at least seven provinces having at least 50 per cent of the population. We have consulted with the Premiers about the proposed amendment and I am pleased today to table letters of support from eight of the Premiers.

Premier Lévesque has informed the Government in writing that while the Government of Quebec does not oppose the substance of the resolution, it will not participate in the debate on the amendments until a solution has been found for Quebec's constitutional grievances of 1981.

There are two possibilities. Our Prime Minister, with his well known and well developed negotiating skills will reach an agreement with Mr. Lévesque that will provide a solution for those constitutional grievances, or there may be a change in the Province of Quebec at the next election that will produce a leader in Quebec who will be able to settle with the Government their constitutional grievances. I am still expecting that before the process has ended we will have the support of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Quebec.

In any event, Premier Lévesque has written and I will table his letter together with the letters from the other Premiers.

Premier Pawley has also advised us that the Manitoba Government prefers the abolition of the Senate and therefore will not endorse the proposed amendment. Even Premier Pawley, I believe, will see the logic of joining in at least reducing the powers of the Senate, even if the NDP cannot get what it perceives to be perfection, which is the total abolition of the Senate. May I table these letters, Mr. Speaker?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** The House would have to revert, by unanimous consent, to tabling of documents. Is there unanimous consent?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.