

they are eligible. How can you differentiate on the allowance as between one province and another? Surely, there may be some variation? But there it is; everybody gets the same allowance, no matter where they live. How can you differentiate between provinces in the comfort allowance?

**Mr. Cafik:** This may not be a very adequate answer, but the OAS-GIS is a federal program and goes to everyone; that is certain. The comfort allowance is not related to the OAS-GIS legislation; it is related to the Canada Assistance Plan legislation.

**Senator Denis:** There is nothing that forbids any province paying any amount of money to old age pensioners.

**Mr. Cafik:** That is correct, and we would pay half.

**Senator Denis:** They could decide to pay \$70 instead of \$50 or \$40, and all we have to do is pay half of it.

**Mr. Cafik:** That is correct, provided it is comfort allowance.

**Senator Smith:** Isn't this one of the very items the minister may be talking about when he visits the provinces? I know he has been in my province of Nova Scotia and in Newfoundland; I do not know how far he has travelled. Is this not a package he is looking at with the ministers, to see where the faults are, where we should correct it jointly, who shall have the responsibility? I have no objection to the thinking behind Senator Argue's proposal. I can see that it is very difficult for us to tell a province what they should do with the comfort allowance. They are the ones who should tell us whether they will permit us to share these things, and I take strong objection to our interfering with the provinces. I think we have done enough of that.

**Mr. Cafik:** I agree wholeheartedly that the purpose of the overall review is to correct all the anomalies that exist in the social structure in Canada, of which this is one. I would hope that the overall review would take this kind of thing into account. I know the minister, at the time the increase was originally proposed in the House of Commons, expressed considerable concern about whether this money would in fact be passed on, in what way and in what amount. I am sure that this matter will be discussed pretty thoroughly with the provinces.

**Senator Fournier (De Lanaudière):** A few moments ago you used the expression "socially active". I would like to know the exact meaning of that expression. If I translate it into French, "socialement actif", it does not mean much.

**Mr. Cafik:** It is not a term that is used by the federal government. As far as I know, it is used only by the Province of Manitoba, and they make a distinction between the socially active and the socially inactive in terms of comfort allowance figures.

**Senator Argue:** If you cannot get out of bed you are socially inactive.

**Senator Fournier (De Lanaudière):** What does "socially active" mean?

**Mr. Cafik:** I could only offer my own interpretation, and I am sure that yours would be every bit as valid as mine.

**Senator Argue:** Don't be too ambitious.

**Senator Bonnell:** And don't be too ambiguous.

**Senator Fournier (De Lanaudière):** At the beginning of the bill there must be a definition of terms.

**Mr. Cafik:** But this is not in our bill, because we are not dividing elderly people into socially inactive and socially active persons. The Province of Manitoba has made the distinction between one who is socially active and one who is socially inactive and, depending on the position one finds oneself in, according to their definition you get a comfort allowance of \$14.21 or \$5.

**Senator Bonnell:** Maybe it means if you are a socialist or not!

**Senator Smith:** You are not inactive if you chase the nurses around!

**Senator Fournier (De Lanaudière):** We do not know; we are in the dark.

**Senator Cameron:** In response to questions Mr. Cafik said that in the discussions so far with the provinces there had been no suggested figure of what a uniform social allowance might be. When we look at the variation between \$10 and \$50, this disparity between the provinces is one more piece of evidence of the chaos in this whole field. It seems to me that the sooner we get down to Senator Croll's guaranteed annual income the better, because this kind of thing cannot go on, no matter how you look at it. Are you not meeting later this month with the provinces?

**Mr. Cafik:** Yes, we are.

**Senator Cameron:** Have you any hope that you may come up with a uniform standard, and or a new approach? I realize how hard it is to get a uniform standard.

**Mr. Cafik:** Yes, that is the whole purpose of the review. The federal government has obligated itself to prepare alternative models of structures for doing away with a lot of the repetition and red tape, to make the welfare delivery system more accessible to people, and to make it less difficult to evolve a system that will be universal, we hope, with provincial overtones, so that the provinces might be able to make varying adjustments to suit their own particular needs. It will cover the whole broad range of guaranteed incomes—which, by the way, we already have in Canada, as you know, with the elderly.

The thrust from the Speech from the Throne will be adequately taken into account when talking about guaranteed incomes for those who cannot work, rather than having them get piecemeal any assistance they can. There is a whole broad range of things we are presently preparing for presentation to the provinces. The provinces themselves have been asked to prepare models of what they think would be acceptable as an overall approach to this question.