

exists in Manitoba. Senator Berntson, who is a divisional western senator, could fill one of the three vacancies that exist in Saskatchewan. That leaves us two left, because, in addition, there is a vacancy in Alberta.

There is considerable under-representation in the west, and some of those vacancies have existed for a considerable period of time. Is it possible to ascertain when those vacancies may be filled and when it will be the pleasure of the Prime Minister to take some action thereupon? We would like to have those Senate seats filled before the two other members and I, who remain here working so hard and diligently for our province, die from overwork.

**Senator Haidasz:** How about some farmers?

**Senator Frith:** Senator Beaudoin would want them elected, would he not? Call an election!

**Senator Haidasz:** Alberta wants an elected senator. Let someone neutral like Senator Simard answer the question.

**Senator Simard:** We have them scared now.

**Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, as Senator Barootes and all honourable senators are aware, it is the Prime Minister's prerogative to recommend to the Governor General the names of people to be summoned to the Senate. As the honourable senator has pointed out, there are presently three vacancies in the Senate. Two are from his Province of Saskatchewan, and one is from Alberta.

I will be glad to convey the honourable senator's representation to the Prime Minister; and, if I may say so, to add my own, because I believe that—

**Senator Frith:** Your majority is getting a bit thin.

**Senator Murray:** Discussions are going forward about Senate reform, but the business of the government and of the country must go forward—

**Senator Simard:** Despite Liberal senators.

**Senator Frith:** There might be some Liberal names on that list.

**Senator Murray:**—until there is some resolution of that question. Indeed, as the honourable senator points out, it is only fair that provinces be fully represented in this place. Therefore, it certainly seems to me to be a good idea to proceed as soon as possible to fill the vacancies in Saskatchewan and Alberta.

**Some Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

**Senator Frith:** Is this the comedy hour?

## NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

### PATENT PROTECTION FOR PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

**Hon. Lorne M. Bonnell:** Honourable senators, I would like to return to the North American Free Trade Agreement for a moment to find out if it is true that Canada and the United States are recommending to the Mexicans that they get 20 years' patent protection on drugs rather than the 10 years

[Senator Barootes.]

provided in the *Patent Act*. Are Germany and the United States working together through GATT to do the same thing in order to give 20-year protection to the patent drug companies?

**Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, I cannot comment on negotiations between Canada and the United States and Mexico on that matter. I would simply remind the honourable senator that the draft GATT agreement tabled by Mr. Arthur Dunkel in late December recommends such an extension of the patent period and that Mr. Wilson, speaking for the government, has indicated our agreement with that proposition and our intention to proceed in that direction.

**Senator Bonnell:** In other words, the government has made a decision to raise by 100 per cent the price of drugs to the elderly, the poor and the disabled in this country.

**Senator Barootes:** You were wrong then, and you are wrong now.

**Senator Murray:** It was one thing for the honourable senator to do that scare-mongering when the legislation was before the Senate. Now that events have proved him wrong, I should have expected him to show rather more humility about the matter.

The fact is that prices of prescription drugs in this country have increased by less than the consumer price index since Bill C-22 went through Parliament.

**Senator Thériault:** Says who?

**Senator Murray:** Says Statistics Canada. I will bring the figures in for the honourable senator.

**Senator Haidasz:** They are wrong again.

**Senator Murray:** Senator Haidasz says Statistics Canada is wrong again. That is the third time in as many weeks that I have heard that from Senator Haidasz.

● (1450)

### DRAFT REPORT—AVAILABILITY OF TEXT—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Hon. Gildas L. Molgat (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** My question to the Leader of the Government is a follow-up on a question of Senator Frith's. When can we expect to see the draft report on the Mexican-U.S.-Canada trade agreement? When will we have a draft?

**Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government):** The honourable senator will see an agreement, if and when there is an agreement. The draft that he and I refer to is a movable feast. It is an evolving document.

**Senator Molgat:** Is there a reason why the Senate does not have that document? Why, on this very major enterprise, are we not, as representatives of our various regions, aware of what is being discussed?

**Senator Murray:** I can tell the honourable senator, or Mr. Wilson can, what is being discussed, in the sense that I can tell