

Many individuals between the age of 60 and 65 will be receiving benefits under the Canada Pension Plan, Canada Assistance Programs, or our social services, and, as such, approximately \$35 million will be saved. That is a shared program with the provinces. How much money will each province save as a result of this legislation being passed and the program being taken over 100 per cent by the federal government?

Both British Columbia and Prince Edward Island have a large proportion of senior citizens, and it will be interesting to see how much money the provincial treasuries of those provinces can save as a result of the passage of this legislation.

Honourable senators, I do not wish to delay the bill, which I support. I wish the legislation could have gone further. Perhaps over the next few days the sponsor of the bill can provide the house with answers to my questions.

Of the 85,000 people who will receive benefits under this program, and the 72,000 women who will receive benefit under the program, can he tell us which provinces those people come from? In other words, can he provide us with a breakdown by province?

On motion of Senator Marsden, debate adjourned.

● (1530)

STATUTE LAW (CANADIAN CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS) AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. Nathan Nurgitz moved the second reading of Bill C-27, to amend certain Acts having regard to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

He said: Honourable senators, I should like to point out that this very important and substantial piece of legislation does not indeed involve any change in direction or policy. In other circumstances, one might even like to call the amendments contained in this bill housekeeping or consequential amendments—except, as I understand those two parliamentary terms, they usually refer to matters that are not of substance, and these amendments, I submit to honourable senators, are amendments of considerable substance.

Bill C-27 is one of a number of initiatives resulting from a very extensive review of federal statutes, regulations and administrative practices undertaken to ensure consistency with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The review was necessary because laws which are not consistent with the Charter may be found to be of no force and effect. From time to time we read in the newspapers and in law reports, for those who follow them, that the courts are declaring various sections of various acts to be of no force and effect. The government believes that it is preferable to change laws than to force people to go to the courts to assert their constitutional rights.

This particular bill amends roughly 50 federal statutes. In addition to this bill, the government has a number of other initiatives under way to ensure that our laws conform to the

[Senator Bonnell.]

Charter. The one particular legislative initiative to comply with the Charter, and the one that I suggest has been outstanding, the only one in which Canada's record in human rights has been called into question, is that dealing with the Indian Act, and that, we hope, will come to a satisfactory conclusion once Bill C-31 finds its way on to the order paper tomorrow. The amendments to the Indian Act to end discrimination, I suggest, are important and are dealt with outside of Bill C-27. I point that out as an additional government initiative.

The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has indicated in the other place that he will be bringing forward amendments to the Combines Investigation Act to deal with Charter concerns.

The search and seizure provisions of the Income Tax Act and related statutes, I am told, are also under review. The report of the Chief Electoral Officer outlining Charter considerations in the Canada Elections Act is being considered by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

As part of the process to review and amend the Criminal Code, the Department of Justice is constantly examining Charter issues arising out of the large number of cases that are now before the courts.

The discussion paper on equality rights tabled by the Minister of Justice in the House of Commons in January of this year is another major Charter initiative. A subcommittee of the House of Commons Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs has travelled throughout the country to hear the views of Canadians on how the equality rights in the Charter should be achieved. The report of this committee will provide the government with important insights on complex policy issues before changes are proposed to ensure consistency with the new standards of equality enshrined in the Charter. I am sure most of us have seen the media accounts of the hearings held by that committee in our respective home cities.

As honourable senators will realize, the review of statutes has been an enormous task. There are hundreds of federal laws covering a wide variety of subjects. In addition, the Charter is new and in many areas there are no definitive judicial decisions. The Charter also involves an evaluation of fundamental issues on social policy.

The bill before you today sets out some of those areas where the government has been able to reach clear legal and policy decisions about changes which should provide consistency with rights guaranteed in the Charter.

I now turn to a discussion of the bill before us today, which will amend, as I have indicated, something in excess of 50 federal statutes to provide for consistency with the Charter. If one can find a focal point of the bill, it is in the amendments related to things like search and seizure, right of entry, warrants, and so forth.

Section 8 of the Charter guarantees Canadians protection against unreasonable search and seizure. A large number of federal statutes authorize what is termed in law warrantless