

## THE SENATE

Friday, March 23, 1979

The Senate met at 10 a.m., the Speaker in the Chair.  
Prayers.

### DOCUMENTS TABLED

#### Senator Perrault tabled:

Report of the Canadian Transport Commission for the year ended December 31, 1978, pursuant to section 28(2) of the National Transportation Act, Chapter N-17, R.S.C., 1970.

Report on the operations of the Shipping Conferences Exemption Act for the year ended December 31, 1978, pursuant to section 12 of the said Act, Chapter 39 (1st Supplement), R.S.C., 1970.

Report on the Administration of the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1978, pursuant to section 35 of the said Act, Chapter 25, (1st Supplement), R.S.C., 1970.

Report of the Superintendent of Insurance for Canada, Volume III, Annual Statements of Life Insurance Companies and Fraternal Benefit Societies, for the year ended December 31, 1977, pursuant to section 8 of the Department of Insurance Act, Chapter I-17, R.S.C., 1970.

Report of the Postmaster General respecting Olympic coins for the period ending September 30, 1978, pursuant to sections 13(2) and 13(3) of the Olympic (1976) Act, Chapter 31, Statutes of Canada, 1973-74.

Report of the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, together with a statement of accounts certified by the Auditors, for the year ended December 31, 1978, pursuant to section 33 of the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation Act, Chapter C-16, and sections 75(3) and 77(3) of the Financial Administration Act, Chapter F-10, R.S.C., 1970.

### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

#### CUT IN GRANTS FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN PROVINCES— QUESTION

**Senator Roblin:** Honourable senators, I should like to ask the Leader of the Government a question respecting bilingualism. It has to do with the fact that the government decided recently to cut the grants to the provinces in the amount of \$34 million that would provide funds for the promotion of bilingual education in the provinces.

My question is: Did the government have an opportunity to consult with the Commissioner of Official Languages before that policy was decided upon, and, if so, what was his advice?

**Senator Perrault:** The question will be taken as notice.

#### BONUS TO BILINGUAL PUBLIC SERVANTS—QUESTION

**Senator Roblin:** Honourable senators, I have a supplementary question on the same point. I notice that the government has decided to restore the bonus to bilingual public servants in the amount of \$35 million, which is just about the same amount as the reduction for the educational grant. I would ask the same question on that point: Did the government consult with the Official Languages Commissioner on that point, and, if so, what was his advice?

**Senator Perrault:** As the honourable senator is aware, advice received from officials is not divulged in this context. Disclosure of advice tendered to any government by its officials would be highly unusual. It may be, however, that during his time as premier of the great province of Manitoba this procedure was followed and encouraged.

**Senator Roblin:** Honourable senators, I always notice that when my honourable friend does not want to answer a question as directly as one would wish, or he does not like the question, he attacks the questioner. That is called *ad hominem*, which I believe is a Latin expression meaning that if you do not like the question you attack the man.

I am rather interested in this little tactic of his, because it reveals a certain attitude of mind toward these problems which is really not conducive to the conduct of public affairs.

**Senator Perrault:** Honourable senators, I raise the serious question whether or not, in the honourable senator's experience in public life, as a matter of course the advice received from officials has been divulged either in a question period or in some other form? I suggest the answer is no.

**Senator Flynn:** That is a question, not an answer.

**Senator Roblin:** Honourable senators, it depends entirely on the official of whom the question is asked. With respect to some officials, the answer might be yes; but with respect to the Official Languages Commissioner, whose function it is to deal with these questions of a bilingual nature, I think it would be reasonable to ascertain his view of the matter.

**Senator Perrault:** Honourable senators, may I also suggest to the honourable senator that he should feel free to contact the Official Languages Commissioner and put the question to him directly. Perhaps he will receive a speedier reply.