

THE SENATE

Tuesday, June 16, 1981

The Senate met at 8 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.
Prayers.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR IN GALLERY

HONOURABLE JOSEPH R. SMALLWOOD, P.C.

Hon. Frederick W. Rowe: Honourable senators, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that we have in the gallery tonight one of Canada's most distinguished citizens in the person of the Honourable J. R. Smallwood, the only living Father of Confederation.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

PRIVILEGE

STATEMENT BY SENATOR BONNELL

Hon. M. Lorne Bonnell: Honourable senators, I rise on a question of personal privilege, to call your attention to remarks that I have read in *Debates of the Senate* of Wednesday, June 10, 1981, at page 2501, by the Honourable Jean-Paul Deschatelets as follows:

I have therefore been authorized by Honourable Senators Cameron, Inman, Molson, Beaubien, Cook, Lang, Deschatelets, Thompson, Bell, Manning, Lafond, Lawson, and Bonnell, who subscribe to this declaration of independence, to request you, Mr. Speaker, to permit them to be seated together in the Senate Chamber.

Honourable senators, I should like to state emphatically that at no time did I discuss with the Honourable Senator Deschatelets the declaration of independence or ask that I be permitted to change my seating arrangement, and at no time did I discuss with the Honourable Senator Deschatelets the constitutional resolution which is now before the courts, either its pros or its cons.

I should further like to state that at the time the amendments were before the Senate I did not vote either pro or con, because I was out of the country at the time the vote on the amendments was taken.

Hon. Jacques Flynn (Leader of the Opposition): That's a good reason.

Senator Bonnell: However, if I could have been present, I would have voted in support of the constitutional resolution and its amendments.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Martial Asselin: Strike one out.

Senator Bonnell: Let me further state that if the Supreme Court of Canada should find the constitutional resolution and its amendments within the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Canada, I intend to support same.

Senator Flynn: The honourable senator's point of privilege should be on what Senator Deschatelets said. However, if he wants to start a debate, I have no objection.

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Government): He spoke about the Constitution.

Senator Flynn: Very good. Your Honour, if the honourable senator wants to raise a question of privilege because he was misquoted or misunderstood regarding sitting with the new group, that is his own business; but if he wants to discuss the constitutional package at this time, he will have to allow everyone to get into the debate.

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Senator Bonnell deserves the full parliamentary courtesies which should be extended to any member under circumstances of this kind. I am shocked to think that the Leader of the Opposition would rise in his place to dispute the matter.

Senator Flynn: I am never shocked when I am criticized by someone like the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

Senator Bonnell: Honourable senators, on page 2501, in the fourth paragraph, Senator Deschatelets states:

We believe that over the years we have lost sight of the original role that the Fathers of Confederation expected the Upper House to play—

I should like to state that I do not believe that I have lost sight of the original role that the Fathers of Confederation expected the Senate to play.

● (2005)

Senator Flynn: That is what the Prime Minister said!

Senator Bonnell: I have also found in my ten years in this chamber that I have been able to speak and vote with freedom of action. I have never been told, at any time, by the leader or the whip how I should vote on any issue.

I should further like to state that I have full confidence in the leadership of the Right Honourable Pierre Elliott Trudeau and of the Leader of the Government in the Senate, as well as of the honourable senators who are cabinet ministers.

An Hon. Senator: And our whip.

Some Hon. Senators: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Bonnell: And I include the deputy leader and our whip. Therefore, honourable senators, I would ask—