

MINURSO's military observers (including 29 officers of the U.S. armed forces) . . .

But including even more Canadians.

. . . have been forced to live in unnecessarily harsh—and sometimes life-threatening—conditions. The soldiers in the field do not have sufficient food, fuel, shelter, or supplies to carry out their mission. The soldiers cite Moroccan intransigence and U.N. ambivalence as the source of their current difficulties.

It would seem to me, honourable senators, that there is not much point in asking the minister further questions in this vein, although I am sure he has done his best to get answers and I do not lay the blame at his feet. However, someone, I suggest, is not giving the minister accurate accounts of what is going on in the Western Sahara with respect to our peacekeeping forces, or indeed with the attempt to implement the U.S. peace plan or hold the referendum that has been promised for 16 years.

My question to the minister is: What does he intend to do to ensure that whoever supplies him with answers to these questions gives him better answers? We have already established that the Canadian Press have no intention of covering this story about that fact that we do not appear to get any information. Our military people must know about this situation, because they, after all, have a larger presence than the U.S. military, and yet last January, when the U.S. Senate Committee was getting this report, the minister was still giving responses to my questions that revealed none of these difficulties.

**Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, I am not in a position to comment, certainly not off the cuff, on the report of the United States Senate Committee on that matter. It is, however, no secret that the process that we all hoped would lead to a referendum is—I will not say it is going nowhere fast, but it is not going anywhere in any great hurry.

I am aware that there were reports—denied by the United Nations—of irregularities in the civilian administration. One of the special representatives of the Secretary-General and the head of the mission resigned a couple of months ago and, according to the last report I had, the United Nations had appointed an interim head of the mission and was still searching for a permanent head.

I am told that, as recently as March 3, the Secretary-General had reported renewed efforts to resolve outstanding issues and had set a target date of June for doing so within the current peace plan.

I cannot go beyond that today. However, I will examine the honourable senator's question and I will ask my colleague, Mrs. McDougall to examine it as well to see whether a fuller report can be brought in here on that situation as soon as possible.

**Senator Marsden:** Honourable senators, I wonder if the Leader of the Government in the Senate could find out whether our 36 military personnel referred to in his answer to

me of February 13 are indeed living under life-threatening conditions in the field. That would seem to me to be a highly significant piece of information that the Parliament of Canada ought to have.

**Senator Murray:** Highly significant but, with respect, I suggest not completely surprising given what we know about the situation in that part of the world. I will look into the matter, however.

● (1500)

## THE SENATE

### DELAY IN PRODUCTION OF *DEBATES*

**Hon. Gildas L. Molgat (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, my question to the Leader of the Government is regarding the *Debates of the Senate*. We do not yet have the *Debates of the Senate* for yesterday, and I understand we will not have them until tomorrow. This is occurring time and time again.

Can we find out what the problem is and what we can do about it? In what way can the Senate take action to ensure that it does not happen on a too frequent basis?

**Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, I could not agree more with the honourable senator that this is an extremely unsatisfactory state of affairs for everybody. I do not know what is at the source of the problem. It was raised some weeks ago, and the Speaker on behalf of the administration tabled a report. I would suggest that we ask the Internal Economy Committee, which meets tomorrow morning, to undertake to look into the matter with a view to taking our business elsewhere if we cannot get some satisfaction from what used to be called the Queen's Printer and is now called the Department of Supply and Services.

## EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

### THIRD LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE—FAILURE TO RATIFY TREATY—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Hon. Colin Kenny:** Honourable senators, at a time when we are aspiring to be world leaders in environmental matters, I would like to draw your attention to a situation that is to a great extent frustrating these aspirations. I speak of the Third Law of the Sea Conference and the international treaty that was negotiated in 1982 for signature and ratification by nations around the world. Of the 119 countries, only 53 have ratified to date, and only 60 ratifications are required before this treaty comes into force.

Honourable senators, Canada has not ratified this law. This is puzzling, because up until 1982 we were at the forefront of the negotiations.

My question to the Leader of the Government is: When does he expect Canada to ratify this convention?

**Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, I do not know the answer to that question. I