

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: As honourable gentlemen will observe, the Commons have amended their motion so as to permit of joint sittings of the two committees. It is obvious that as between the two Houses this is the only way to determine on the character of the proposed celebration. Assuming that honourable gentlemen are in accord with this move:

That a message be sent to the House of Commons informing that body that to the resolution adopted by the Senate on Wednesday, the seventh day of February, appointing a committee to consider and report upon the Fiftieth Anniversary of Confederation, the following words be added:

"And that the committee is hereby empowered to meet in joint sittings with the like committee of the House of Commons."

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: I have not the slightest objection to this motion, but recently I had occasion to form a decided opinion against joint committees of the two Houses.

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: Though they sit at the same time, they are not a joint committee.

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: It is a joint committee in that sense, just as was the committee to which I am going to refer. During our last sitting my honourable friend moved to have a committee appointed to deal with the question of returned soldiers. I was a member of that committee. I was advised by one of the clerks of the House of Commons, and I imagine that other members of the committee received a similar notice, that the committee of the House of Commons would sit on a certain day, and that if the members of this House were so disposed they might come and sit there also. I think that was about the meaning of it. I have not got the notice with me. I am not quite sure whether any other member of this House attended on that day; I think I was alone. Possibly my honourable friend from Moosejaw (Hon. J. H. Ross) was present.

Hon. Mr. DANIEL: The honourable senator from Montarville (Hon. Mr. Beaubien) was there.

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: I think I was the only member of the committee present when the meeting began. When I got there I found that the committee of the House of Commons had already met, chosen its chairman and appointed its clerk; these gentlemen took possession of the chairs, and told us that we might sit anywhere we chose and could listen, and perhaps put a

few questions. I did not like the proceedings very much, but as I was there I thought I should sit it out. We were simply considered at the utmost as an adjunct to that committee.

An hon. SENATOR: On sufferance.

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: On sufferance. The next day the chairman called me to order because I was asking questions that he thought I should not ask, and I was asked in more or less polite language to desist. We were told, "If you fellows only shut up we will do some business." that was the effect of it. I made up my mind that I would not sit any longer on a committee of that kind. The committee afterwards sat in Montreal two days and in Toronto one day, and I have just received notice that it is going to sit to-morrow at half past two.

I have not formed a very favourable opinion of joint committees of the two Houses, and take this opportunity of drawing attention to the manner in which these joint committees work. I have no confidence in committees of that sort bringing forth anything very useful and think I owe it to the Senate to call its attention to the way members of this House have been treated. I do not know how my honourable friend from Moosejaw feels about it, but I think if he or any other member of the House had been present, they would share my views.

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: I think there is a misapprehension in regard to the matter to which my honourable friend quite properly directs the attention of the House, although in one way my honourable friend is quite right. The Senate committee was never organized; the Commons committee was organized and sat simply as a Commons committee, appointed its chairman and secretaries and whatever officers are necessary to perform the duties of the committee. Possibly to some extent the fault is my own; but the explanation is that on the last day of the session, ten minutes before we adjourned for the members to go to their homes, I was notified on behalf of the Commons that a motion had been moved in the Commons appointing such a committee, and it was suggested that we should appoint a similar committee—not that it should be a joint committee. It was a matter for our own discretion to appoint that committee, and we should have organized; but it was too late to do so, as the Senate adjourned within