

THE SENATE

Tuesday, February 10, 1976

The Senate met at 8 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.
Prayers.

REGULATIONS AND OTHER STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

STANDING JOINT COMMITTEE—CHANGE IN COMMONS MEMBERSHIP

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons to acquaint the Senate that the name of Mr. Baldwin had been substituted for that of Mr. Balfour on the list of members appointed to serve on the Standing Joint Committee on Regulations and other Statutory Instruments.

DOCUMENTS TABLED

Senator Langlois tabled:

Copies of Statement made by the Secretary of State for External Affairs to the House of Commons on February 5, 1976, on the Conference on International Economic Co-operation.

Copies of Order in Council P.C. 1976-139, dated January 17, 1976, amending Schedule I to the Canada Grain Act, effective October 1, 1976, pursuant to section 15(6) of the said Act, Chapter 7, Statutes of Canada, 1970-71-72.

Statement of the Chartered Banks of Canada showing Revenue, Expenses and Other Information for the fiscal year ended October 31, 1975, pursuant to section 119(1) of the Bank Act, Chapter B-1, R.S.C., 1970.

Copies of Report, dated January 1976, of the Law Reform Commission of Canada entitled "Disposition and Sentences in the Criminal Process—Guidelines", pursuant to section 18 of the Law Reform Commission Act, Chapter 23 (1st Supplement), R.C.S., 1970, together with explanatory notes.

Copies of document entitled "Local Initiatives Program 1975/76—The Allocation Process", issued by the Department of Manpower and Immigration.

WESTERN GRAIN STABILIZATION BILL

SECOND READING

The Senate resumed from Wednesday, February 4, the debate on the motion of Senator McDonald for second reading of Bill C-41, respecting the stabilization of net proceeds from the production and sale of western grain and to amend certain statutes in consequence thereof.

Hon. Paul Yuzyk: Honourable senators, the sponsor of Bill C-41, Senator McDonald, presented a good, lucid explanation of the main features of the Western Grain Stabiliza-

tion Bill, which reached this chamber last week. It made my second reading of the 51 clauses, encompassing 44 pages in the two official languages, more understandable, especially if I remind honourable senators that my background had little to do with agriculture, except indirectly when I was a teacher in my early years in farming districts in Saskatchewan. Senator McDonald's comprehension of farming and the problems of agriculture is much greater than mine. However, I believe that I have some idea of the general problems in agriculture and a genuine interest in helping to improve the lot of the farmer. We are all aware that a healthy agricultural economy contributes enormously to a sound general economy of the country.

We know that the success of agriculture depends on weather and markets. There are years of high prices and years of low prices, years of abundant crops and years of crop failure, in many cases for extended periods of time. These frequent drastic fluctuations in the incomes of the producers, with their boom-and-bust cycles, have had harmful effects on agriculture, causing many prairie farmers to go bankrupt and to abandon the industry which is so vital to our country.

The instability of grain farming has been of concern to government and the political parties, no doubt from the time when Manitoba and later Saskatchewan and Alberta became provinces in Confederation. All parties, I believe, have in the past several decades favoured schemes to eliminate the instability factors and establish stabilization plans. Therefore, the idea of western grain stabilization is not new. What is different in this piece of legislation is that it comes to us with more specific and concrete features.

Bill C-41 has its roots in Bill C-244, which was initiated in the other house by the Honourable Otto Lang in 1969, after the establishment of the Grains Administration of the Government of Canada, composed of representatives of the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, the Ministry of Transport, and several special advisers. This administrative structure of government agencies involved in the grains industry was an attempt to coordinate their efforts in this field, and resulted in the presentation of Bill C-244.

A heated debate took place, particularly over the compulsory feature of the plan and the fact that the cost of production had not been taken into consideration. The opposition parties, led by Progressive Conservatives, who had the largest number of seats in the three Prairie provinces, and with the support of farm organizations and farmers in general, severely criticized the bill. Many amendments were presented, but Mr. Lang was not in the mood at that time to accept what appeared to him to be drastic changes, and so Bill C-244 was withdrawn with a commitment by the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board to come back to Parliament with a new