

this government will know what will happen? Or will the minister keep on saying, "If you didn't buy the programs that were available early in the spring, we are not promising anything else." At least the Prime Minister raises some hope.

Senator Murray: What the Right Honourable the Prime Minister has said, and it should be obvious to the honourable senator, is that we would do in the future what we have done in the past—that is, respond to any need in the farm community in Western Canada. That is our record and no one knows it better than the farmers.

Senator Olson: The minister could have saved a lot of time if he had said that yesterday, instead of dismissing it by saying, "You should have bought the programs that were there, or else."

COST OF CROP LOSSES—FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL APPORTIONMENT

Hon. H.A. Olson: Honourable senators, I wish to ask another, related question. Will there be any change in the reduction of cost factors to both the federal and provincial governments? It seems that it will cost the Saskatchewan farmers some \$300 million to save \$24 million from the provincial treasury. Do you have any interest in trying to fix that?

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, that is the sort of question which I should relay to my colleague the Minister of Agriculture and report back.

Senator Olson: The Minister of Agriculture is already aware of the situation. You do not need to refer the matter to him because he has already tried to persuade the Saskatchewan government that they are doing a great disservice to the farmers by their actions. I want to know whether or not the government will intervene on this matter. Even the farmers sometimes need to be protected from the provincial governments.

SOCIAL AFFAIRS

APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLE OF UNIVERSALITY—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Royce Frith (Leader of the Opposition in the Government): I have a question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate concerning something he said yesterday during Senator Thériault's speech on Bill C-80. He indicated at that time that senators should not receive Family Allowance benefits, presumably, it appeared, because senators are employed and receive a paycheque.

Extending that logic, I then asked Senator Murray if senators should also not benefit from medicare, since they are employed and receive a paycheque. His response was that Family Allowance and medicare are two totally different programs.

Honourable senators, I agree that they *are* two totally different programs. However, they are both based on the same principle; namely, universality.

[Senator Olson.]

Senator Murray has made it clear that Family Allowance benefits should not be universal. That is reflected in Bill C-80. Therefore if he is attacking that principle in this program, can we not reasonably assume that he will attack the same principle in medicare?

My question is: If you do not believe in preserving the principle of universality as it relates to Family Allowance benefits, why do you expect us and the people of Canada to believe that you will preserve that principle in relation to medicare?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government in the Senate): Honourable senators, I do not think I can improve on the statement I made in the course of the debate yesterday.

Senator Frith: To tell you the truth, I did not think you were capable of improving on it either. I did, however, think it fair to give you a chance.

THE ECONOMY

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL ARRANGEMENTS—PROPOSED SHARED-COST AGREEMENT—EFFECT ON REFERENDUM VOTE

Hon. Royce Frith (Leader of the Opposition): My next question relates to capital spending and infrastructure. In last Saturday's *Toronto Star*, an article appeared concerning the government's plan to spur the economy. That article said:

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney is expected to announce the mammoth capital-spending program during the referendum campaign to boost the Yes side before the Oct. 26 vote.

Ottawa would spend \$1.5 billion a year and the provinces \$1 billion, under a proposed shared-cost agreement between the two levels of government.

Much of that is to be targeted to upgrading our national highways.

That program sounds stunningly similar to the infrastructure improvements Mr. Chrétien has been calling for over the past few months. To give you an example, in a press release dated June 8, Mr. Chrétien repeated his call for a shared-cost infrastructure program among the three levels of government. He said:

The physical infrastructure of our towns and cities—the roads and bridges and sewers—is literally falling apart . . . Capital improvements are desperately needed now, and so are the jobs and economic activity that would go with them.

Senator Simard: Senator Frith —

Senator Frith: I was not asking you a question, sir, but if you want to interrupt, I will repeat it as soon as you are through.

● (1420)

Honourable senators, under our new rules, we have a limited time for Question Period. Because the clock is watched and the interventions are monitored, when someone asks a