

that in future whoever drafts the answers to questions which the honourable Leader of the Government gives us in this house might read some of the questions rather more carefully, and not go off at a tangent answering something which hasn't in fact been asked.

Senator Perrault: I assure Senator Forsey that no apology is necessary, and that if the answer is incomplete for any reason an effort will be made to provide one that is complete in the very near future.

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Senator Perrault: Honourable senators, before the Orders of the Day are called I should like to review briefly the work done by the Senate during the period from October 21 last, when we resumed sittings after the summer adjournment, to December 20, when we adjourned for the Christmas recess. Honourable senators will recall that on October 21 I gave a brief résumé of what had been accomplished by the Senate from the opening of this, the First Session of the Thirtieth Parliament, until we adjourned on July 30, 1975. I said at that time that some 59 bills had come to us from the House of Commons, of which 50 were government bills, eight public bills by private members and one a private bill. All these bills were passed by the Senate and received royal assent before the summer adjournment. In addition, 27 bills—18 government, four public by private members and five private bills—were introduced in the Senate during that period. Before we adjourned on December 20, a further 16 bills had come to us from the Commons and were passed by this house. In addition, two private bills were initiated in the Senate, passed and sent to the Commons.

Possibly the most serious matter facing Parliament this session has been inflation. Ten days after the Prime Minister announced the government's proposals for the control of inflation in October, I opened an inquiry calling the attention of the Senate to the White Paper entitled *Attack on Inflation—A Program of National Action*. The ensuing debate thereon was both challenging and constructive. Many senators on both sides of the house took part in this debate, and their contributions were invaluable. The debate continued until the anti-inflation bill was introduced in the House of Commons, and the Senate on November 18 authorized the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce to examine the bill in advance of its reaching the Senate.

● (2030)

The widespread discussion during the debate on the White Paper and the advance study of the anti-inflation bill enabled the Senate to expedite, through morning, afternoon and evening sittings, the passage of this very urgent and important piece of legislation.

Of course, as over the years, the work of the Senate committees continues to be of the highest calibre both in volume and quality, and members of this chamber continue to make invaluable contributions as members of the various joint committees of both houses. The joint committee work has been particularly heavy this session, with the special joint committees on Employer-Employee Relations in the Public Service, the National Capital Region, and Immigration Policy, and the Standing Joint Committee on

Regulations and other Statutory Instruments sitting concurrently.

May I say that I feel confident that the Senate will continue, both in this chamber and in its committees, to deal with the same devotion and dedication with whatever tasks may face us during the balance of this session. Present indications are that the work will be heavy and challenging. At this time I want to thank all honourable senators, wherever they may sit, for their splendid and unselfish contributions to the work of the Senate so far this session. I cannot let this opportunity pass without special mention of the chairmen of the various committees who have worked throughout this session with such vigour and dedication, and commendation also to members of the loyal Opposition who have cooperated so well in order to expedite and help the business of the Senate.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Flynn: Honourable senators, the Leader of the Government has expressed it very well. It is quite obvious that the driving force in the Senate has been the Opposition.

Some Hon. Senators: Oh, oh!

HALIFAX RELIEF COMMISSION PENSION CONTINUATION BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Margaret Norrie moved the second reading of Bill C-78, to repeal an act respecting the Halifax Relief Commission and to authorize the continuation of pensions, grants or allowances paid by the Halifax Relief Commission.

She said: Honourable senators, the subject matter of Bill C-78, which is called the Halifax Relief Commission Pension Continuation Bill, will bring back memories to many persons across Canada who suffered, or whose relatives and friends suffered, bereavement, injury or damage to their property as a result of the devastating explosion which occurred in Halifax harbour on the morning of December 6, 1917. In addition to some 1,635 persons killed, approximately 10,000 cases of injury were originally reported.

As soon as the extent of the explosion was appreciated, assistance in various forms was sent to the stricken area from other parts of Canada and from the United States. Apart from this immediate assistance, substantial donations of funds were made by individuals and governments to provide financial assistance on a long-term basis to the victims of the explosion and their dependants, as well as to assist in the rehabilitation of the Halifax-Dartmouth area which had been damaged by the explosion.

After a temporary committee had looked after immediate relief, the Halifax Relief Commission was created by an order in council in January 1918. Later that year, this commission was more formally established under an unusual combination of federal and provincial legislation whereby the federal government, which had donated almost two-thirds of the funds made available to the commission, was given the responsibility, through the Governor in Council, for operational matters such as the appointment of the commissioners.