

what did he say? He ducked the question. Now, Senator Castonguay is from Quebec. He is in a far better position to deal with that question than I am. And if Senator Castonguay feels that it is desirable to evade the question, I cannot see why I should attempt to forecast the result of a negative vote in Quebec on future developments in Quebec.

Senator Perrault: Is this Question Period?

Senator MacDonald: My third question would be: What happens if there is a resounding "yes" vote and all of the information, all of the legal texts still have to be dealt with? Because I can pick as many flaws in this accord as anyone in this chamber. However, I really do not see the purpose in doing it. I admit that it is natural that it would arise in a motion just strictly on a referendum question, but we would still be in the position where we would have, as Churchill said, "Rah, rah, rah", instead of "War, war, war". And that is the question I am putting to you in your abstention.

Senator Stewart: I cannot say confidently that I understand the question, but I think I have an intimation of what the senator is getting at. I argued—and, if I am wrong, I hope that someone will not just say so, but will demonstrate that I am wrong—that the government's plans went awry when Mr. Clark went along with the premiers in July. He failed to fail. And from then on the other members of the government have been caught up in an avalanche not of their own making.

I do not think it is up to me, as one senator, to undertake to try to tell the government how it can, at this late date, get off that slope. Perhaps if the Prime Minister, when he returned from Europe, had said, "No way. We will not be carried along by one member of the government"—Let us remember that Mr. Wilson spoke out and also other members of the cabinet. Perhaps at that point, this derailment might have been stopped by the government without much grief.

But at this late date, I cannot give them a remedy for their plight. I do not think it is incumbent upon me to try to do so. They have the responsibility. Do not apply to me for salve for these self-inflicted wounds.

Hon. Noel A. Kinsella: Honourable senators, if I may ask a question in clarification, I am interested in the honourable senator's argument relating to the Senate as conceptualized in the Charlottetown Consensus Report.

Do you find no element of bicameralism in that proposal? And if you think there is an element, obviously new, can it work?

Senator Stewart: I thank the honourable senator for his question. Let us put aside, first, the question of bills that appropriate money. Senator Everett, I felt, opened up that problem quite effectively.

If we define an appropriation bill as one that requires a Royal Recommendation—sections 53 and 54 comprise the only place in which the word "appropriation" appears in the Constitution now—then the free trade bill with the United

States could be classified as an appropriation bill. It appropriated money and was introduced in the House of Commons with a Royal Recommendation.

It may be that the definition of appropriation bills—of money bills, to use language which we have heard here repeatedly—will be narrowed down to include only bills based on Estimates. That takes us to the second category of bills—most of the others. If such a bill is defeated or amended in the Senate, there is to be a joint session of the 62 senators and the 337 members of the House of Commons.

We can anticipate two situations in the House of Commons. There will be the situation where the government of the day will have a good working majority. In that case they can readily out-vote in a joint session even a unanimous Senate.

The 62 senators in a joint sitting might be decisive against a very closely balanced House of Commons, but surely that is precisely the situation in which a second chamber is not required to check the executive.

Insofar as bills that materially affect French language or French culture are concerned, I think we are into some uncertain waters.

First, what is a francophone senator? Is it one who can pass a language test, or is it someone who, although his or her French may be amateurish, genuinely represents a considerable francophone population?

Let us imagine a situation in which there are 12 Francophone senators, five from Quebec, seven from outside. We then have a situation where a tie vote will defeat a motion, notwithstanding that, at the logical extreme, every member of the 337 members in the House of Commons and all the other senators are on the other side.

Let me say two things in conclusion. First, the Senate now projected is diametrically opposite to the Senate that Premier Getty and Premier Wells initially advocated. They lost out in the negotiations.

Second, it seems to me that this proposed Senate, partly composed of senators popularly elected, partly composed of national delegates, with its limited powers, is going to be so insignificant that this Senate will amount to nothing other than a very expensive nuisance. If we must go in this direction, if this is the only reform of the Senate now available to us, let us abolish the Senate and be rid of it.

[Translation]

Senator Norbert L. Thériault: Honourable senators, I would like to express very briefly my thoughts and my position on the motion before us today.

As I did during the debate in 1990 on the Meech Lake Accord, I have carefully read everything I could find about the agreement that is being submitted to a referendum.

Today, as usual, I carefully listened to the people who are supposed to be constitutional and parliamentary experts, including Senators Everett, Pitfield and Stewart.