

passed Bill C-8 last night or early this morning it could not have gone into effect until tomorrow. Therefore, the suggestion that somehow the Senate has delayed this measure of vital importance to Canadians everywhere is not true, it is not accurate. I hope that correct view can be conveyed to the Canadian people.

Senator Argue: A big lie.

Senator Perrault: The only option open to us after midnight was merely an option that might have accommodated a great many people who had worked for many, many hours, and were standing by to assure passage, assent to and implementation of the bill. No harm has been done. This was an initiative by the government to try to accommodate the people who were standing by, including the representative of His Excellency the Governor General. So let us carry on in a positive and co-operative fashion and make certain that the bill is given the attention it deserves.

Senator Flynn: I think I should be allowed to make a little correction. If the Leader of the Government had said last night what he is saying now the media would not have misunderstood the situation. That is the first point. The second is with regard to the accommodation of many people. I think the Commons were very happy to go to bed earlier than at 4 o'clock this morning and that goes for the representative of the Governor General also.

ENERGY

GOVERNMENT PRICE AGREEMENT WITH ALBERTA RESPECTING CRUDE OIL—QUESTION

Senator Olson: Honourable senators, I should like to ask the Leader of the Government if the government considers the agreement it made with Alberta respecting the dates for changing the price of crude oil to be a firm commitment, or does the government feel this is still negotiable?

Senator Perrault: Honourable senators, I must take that question as notice.

FISHERIES

GOVERNMENT ACTION AFFECTING FISHERMEN IN ATLANTIC CANADA—QUESTION

Senator Marshall: Honourable senators, I should like to ask the Leader of the Government a question having to do with the fishermen in Atlantic Canada. In view of the continuing fears about a definitive decision by the government, first, concerning the future of the fisheries research laboratory in Halifax, secondly, closing the weather station at Gander, and thirdly, the cut-back of marine broadcasting, even though there has been some representation otherwise, could the leader extract from the Minister of Fisheries and the Environment a definitive decision on the government's intentions?

Senator Perrault: That explanation will be sought from the Minister of Fisheries and the Environment. Representations

with respect to all three of those subjects are under study at the present time.

GREAT LAKES SHIPPING

STRIKE OF ENGINEERS AND DECK OFFICERS—QUESTION

Senator Roblin: Honourable senators, last night great anxiety was expressed in the house by some members from western Canada and elsewhere about the state of the strike in the Great Lakes shipping system and its effect on the economy of the country, and on western Canada in particular. Can the Leader of the Government give us any information on the present status of that industrial dispute, and whether the government has a plan of action to deal with it?

Senator Perrault: We have no further information this morning, except for confirmation of the fact that Upper Lakes Shipping has signed an agreement. Hopefully, information can be obtained during the next few hours if there are further developments.

Senator Argue: How many ships are involved?

Senator Perrault: I understand there are something like 126.

Senator Argue: The ones that have settled.

Senator Perrault: Approximately 25.

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

CLOSURE OF REGINA WEATHER STATION—QUESTION

Senator Argue: Honourable senators, I should like to ask the Leader of the Government a question. I am sorry that I have not been able to give him notice of it. It results from the government restraint program and a project to save \$200,000 in a year by, in effect, closing the Regina Weather Station. I just wanted to point out that this weather station was obtained in Regina after many years of battle to get it there. We feel, as the major grain-growing province in Canada, that we really need up-to-date weather information, and it is not good enough that the weather information comes from Winnipeg and Edmonton only.

● (1110)

This is a major issue. It may not sound too important. It is only \$200,000, which in the context of a huge budget is not very much. But it is so great an issue that all political parties in Saskatchewan campaigning in the election for today have said that they, as a government, would be prepared to pick up the tab. But I suggest that there is no reason why Saskatchewan should pick up the tab if Alberta is not picking up the tab and if Manitoba is not picking up the tab. We from Saskatchewan feel that this is something of major importance.

Senator Perrault: Honourable senator, the government is aware of the concern which exists in the prairie provinces with respect to this particular weather station. The Minister of Fisheries and the Environment has spoken about this and other matters on occasion. He has stated that technological advances