

THE SENATE

Tuesday, September 22, 1992

The Senate met at 2 p.m., Senator Gérald J. Comeau, Acting Speaker, in the Chair.

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

THE CONSTITUTION

REFERENDUM QUESTION—CONCURRENCE IN MESSAGE
FROM COMMONS—QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE

Hon. P. Michael Pitfield: Honourable senators, I rise on a point of personal privilege.

As I stated in my speech last Tuesday, I agree with the text of the referendum question. Unfortunately, when the vote on the issue was taken, I was absent from the Senate because I had been informed that there would not be a recorded vote. Consequently, the impression may be abroad that I abstained or changed my mind. That is not the case.

I should like to make it clear that, had I been able to vote, I would have voted in support of the text of the referendum question.

MIDDLE EAST

PEACEMAKING EFFORTS OF PRIME MINISTER OF ISRAEL

Hon. Heath Macquarrie: Honourable senators, it is not always easy to find reasons for optimism about the international scene. It is rarer still to find cause for such positive sentiments in the Middle East.

I therefore cannot refrain from expressing my immense satisfaction and appreciation for the noble and wise leadership of the new Prime Minister of Israel, General Yitzhak Rabin. Thanks to his dedication to peace, there now exists hope where gloomy foreboding once dwelt. Conversations between Israelis and Palestinians are becoming real exchanges of view. The tough, brittle issue of the Golan Heights is now being considered. The United States-Israel rift has been healed. It is not even preposterous to suggest that a summit meeting between President Assad and Prime Minister Rabin could take place.

In this chamber, Senator Murray and I are the only remaining members of the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs who met Mr. Rabin over dinner in Jerusalem at the time of our visit to the Middle East. He did not impress me then as a likely reformer. But he has moved with audacious alacrity on many age-old problems. Upon more careful reflection I am now convinced that he is in fact the very person to take the risks of real peacemaking.

A great military hero, he could never be accused of softness. Having passed the three score and 10, like some of the rest of us, and achieved many great honours and positions in the military, and in politics and diplomacy, he seems to have but one goal left; but what a difficult one—the building of peace.

It is my hope and prayer that this wise and brave man will attain his goal. All people of good will everywhere should do all in their power to support him in his lofty purpose.

GENERAL ELECTION

NUMBER OF DAYS LEFT IN CURRENT TERM

Hon. Gildas L. Molgat (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, in the absence of my colleague, the Leader of the Opposition, I must remind honourable senators that the clock is still ticking. My honourable friends will be pleased to know that, if the government of which Senator Murray is a member still respects democracy, there are 59 days before the election should be called. Similarly, if it is a government cowardly and contemptuous of democracy, there are 455 days left before the day of reckoning.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY ACT

BILL TO AMEND—REPORT OF COMMITTEE

Hon. Efstathios William Barootes, Chairman of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, presented the following report:

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The Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry has the honour to present its

FIFTH REPORT

Your Committee, to which was referred Bill C-306, An Act to amend the Department of Forestry Act and to make related amendments to other Acts, has, in obedience to its Order of Reference of Wednesday, September 16, 1992, examined the said bill and now reports the same without amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

E.W. (STAFF) BAROOTES
Chairman