

THE SENATE

Wednesday, February 4, 1976

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

DOCUMENTS TABLED

Senator Perrault tabled:

Copies of text of Joint Communiqué issued by President Echeverria and Prime Minister Trudeau on January 25, 1976, in Mexico City.

Copies of text of Joint Communiqué signed by Prime Minister Castro and Prime Minister Trudeau in Havana, January 29, 1976.

Copies of Joint Communiqué issued by President Pérez and Prime Minister Trudeau following the visit by the Prime Minister of Canada to Venezuela, January 29 to February 2, 1976.

Senator Flynn: How do the communiqués compare?

Senator Perrault: They are all excellent documents.

RULES OF THE SENATE

COMMENCEMENT DATE OF AMENDMENTS—ORDER OF THE SENATE OF DECEMBER 8, 1975 RESCINDED AND NEW DATE AUTHORIZED

Senator Molson, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 47(2), moved:

That the Order of the Senate of December 8, 1975, that the amendments to the Rules of the Senate contained in the Report of the Standing Committee on Standing Rules and Orders, dated October 29, 1975, and adopted by the Senate on November 26, 1975, shall come into force on the first day of the Second Session of the Thirtieth Parliament, be rescinded; and

That the said amendments shall come into force on March 1, 1976.

He said: Honourable senators, if I may, I will give a brief word of explanation. I think we all remember that in December when the original motion was passed we thought that Parliament would reassemble in January, then prorogue and that a new session would probably start right away, which would have been before now. I believe that was the generally accepted rumour, shall I say, of the times.

It now seems not impossible that this session will continue until late in this spring or summer, in which case it is possible that the amended rules might not become effective until next September or October. For that reason it seemed to be reasonable, and perhaps wise, to suggest that

the new rules, which have already gone to the printers, should become effective on March 1.

Motion agreed to.

PROVINCE OF NEW BRUNSWICK

STORM DAMAGE—POSSIBILITY OF FEDERAL AID—QUESTION
● (1410)

Senator Riley: Honourable senators, as most of you are aware, the Atlantic Provinces were struck at about noon on Monday by a hurricane which caused a great deal of damage to public and private property. The city of Saint John, which I represent, was completely blacked out, completely isolated. There was no power and no communication except by ham radio. The most frightening aspect of the storm was that families were without heat and cooking facilities for upwards of 24 hours. In some areas these conditions still existed at noon today. Large sections of the city are still without power and heat.

I am told that damage to property in New Brunswick has been estimated at about \$20 million, but that has not been confirmed. The damage in Saint John alone may run to \$5 million or \$6 million. During the storm, roofs were lifted or torn off, walls collapsed, windows were blown out, steel girders in new construction were twisted, ships broke their moorings, and in all areas commercial establishments had to shut down. All businesses were completely unable to function on Monday and Tuesday, though many are starting to get back to normal today.

I understand that yesterday the Premier of New Brunswick, accompanied by the Director of the Emergency Measures Organization, visited Saint John. I do not know whether the area has been declared a disaster area, but I am informed that the New Brunswick cabinet met this morning and discussed the matter.

My question to the Leader of the Government is this: Has the Government of New Brunswick declared this particular area, and possibly other areas within the province, a disaster area? If so, has the Government of New Brunswick informed the Government of Canada of its decision so that the latter may also make assessments of damage to businesses and individuals for the purpose of providing relief to those affected? As I understand it, every individual in the city and surrounding areas has been affected.

Senator Perrault: Honourable senators, as the honourable senator has observed, it is a requirement, before federal intervention by way of assistance in matters of this kind may take place, that the provincial government declare the emergency to be beyond its resources, at which time a formal request for assistance is directed by that province to the federal government.