that I have consulted the practice and precedents of the past and determined that not only is it quite in order but it is accepted as a courtesy to await a message initiated in the other place. It is a matter of courtesy not to anticipate such a message by debating it prior to its arrival. If the situation were reversed and we were in the position of sending a message to the other place, asking them to concur in something, we would certainly not expect them to debate it in anticipation of its arrival. The honourable senator may not find my argument persuasive, but I tell him that in my view we are not being humiliated.

I am now given to understand that the motion has been passed in the Commons and that we can therefore expect to receive a message shortly. If you wish, honourable senators, we can adjourn during pleasure to await the arrival of that message. That is the procedure I recommend, having taken note of the fact that there are those who would prefer another procedure. I feel we ought to follow this procedure, in the hope that the next time there is a reverse situation and we are sending a message to the other place, as has happened often in the past, they will treat us in kind.

Hon. Heath Macquarrie: Honourable senators, since the house leader is being quite avuncular, in a pleasant way if I may say so, may I ask two questions? At the beginning of our sitting did he not have the precise form of the resolution which was being presented to the other house? And does he not agree that it is quite within the prerogatives of this chamber, and indeed in the whole gamut of Parliament, that resolutions—not just subsidiary motions on procedure, but joint resolutions—may arise simultaneously in both houses and that, in fact, the idea of waiting is not a fixed and immutable law such as that of the Medes and the Persians? In other words, there was, in fact—and I hope he will admit it—no reason at all why we could not have dealt with the same motion the other place was considering and have made our judgment upon it, because no one knows or can predict in the parliamentary process that both chambers will come up with identical answers. We have a perfect right to deal with the matter. We could have supported our committee members. We could have done that because that is our prerogative. That is why we put it to the two houses. That is the essence of bicameralism.

Senator Flynn: You never know. We may say no; we may say yes.

Senator Frith: Honourable senators, we may not concur in the message. That is true. For example, there is no impediment to the House of Commons adopting a motion—

Senator Flynn: Or refusing.

Senator Frith: For example, the House of Commons could adopt a motion asking a joint committee to do something, and then the Senate could adopt a motion on the same subject saying the opposite. That is possible, but it is desirable to avoid it. That is one of the reasons the accepted procedure has been to allow one of the chambers to initiate something and then send a message to the other chamber requesting concurrence. Something then is begun that can be dealt with in one form,

without having both houses acting coincidentally and possibly giving the committee two separate sets of instructions or advice on the same matter.

Senator Flynn: No.

Senator Frith: In my opinion that is the reason the practice I have referred to has arisen. It is to avoid confusing a joint committee, which is one body although it represents two chambers, by giving it two sets of conflicting instructions. We avoid that by having one chamber initiate the message. Whichever is the initiator does not really matter; the other simply waits to receive the message, and then concurs or does not concur in it.

Senator Macquarrie: I am sorry, honourable senators, but I wish to make one more point. Although I am not given to frequent and easy argumentation, I should like to take exception to the house leader's comment that it is desirable for one house to agree with the other. I submit that that is overstating the case. Each house makes its own judgment. It may be convenient for those who originate a particular document that both houses agree; but it is never better per se, surely, that House B agree with House A, or that House A agree with House B. It is a matter purely for each House to determine.

I thought the honourable deputy leader had made a rather fine statement of a very poor case, and the only exception I would take to it is the use of the word "desirable". I do not think it is any more desirable that we should agree than that we should disagree. It is most important that we make up our own minds.

Senator Frith: I agree. I am sorry if I gave the impression that I thought it was always desirable for us to agree. What I thought I was saying, and what I intended to say, was that it is desirable to avoid conflicting instructions being given to joint committees, because I do not believe it is possible, or, indeed, in order, for only one chamber to instruct or authorize a joint committee. In other words, I do not think it can, but that is what I meant by "desirable".

If I may restate it in other words, the reason the procedure is to have one or the other chamber initiate the instructions, and then have the other concur or not concur in them, is that the only instructions that a joint committee need heed are those that emanate from both houses. I do not believe that we could instruct that joint committee to do anything. The joint committee could simply say, "Oh, we are sorry; we are a joint committee and we cannot take instructions from the Senate alone. We have to take instructions from both chambers."

● (1500)

Senator Flynn: So far as the Senate is concerned, there should be no problem with adopting immediately the resolution concerning this matter. I am giving the Deputy Leader of the Government an opportunity to kill time.

Senator Frith: Yes, and I appreciate that. I want to record my appreciation for the opportunities given by both Senator Flynn and Senator Macquarrie. A problem that could arise in such a case lies with the wording. We must remember that