

Since the onset of the AIDS pandemic, over 1.5 million children and youth, mostly in Africa but increasingly in Asia and even in North America, have been infected with HIV. By the year 2000, it is predicted that this number will increase to between 5 and 10 million children. In addition to these sick and dying children, millions of others under the age of 10 will have lost one or both parents to AIDS. The impact of AIDS on children is devastating, whether or not they are sick. There is the terrible grief caused by the lingering death of their parents and there is physical and intellectual impoverishment.

In Africa and elsewhere, many families remove children from school to nurse their dying parents, to care for younger siblings, or to augment or replace the family's meagre income. Girls are usually the first to have to forego their education. Worse, when one or both parents die, children often find themselves rejected by relatives and other members of the community in which they live because of the stigma associated with AIDS.

Nor is Canada immune to this tragic epidemic: 12,119 cases of AIDS have been reported so far, including 116 paediatric cases of children under the age of 15. Most have died. These cases are full-blown AIDS. The numbers of HIV-infected persons in Canada is much higher, and many of these are teenagers. Those at greatest risk are street kids, gay youth, aboriginal youth and some immigrant youth. However, when we realize that 41 per cent of grade 11 students admit to being sexually active without protection, we need to recognize that the risk is more widespread than we would like to admit.

Honourable senators, it is tempting to turn away from this terrible disease. It seems so intractable. What can we do? Rather than wring our hands, we should join them with others. When we ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, we undertook to share responsibility for the health of the world's children, including our own.

There is a number of things we can do. First, we must keep ourselves informed. Then we must promote awareness in others and support efforts at prevention. At home and abroad are many organizations on the front line we can help — organizations like UNICEF and Save the Children. In Canada, the Inter-Agency Coalition on AIDS and Development, a network of Canadian NGOs, AIDS service organizations and government agencies seeks to provide greater understanding of how to address the socio-economic and child welfare problems that emerge as the epidemic progresses.

Honourable senators, we must not give up on this issue. The AIDS pandemic is possibly the greatest health crisis the world will be facing as it enters the new millennium. Eventually it will affect us all, as increasing numbers of young people are felled in the prime of life. The World Health Organization has asked us to use World AIDS Day to show solidarity. Let us respond.

[Senator Pearson]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

EXCISE TAX ACT INCOME TAX ACT

BILL TO AMEND—REPORT OF COMMITTEE

Hon. Michael Kirby, Chairman of the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce, presented the following report:

Tuesday, December 5, 1995

The Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce has the honour to present its

TWENTY-SIXTH REPORT

Your Committee, to which was referred the Bill C-103, An Act to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Income Tax Act, has, in obedience to its Order of Reference of Tuesday, November 7, 1995, examined the said bill and has agreed to report the same with one amendment:

Page 6, Clause 1: Replace line 17, on page 6, with the following:

“on the day this Act is assented to, a particular number of”

Respectfully submitted,

MICHAEL KIRBY
Chairman

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

On motion of Senator Kirby, report placed on Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting of the Senate.

THE ESTIMATES, 1995-96

REPORT OF NATIONAL FINANCE COMMITTEE ON SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (A) PRESENTED AND PRINTED AS APPENDIX

Hon. Lowell Murray: Honourable senators, I have the honour to present the nineteenth report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance. This report concerns the Supplementary Estimates (A), 1995-96.

I ask that the report be printed as an appendix to the *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Senate* of this day and that it form part of the permanent record of this house.