

The Senate adjourned during pleasure.

• (1500)

The sitting of the Senate was resumed.

### PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

#### INCREASE IN SPENDING—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, when the sitting was interrupted, I had risen to reply to a question asked by Senator Grafstein.

The non-statistical reply that he seeks is simply that we must continue in our efforts as a government to maintain the economic recovery and to promote economic expansion; to continue with the policy which, as I said, has created 1.4 million jobs since 1984.

At the same time, the honourable senator must be aware that this government, even given the straitened financial circumstances, has improved the targeting of many of our social programs. I do remind him that we continue to share with the province of Ontario, and therefore with the municipality, the costs of welfare assistance through the Canada Assistance Plan. That is the short and what he would call the "non-statistical" answer to his question.

**Hon. Jeremiah S. Grafstein:** Obviously, honourable senators, it is not enough because the source of these foodstuffs is not public moneys but essentially the private sector. It is there as a super safety net, I guess, because the government welfare systems, combined as they are, are not sufficient. That was really the thrust of my question. In effect, notwithstanding that the welfare system is joined by the federal, provincial and municipal governments, it is still not sufficient to feed 120,000 people every week. So the system obviously is corroded or inept, and that is the point of my question.

Let me go on, honourable senators. We have a new occurrence in Toronto. I have been working out of the same office in Toronto since 1960. I travel two blocks to a parking lot where I park my car. Along that two-block route are a number of heat grates. Most of these heat grates are now occupied by people at night. This is a new occurrence in Toronto for me. We have seen homeless people walking the streets and being taken care of, but we have never seen them reserving specific grates for sleeping at night.

Surely the federal government, in conjunction with the municipal and provincial governments, can move toward alleviating the distress of these people who are homeless and do not have a place to sleep at night. It is a new occurrence. This is not something that happened in 1984, 1983, 1982 or 1981 in Toronto. Today in downtown Toronto, it is now a common occurrence.

I am not ascribing any less beneficial modus to this government than to any other government. Surely the government should take it upon itself to investigate the situation and to see what it can do to alleviate this distress, not only in Toronto but in other metropolitan areas across the country. It is clearly a

[The Hon. the Speaker.]

new problem in terms of its size and sweep in metropolitan Toronto.

**Senator Murray:** Honourable senators, I appreciate the points that the honourable senator is making and the concern that he expresses. He does not want a statistical answer and in any event I do not have the statistics. However, I can assure him that the federal government continues to provide considerable financial assistance to the provision of low income housing in Toronto and elsewhere. That is all I can say on that question for the moment.

[Translation]

### CANADA PENSION PLAN FAMILY ALLOWANCES ACT OLD AGE SECURITY ACT

#### BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING—DEBATE CONCLUDED

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Lavoie-Roux, seconded by the Honourable Senator Grimard, for the third reading of Bill C-39, An Act to amend the Canada Pension Plan, the Family Allowances Act and the Old Age Security Act.

**Hon. Thérèse Lavoie-Roux:** Honourable senators, I would like to take only a few minutes at third reading stage of bill C-39 to thank my colleagues, senator Bosa particularly who represented officially the Opposition, for their contributions in this matter.

I told them what the priority was with this bill. They all really demonstrated an excellent cooperation to ensure that the bill was going to be adopted et sent to the provinces so that it could be adopted and take effect in next January.

I recognize with the ten other committee members that we really did not have much time and that, on both sides, we would have liked to have more in order to examine it more thoroughly.

I would also like to mention the excellent work done by senator David as president of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology.

Finally, I would like to thank the officials of the department of National Health and Welfare for their diligent and competent answers to questions which were not always simple, but rather complex, and which were put to them by committee members.

I would like to remind you that this bill contains two main changes. First, it provides for a new contribution rate schedule spread out over 25 years. After consultation with all provinces, this schedule would be extended over five more years.

The second change is the \$35 increase affecting the child benefits of disabled or deceased CPP contributors. This will increase the current monthly pension from \$113 to \$150, if we take into account the increase due to indexation.

The bill also included a number of amendments which have little impact on costs but which, I think, improve the existing provisions. I will not mention them all, but I simply want to