

will have to be present on Friday so that it cannot be said that the committee did not report by the deadline because the Senate was not sitting.

From preliminary advice I have received I do not think there is any such problem, but if I have anything more definite I will share that information.

• (1520)

Senator Grosart: I am suggesting that there surely cannot be such a problem because I do not see how any committee can tell the Senate or the House of Commons when they shall sit.

Senator Frith: No, but the problem is that the Senate and the House of Commons can tell the committee by what time it shall report.

Senator Grosart: Of course.

Senator Frith: "Report" in accordance with the wording we have, means "submit its report."

Senator Grosart: Yes.

Senator Frith: Therefore, if the Senate says to a committee, "Thou shalt submit thy report by a certain date," then the question is: Does the Senate have to sit to receive the report, at least by the time of the deadline that is set? In my opinion, it does not.

Senator Grosart: Agreed.

Senator Frith: However, I do not have a perfect answer to this yet.

Senator Lamontagne: Does the Deputy Leader of the Government think, if we receive the report before Friday, that the Senate should sit on Friday in order to accelerate the debate on its adoption?

Senator Asselin: Before Friday.

Senator Frith: I think that is a very good suggestion. We will have to discuss this when we see exactly what happens. However, I understand the point raised by Senator Lamontagne. Depending on what day of the week we do receive the report, we should give thought to whether we proceed with the debate.

The other issue that exists, of course, is that some senators may think we should wait for the debate in the other place to take place before we debate the matter here.

Senator Asselin: That is a good point.

Senator Frith: I do not share that opinion, but I respect the view of those who do, and I want to hear what they have to say

about it. That is certainly included as part of the question raised by Senator Lamontagne.

Hon. Duff Roblin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I do not think there is any necessity to debate the last point at any length this afternoon because we do not yet know what the proposal from the other side will be.

I only wish to reserve my position because I have some doubt as to whether I am fully in accord with Senator Lamontagne on the point he put forward. I do think that we on this side would like to reserve our position to fully debate the matter when it comes up.

Motion agreed to.

[Translation]

THE CONSTITUTION

DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA AND PRIME MINISTER OF GREAT BRITAIN—NOTICE OF QUESTION

Hon. Martial Asselin: Honourable senators, it had been decided that there would be no question period today, and I respect that decision. I want to give the Leader of the Government verbal notice of an important question. So I give him notice now that next week I will ask him to make a formal statement on the contradictory statements made in the other place by the Prime Minister and other ministers regarding discussions with the Prime Minister and other ministers of Great Britain about the admissibility of the resolution of the House of Commons and the Senate on the Constitution. I therefore give notice that next week I will ask for a statement from the government.

[English]

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I appreciate the courtesy of Senator Asselin in giving me notice of his intention to ask a question respecting certain allegations that contradictory statements have been made. I hope to provide compelling evidence next week that there is nothing contradictory about the position of the government or the Prime Minister with respect to this matter.

Senator Asselin: I can tell you right now that I am not too sure.

Senator Steuart: Be of good faith.

The Senate adjourned until Tuesday, February 10, 1981, at 8 p.m.