

THE SENATE

Wednesday January 27, 1988

The Senate met at 2 p.m., the Speaker *pro tempore* in the Chair.

Prayers.

POVERTY IN CANADA

SENATE REPORT ON POVERTY—POVERTY LINE UPDATE, 1986
PRINTED AS APPENDIX

Hon. David A. Croll: Honourable senators, I ask that the document which I tabled yesterday, being an update to 1986 on the poverty line, be printed as an appendix to today's *Debates of the Senate*.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Is it agreed, honourable senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(For text of update see appendix, p. 2582.)

VISITORS IN GALLERY

PARLIAMENTARY INTERNS, ALBERTA LEGISLATURE

Hon. H.A. Olson: Honourable senators, may I draw to your attention the presence in our gallery of a group of young people from Alberta? They are the parliamentary interns from the legislature in Alberta who have been in Ottawa for a number of days now, watching and learning the federal structures. They are visiting the Senate this afternoon.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

SEVENTY-EIGHTH CONFERENCE, BANGKOK, THAILAND—
NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. M. Lorne Bonnell: Honourable senators, I give notice that on Wednesday next, the 3rd February 1988, I will call the attention of the Senate to the Seventy-eighth Conference of the Inter-parliamentary Union, held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 12th to 17th October, 1987.

QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

AGRICULTURE

FARM CREDIT CRISIS—REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON
ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS

Hon. H.A. Olson: Honourable senators, I have a question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate that is

probably more in the way of a request for some assistance. Ever since mid-December, when the government announced that it intended to make an additional amount of approximately \$70 million available to assist people caught in the farm credit crisis, I have been attempting to find out the rules, regulations, criteria or formulae for people to apply for this assistance. So far I have been unable to obtain any information as to the criteria or where the applications for this assistance can be made, although I believe there are some farm credit review boards that will be playing a part in it.

However, there is a new element involved in the program in that the government has committed funds. I am not being critical of that, but I would like to know how to advise farmers in southern Alberta who are experiencing difficulties just where, how and under what conditions they can apply for assistance under the program or, to be more specific, for that part of the program that gives them an opportunity to have all or some of their debt reduced to 6 per cent.

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): Honourable senators, I shall ask my colleague to convey to my friend the information that he seeks as soon as possible.

UNITED STATES SUBSIDIES ON GRAIN EXPORTS—CANADA-U.S.
CONSULTATIONS

Hon. Hazen Argue: Honourable senators, I have a question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. When the Secretary of State for the United States was in Ottawa meeting with our Secretary of State for External Affairs some days ago, a report from the meeting was to the effect that the Americans were not moving on the whole question of acid rain. That, of course, is a very important subject.

However, I was disturbed that no reference came out of that meeting to continuing United States subsidies on the export of wheat and other grains. The deputy commissioner of the Canadian Wheat Board is reported to have said just recently that if the Americans were to cease their wheat giveaways that very action would result in the price of wheat in Canada going up by \$1 a bushel. For months I have been saying that, if the Americans were to quit that subsidy, within 72 hours our wheat would go up by \$1 or \$2 a bushel. That statement is really being confirmed by the deputy chief commissioner of the Canadian Wheat Board, Larry Christenson.

My question is this: Did the Secretary of State for External Affairs raise with the American Secretary of State this question of continuing American subsidies in the export field? If so, in what terms was it raised, and what was the reaction of Secretary of State Shultz?