

Senator Guay recalls this well—he terminated all sorts of programs which he felt had become obsolete or unfair or unworkable.

Now the Government of Canada is saying that modifications are required in our approach to certain problems in this country. The government is saying that we should make changes. Is the Honourable Senator Roblin really suggesting that no program should ever have a “sunset” clause; that once a program is in place it should never be changed? Of course not! His own record would demonstrate that he made all sorts of changes in Manitoba when he was premier of that province.

What the federal government is saying is that there is a time in the development of this country when we must do some fundamental reassessing of these programs to determine whether or not the burden has been unfairly carried by one level of government or another.

We all know that, ultimately, the same taxpayer pays the taxes municipally, provincially and federally. Everyone is aware of that fact. But more and more in this country we have seen more of the taxes going to provincial and municipal governments, with more of the responsibility going to the federal government, however, to collect the moneys which are then diverted to the provincial governments.

The federal government is saying that the time has come to reassess its relationship with the provincial governments; to determine whether or not the federal government is getting most of the blame and none of the credit; to determine whether some of the programs are now obsolete. The block funding concept may have had relevancy, but perhaps it is time to modify that program, to change it. Surely, a quality of government which should be admired is willingness to reassess and change, when change is required. But this government is not willing to stand back and assume all the responsibility to collect vast revenues, with over 60 per cent of all the taxes now collected by the federal government being spent by municipal and provincial governments, with the federal government having total discretionary power over less than \$20 million in today's budget.

Senator Roblin: Well, I am not going to indulge in any *ad hominem* arguments about what I did or did not do when I was Premier of Manitoba. I only hope that I did a better job than some of my friends opposite are doing at the present time.

Senator Olson: I don't think that is right.

Senator Roblin: Well, you don't think that is right.

Senator Olson: That would be an opinion we would not share.

Senator Roblin: All right. Well, I expressed the hope, but I think my honourable friends opposite are perhaps impervious to argument on that point. In any event, I do not intend to indulge in that kind of retrospective debate.

My point is simply that if you examine the origin of these enormous federal expenditures of which my honourable friend speaks, they were not made at the request of the provinces but on the initiative of the federal government. The federal govern-

ment took the initiative in making these sums available for worthy public purposes, but when they did so they set in train an accumulation of financial consequences and responsibilities which really, in a sense, dictated the fiscal policies of the provinces to deal with them.

Anyone who was around at the time when those massive social changes were initiated will understand the weight of the argument I am making here. I am not saying they were necessarily all wrong. I don't think they were. I am saying, however, that they did change the financial structure of the country and they did impose financial burdens on other levels of government which had no real way of avoiding them. There was no way of backing out of these things from a practical point of view.

Against that background, it then seems a little unfair that the federal government should come along and say, “We started this ball rolling. It has had consequences we did not entirely anticipate and now we think we ought to change it. The way we are going to change it is by pushing back on to another level of government some of the financial responsibilities.”

It seems to me that that, in a nutshell, is an argument that has to be considered. I suggest to my honourable friend that if he would use the kind of moderate language that he employed in his last exchange with me, we would get along a lot better. It seems to me that he should recognize the justice of that particular approach to the matter, particularly by a provincial treasurer or, indeed, a provincial taxpayer.

It seems to me that the federal government has to exercise reasonable discretion so that it does not leave somebody else holding the baby for which it is responsible.

THE CONSTITUTION

CANADIAN CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS—PROTECTION OF FETUS—TELEGRAM FROM CARDINAL CARTER TO PRIME MINISTER

Hon. Stanley Haidasz: Honourable senators, I should like to ask the Leader of the Government whether the telegram which His Eminence Cardinal Carter of Toronto sent to the Prime Minister requesting the affirmation of constitutional protection of the life of the fetus has been given any reply or consideration by the Prime Minister or by the Minister of Justice or by the cabinet.

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): I can confirm that the telegram has been received. I do not know whether a reply has been completed as yet, but it is in the process of formulation.

THE ECONOMY

ALBERTA—CANADIAN FORCES—IMPACT OF COST OF LIVING

Hon. Jack Marshall: Honourable senators, I wish to direct a question to the Leader of the Government in the Senate having to do with the recent alarming news that Canadian Forces