

someone who has been a victim of this rule, I feel probably a little more strongly about it than some other senators might. The rule has been exercised towards me, I think, three times. I feel pretty sensitive about someone else deciding how long I can speak when some other senators get more time.

I have nothing against any other senator, but I do not believe any senator's rights are superior to my rights in this chamber. Let us get that straight. If there is to be these kinds of deals, as you call it, and other arrangements set up, then let us stop them right now. If that is what we are leading into then I can tell you that unanimous consent is not forthcoming.

**Senator MacEachen:** I had thought that we might attempt to solve this particular problem, namely how we deal with the debate on the constitution which is extremely important.

**Senator Olson:** That is no more important than some of the things that I brought up in this chamber.

**Senator Barootes:** My good Lord, man!

**Senator Olson:** Nor more important than the economic plight of farmers out there. Let us not set up different kinds of debates. I tell you that equality, at least in this place, ought to prevail and I intend to see that it does. I will not withhold consent today but I do not accept for any reason rules that will create different classes of senators.

**Senator MacEachen:** Honourable senators, I think that I had a solution to the senator's difficulty, namely equality. I proposed that in this debate, which I described as an important debate not a more important one, Senator Beaudoin be given unlimited time, and that any other senator who wishes to speak be given the same treatment, thereby establishing and firmly anchoring in the agreement the principle of equality so strongly put forward by my colleague to the right. I must say that he has been uncharacteristically forceful today. He only exhibited similar forcefulness when he addressed the chief justice of the court, and that was a historic day.

**Senator Olson:** They fixed that, too, with their rules.

**Senator MacEachen:** Can we agree seriously to deal with the matter in this way? Otherwise well be in a mess.

**Hon. Gildas L. Molgat (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** As far as we are concerned we are quite prepared to agree to that suggestion made by Senator MacEachen. Therefore we are quite prepared to proceed in that way and have it ordered for this debate, which is undoubtedly an extremely important debate for Canada. When you take the long view, it is very rare that senators have abused the time of this house. The problem with the rules is that we are harking back to the GST debate of last year and we are imposing rules because of that situation. However, we are not in that state in the Senate now and I think we could have much more relaxed rules.

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Is it agreed that Senator Beaudoin continue?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**Senator Beaudoin:** If I may speak, I am sure I will terminate my remarks before 6 o'clock.

[Senator Olson.]

[Translation]

**Senator Beaudoin:** So I was talking about the paragraph dealing with the asymmetry mentioned in our report. I start again with the first sentence. There are in the Constitution of 1867 some forms of asymmetry people often tend to forget. And as I said, the spirit of the Halifax conference in mid-January was like a breath of fresh air in this respect. Let us hope that this spirit is not dead. We will need it in the months to come and for the final proposals. We can imagine here, if necessary, and it is explained in the report, a few rival powers with a prevalence sometimes federal, sometimes provincial; one can use a direct asymmetry, and finally it can be limited by using the federal spending power.

As far as federalism is concerned, the fundamental dilemma has always been the same one in Canada: the English-speaking provinces generally want a strong central power and Quebec on its part likes a some decentralization.

**Senator Corbin:** I am sorry, honorable senator, but I would like to ask you a question on a point of order which is crucial. You talked about Quebec and the English-speaking provinces. But there is one province which is not English-speaking, it is New Brunswick which is an officially bilingual province. I would ask you to take that into account.

**Senator Beaudoin:** Then eight English-speaking provinces and one province—

• (1730)

[English]

**Senator Sylvain:** No wonder the country is going to hell.

**Senator Corbin:** If you find that a laughing matter, laugh your heart out. It is a shame that you take that attitude in this house.

**Senator Roblin:** I don't lose my temper as easily as you do.

**Senator Corbin:** I can control myself, but I find that despicable.

[Translation]

**Senator Beaudoin:** It is relatively easy. Quebec wants some decentralization, while other provinces are generally calling for centralization.

True asymmetry, concurrent powers, federal spending power: three ways to resolve this dilemma for Canada, and for one of its provinces, Quebec. One also can, if necessary, provide in the latter case for direct payments to the provinces.

We looked at the distribution of powers in 24 areas: residual power, declaratory power, immigration, legislative delegation, labour market training, tourism, forestry, mining, urban affairs, recreation, housing, spending power, culture, inland fisheries, personal bankruptcy, marriage and divorce, broadcasting, safeguard mechanism for intergovernmental agreements, also family policy, health, education, social services, energy and regional development. We are recommending changes and transfers, as well as the status quo in some cases. I repeat, twenty-four powers. Therefore I just don't know what