

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I do have some information. Yesterday I was asked whether any Canadians had suffered as a result of the terrible earthquake tragedy in Italy. In the latest telegram today, of which I have a copy, our embassy in Rome reported that they had just been informed by Italian authorities that there are no Canadians among the victims who have been identified to date. It is possible, however, that a Canadian connection with some persons among the casualties—persons who are citizens of both Italy and Canada—may yet be established.

In addition, Canada has already announced a donation of \$100,000 to the Canadian Red Cross. Cabinet is formulating a plan for Canada's financial response to the situation beyond that amount. It is expected that that response will be announced shortly.

Honourable senators, shortly before the commencement of our sitting today, I was advised that there has been another severe earthquake in Venezuela and Colombia.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

PEACE IN MIDDLE EAST—CANADIAN INITIATIVES

Hon. Heath Macquarrie: Before the Question Period ends, honourable senators, I should like to ask the Leader of the Government in the Senate if he would bring us a more full and complete statement on what the Prime Minister had in mind when, in the press conference with President Sadat, he indicated that Canada might be more involved in the pursuit of Middle East peace.

I am not one of those who think that any man, even our Prime Minister, is always wrong, and I would like to hear more about what the distinguished Prime Minister had in mind and, at some later date, I will ask the government leader to tell the Senate what positive measures the Prime Minister did, in fact, indicate.

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): The question will be taken as notice, honourable senators. I do not have a current status report.

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, pursuant to the earlier discussion and, more specifically, the intervention of Senator Macquarrie, I propose that we now suspend our sitting to reassemble at the call of the bell shortly before 5 o'clock for royal assent, and that we use the intervening time, as we had planned—it is not an accident that we are free now, but a deliberate plan—to pay our respects to the memory of the late Right Honourable Jules Léger. Further to that same sentiment, the Senate will not sit tomorrow, the day of his funeral.

If that meets with your approval, honourable senators, the bell will summon you to royal assent at approximately 4.50.

Senator Macquarrie: The deputy house leader has expressed well the sentiment which this body feels at this time.

● (1549)

LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

NOTICE OF MEETING

Hon. Richard A. Donahoe: Honourable senators, before we rise, may I make an announcement?

The Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs was called to meet on the rising of the sitting of the Senate this afternoon. That meeting has now been cancelled.

A number of witnesses were summoned to appear before the committee. They have been discharged, and asked to return at 9.30 tomorrow morning. The committee will meet tomorrow morning at 9.30.

I make this announcement for the benefit of members of the committee.

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Government): The committee does not need permission to meet because the Senate is not sitting at that time. I hope honourable senators have taken note of that announcement.

Incidentally, that is connected with the point raised by Senator Smith yesterday. I understand that a number of committees will be sitting tomorrow, but the Senate itself will not be sitting.

To allow honourable senators to pay their respects to the late Right Honourable Jules Léger, the sitting was suspended, to resume at the call of the bell at approximately 4.50 p.m.

At 5 p.m. the sitting was resumed.

The Senate adjourned during pleasure.

ROYAL ASSENT

The Honourable Brian Dickson, Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of Canada, in his capacity as Deputy Governor General, having come and being seated at the foot of the Throne, and the House of Commons having been summoned, and being come with their Speaker, the Honourable the Deputy of His Excellency the Governor General was pleased to give the Royal Assent to the following bill:

An Act to revise the Bank Act, to amend the Quebec Savings Banks Act and the Bank of Canada Act, to establish the Canadian Payments Association and to amend other Acts in consequence thereof.

The House of Commons withdrew.

The Honourable the Deputy of His Excellency the Governor General was pleased to retire.

The sitting of the Senate was resumed.

The Senate adjourned until Tuesday, December 2, 1980, at 8 p.m.