

I should like to get an undertaking from my honourable friend that in whatever form the report appears on our desks, when there is one, we will have an opportunity to amend the resolution in the same style as we do in Committee of the Whole and in the same style as can be done in regular legislation as the minister said would be the case.

● (1435)

Senator Perrault: Honourable senators, if there is a request by the honourable senator that there be a Committee of the Whole stage where clause by clause we can consider the Address to Her Majesty, which includes proposed constitutional amendments, I do not believe that at this time I can give assurances of formal Committee of the Whole consideration—but equivalent opportunities, I suggest, will be provided. In other words, if any honourable senator wishes to amend a certain section, that senator would have the right to rise in his place and make a motion to amend. The Senate then would have the right and the opportunity to debate such a motion and to discuss that proposal to change the Address to Her Majesty. The motion would be subject to voting procedures in the house. There would be no barrier to that kind of procedure. It would be the Senate acting, as it has in the past, as master of its own rules. If the senator wishes to launch that kind of endeavour, I want to assure him that he will enjoy the full co-operation of the government.

Senator Roblin: I am never very comfortable with the ad hoc procedures that are invented by my honourable friend on the spur of the moment, as I rather suspect he has been doing for the last little while. However, I guess I am not going to get much out of him today so I will have to be content with the observation that maybe he has moved a little way in my direction, so I appreciate that. I would like him, however, to deal a little more with the question of the revival of the committee. He has told us that he would regard it as a matter of courtesy that the other house would agree to a revival of the committee if it were recommended by this chamber. Would it be the policy of the government to advise the other house and this chamber to agree to a revival of the committee should either house request it? There is a difference between policy and my honourable friend's opinion.

Senator Perrault: Honourable senators, that question will be taken as notice, but as I said earlier, I would regard it as a courtesy that this place would extend to the House of Commons should a similar circumstance occur over there.

Senator Roblin: I should hope so.

Hon. John M. Godfrey: Honourable senators, I direct a question to the Leader of the Government. He referred to the greater opportunity the public will have for input by having this matter referred to a committee. I received representations from one organization pointing out that in one respect the public will not be able to participate as much because the proceedings will not be televised as are the debates in the House of Commons. My question is: Is the government considering the possibility of televising the committee's proceedings? If the proceedings are not to be televised, will they at least be

videotaped? This is a very historic occasion and there should be a videotape made of the proceedings.

Senator Perrault: Consideration is being given to the possibility of telecasting the proceedings in living colour.

MEETING OF CANADIAN CABINET MINISTERS WITH BRITISH
PRIME MINISTER

[Translation]

Hon. Martial Asselin: Honourable senators, I would like to put a question to the government leader. When the two ministers of the federal government, Mr. Roberts and Mr. MacGuigan, went to London to meet with representatives of the British government, was there during the discussions a recommendation made by the British Prime Minister to the effect that the Address presented by the Parliament of Canada would be acceptable if the said Address did not contain a Charter of Rights?

● (1440)

[English]

Senator Perrault: Honourable senators, I must take that question as notice. As far as my understanding goes, I do not know whether that was discussed.

STATEMENT BY PREMIER OF SASKATCHEWAN

Hon. Duff Roblin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I should like to ask the Leader of the Government in this house a question in connection with the statement made last night by the Premier of Saskatchewan, in which he indicated several factors of concern to him in the present constitutional package, and on which he expressed an opinion that varied somewhat from the policy so far laid down. Is it the intention of the Government of Canada to respond publicly to Mr. Blakeney's initiatives in this respect.

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): That question will be taken as notice.

MEETING OF CANADIAN CABINET MINISTERS WITH BRITISH
PRIME MINISTER

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have some information that has just been handed to me with respect to the situation in the United Kingdom, at least in partial answer to Senator Asselin's previous question.

No United Kingdom minister has ever requested Canada to modify the substance of its constitutional package. It is inconceivable that the United Kingdom government, given its respect for the constitutional conventions between our two Parliaments, would do so. In fact, only yesterday Lord Hailsham, the Lord Chancellor, confirmed in the House of Lords that there is no change in the constitutional position of the United Kingdom government; that it would be in accordance with precedent for the United Kingdom government to introduce in the United Kingdom Parliament, and for Parlia-

ment to enact, legislation complying with a Canadian request to patriate.

Senator Asselin: Patriate? And amend?

Hon. G. I. Smith: I should like to ask the Leader of the Government a question which I suppose might be considered supplementary to that. I have in my hand what is purported to be a quotation from the *Manchester Guardian* of yesterday. I am sure the Leader of the Government will agree with me that that is one of the more respected newspapers in the United Kingdom. It reports a senior minister of the United Kingdom government as saying:

—"that if the present discussions with Mr. Pierre Trudeau's Liberal Government failed to persuade the Canadians to withdraw their request for a Bill of Rights, there would be a major hold-up in legislation planned for the new parliamentary session."

"It could wreck the whole thing," the minister is quoted as saying.

Senator Thompson: What is the name of the minister?

Senator Smith: I am just quoting what is in the report that I have before me. My question is simply whether or not this report has come to the attention of the government, and whether they believe there is anything valid in the alleged quotation.

Senator Perrault: Perhaps the Honourable Senator Smith would be willing to provide us with the name of the unnamed minister, if he has that information. We would be glad to know that as well.

Senator Smith: I would do so gladly if I had it. I was merely quoting what is alleged to have appeared in the *Manchester Guardian*. I would be glad to send it across to the Leader of the Government.

Senator Perrault: Honourable senators, I am aware of the article. The *Guardian* article was by an anonymous writer, purporting to have had a conversation with an anonymous minister, and I question the value of interviews of that quality. However, it can be said that no minister of the British Crown has ever asked this country to modify the substance of its constitutional package.

Senator Flynn: Not as yet.

[Translation]

Senator Asselin: Honourable senators, I would like to point out to the Leader of the Government that perhaps we should also question the comments made by the CBC reporter in London who yesterday repeated the same story and the same facts, namely that ministers of the British government had indicated that if the resolution included a charter of rights that part of the resolution might be sent back and they would simply patriate the Constitution with or without amendment.

[English]

Senator Perrault: It may be helpful, honourable senators, if some of these reports were to quote the names of the ministers in question, and if, in fact, the ministers holding these views,

[Senator Perrault.]

say whether they are prepared to state them publicly. Nothing of that kind has been said in any conversations with Canadian officials or ministers. I think that all members of the Senate and of the other place, and Canadians generally, would resent very much an attempt by another Parliament to frustrate efforts by Canadians to patriate their Constitution.

THE BUDGET

ALLEGED STATEMENT ON NATURAL GAS EXPORT TAX BY MINISTER OF STATE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Lowell Murray: Honourable senators, I have a question for the Minister of State for Economic Development arising out of a statement attributed to him in Calgary the other day concerning tonight's budget. The newspaper report says:

If an export tax on natural gas is contained in Tuesday's federal budget, it could be moderated in the future providing Alberta and Ottawa agree on an energy-pricing package, Senator Bud Olson says.

Then the direct quotation that is attributed to the minister is as follows:

Whatever comes out of the budget, we'll leave the door wide open if the producing provinces want to come to the table and are willing to give a little. If any (pricing) agreement is reached some time in the future, we would adjust some things in the budget.

My question is this: Is it now the policy of the Government of Canada, and will it be the practice of Mr. MacEachen when introducing tax measures, simply to be launching trial balloons and chips for further negotiation with the provinces, the private sector or other players in the Canadian economy?

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of State for Economic Development): No, honourable senators, it is not, and that is an erroneous, or at least a misinterpretation—

Senator Murray: They have misquoted you again.

Senator Olson: No, it is not a misquote. I never complain about being misquoted.

Senator Roblin: Hardly ever.

Senator Olson: I know that I am very often misinterpreted, and by honourable gentlemen opposite—

Senator Roblin: Consistently.

Senator Olson:—who are making a profession out of that.

Senator Murray: Don't be so thin-skinned.

Senator Olson: I understand that, because I occupied an opposition seat in this chamber for some time. To get back to the substance of what is involved in what is raised by Senator Murray, I said also—and perhaps you should quote that too—that I regret that we have to be in the position of bringing in a federal budget in the absence of an energy agreement, especially a pricing agreement with respect to the producing provinces. Perhaps it is not even in the article, but I was there