

I conveyed that message to the minister, who agreed to be here at 6 o'clock on Tuesday evening. Realizing that the schedules of ministers are not always easily adjusted, I did take the opportunity to make that arrangement with him. I sincerely hope that those senators who are interested in this matter can be in the chamber then. In any event, that is the time that has been arranged.

Senator Frith: Honourable senators, I do not want to leave the impression, as apparently I have with Senator Doody, that I felt that we should not discuss this matter in Committee of the Whole unless we had checked with all senators to make sure that it met with their convenience. That is not my position at all. When we set dates for this sort of thing, including dates for votes and so on, we try to suit the convenience of those persons most interested. I want to suit the convenience of the minister. I merely add this as a caveat: I think we should also consider the particular senators who are interested.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. C. William Doody (Deputy Leader of the Government), with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 45(1)(g), moved:

That when the Senate adjourns today, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday next, 31st May, 1988, at two o'clock in the afternoon.

Motion agreed to.

THE SENATE

ACTING OPPOSITION LEADER IN ABSENCE OF OPPOSITION LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER FROM CHAMBER

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, Senator MacEachen is away on the business of the Foreign Affairs Committee. Incidentally, the meeting at 6 o'clock on Tuesday of the Committee of the Whole would also conflict with the meeting of the Foreign Affairs Committee, but that is another consideration which I am sure we can work out.

In addition, I have to leave now for a speaking engagement in Cobourg. I wish to advise honourable senators that in our absence Senator Petten will be the Acting Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Doody: Send a message to the House of Commons!

Senator Frith: If Senator Doody is asking for leave to send a message to the House of Commons to that effect, I am prepared to grant leave.

If there are any procedural nitpickers—and I am sure there are not!—Senator Petten ought to have leave to occupy the seat of the Leader of the Opposition, since the rules provide that he is not permitted to speak unless he rises in his place.

[Senator Doody.]

This being his place until further notice, I take it he has such leave.

QUESTION PERIOD

THE CONSTITUTION

CONSTITUTIONAL ACCORD, 1987—POSSIBILITY OF AMENDMENTS UNDER

SEVEN-PROVINCES-50-PER-CENT-OF-THE-POPULATION RULE

Hon. Philippe Deane Gigantès: Honourable senators, I should like to ask a question of the Leader of the Government in the Senate. I shall supply him with a photocopy of a newspaper clipping from the *Globe and Mail* that I have in my possession. Would the Leader of the Government ask one of his experts to refute an argument made by the eminent Professor of Law, Dr. Bryan Schwartz? Dr. Schwartz said that there are almost no amendments that can be made under the seven-provinces-50-per-cent-of-the-population rule after Meech Lake is passed. I know there are probably disagreements with that.

I would be grateful to the Leader of the Government if he could give a more satisfactory answer than last time, when he said, "Well, you don't understand." I wish to understand, and I would like a careful answer to a question that is honestly meant.

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): Honourable senators, I don't doubt that the question is honestly meant. However, I do not know what the honourable senator expects of me. If he is looking for a legal opinion, he should seek one from a lawyer in private practice or from a lawyer who is acting for his party. Surely he cannot expect me to impose upon the law officers of the Crown and ask them to provide an analysis of an opinion that turns up in the "Letters to the Editor" column in the *Globe and Mail*.

Senator Gigantès: Honourable senators, this opinion directly contradicts things which—

Senator Flynn: Who cares, other than you?

Senator Gigantès: Senator Flynn, you may not care about the effect of the Constitution on the country—

Senator Flynn: I do not care what you say.

Senator Gigantès: But as a new Canadian—

Senator Flynn: And you look like one, too!

Senator Gigantès:—I do not have your habit of not worrying about the viability of this country. Like Mr. Robertson Davies, I worry about Canada.

If this article contradicts statements that the Leader of the Government has made here in this chamber, I think they should concern him since they are contradictions of things he has said.