

THE SENATE

Thursday, June 12, 1980

The Senate met at 2 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.
Prayers.

REGULATIONS AND OTHER STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

STANDING JOINT COMMITTEE—CHANGE IN COMMONS MEMBERSHIP

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons to acquaint the Senate that the name of Mr. Nielsen had been substituted for that of Mr. Hnatyshyn on the list of members appointed to serve on the Standing Joint Committee on Regulations and other Statutory Instruments.

INTERNAL ECONOMY, BUDGETS AND ADMINISTRATION

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE BUDGETS TABLED

Hon. B. Alasdair Graham, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration, tabled reports approving budgets of the following committees:

- Banking, Trade and Commerce;
- Foreign Affairs;
- Health, Welfare and Science;
- National Finance.

(For texts of reports, see today's Minutes of the Proceedings of the Senate.)

REPORT APPROVING SALARY REVISIONS TABLED

Hon. B. Alasdair Graham, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration, tabled a schedule of authorized salary revisions for certain Senate positions, effective April 1, 1980, as approved by the committee today.

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 45(1)(g), I move that when the Senate adjourns today it do stand adjourned until Tuesday next, June 17, 1980, at 8 o'clock in the evening.

Hon. Jacques Flynn (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, the motion as put is, of course, quite customary, and I have no problem with it. However, I think this is a good

occasion on which to ask the Deputy Leader of the Government what the intentions are for the following two weeks. Is it the intention of the Senate to sit on the Wednesdays following June 24 and July 1?

Senator Frith: The present intention is to sit on those days.

Senator Flynn: Which days?

Senator Frith: The Wednesday after St. Jean Baptiste Day and the Wednesday after July 1. It is also our intention to consult with our counterparts, when we know what kind of business we are going to be dealing with, and decide whether it would be worthwhile for us to come back for both those weeks.

Senator Flynn: Would you say that we would be sitting on the Wednesday afternoon in both cases?

Senator Frith: Yes.

Senator Flynn: I understand there may be some interest on your side in regard to not sitting in the week of July 1, in view of the events of the following weekend.

Motion agreed to.

QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

THE CONSTITUTION

ABSENCE OF OIL-PRICING AGREEMENT—EFFECT ON SEPTEMBER MEETING OF FIRST MINISTERS

Hon. R. James Balfour: Would the Leader of the Government tell us if it is the policy of the government that an agreement on oil pricing with the energy-producing provinces is critical to the achievement of success in the constitutional negotiations now under way?

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, this is an important question. The government, of course, would like to have that as a prior condition. The matter is presently being discussed.

Senator Balfour: As a supplementary, is the Leader of the Government aware of the fact that yesterday Premier Blakeney of Saskatchewan joined Premier Lougheed in suggesting that there is a direct relationship between the two sets of talks, and that the absence of an oil-pricing agreement will directly affect the chances for success of the constitutional negotiations in September?

Senator Perrault: The government is aware of certain positions taken by certain premiers with respect to the talks and

the priorities which have been established by these governments. It should be borne in mind that statements have been made by other provincial and party leaders on other aspects of the talks. This process is not unexpected. The information is known to the government.

Senator Balfour: As a final supplementary, would the leader tell us if the government agrees with the sentiments expressed by Premier Blakeney and if it still expects resolution of the oil-pricing situation before the existing agreement expires on July 1?

Senator Perrault: I think the honourable senator is aware that strenuous efforts have been made by representatives of the federal government to achieve some agreement with respect to oil pricing. Those efforts are continuing and will continue during the weeks to come. Hopefully this matter can be resolved in advance of the September meeting of first ministers.

AIRLINES

APPLICATION OF EASTERN PROVINCIAL AIRWAYS TO EXTEND SERVICES

Hon. Heath Macquarrie: Honourable senators, my question relates to the air service between Halifax and Toronto sought by Eastern Provincial Airways. An appeal was launched to the cabinet not long ago. I base my question on a remark attributed to the Minister of Transport the other day, to the effect that there are people in the maritimes who prefer the CP service. I should like to say, as a preamble to my question, that there are some, a few, in that category, and I would also say, "Shame on them."

I would ask the Leader of the Government to bear in mind the importance and significance of EPA to the total Atlantic economy, especially Prince Edward Island. Can he give us an indication when the cabinet may be acting upon the very important appeal for the reversal of a very wrong decision?

• (1410)

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, first of all, may I say that in the view of most Canadians who are well served by the air carriers of this nation, including Air Canada, CP Air and Eastern Provincial Airways, these are three good airlines. There are many others in this country. Secondly, may I say that the question of routes in Atlantic Canada, and connections to Toronto, has been of active interest to many members of cabinet. Discussions have been held during the past week. I personally, as a government minister, have been involved in meetings with both Canadian Pacific and EPA, and I think that a useful solution is going to be found to this particular problem.

THE CONSTITUTION

ASPECTS OF SENATE STUDY

Hon. Orville H. Phillips: Honourable senators, I would like to direct a question to the Leader of the Government. My

question is based on item number four on the order paper, the motion made by the Honourable Senator Lamontagne, and the amendment made by the Honourable Senator Flynn. The Task Force on Canadian Unity listed seven functions of a second chamber, and then went on to state that this chamber has failed in all except the first two. Would the leader consider having the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs study this aspect, and then report back? In the meantime the motion of Senator Lamontagne and the amendment of Senator Flynn could be held in abeyance. I think it would help both sides of the debate if this study were carried out first.

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators may wish to reconstitute that committee, to complete its report or investigate other aspects of constitutional reform. It is not for the Leader of the Government in the Senate to dictate or direct that that activity be undertaken.

Senator Flynn: Did you say that without a smile?

POST OFFICE

REQUEST BY LETTER CARRIERS UNION TO RENEGOTIATE CONTRACT

Hon. C. William Doody: Honourable senators, I have a question for the Leader of the Government. In the light of the answer that the minister kindly provided yesterday, relative to my previous question on the settlement with the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, I wonder if the minister would inform the Senate as to what the government's plans are in response to the request of the Letter Carriers Union, who have asked that their contract be reopened in view of the settlement with the inside workers. I recognize that the working environment is somewhat different, as the minister pointed out yesterday, but nonetheless the letter carriers feel they have a legitimate grievance in this connection.

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, it would be unwise and unfair for me to offer an opinion on a looming negotiation when the facts are not before me and when the rationale for any settlement has not been spelled out to the interested parties.

Senator Doody: I gather, then, from the answer of the minister, that there is in fact a set of negotiations looming, which means that the contract will be reopened.

The others who seem to be particularly concerned with this situation—and this arises out of a question that I asked prior to today—are the supervisors. There are some four thousand plus supervisors, who apparently feel that the settlement they have received gives them lesser benefits than those of the people they supervise. As I asked earlier, how do we expect these supervisors to see that forty hours of work is done in a 37½ hour week if the people they are supervising will be getting greater benefits than they? Is it the intention of the government to reopen their contract as well?

Senator Perrault: The question will be taken as notice.