

In March of this year, a reporter from *The Ottawa Citizen* published a story informing us that the director of the Canada Council was receiving a living allowance of \$1,300 a month, which adds up to \$46,800 for three years. This was being paid to the director in lieu of moving expenses to Ottawa from Montreal.

In my opinion, honourable senators, this is a generous allowance. However, what I find more fascinating in respect to this payment is that the head office of the Canada Council is obviously in Ottawa, or certainly in the National Capital Region. The bill does not state that, but for all practical purposes, that is the general understanding, that the Canada Council operates out of Ottawa. Therefore, for all practical purposes, the director is the chief executive officer of the Canada Council; not the president or the vice-president; none of the other nine members of the Canada Council. It is the director who is the chief executive officer, and he does not reside in Ottawa.

The chronicler of *The Ottawa Citizen* attempted to find out why the director of the Canada Council had not moved to Ottawa to assume his duties. He was informed by a person at the Canada Council that that was a personal matter. The same response was given with respect to other questions.

Honourable senators, I have been attempting to ascertain the reasons why the director of the Canada Council, as expected of him and as was expected of his predecessors, does not reside in Ottawa.

• (1410)

Since my intervention last evening on the presentation of the report from the committee by Senator Murray, I have received some information. However, it is so succinct it can only be considered an illusion of a response. I received an answer dated June 30, 1995. The question was, "Is the Director of the Canada Council in receipt of a living allowance and, if so, why?" The answer was, "The remuneration of Mr. Roch Carrier, the Director of the Canada Council, was fixed by the Governor in Council and a living allowance was also approved in lieu of relocation expenses."

I do not know if this is a new trend. The Commissioner of Official Languages appointed by the previous government also benefits, I believe, from a living allowance in Ottawa where he has chosen not to reside for, I presume, personal reasons.

Honourable senators will recall that two or three years ago, in mid-July, the Senate was called back to revoke a decision it had made respecting the payment of a \$6,000 living allowance to senators? Senators were literally ordered back here. A number of my colleagues stood up and reversed their earlier decisions.

Here is an overly generous policy whereby — in view of the position they occupy and the duties they are expected to execute requiring them to reside in Ottawa — these persons are paid an allocation or special allowance not to reside in Ottawa. One must put things in scale and look at them in perspective.

Both the previous government and this government are responsible for this state of affairs. It is basically unfair. I know

of colleagues from both sides of the house who could use to their advantage that \$6,000 allocation the House of Commons members granted themselves by way of a decision in the back rooms of the House of Commons.

Senator Stewart: Has the Auditor General examined that decision?

Senator Corbin: I am not aware of that, Senator Stewart. Has he?

Senator Stewart: I do not know.

Senator Corbin: The senators attempted to do the same thing because a number of senators were faced with out-of-pocket expenses to meet their living costs in Ottawa. Some still are. Every week that we sit during the summer, senators have to dig into their pockets — not all of them, but a number of them.

On the other hand, we have the government which establishes a policy for well-paid, top civil servants — people who receive well over \$100,000 in salary, luxury offices; some have cars and chauffeurs and expense-recoverable trips in Canada, North America and Europe, trips planned as they see fit. Over and above what they already get, these people receive a special allowance so that they do not have to reside in the national capital area.

I find the government's approach hypocritical. On the one hand, it tells senators, "No way, we will not allow you to recover your legitimate living expenses in Ottawa." The government does not say that to members of the House of Commons, and these well-paid, Governor-in-Council appointees also have the same privilege.

I have been fighting the decision of the Canada Council to close the Art Bank. It is incumbent upon us to start examining all aspects of the operation of the Canada Council. I am a supporter of the Canada Council. Some senators are not, and that is fine. However, I am prepared to defend my ideas and my views on what art and subsidies to artists and culture are all about. Other people will not agree with my views. Let us have a debate.

There should be a committee to review the cultural policy of the Canadian government. The time is right for that, in view of what is going on currently in the Canada Council.

We realize that what is happening is in the cost-cutting context of government budgets. Agencies and Crown corporations are requested to do the same. Indeed, parliamentarians are requested to do the same, and we have been doing that. Our income has been frozen for some time. I have been here over 26 years. It is not the first time that I have had my salary frozen. It is at least the third time. I am sure Senator Prud'homme could elaborate if he so wishes.

How can the government of the day or the previous government say one day that parliamentarians must set an example, must show the way, and then the next day say that it has made concessions to highly paid servants of the state? I do not buy it.