

the Senate use his undoubtedly major influence in the cabinet to help bring this about?

Senator Roblin: I will use my influence in the cabinet to reinforce the desire of that body, and of the Members of Parliament for western Canada, to make sure that the treatment accorded to the Saskatchewan situation is the best possible. I have no hesitation in saying, however, that it will not be possible to save everybody harmless. There are just not enough resources to enable us to do that, but we can and, I think, we will do our best to mitigate the hardships, as far as we can.

As to the Government of Saskatchewan, I have to confess that I have no influence there whatsoever.

Senator Argue: I am disappointed in that answer. I would have thought that the cabinet would have some influence. The Leader of the Government in the Senate might try it in the cabinet, because I think the Saskatchewan government has virtually stolen \$30 per beef cow from the beef producers of Saskatchewan, and that is shameful.

Senator Roblin: I think my honourable friend ought to address his charge of theft in another quarter, where no doubt he will get an interesting answer.

REFORM OF THE SENATE

GOVERNMENT ATTITUDE

Hon. Paul Lucier: Honourable senators, I have a question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. It is a question that he will have some interest in, since he had a great deal of interest in it when he sat on this side, and I am sure he has maintained that interest. Since the joint committee on Senate reform jointly chaired by Senator Molgat, and now the Macdonald Commission, after hearing from Canadians across the country, have been told so strongly, particularly in western Canada, that Canadians want meaningful Senate reform and an elected Senate, is there any chance that this government, in the foreseeable future, will bring forth some proposals for such Senate reform?

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): My honourable friend tempts me to re-read my old speeches on this subject. In fact, I think it would be a good idea if I did so. I have to say that, in those days when I was proposing a Senate elected by proportional representation, I cannot remember my honourable friend rising in his place to tell me how right I was. In fact, I cannot remember many gentlemen or ladies in this chamber rising to tell me how right I was.

Senator Buckwold: I did.

Senator Doody: And I.

Senator Roblin: I have to say that there are audible exceptions. My colleague here is one, and Senator Frith is another; Senator Buckwold is another and there are undoubtedly more. However, I have to say that the majority of opinion was solidly aligned against any proposition of that kind. Now time flows along and changes many minds—on Senate reform and some

other things—so I am going to take my honourable friend's advice to heart and if I am able to give him some comfort with respect to this matter, I shall report in due course.

Senator Lucier: Honourable senators, I would just like to say—

Senator Roblin: You are a convert.

Senator Lucier: That is right, and while I was not originally in favour of an elected Senate, at the insistence of Senator Roblin, among others, I sat on the committee with Senator Doody and others and, after listening to the people of Canada, I have come here prepared to deal with an elected Senate. I think that, since I and other senators have reached that stage where we are now prepared to look at an elected Senate, which we were not prepared to do before, it is imperative that the government now bring it forward in order that we can deal with it.

Senator Doody: Perhaps Senator Molgat would chair another committee to deal with it.

Senator Roblin: I have a suggestion to make to my honourable friend. As I recall, the committee co-chaired by Senator Molgat reported to the Senate, but I do not think the matter was debated. If my honourable friend wishes to bring in a resolution to debate that report, it might be interesting.

SUGGESTED APPOINTMENT OF SENATORS AS PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES

Hon. Peter Bosa: Honourable senators, I have a supplementary question. Major reform consists of an accumulation of minor reforms and we have discussed on previous occasions various measures, for instance the appointment of parliamentary secretaries to assist the Leader of the Government in the Senate in coping with all of the barrage of questions that are put to him, as was the case today, and which he answered with a great deal of composure and provided some information, although not always to the satisfaction of the senators asking those questions.

I would ask the Leader of the Government in the Senate if he would consider appointing some of his colleagues as parliamentary secretaries so that when he is unavoidably absent, as he was yesterday, the Senate might get some information which the Senate is entitled to have.

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): If that is my friend's idea of major reform of the Senate, it is certainly not mine. I leave this matter to the discretion of the Senate.

● (1450)

HEALTH AND WELFARE

ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Hon. Stanley Haidasz: Honourable senators, I should like to ask the Leader of the Government in the Senate whether he can now, or at an appropriate time, inform this chamber as to what action the federal government has taken to stem the