

THE SENATE

Wednesday, December 7, 1994

The Senate met at 1:30 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.

Prayers.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

POWERS OF PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

NOTICE OF MOTION TO REFER PAPER TO STANDING SENATE
COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Finlay MacDonald: Honourable senators, I give notice that on Tuesday, December 13, 1994, I will move:

That a paper dealing with the powers of parliamentary committees, prepared by Diane Davidson, General Legal Counsel to the House of Commons, dated November 16, 1994 and tabled with the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations on November 17, 1994, be referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs for consideration and report.

QUESTION PERIOD

ANSWERS TO ORDER PAPER QUESTIONS TABLED

UNVEILING OF CANADIAN WAR MEMORIAL
AT GREEN PARK, LONDON, ENGLAND—GUEST LIST

Hon. William M. Petten (Acting Deputy Leader of the Government) tabled the answer to Question No. 56 on the Order Paper—by Senator Berntson.

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION—
ANNUAL REPORT 1993/94—PRODUCTION COSTS

Hon. William M. Petten (Acting Deputy Leader of the Government) tabled the answer to Question No. 62 on the Order Paper—by Senator Tkachuk.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming the debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Austin, P.C., seconded by the Honourable Senator

Stanbury, for the second reading of Bill C-57, to implement the Agreement establishing the World Trade Organization.

Hon. John Lynch-Staunton (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I want to commend Senator Austin for a very clear, succinct and convincing argumentation in favour of Bill C-57, a most complex piece of legislation which will leave few Canadians untouched in the years to come.

Senator Austin's presentation was particularly impressive not only for its content but even more for its authorship, coming as it did from a leading member of the Liberal Party whose adamant opposition in 1988 to free trade, and to a free trade agreement with the United States, forced a general election on the issue, and who, during the 1993 election campaign, repeatedly criticized the NAFTA to the point of threatening to scrap it once elected.

Yesterday, on behalf of the Liberal Party, Senator Austin described the NAFTA as, and I quote his words, "a role model for extending serious obligations in the trade field to developing countries around the world..."

The Prime Minister has been travelling the globe, extolling the virtues of free trade, first at last month's meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit and, more recently, in Paris.

What has led to this extraordinary, but no less welcome, about-face by the Liberal Party, only our friends opposite can explain. Suffice it to say that at last an issue which yesterday divided this house for far too long is today allowing it to work and discuss on the same side for the benefit of all Canadians tomorrow.

I want to join with Senator Austin in expressing appreciation to our two colleagues Senators Kelleher and Carney, and to Michael Wilson, all of who, as international trade ministers, can take much of the credit for the legislation before us.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Lynch-Staunton: Honourable senators, Senator Austin has urged that the vote on Bill C-57 be taken in time for it to come into force by January 1, 1995, so that Canada can become a charter member of the World Trade Organization. It should be pointed out that this date is nothing more than symbolic. In effect, the bill provides, in clause 221(1), that it:

...shall come into force on a day or days to be fixed by order of the Governor in Council.

Therefore, as there is no statutory deadline for passage, this bill can and must be given a study which should not be limited simply in order for Canada to be first past the gate.