

**Senator Murray:** I take it these increases are the result of automatic escalators built into the Parliament of Canada Act, are they not?

**Senator Stewart:** Yes, I think that is correct, Senator Murray. There would have been automatic increases in sessional indemnities, in the payment to members of Parliament on account of their expenses, and then in ministerial salaries.

However, what has happened is that on eight occasions there has been intervention, either to freeze the payments or to reduce what would otherwise have taken place. Even with those eight applications of the brakes, the increase has been considerable, especially in the case of the Prime Minister who went up from \$53,000 in 1985 to \$70,600 in 1991.

• (1730)

**Senator Murray:** Presumably because he starts with a bigger base.

**Senator Stewart:** Yes, presumably. As I say, perhaps the caution on freezes and cuts I was sounding were not quite as pertinent as I thought they were. It would appear that ministers have not done too badly. Given the fact that both the sessional indemnity and the tax-free expense allowance has gone up, the ministers in the House of Commons have not done that badly.

**Senator Murray:** Just to complete the record, senator, do you have the relevant figures for members of the Senate?

**Senator Stewart:** No. I remind you of how we got into this. We got into this because of the provision in Bill C-76 that the salary of the Prime Minister and the other ministers will be reduced. I apologize to Senator Murray for not immediately springing to his defence. I confess that I forgot about him.

**Senator Murray:** If you want to know, and I think you do know, I would receive the same ministerial salary as any other minister and the same sessional indemnity as any senator or member of Parliament, but of course, as you know, our tax-free allowance as senators is roughly half of what members of the House of Commons —

**An Hon. Senator:** Less than that.

**Senator Murray:** In any case, as to the senators, I think what you said about the sessional indemnity of members of Parliament holds true for senators. That is, over the period from 1985 to 1991, their sessional indemnity increased from \$54,600 to \$64,400 and is to be frozen. Just as the employees of the government, all of us will have two years of zero.

**Senator Stewart:** I think that what Senator Murray has said is accurate.

Let me read what Mr. Mazankowski said by way of summary.

Not taking into account the initiatives that were taken in the December 2 economic statement, sessional and expense allowances of MPs would have increased by 2.9 per cent over the period 1984 to date.

At that point, I asked if that covers all payments to members of Parliament on account of expenses which they have incurred. Mr. Mazankowski replied:

Sessional and expenses allowances that they have incurred, that is right. That would include salary and expenses.

I asked whether it was expenses of all kinds, and Mr. Mazankowski said that it was. So there we have the whole story.

**Hon. Finlay MacDonald:** Why would you not simply content yourself by proving that any of the eight applications was simply symbolism? Everyone would be in agreement with that. It is all symbolism.

**Senator Stewart:** I am sorry, I am not hearing the honourable senator.

**Senator Perrault:** He said it is all symbolism.

**Senator MacDonald:** I said I thought you might be content to make the point that these eight applications of cuts, making sacrifices on the part of the cabinet and so on, was simply symbolism, because we would all agree with that. At least I would.

**Senator Stewart:** I do not know what the thrust of your question is. Am I boring you, Senator MacDonald?

**Senator MacDonald:** You may be a tad pedantic, but not boring.

**Senator Stewart:** All right, I guess you never were a good student.

**Senator Molgat:** It is window dressing, you mean.

**Senator Stewart:** No, I do say that, Senator MacDonald, because although I agree with you that, as Mr. Mazankowski says, this is not really intended to save much money, it is designed to make palatable certain other unpleasant things that the government thinks have to be done. The other side of the coin, the one on which I focused, is whether we are paying too big a price in terms of impact on the quality of service to the public for this symbolism. I do not think I would have raised the point at all if it had been only a matter of symbolism.

Let us now turn to the third part of the bill. I expect that I will not get as much agreement on what I have to say about it. This part refers to the Canada Student Loans Act. There is no