

THE SENATE

Wednesday, June 10, 1981

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

DOCUMENT TABLED

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government) tabled:

Financial statement on the operation and maintenance of the Great Slave Lake Railway for the year ended December 31, 1980, together with a statement showing the net capital investment as at December 31, 1980, pursuant to section 9 of the *Great Slave Lake Railway Act*, Chapter 56, Statutes of Canada, 1960-61.

THE ESTIMATES

REPORT OF NATIONAL FINANCE COMMITTEE PRESENTED AND
PRINTED AS AN APPENDIX

Hon. Douglas D. Everett: Honourable senators, I have the honour to present the report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, to which were referred the estimates laid before Parliament for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1982. I ask that the report be printed as an appendix to the *Debates of the Senate* and to the *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Senate* of this day and form part of the permanent records of this house.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, is it agreed?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(For text of report see appendix, p. 2511.)

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this report be taken into consideration?

Senator Everett: Honourable senators, I move that this report be taken into consideration at the next sitting of the Senate.

Motion agreed to.

THE SENATE

STATEMENT BY SENATOR DESCHATELETS

Hon. Hartland de M. Molson: Honourable senators, before we proceed to Question Period I would like to say that certain of our colleagues have asked me to ask you, knowing your unfailing courtesy, to listen to a statement which our former Speaker and greatly respected colleague for 15 years, the Honourable Jean-Paul Deschatelets, wishes to make. It is a statement with which I personally am in complete agreement

in every respect. I welcome it most heartily, and ask you to extend this privilege to our colleague.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Hon. Jean-Paul Deschatelets: Honourable senators, I am grateful to you for your courtesy which permits me to read the following statement in both English and French.

A number of senators have reached the conclusion that to serve Canada in the fullest sense, and to maintain the balance between representation by population and representation by region, they must take part in any proceedings or votes in the Senate independently and free of partisan dictates.

Those senators believe that principle to have been a fundamental tenet in the creation of a second chamber.

At Confederation, Sir John A. Macdonald said:

It would be of no value whatever were it the mere Chamber for registering the decrees of the Lower House. It must be an independent House, having a free action of its own, for it is only valuable as being a regulating body, calmly considering the legislation initiated by the popular branch and preventing any hasty or ill considered legislation which may come from that body.

On page 95 of F. A. Kunz's *The Modern Senate of Canada*, speaking of the Right Honourable Arthur Meighen, we find this:

● (1410)

Following in Dandurand's footsteps he developed the practice of utilizing caucuses in the Senate as little as possible. When he summed up his ideas about the Senate in an article in the *Queen's Quarterly* in 1937, it sounded exactly like Dandurand:

The Senate is worthless if it becomes merely another Commons divided upon party lines and indulging in party debates... Members of the Second Chamber must get away, lift their minds far from those hard-drawn lines of party, or they cannot serve their country.

This concern, honourable senators, has been growing over the last 10 years, and although the constitutional resolution now before Parliament and the courts is not the only reason for this declaration, it has brought that concern into focus.

These senators are not changing party affiliation, nor are they forming or joining a new party, but they desire their role to be in accord with the concept of the Fathers of Confederation.

They desire to be associated only in their individual freedom and individual independence with respect to the discharge of their responsibilities as members of the Senate of Canada.