Senator Frith: He never said that.

Senator Flynn: You did say that.

Senator Perrault: No, I did not.

Senator Flynn: You said that.

Senator Frith: No, he did not.

Senator Perrault: No, I did not.

Some Hon. Senators: No, no.

Senator Flynn: You said that, and we will look at the official report tomorrow, Your Honour, and will see if the reporter heard him. He certainly speaks loudly enough to be heard. He said that I had arranged—

Some Hon. Senators: No, no.

Senator Frith: No, he said that you suggested that he had arranged the absence—

Senator Flynn: He said that you had arranged it yourself?

Senator Perrault: Let me explain what the situation is.

Senator Flynn: Yes, you had better explain it.

Senator Perrault: The Honourable Senator Stollery directed his question, in the first instance, to the Honourable Senator Tremblay.

Senator Smith: No, he didn't. Senator Tremblay was not here.

Senator Perrault: He said he had hoped to address his question to Senator Tremblay. He said that in Senator Tremblay's absence alternatively he had hoped to have the opportunity of questioning Senator Murray. And then the Leader of the Opposition—

Senator Flynn: I am speaking about what you said.

Senator Perrault: The Leader of the Opposition, in a petulant display contrary to the traditions of this chamber, suggested that somehow we had a prior arrangement for me to make a speech on this occasion. I merely drew to the attention of honourable senators that I had nothing to do with the absence of Senator Tremblay this evening, and I had nothing to do with the absence of Senator Murray.

Senator Flynn: I never said that.

Senator Perrault: But I will tell you that the honourable senator has asked a very appropriate question.

Senator Smith: Sure, at your suggestion.

Senator Perrault: This so-called joint committee, this "kangaroo court," which has been convened by Honourable Senators Murray and Tremblay, is not acting in the best traditions of Parliament by proceeding with its deliberations without a representative group of members from the other chamber serving on the committee. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition must know that that is unacceptable and a parliamentary disgrace.

This Conservative Party, which is lecturing Canadians from coast to coast these days—

Senator Smith: He's mad now!

Senator Perrault: —about upholding parliamentary tradition and the customs of Parliament, is trampling those traditions into the dust, so far as this so-called joint committee is concerned.

Some Hon. Senators: Oh, oh.

Senator Perrault: There is no acceptance at all by the Conservative opposition of the point that certain members of the House of Commons cannot in conscience attend these joint committee meetings. Certain members of the other place have stated that according to *Erskine May* they cannot attend those meetings while the Commons bell is ringing; that in conscience they must absent themselves from committees. That argument has no weight at all so far as Senator Tremblay, Senator Murray and the Leader of the Opposition are concerned. Their policy is to ram ahead with joint committee meetings which have no legitimacy in any meaningful sense in the realm of parliamentary tradition and justice.

Senator Flynn: Honourable senators, I think I should rise on a point of privilege, at least. I may say as a preamble that it is a very pitiful picture the Leader of the Government offers to the Senate when he makes that kind of speech and defends the government against anything that might be said about it. So servile is the Leader of the Government that, to my memory, I have not seen the equivalent anywhere in my 25 years in this place and the other place. It is shameful.

• (2030)

Secondly, with regard to the question raised by Senator Stollery, I do not know whether he is a member of that committee, but I do know that Senator Guay is a member and that, if there was a desire to have the Senate and the Liberal Party represented at that committee meeting, they merely had to attend. The committee was only hearing witnesses. There is no justification for their absence. There is no reason for Senator Stollery crying or complaining about the committee proceeding, under the circumstances, when he merely had to go to the meeting. But if he wants to be a servile senator, at the service of the Prime Minister and of the servile Leader of the Government in this place—

Senator Perrault: That is unparliamentary language.

Senator Flynn: —then that is up to him.

Senator Stollery: Honourable senators, I rise on the same question of privilege. The Leader of the Opposition in the Senate has intimated that I would lend myself to what I consider an illegal meeting to give it legitimacy. I certainly would not do such a thing.

Senator Flynn: Oh, no? Go back into your place and stay there.

Hon. Martial Asselin: Because you were instructed not to go.

Senator Smith: Honourable senators, I wish to draw to the attention of the Leader of the Government and Senator Stol-