

in large parts of western Canada and that action in the form of \$50 per seeded acre and \$100 per cow is required. Action is required immediately because many farmers are in a position of almost total economic collapse. Businesses in small communities are going broke; they are being boarded up. Therefore, it is urgent that this announcement be made quickly.

I would ask, in more particular detail, whether or not the task force, headed up by the diligent member for Assiniboia, has yet made its report to cabinet. If so, at what stage is that report in terms of consideration? I should also like to know when the announcement will be made.

I would also ask that the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry consider looking into this whole agricultural situation.

In addition, I would ask the acting leader if he is aware that, in the other place, although they have been in session now for some eight days and their deliberations have occupied 300 pages of *Hansard*, this major catastrophe has warranted the attention of the members collectively to the extent of inserts into only one page of *Hansard*. One-third of 1 per cent is just not good enough for the farmers in western Canada, who are in serious financial straits at this time.

Senator Doody: Honourable senators, I have no wish to downplay the importance of the situation Senator Argue describes to us. I know exactly what he means when he talks of economic disasters and hardships.

I am witnessing a disaster in my own province this year where there has been a total collapse of the fishery on the northeast coast of the island. From the southern tip of the Avalon Peninsula to the northern tip of the Great Northern Peninsula, fish catches, in many places, have been non-existent and, in others, have been down to a range of between 10 per cent and 30 per cent of their yearly catches. There is a tremendous economic disaster in that particular area. The very same conditions the honourable senator describes, in terms of small businesses which are the backbone of the economic community in these areas, apply. They are in virtual collapse. I know exactly what the honourable senator is saying.

I studied *Hansard* diligently and I have not seen any great reference to that particular plight. I am not trying to say that the plight in western Canada is not a serious one; I know it is and I feel the greatest sympathy for those people. They, like my own people, are primary producers who live close, on day-to-day terms, to the environment in which they live.

I cannot tell honourable senators whether or not the gentleman from Assiniboia has brought in his report. I will certainly make every effort to find out. I appreciate the concern of the honourable senator and I will do what I can to find out what I can for him.

Hon. Sidney L. Buckwold: Honourable senators, my question is for the Acting Leader of the Government. It is supplementary to those raised by Senator Argue and Senator Olson, but will focus upon the province of Saskatchewan. Although Senator Olson spoke about the area of his concern and Senator Argue, quite rightly, talked about the entire western region, I

[Senator Argue.]

would like to emphasize the disastrous situation facing Saskatchewan farmers.

My question is: Has any agreement been made with the Province of Saskatchewan and its government as to the kind of aid program that will make possible a living for those who have been so badly affected?

Senator Doody: Honourable senators, I shall take the question as notice and find out at the earliest opportunity.

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES

SUGGESTED APPOINTMENT OF SENATORS

Hon. Peter Bosa: Honourable senators, my question is really supplementary to those put by Senator Olson, Senator MacEachen and Senator Argue. I wish to address what happens in this chamber when the Leader of the Government in the Senate is unavoidably absent. Question Period becomes meaningless, because the questions asked are not answered but are taken as notice.

Senator Flynn: What is the question?

Senator Bosa: I am coming to the question, Senator Flynn. I am saying that the inability to obtain answers to these very important questions emasculates the importance of the Senate.

I have advocated on a previous occasion the appointment of parliamentary secretaries to answer questions put during Question Period. Will the Acting Leader of the Government in the Senate impress upon his leader and upon his government the necessity of appointing some parliamentary secretaries in the Senate? There is a great deal of talent among our colleagues on the other side, and I know there are some who could answer some of the questions raised during Question Period.

Hon. C. William Doody (Acting Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I think that "the emasculation of the Senate" is probably a little bit of an overstatement—even, one might say, of hyperbole. We have been away from this chamber since June. It is now the middle of September. There were no questions answered during that period of time and there was no great kerfuffle made about that. Senator Roblin is suddenly absent for one day and a great crisis has presented itself. I do not think that matters are that pressing. I think we can contain ourselves for 24 hours until he gets back to resolve all of the problems on the other side of the house.

STATUS OF WOMEN

BROADCASTING TASK FORCE—REMUNERATION OF WOMEN MEMBERS

Hon. Lorna Marsden: Honourable senators, on Saturday, September 14, the *Globe and Mail* published, in its column "The Ottawa Scene", a list showing the remuneration to be received by those serving on the broadcasting task force being chaired by Mr. Gerry Caplan. This list reveals that the contracts which have been signed are very generous. However, one cannot help but notice that there are only two women on