

THE SENATE

Tuesday May 7, 1974

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

HON. MURIEL MCQUEEN FERGUSSON

SPEAKER OF THE SENATE—FELICITATIONS ON HONORARY
DEGREE

Hon. Paul Martin: Honourable senators, before we begin our proceedings today, I should like to extend to Madam Speaker our warmest congratulations upon being awarded an honorary degree on Monday last by Acadia University.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Martin: I am sure we all feel that this is a recognition of Madam Speaker's great qualities and the distinguished way in which she presides over our affairs.

Lest there be any doubt that our Speaker is held in high intellectual appreciation in the Atlantic provinces, it is to be noted that she is to receive, I believe, an honorary degree from St. Thomas University. In anticipation of this, our congratulations and warmest good wishes.

Hon. Jacques Flynn: Honourable senators, may I assure Madam Speaker that the words expressed by the Leader of the Government are shared by everyone in this chamber. I congratulate you, Madam Speaker, on having yesterday been awarded an honorary doctorate. And I further congratulate you on the other doctorate that you are soon to be awarded. I can assure you that since you took over the duties of Speaker of this house you have done honour to the Senate, and we are thankful to you for that.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

DOCUMENTS TABLED

Hon. Paul Martin tabled:

Report of the Commissioner of Patents on proceedings under the Patent Act for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1973, pursuant to section 27 of the said Act, Chapter P-4, R.S.C., 1970.

Copies of twenty-four contracts between the Government of Canada and various municipalities in the Province of British Columbia for the use or employment of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, pursuant to section 20(3) of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act, Chapter R-9, R.S.C., 1970 (English text).

EXPORT AND IMPORT PERMITS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—REPORT OF COMMITTEE

Hon. Salter A. Hayden, Chairman of the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce,

reported that the committee had considered Bill C-4, to amend the Export and Imports Permit Act, and had directed that the bill be reported without amendment.

THIRD READING

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this bill be read a third time?

Senator McElman: Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 45(1)(b), I move that the bill be read a third time now.

Hon. Mr. Flynn: Is there any need for third reading at this time?

Hon. Mr. Langlois: I think the best reason is that we are to have royal assent some time this afternoon.

Hon. Mr. Argue: Why?

The Hon. the Speaker: It is moved by Honourable Senator McElman, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 45(1)(b), that this bill be now read a third time. Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Hon. L. P. Beaubien: Honourable senators, the purpose of Bill C-4 is to amend an act which was put on the statute books as a temporary measure and which was to die on the 31st of July 1974. Bill C-4 is not, therefore, simply an amendment to an existing act. Admittedly, an act such as the Export and Import Permits Act has been in effect in one form or another since 1947. I can hardly pretend, therefore, that this particular act is merely temporary in nature. Nevertheless, it should be noted that it does trace its origin to the old war regulations as a result of which it gives to the Governor in Council a tremendous amount of discretionary power. Now, the two suggested amendments to the act which are embodied in Bill C-4 would make those discretionary powers even more wide ranging than they are.

I am far from convinced that such wide-ranging discretionary powers are either necessary or appropriate, and I feel, therefore, that this bill is of the type which should be considered long and hard and most carefully before being passed by the Senate.

It is to the credit of the Chairman of the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce that he worked long hours on this bill last night, and, having gone through it carefully, he is of the opinion that we should pass the bill without amendment. I am as a matter of course impressed by his judgment and I do not want particularly to oppose him. I must say again, however, that it makes absolutely no sense to me to give such vast discretionary powers to the Governor in Council so that, for example, all of a sudden the Governor in Council can stop eggs from being imported. Two years ago grade A large eggs were selling for 47 cents on the market in