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Wednesday, February 12, 2014

The Honourable NOËL A. KINSELLA
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Wednesday, February 12, 2014

The Senate met at 1:30 p.m., the Speaker in the chair.

Prayers.

[Translation]

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

COLLÈGE SAINT-JOSEPH

ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Hon. Fernand Robichaud: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the 150th anniversary of the founding of Collège Saint-Joseph in Memramcook, New Brunswick.

In 1864, Father Camille Lefebvre of the Holy Cross Fathers Congregation settled in the Memramcook Valley and founded Collège Saint-Joseph, which opened its doors on October 10, 1864.

In 1868, the province gave Collège Saint-Joseph its charter, allowing it to award degrees. Twenty years later, the college would become the Université Saint-Joseph.

Early on, Collège Saint-Joseph accepted both francophone and anglophone Catholics from the region.

A fire in 1933 meant that the university had to move its classes to Moncton temporarily. Classes resumed in a new building in Memramcook the following year.

Over the years, its university programs evolved, thereby confirming its mission as an institution of higher education in Acadia.

In the 1950s, Université Saint-Joseph moved some of its staff to Moncton. Following the recommendations made in the Deutsch Report in 1963, Université Saint-Joseph took the name of college again and moved all of its activities to the Université de Moncton, the only French-language university in New Brunswick.

For the Acadian people, Collège Saint-Joseph played a leadership role in the training of Acadian and anglophone Catholic professionals and business people.

Its influence spread rapidly throughout Acadia. Collège Saint-Joseph served as a centre for religious events and Acadian conventions.

Acadian leaders were educated there, and Collège Saint-Joseph spurred the Acadian renaissance. Heads of Acadian associations and institutions studied there, including people like Placide Gaudet and Pierre-Amand Landry.

Many got involved in the Canadian parliamentary system by working for or sitting as members of the two houses. I'm thinking of Senator Pascal Poirier and Senator Calixte Savoie, not to mention the Right Honourable Roméo LeBlanc, who, after sitting as a member of the other place and becoming the Speaker of this honourable chamber, rose to the highest office in Canada, that of Governor General.

No doubt senators are familiar with another alumnus of the college, Arthur Beauchesne, a former clerk in the other place and the author of the annotated *Rules and Forms of the House of Commons of Canada*, who attended Université Saint-Joseph before studying law in Montreal.

Honourable senators, please join me in congratulating and thanking the founders of Collège Saint-Joseph, who, 150 years ago, laid the foundations for the institute of higher learning that has since become the Université de Moncton.

We hope that this institution will continue to serve Acadians for many years to come.

Thank you.

WINTER OLYMPICS 2014

Hon. Jean-Guy Dagenais: Honourable senators, I know that the Winter Olympics in Sochi are far from over. It's only day 5 of competition, but I can hardly contain my excitement over everything our Canadian athletes have achieved since the games began. They have made us proud and made Canada look good, and that deserves a mention in this chamber.

Has the Canadian flag ever appeared on TV and in the newspapers so often? We are making an incredible impression on the rest of the world, especially when we have not one, but two of the three medal winners on the podium, which has happened three times in five days.

I have never felt so proud. Of course, there are many competitions still to come, and I know we are all hoping for more medals. We are off to a good start for setting records.

Imagine this. We have already won 10 medals: four gold, four silver and two bronze. Ten medals won by young athletes who have left us with unforgettable images of both their amazing performances and their victories as captured by the media.

We are left with images of sporting achievements and also images of the families that have spent years helping these young athletes reach such lofty heights. I want to congratulate CBC/Radio-Canada for the job they have done introducing these athletes to us and helping us learn about them.

No one will forget the images of the Dufour-Lapointe sisters' victory. Two of them won medals, and the third was among the best moguls skiers in the world. These victories and family moments were so touching to see.

What else can I say about Charles Hamelin, who is the fastest skater around? One gold medal and he is not done competing in Sochi.

Then, it was time for our men's freestyle moguls team to dazzle us. A gold medal for the master, Alexandre Bilodeau, who will retire from freestyle skiing at the peak of his fame to become an accountant, and a silver medal for Mikaël Kingsbury, who, at 21, has not seen his last podium. He will be back in four years.

Dara Howell, from Ontario, with the gold, and Kim Lamarre, from Quebec, with the bronze, shared the podium in freestyle skiing. All of our athletes show great determination, and Kim Lamarre is a shining example. She was on the sidelines for more than two years because of accidents and three knee operations, so she paid her own way to train and get to Sochi, and she brought home a medal.

It takes a lot of hard work for an athlete to bring home an Olympic medal. It also takes a lot of sacrifices by parents and families who stand united to support a child's talent — or even three children's talent, in the case of the Dufour-Lapointe family.

Sports federations and coaches also deserve credit for this year's crop of athletes.

And we cannot forget Marcel Aubut, a man who always gives his all and who has been the head of the Canadian Olympic Committee for the past five years.

• (1340)

In a recent interview, Marcel Aubut said he wanted to make our Olympic athletes even bigger stars than our hockey players. When we see images of our athletes with their medals on international television channels such as CNN and NBC, then we can say mission accomplished.

Congratulations to our athletes. Let's hope for more great moments over the next nine days. It has been a long time since Canada's star has shone so brightly around the world. I am sure that Senator Nancy Greene Raine shares my enthusiasm. She won gold and silver at the Grenoble Olympic Games in 1968.

[English]

I am proud to be sitting close to her in the Senate.

[Translation]

Determination certainly remains the top quality of these athletes.

[English]

Hon. Claude Carignan (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, as you have certainly seen with a lot of pride, our Canadian athletes are doing very well at the Sochi Olympic Games, and we can all share in their success.

[Translation]

Since Monday, I have had two more reasons to be very proud of our athletes. On Monday afternoon, two young men from my Senate district won gold and silver in freestyle moguls skiing.

Alexandre Bilodeau managed to win gold in this particular event for the second time, defending the title of Olympic freestyle skiing champion he so brilliantly earned at the Vancouver Games in 2010.

Alexandre Bilodeau's performance on Monday was exceptional, on par with the world's greatest athletes. He made our Canadian delegation in Sochi shine. At just 26 years old, Alexandre has now won seven medals at two Olympic Games and at the world championships, including five gold and two silver. Since 2009, he has earned medals as well as honours, which speaks to the quality of our support programs for our young Canadian athletes. Alexandre enjoys unfailing support from his parents. Through his journey he has shown us his determination and perseverance and proven that he is a young man of extraordinary character.

Mikaël Kingsbury won a silver medal at his very first Olympic Games. The 21-year-old won four medals at the recent world championships and has twice earned the World Champion title and won the prestigious Crystal Globe.

This time he has stepped onto the Olympic podium with a sense of pride that we all understandably share. I have watched him develop since 2007, when he received a bursary from the Fondation Élite de Saint-Eustache, a foundation that I established in 2001 to help young elite athletes in Saint-Eustache. As a young 15-year-old athlete, he was already looking far into the future, and his passion for his sport was contagious. Like Alexandre, Mikaël has had the unconditional support of his parents, Robert and Julie, allowing him to become the best in the world.

Honourable senators, I would like to pay a heartfelt tribute to all the athletes representing Canada at the Sochi Olympic Games. I want to sincerely congratulate Alexandre Bilodeau and Mikaël Kingsbury in particular for their dual accomplishments.

In closing, I would also like to mention the excellent performance by the Dufour-Lapointe sisters. Justine, Mikaël's girlfriend, won gold in freestyle skiing, and her sister Chloé won silver in the same discipline.

[English]

DAIRY FARMERS

Hon. Maria Chaput: Honourable senators, on February 4, I had the pleasure of meeting with board members of the Dairy Farmers of Manitoba, who were in Ottawa for the Dairy Farmers of Canada Policy Conference 2014. We had discussions relating to Canada's dairy sector and supply management system, including the importance of ensuring adequate border enforcement measures and the government's defence of supply management

in trade talks. They emphasized the importance of government working as a partner with the sector to maintain strong consumer confidence in Canada's dairy products. They talked about the growth in the Canadian cheese sector over the last decade, which is a source of pride for dairy farmers and is a result of their hard work, strategic promotion efforts and significant financial investments.

Honourable senators, farmers are worried about the tiny percentage of fine Canadian cheeses that may find a niche on the EU market. They want to ensure that growth continues in the Canadian cheese sector. Dairy Farmers of Canada's proAction Initiative presents six key programs under one umbrella. These programs are currently at different stages of development or implementation across the country: milk quality, food safety, livestock traceability, animal care, biosecurity and environment.

As dairy farmers, they collectively demonstrate responsible stewardship of their animals and the environment, sustainably producing high-quality, safe and nutritious food for consumers. I appreciated meeting with the DFM's board members, Henry Holtmann, vice-chair; Lawrence Knockaert and Mark Donohoe, directors; and DFM's corporate communications manager, Teresa Ciccarelli.

Dairy farmers have been and will continue to be the backbone of many communities across the country, and governments need to continue to work with them in partnership.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

Hon. Suzanne Fortin-Duplessis (The Hon. the Acting Speaker): Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Dr. Shelly Whitman and her colleagues from the Child Soldiers Initiative, Tanya Zayed and Lori Ward. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Dallaire.

On behalf of all senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST THE USE OF CHILD SOLDIERS

Hon. Roméo Antonius Dallaire: Honourable senators, today is the International Day against the Use of Child Soldiers. Since the United Nations Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict entered into force in 2002, February 12 has been the day when we draw attention to the horrors faced by children who are forced to serve as soldiers in wars and armed conflicts in over 51 conflicts in the world.

There are around 250,000 child soldiers in the world today, with around 40 per cent being girls. Those numbers are virtually unchanged since 2006, in spite of the great work being done by governments and NGOs to promote the rights of children and to rehabilitate and reintegrate child soldiers who manage to escape their captors.

Over the past months and years, we have seen that the presence of child soldiers heightens the risk of violence inflicted upon civilian populations, particularly in the case of civil wars where we see mass atrocities and ultimately even genocide. We can see conflicts going on in the Central African Republic, Mali, Syria and the Congo, where UN troops are becoming casualties too through the use of child soldiers as weapons of war. Children are often easier to manipulate than adults and are more plentiful in a number of developing countries; and so is the proliferation of small arms that we did not reduce at the end of the Cold War and that have been made available by the hundreds of millions in many parts of the world.

Children have become the weapon of choice for civil wars and conflicts over the last 20 years. They are the most effective, low-technology weapons system right now in the inventory of low-intensity wars. They are also the prime indicator of when a civil war degenerates from being not only war but also mass atrocities, the whole breakdown of social structures and, ultimately, even genocide.

Twenty years ago, I was facing a child soldier as I looked at the barrel of an AK-47. To this day, I still remember the one who was about 13 years old, whose eyes were bright and scared, with his finger on the trigger and the barrel up one of my nostrils. The only reason he didn't pull the trigger that day is because he saw the chocolate bar in my hand.

• (1350)

He was not alone. The bulk of the slaughter in Rwanda 20 years ago was done by youth influenced by political propaganda and who were ultimately forcibly recruited.

I wish to extend an acknowledgement to the team working out of Dalhousie University with the Child Soldiers Initiative, who have been at it since 2004, with research initiated at Harvard. They are the only body in the whole of the NGO world that is actually looking at preventing the recruitment of child soldiers and providing military and police force with tools and training so that they don't have to use lethal force and kill children who, under duress, ultimately find themselves in the face of these conflicts. They have been mandated, as an example of their work, to conduct the retraining of the whole of the Sierra Leone forces — police, military, prison guards — and even affect the agenda or curriculum within the schools to ease children into the idea that being forcibly recruited is against their best interests, and that it should be their will and their family's will to prevent them from being so recruited.

I wish to also bring to your attention other members in the gallery who are part of the advisory board, such as General Baril, former Chief of the Defence Staff. There are also members of the extraction industry there who are also concerned about the use of children in these conflicts and surrounding the areas in which they are so engaged — Mr. Carreau, in particular, and his organization.

I also bring to your attention two people sitting there in Scarlet. Those RMC cadets two years ago climbed Kilimanjaro and provided \$20,000 to the Child Soldiers Initiative at Dalhousie to fund PhD students working toward the prevention of the use of

children as weapons of war. They recognize that one day they may face child soldiers and their troops may be casualties thereof. So they recognized that it would be useful to participate in trying to eliminate that threat.

Dr. Shelly Whitman and her team are there to reduce and prevent the recruitment and use of children as weapons of war, and they should be commended for that work.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of John and Carolyn MacDonald. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Watt.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[Translation]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Dennis Dawson introduced Bill S-215, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act (election expenses).

(Bill read first time.)

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this bill be read the second time?

(On motion of Senator Dawson, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

[English]

CANADIAN NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

JOINT VISIT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON TRANSATLANTIC ECONOMIC RELATIONS AND ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT SECURITY, JUNE 24-28, 2013—REPORT TABLED

Hon. Joseph A. Day: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian parliamentary delegation of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association respecting its participation at the Joint Visit of the

Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Economic Relations and Energy and Environment Security, held in Texas, United States, from June 24 to 28, 2013.

VISIT OF THE DEFENCE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE, JULY 9-12, 2013—REPORT TABLED

Hon. Joseph A. Day: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian parliamentary delegation of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association respecting its participation at the Visit of the Defence and Security Committee, held in Washington, D.C., and Dallas, Texas, United States, from July 9 to 12, 2013.

QUESTION PERIOD

FINANCE

BUDGET 2014—INCOME SPLITTING

Hon. James S. Cowan (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate, and it arises directly out of what we learned yesterday from the budget speech.

During the 2011 election campaign, Prime Minister Harper promised that once the budget was balanced, his government would introduce and implement income splitting. The platform of the Conservative Party in that election said:

We will establish the Family Tax Cut: income-sharing for couples with dependent children under 18 years of age.

This will give spouses the choice to share up to \$50,000 of their household income, for federal income-tax purposes. This important new measure will be implemented when the federal budget is balanced within our next full term of office.

That is pretty clear.

Yesterday, the Finance Minister announced that the budget would be balanced next year — not the current year but next year.

In light of those statements, Mr. Flaherty said something I find rather curious when he was interviewed on the weekend by Tom Clark. Mr. Clark asked whether income splitting will kick in with the balanced budget. You will recall what the Prime Minister said and what the Conservative Party campaigned on: It would be done. The minister's response was this:

It's a good debate . . . and I think in the next year it will be healthy for Canada to have a fulsome discussion about that issue, because there are some people who benefit, and some who don't in that world of income-splitting.

That is a rather curious take on the very explicit promise set forth in the Conservative election platform.

Mr. Clark went on and asked:

Is it conceivable . . . that if there is this national discussion on income-slitting, is it possible that income-splitting may not be part of the plan going ahead?

The minister responded not “yes;” he said, “That will be up to the Prime Minister at the end of the day, whether he chooses to go ahead with it or not.”

My question is very specific: Is the government committed to income splitting as soon as the budget is balanced?

• (1400)

[Translation]

Hon. Claude Carignan (Leader of the Government): I would like to thank you for your question. As you mentioned in your question, the budget is still not balanced, so we cannot deliver a surplus this year. However, we will continue to work towards delivering a balanced budget, meeting the financial goals we have set and reaffirming our commitment to Canadian families.

Economic Action Plan 2014 established important priorities, notably the Canada Job Grant, which will match Canadians with available jobs. We have taken a number of measures to create jobs and ensure that Canadians fill those jobs. We will continue to work on that while lowering taxes, decreasing tariffs and minimizing bureaucracy so that the Canadian economy stays healthy.

[English]

Senator Cowan: My question had to do with income splitting. The specific promise that was contained in your election platform last time said that when the budget was balanced, the government was committed to income splitting. The finance minister said the budget would be balanced in 2015-16.

My very specific question is: Is it still the commitment of the Conservative Government of Canada that they will implement income splitting in 2015-16? Nothing else; that's the question I have.

Senator Mercer: Yes or no?

[Translation]

Senator Carignan: The Leader of the Opposition is eager to find out what is in the 2015 budget, but right now we are focusing on Economic Action Plan 2014. Yesterday, we tabled an economic action plan that announced investments in various areas, including economic development, job creation, and support for innovation and families. We will continue to work toward those goals, while still looking to balance the budget.

I hope that the Leader of the Opposition will manage to convince the members of his Liberal caucus to vote for the budget.

[Senator Cowan]

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Hon. Maria Chaput: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. On January 8, the French newspaper, *Le Monde*, published an article titled “Canada accused of destroying its historical heritage.” Two days later, on January 10, an evocatively titled documentary called *Silence of the Labs* aired on CBC. It took stock of the cuts to scientific research in Canada. James Turk, Executive Director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, said the following:

[English]

What's important is the scale of the assault on knowledge, and on our ability to know about ourselves and to advance our understanding of our world.

[Translation]

Over the past five years, the federal government has laid off 2,000 scientists, and hundreds of world-class research centres and programs have lost their funding. Some of the research areas targeted include food inspection, oil spills, water quality and climate change.

Mr. Leader, we know that government members in the other chamber often make decisions based on ideology, but here in the Senate, our work must be guided by objectivity. We must provide sober second thought. Do you think that the Senate's work, be it studies, legislation or writing reports, could be compromised by your government's decision to weaken scientists' ability to provide accurate information?

Hon. Claude Carignan (Leader of the Government): Thank you for your question, Senator Chaput. Since you brought it up, I would be pleased to talk about this government's record on research and innovation. Judging from your question, perhaps you do not know that the government has invested over \$10 billion a year in new funding to support entrepreneurship and innovation in Canada. I would like to share some examples: \$49 million for the Canadian Youth Business Foundation to help young entrepreneurs grow their businesses; over \$2.3 billion to support advanced research through federal granting agencies; over \$800 million to support cutting-edge post-secondary research through the Canada Foundation for Innovation; \$2 billion for repair, maintenance and construction work in universities to support the Knowledge Infrastructure Program; support for talent development through the Canada Excellence Research Chairs and the Industrial Research and Development Internship programs; \$65 million for the permanent Build in Canada Innovation Program, which helps businesses get their technology from the lab to the marketplace by testing and providing feedback; and \$1.5 billion to support private sector research and development to enhance the Canadian aerospace industry's ability to compete through strategic aerospace and defence initiatives.

Senator, that is our record, and we continue to make investments under Economic Action Plan 2014.

Among the announcements made yesterday, I would be remiss if I did not mention the new Canada First Research Excellence Fund, with \$1.5 billion in funding over the next 10 years. In addition, granting councils across Canada will receive funding of \$46 million per year to support advanced research and scientific discoveries.

We have also committed to providing \$222 million to the TRIUMF laboratory to support world-class advanced research and create leading-edge businesses.

We have committed to supporting innovative technologies by providing an additional \$15 million to the Institute for Quantum Computing, which carries out research and commercializes technologies. At the same time, we are supporting the automotive sector and the forest industry.

In your province, the University of Manitoba commented on this record and the initiatives in Economic Action Plan 2014, saying, “We are extremely pleased that the federal government continues to recognize the pivotal role that universities play in driving Canada’s innovation agenda and this investment demonstrates the confidence that the federal government has in universities’ ability to find solutions to challenges both at home and abroad.”

Senator Chaput: Mr. Leader, can you tell us over how many years the investments you just listed and described in detail have been made by your government? When did the investments start and when will they end? Have any of those amounts been paid out already?

Senator Carignan: Senator, as I said, the \$10 billion has been paid out every year. That is what the Government of Canada currently spends on innovation.

The amounts I mentioned from Economic Action Plan 2014 are for future years.

The \$1.5 billion will be invested over 10 years, but the other amounts are annual investments.

I will not repeat my answer because it seems to have upset some people across the way.

Senator Chaput: Those amounts are not just promises. They will actually be paid out and spent.

• (1410)

Therefore, this means that, when the National Finance Committee reviews the budget, we will not see any sums of money at the end of the year left unspent for any reason. Is it your opinion that everything that is spent should be spent?

Senator Carignan: The money that was available for spending was made available this year. The total was \$10 billion. The sums committed as part of the action plan are available to be spent and will have to be spent as part of the program. For some of the spending, research proposals must be submitted, and given how

Canadian universities have welcomed and applauded the budget, we have no doubt that proposals will be submitted so that the money can be committed and spent.

[English]

TRANSPORT

TRAIN SAFETY

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Train derailments seem to be reaching epidemic levels. Only last month there were three more derailments: two in New Brunswick and one in British Columbia. Last year there were accidents in Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Quebec.

While industry and the federal Minister of Transport worked together to develop rail safety plans, we do not know what is in those plans because the department will not release the information and defers to industry. So we go to industry.

Industry will not release the plans because they claim they contain confidential information. Now we have learned that Transport Canada refuses to discuss why it grants exemptions to the rail industry, claiming it is private information. The safety of Canadians is not private information.

Would the leader know why the Minister of Transport remains silent on these exemptions, even as train derailments continue to occur?

[Translation]

Hon. Claude Carignan (Leader of the Government): Our government remains committed to safety and continues to be proactive, especially when it comes to rail transportation.

The sharing of information you referred to is perhaps the protective direction issued by the minister, specifically to share information with the municipalities. On November 20, 2013, Minister Raitt issued a protective direction requiring rail companies to share information with the municipalities. We recognize the responsibilities of all parties involved in maintaining safe railway transportation in Canada. Our government remains committed to two-way dialogue and information exchange with key transportation stakeholders in communities across Canada.

This prompted the following statement from Claude Dauphin, the President of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, who incidentally was here yesterday for the tabling of the budget:

Minister Raitt and the federal government have now taken action, and we congratulate them for that.

Even your former colleague, Denis Coderre, the Mayor of Montreal, had the following to say about the protective direction:

Excellent news!

[English]

Senator Mercer: Honourable senators, I don't believe anyone takes safety lightly, especially rail safety these days. Trains carry more dangerous goods every day, and the safety regulations around the transport of dangerous goods are clear. What I find hard to believe is that the minister is still granting exemptions to safety rules. Why, how much, and to whom?

[Translation]

Senator Carignan: Our government is committed to protecting the safety of Canadians. It takes this responsibility seriously and is taking meaningful action. We are working to ensure transportation safety. The minister has issued several protective directions requiring rail companies to ensure rail safety and the safe transportation of goods. This includes testing and classifying crude oil, which was one of the transported goods that caused problems in the most recent incidents.

Rail safety regulations governing the transportation of dangerous goods ensure public safety and protection. They apply to companies that use rail transportation. If a company does not abide by the regulations, we will not hesitate to immediately impose the necessary sanctions. If a company does not classify its goods appropriately, it can be taken to court under the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act. We have all kinds of things in place, including legislation, regulations, inspections, minister's decisions and protective directions, to protect the safety of Canadians and to minimize the risk of potential incidents or accidents involving the transportation of dangerous goods.

[English]

Senator Mercer: The minister says everything is in place, and indeed the rules and regulations might be, but the minister continues to grant exemptions.

For example, in 2006 Transport Canada ordered all rail companies to install reflective strips on railcars, following a number of deadly accidents with freight trains at level crossings. The companies were given several years to do this, but in 2013, the department granted CN and CP an extension of another 28 months. That sounds like a pretty easy rule to follow. Why are exemptions like this still being allowed?

[Translation]

Senator Carignan: I will repeat the answer again. As I often say, you are not really satisfied with the answers. You can see that our government is taking real action when it comes to prevention and safety.

As I explained, the law is in place and the companies must abide by the law. If they do not obey the regulations and commit infractions, then significant fines are in place to address that. Between April 1, 2012, and March 31, 2013, more than 30,000 inspections were done, we invested \$100 million in our railway safety system, we continued to hire inspectors and we increased the fines for violating our regulations. Everything is in place to ensure that the rail companies obey the rules and that the

regulations and directions, including protective directions, are implemented and adhered to by the companies.

[English]

Senator Mercer: I have a final supplementary question. The minister says everything is in place. Great. But you're not implementing the measures, and you're giving exemptions all over the place.

Another example was in 2012, the department waived the requirements for CN trains leaving a Winnipeg yard for six months. Listen to this folks, this allowed the trains to travel through Winnipeg without a complete brake test; again, a brake test would seem to be highly important to ensure that the trains can stop and stay stopped.

Would the Leader of the Government in the Senate please tell us why you continue to play with the safety of Canadians?

[Translation]

Senator Carignan: As I already said, under the Railway Safety Act, to prevent or limit the risk of having a runaway train — considering your question has to do with brakes, I imagine this is one of your concerns — the Transportation Safety Board of Canada, which is an independent agency, made decisions on classification and the production of reports on incidents involving rail safety.

• (1420)

In 2012, Transport Canada carried out more than 30,000 railway inspections. We want to ensure that companies comply with rail transportation regulations. If these regulations are not followed, we will not hesitate to impose the necessary sanctions. Railway companies are required by law to ensure that their trains run safely, and our government has increased fines for offenders under the Railway Safety Act from \$200,000 to \$1 million. Everything — the directions and regulations — is in place to prevent incidents, including brake problems or failures, which you seem to be raising.

FINANCE

BUDGET 2014

Hon. Céline Hervieux-Payette: Now that we are studying this year's budget, it seems that there is one aspect that keeps coming up year after year. In its review of so-called security expenditures, the Institut de recherche et d'informations socio-économiques points out that spending related to National Defence, CSIS, Correctional Services and the RCMP has increased by 31 per cent since the Conservative government came to power. There have been across-the-board cuts, except in the case of the police and correctional services, even though we are about to have triple bunking.

According to this study, while the federal government claims that it does not have money for social policies — which has led to an increase in the retirement age, employment insurance reforms

and cuts to health transfers — it seems that funding for military operations abroad, in the name of the war on terrorism, and correctional services and spy agencies is infinitely expandable.

Mr. Leader, when will your government stop cutting Canadians' social programs to fund its brutal and ineffective ideology?

Hon. Claude Carignan (Leader of the Government): Senator, I'm not sure what cuts you are seeing in family support services. The opposite is true. It's easy to make accusations, particularly in terms of cuts to provincial transfer payments, but it's the other way around. Your former Liberal government cut provincial transfers and tried to balance its budget on the backs of the provinces.

That is not this government's policy in the slightest. You have seen that in one economic action plan after another that you unfortunately voted against. You can't balance a budget by increasing taxes or reducing the disposable incomes of Canadians, quite the contrary.

Senator Hervieux-Payette: Leader of the Government, I am not denying what the Liberal government did. However, let me add that the previous Conservative government, the Mulroney government, left us with a debt of \$425 billion and one deficit after another, and that the International Monetary Fund was practically threatening to put Canada into trusteeship. You don't make cuts lightly. You make them because you have no other choice.

Let me turn to the Correctional Investigator of Canada. In his reports, he said that changing the way prisons are managed does very little for public safety. Instead, it makes the rehabilitation of inmates and their reintegration into society more difficult.

Mandatory minimum sentences, eliminating house arrest and early statutory release, trying young offenders in adult courts and increasing the fees for pardon applications to deter claimants from applying are all provisions that contribute to prison overcrowding, to the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in prisons and to the increased number and duration of prison sentences with no impact on public safety, as the Correctional Investigator of Canada pointed out.

Your tough-on-crime approach does not work, as American experts have shown. Mr. Leader, Minister Finley acknowledged that your government had mishandled military procurement and mismanaged public funds. With that in mind, when will you propose a crime prevention action plan? When will you consult experts, not polls, and invest money in rehabilitation?

Senator Carignan: Your question has many facets and contains many assertions. I will not respond to each assertion in order to correct inaccuracies or point out the nuances lacking in your preamble. However, regarding overcrowding and the Correctional Investigator's annual report, criminals are in jail for a reason. Our crime agenda is based on the idea that dangerous criminals and reoffenders are incarcerated as they deserve, and the only identifiable target group for our justice system is criminals.

As for the growth in the inmate population, it is only about one-quarter of the estimate by correctional services and far lower than the fearmongering opposition predicted.

Double-bunking in prison cells is a totally normal, well-established practice in many Western countries. We do not believe that convicted criminals are entitled to private accommodation. If you are expecting our government to be nicer and softer toward criminals, you have got the wrong government. Perhaps an NDP or Liberal government would be content supporting lenient sentences and releasing criminals from prison, but that is clearly not our policy for making our streets safer and ensuring that families and individuals are safe.

[English]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SIoux VALLEY DAKOTA NATION GOVERNANCE BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Raine, seconded by the Honourable Senator Gerstein, for the second reading of Bill C-16, An Act to give effect to the Governance Agreement with Sioux Valley Dakota Nation and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

Hon. Lillian Eva Dyck: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Bill C-16, the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation Governance Bill. I intend to make my remarks brief, as the sponsor, Senator Nancy Greene Raine, spoke in great detail about the process and benefits of this self-government agreement. As we know, this bill has had great support from the three parties in the other place, and in fact, the whole bill was dealt with in one day by means of a ways and means motion. It passed very quickly through the other place.

Senator Day: By means of not looking at it.

Senator Dyck: We'll come to that. Good point.

During the last session of Parliament, we had before us the Yale Treaty Act for consideration and passage. What I like to do when I get a bill such as this, is compare it to the other self-governing bills that we have had. I looked at what happened with the Yale First Nation, and then I looked at the bill that we passed some years ago pertaining to the Maa-nulth First Nation. I went back to the bill kits, compared the table of contents between those two versus what we have before us today, Bill C-16, the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation. You can see very quickly that this bill is much

simpler. The content of the agreement in the Yale First Nation legislation has 11 sections. Under the Maa-nulth First Nation legislation, under content of the agreement, there are 13 sections.

• (1430)

If you look at the table of contents for the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation, there is no table of contents. There is nothing that says what the contents of the agreement are.

That's because this agreement basically sets out a governance agreement and also sets out a tripartite agreement between the Government of Canada, the Province of Manitoba and the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation.

Now, I have gone through the bill, and it seems to me that as of yet the Manitoba government has not actually signed on, so that will be a question that will come before the committee when we deal with the bill there.

There are a number of outstanding issues. If you look at the bill, basically it sets up self-governance, and the intention mostly is to deal with land and taxation, which of course we all know is important to economic development, and certainly the sponsor pointed that out. It's a move toward self-governance and economic development.

Typically in self-governing agreements we also have contents that deal with things like education and child welfare. Senator Watt could tell us all the things that go with self-government. Those have yet to be developed and have yet to come into play. In fact, many of the bylaws have yet to come into play. This is just the beginning.

Nonetheless, it has taken decades for the agreement to reach this stage. The process started in 1988 with the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation deciding that it wanted to proceed, and then it has gone step by step to get where we are and I want to put into the record some of the major milestones. As I said, it began in 1988, and in 1991 the framework agreement was signed by the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation and the Government of Canada. Ten years later, in 2001, there was an agreement in principle by the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation and Canada, and an agreement in principle for the tripartite agreement by the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation, Canada and the Province of Manitoba.

This was ratified by the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation in October 2012, and then, as I said before, in December 2013 the bill was introduced into the House of Commons. It passed in one day and is before us now. This is where we're at in terms of the process.

The Sioux Valley Dakota Nation bill is a self-government agreement, not a treaty. Nonetheless, we are part of the parliamentary oversight of an important step within the emergence of self-governance for First Nations. Typically, as we know, these agreements arrive at the Senate at the end of the approval process. I believe that no senator, regardless of political affiliation — whether Conservative, Liberal, Progressive Conservative or independent — wants to stand in the way of self-governance. I don't think the intention is to in any way delay

it, because it's been in the making for decades, agreements have been signed, lawyers have been hired and all of the i's should have been dotted and the t's crossed, and we'll get to that later.

As I said, this agreement is a self-government agreement without any attached land claim. Most senators should know that the majority of self-governing First Nations in Canada achieved their self-government through land claim agreements, but this is not the case here. As such, if you compare the three bills that I mentioned, the Yale, the Maa-nulth and the Sioux Valley legislation, the first thing you will see is a big difference in the preambles.

Let's go to what is said. Both the Yale and the Maa-nulth agreements say:

Whereas the *Constitution Act, 1982* recognizes and affirms the existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada . . .

Whereas the reconciliation between the prior presence of aboriginal peoples and the assertion of sovereignty by the Crown is of significant social and economic importance to Canadians;

Whereas Canadian courts have stated that this reconciliation is best achieved through negotiation . . .

Those phrases are not present in the proposed Sioux Valley Dakota Nation governance act. Why is that important? Because that means section 35 rights are not included as part of this agreement. I would be interested to hear why they have been left out. I'm not saying it's wrong; I just would like to know the background. I suspect that part of it is because the Dakota First Nations were not party to the treaty-making process on the Prairies. There has been ongoing litigation by a number of Dakota and Lakota First Nations on the Prairies. The Sioux Valley Dakota apparently were in litigation with the government and have dropped their case. Part of that may be one of the reasons why the section 35 rights are not protected within this bill.

We will get clarification when the bill goes to committee as to why those rights are not definitively articulated within the bill.

This agreement does not touch on land issues itself, except that it does have an annex of provisions of the Indian Act that relate to land that the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation will no longer be under. The agreement basically takes them out from under land-use provisions of the archaic and paternalistic Indian Act, as our sponsor said. Many nations have been trying to get out from under the Indian Act. This bill removes the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation from under those provisions, and that's not a bad thing.

When I first went through the bill, I didn't notice where it removed itself from the elections or governance act. I am sure the Dakota Nation will tell us that when this bill gets to committee, and where the Indian Act provisions are with regard to elections and self-governance. I'm sure we'll get that information when the bill goes to committee.

The governance agreement, which is really the primary part of the act so far, recognizes the Sioux Valley Dakota Oyate Government. It sets out its jurisdiction and the

government-to-government relationship that it will hold with the Government of Canada and the Government of Manitoba. I would like to reiterate again that we will probably get clarification as to how this agreement will deal with future negotiations related to section 35 rights of the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation.

That will be one important area. I've already mentioned that typically these section 35 rights are mentioned in the preamble to set that out, right up front, to say that Aboriginal treaty rights are protected.

As I said before, the bill before us is a product of more than 20 years of close negotiations between the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation, the Government of Canada and the Government of Manitoba, and it will be interesting to see what the various parties have to say about the process that it took in order to get to where they are.

It will also be interesting to see how the Government of Manitoba intends to come into an agreement with them with regard to things like child welfare and education — those things that are normally under provincial jurisdiction. We all know that typically First Nations fall between the Government of Canada and the provincial laws. It will be interesting to see how they have worked out those differences or how they will work out those differences in terms of which laws will be followed and who will provide the funding.

Our honourable colleague Senator Watt raised some concerns with regard to the funding attached to this bill. One section of the bill kit talks about financial management. According to the bill kit, on the day the agreement comes into effect, Canada will provide one-time funding in the amount of \$700,000 to support the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation with its start-up costs. Canada will provide ongoing funding in the amount of \$11 million for the delivery of agreed-upon programs and services of \$2.5 million for the structured operation of the Sioux Valley Dakota Oyate First Nation.

• (1440)

That's what it says in the bill kit with regard to financing, but the financing for things typically covered by the provincial government I am sure will be explained to us when it is examined in committee.

As I said, we are in the final stages here, and I would like to congratulate the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation. I'm sure they must've gotten frustrated, having worked on this for more than 20 years. It's very good that they've come to this place where we can see the end coming and where the bill will be enacted.

I presume that the bill will go to the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples. We have had a number of experiences, over the years, dealing with these self-governing agreements.

I mentioned the milestones that were reached. There are several outstanding questions that I have outlined with regard to provincial interplay within this bill.

In Senator Greene Raine's speech, she talked glowingly about the bill, and I think it is a really good step. To my mind, it's not a huge step because it's still dealing, basically, with governance and land. There are still many outstanding issues to be resolved.

She also suggested that we should use this as a template. If you look at all of our self-governing agreements, they all pretty much follow the same template. It is the same language, like in the preamble. Compare one to the other. The lawyers in the crowd will say, "We figured it out once. We know what we want. Why should we redo it?" It's a good idea, but here is where we earn our keep, senators.

If you read this bill, it has clearly used a template — the Yale First Nation Final Agreement. As I was reading through it, I discovered it says "Yale First Nation" in many spots. Now that is an error, for sure. I first looked at it and saw three mentions of "Yale First Nation." This is not dealing with Yale First Nation at all; this is dealing with the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation.

Senator Mercer: Sloppy work.

Senator Dyck: I saw three references to Yale First Nation. I looked back just now, and I saw five references to Yale First Nation.

An Hon. Senator: Look again.

Senator Dyck: I'd better not look anymore. I'm pretty sure it's not mentioned in the title. There you go; that earned our keep as senators, right?

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Day: Well done.

An Hon. Senator: Sober second thought, yes.

Senator Dyck: That's right.

That's the danger of templates. Even the lawyers, who don't come cheap, missed it. Under changes to the Privacy Act and Access to Information Act, it says "Yale;" it does not say Sioux Valley Dakota Nation. Right away, we have to make some changes right there, in the French version as well as the English version.

I look forward to reviewing this in committee because there will be some outstanding questions. There will be interesting discussions, and I'm sure the lawyers will be sitting there with their red faces. I hope that we will be asking for a bit of a refund on the charge. Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Are honourable senators ready for the question?

An Hon. Senator: Senator Watt has a question.

Hon. Charlie Watt: Honourable senators, if there is time to ask a question of Senator Dyck on a point that she raised? Am I permitted to ask questions?

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Yes.

[Editor's Note: Senator Watt spoke in Inuktitut.]

Senator Watt: I'll translate that quickly, because I don't intend to speak all the way through to Inuktitut. I could, but you might not be able to understand.

An Hon. Senator: For sure we won't.

Senator Watt: I'm sure some of you will.

Honourable senators, this is a very interesting topic that Senator Dyck has raised. Not too long ago, with regard to the concept of self-government, we had to go through a referendum solely because the Government of Canada and the governments of the provinces decided that maybe we should test out whether a new concept could be recognized by the Aboriginal groups. We ended up having a referendum on the particular question that she just raised. Yet, self-government is going to turn out to be stand-alone self-government, not taking into consideration what is anticipated within section 35, and they are not going to make it. I would even go as far as to say that it is unconstitutional if you do that.

It seems like we have a lot of work to do at the committee level, not only in trying to rectify that matter. Also, from what I understand, you are talking about an empty shell. There's nothing in it. It is a letter of intent. Why don't they call it a letter of intent instead of calling it an agreement if it is not complete but still subject to further development down the road, encompassing and bringing the Province of Quebec, the First Nation and the federal government to rectify the problem of two jurisdiction levels? They have no choice; they have to go through that avenue.

On top of that, have you seen, aside from what you have highlighted in terms of the funds that have been made available, any implementation funds, any appropriation that is being put aside for when they have to deal with a bigger picture involving the provincial government, the First Nation and the federal government? Is there any money for that?

Senator Dyck: Thank you, Senator Watt. You always ask such good questions. Your wisdom here is very much appreciated. In fact, I can't answer most of your questions because they should mostly be directed to the partners in the agreement.

As to section 35, you may well be right. I don't know what the answer there is, whether it is constitutional or not.

Letters of intent are also a question. If it is not fully implemented now, then that is a question for the witnesses.

With regard to implementation funds, offhand, within the information that we have, I don't see anything with regard to that. I think that would be a very important question to ask them with regard to what they see coming down in the future.

My understanding from looking at it is that the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation is anticipating that, with their removal from under the land provisions of the Indian Act and with some taxation that they will be able to then implement, it will be an economic driver.

With regard to the other questions, I guess we'll have to ask them to see if there is a tradeoff. Did they give up something in order to get that? Thank you for those questions.

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and bill read second time.)

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: When shall this bill be read a third time, honourable senators?

(On the motion of Senator Raine, bill referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples.)

• (1450)

RULES, PROCEDURES AND THE RIGHTS OF PARLIAMENT

SECOND REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the second report of the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament (Amendments to the *Rules of the Senate*), presented in the Senate on February 11, 2014.

Hon. Vernon White: Honourable senators, I move adoption of the report.

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

THIRD REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the third report of the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament (Amendments to the *Rules of the Senate*), presented in the Senate on February 11, 2014.

Hon. Vernon White: Honourable senators, I move adoption of the report.

Hon. Joseph A. Day: I wonder if we might ask the honourable senator to explain a bit about what we are voting on.

Senator White: Would you like that on the report previous or this report? I could do all three.

Honourable senators, if I may, the Rules Committee continues its work reviewing the *Rules of the Senate*, and the changes that have been brought to you are fairly straightforward.

As you know, we have developed a practice of allowing senators to adjourn debate for the balance of their time once they have started their speech. Although this does not guarantee the senator who adjourned debate can use the rest of their time, we of course are very reticent about depriving a colleague of his or her

speaking time. While acknowledging this practice, this report proposes to curtail it slightly by limiting to one the number of times a speech on an item of non-government business can be adjourned this way.

Senator Mercer: By the same senator?

Senator White: That is right.

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

FOURTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament (Amendments to the *Rules of the Senate*), presented in the Senate on February 11, 2014.

Hon. Vernon White moved the adoption of the report.

He said: Honourable senators, the changes proposed in this report clarify some aspects relating specifically to speaking time. The first change would make more explicit that the two periods of 45 minutes for a bill are for the sponsor and the critic. That is our practice, but at the moment the Rules say it is the first and second speakers who have the 45 minutes. Through the additions to the terminology, we have made clear that either the sponsor or the critic could be a senator other than a member of the government or opposition parties.

With respect to the critic, that senator would be designated by the leader or the deputy leader of the side other than that of the sponsor, but those individuals could choose an independent senator.

The second change deals with the situation where a motion for the adoption of a tabled report is only moved after debate has started. Such cases are rare, but at the moment senators who spoke before the motion was moved could speak again for their full normal time. This is close to giving them a second chance to speak to the same item of business.

We therefore propose that if a motion to adopt a tabled report is only moved after consideration has started, the senators who have already spoken would be allowed to speak to the motion for a maximum of five minutes. This would allow them to address the specific issue of whether or not the report should be adopted, but would avoid the possibility of debating anew the entire content of the report.

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

THE SENATE

MOTION TO RECOGNIZE MAY AS NATIONAL VISION HEALTH MONTH—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Seth, seconded by the Honourable Senator Plett:

That because vision loss can happen to anyone at any age and as a result thousands of people across Canada are needlessly losing their sight each year, and because many Canadians are not aware that seventy-five per cent of vision loss can be prevented or treated, the Senate recognize the month of May as “National Vision Health Month,” to educate Canadians about their vision health and help eliminate avoidable sight loss across the country.

Hon. Nicole Eaton: Honourable senators, I rise today to join in the debate of Senator Seth’s motion, which seeks to address increasing rates of blindness and vision loss in Canada.

Colleagues, no one is born blind but for a very few cases, but every 12 minutes someone in Canada begins to lose their eyesight.

In 2009, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind and the Canadian Ophthalmological Society released a groundbreaking study, “The Cost of Vision Loss in Canada.”

[Translation]

According to their findings, the annual cost of vision loss to the Canadian economy is estimated at \$15 billion or nearly 2 per cent of GDP. That amount should increase to \$30 billion by 2032.

• (1500)

[English]

These costs are an enormous burden in Canada and far ahead of most other diseases. A comparison of results from this study with Public Health Agency of Canada data show vision loss accounts for a large proportion, approximately 8 per cent, of the economic burden of illness in Canada.

Then what are the causes of these significant rates of affliction? Age-related macular degeneration is the leading cause of vision loss in this country. Other major causes of vision loss include diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, cataracts and refractive error. Also, with a higher prevalence of obesity and diabetes than in the past, our key risk factors increase accordingly.

The number of those suffering from vision loss is projected to increase dramatically in the future. One in nine Canadians will develop vision loss by age 65. This is equal to the number of women affected by breast cancer. By age 75, this ratio rises to one in four.

[Translation]

Experts agree that we are on the verge of a crisis in vision care given the aging population.

[English]

In the face of this, raising awareness of the debilitating impacts of this illness and its toll on Canadians' wellness is a matter of necessity. It's key, because 75 per cent of vision loss is preventable.

[Translation]

The cost of care is rising, while vision care research and eye disease prevention are underfunded.

[English]

The National Coalition for Vision Health, an organization of associations that share a common interest in eye care and vision research, points out that there are no federal agencies in Canada that exclusively fund vision research.

At the personal level, those with vision loss experience three to five times as much difficulty with daily living; three times as much clinical depression; twice as much social dependence; a greater degree of errors with medication; twice the risk of falls and premature death; four times the risk of serious hip fractures; and are likely to undergo premature admission to nursing homes, three years earlier, on average. Half of all adults with vision loss will have a gross annual income of \$20,000 or less, regardless of marital or family status.

[Translation]

However, let's look at some of the recent innovations that give us hope of overcoming vision loss.

[English]

These include Audible Pedestrian Signals at many pedestrian crossings, automated stop-callouts on many city buses, as well as described video on many television stations.

[Translation]

There are examples of people living with vision loss who are paving the way with tools to help make life easier for their peers.

[English]

The first deals with the entrepreneurial spirit of a young lady in Toronto living with vision loss but determined to help herself and others cope with this growing affliction. Sherene Ng is 23 and a student studying adaptive design at Ryerson University. She is living with retinitis pigmentosa, a genetic degenerative eye condition that will cause her to go blind. Sherene's symptoms have already begun. That's why she founded a company to develop a new shoe that uses sensors to detect when an obstacle is within step. They won't replace the traditional aids like guide dogs or white canes, but her shoes will work in tandem to assist people with low vision to navigate familiar areas.

[Senator Eaton]

Kevin Shaw is another blind visionary at Ryerson University. He has created a prototype for a pseudo Netflix for the blind, which aids in live audio descriptions through a talking play button with the on-demand application.

Groundbreaking scientific study around vision loss is also currently under way at Toronto's St. Michael's Hospital where Dr. Neeru Gupta is an ophthalmologist. She's also Chief of Glaucoma at the University of Toronto. Glaucoma is becoming more common as the population ages and is expected to affect 80 million people worldwide by 2012. About half of all cases remain undiagnosed.

Through her research, Dr. Gupta has determined that glaucoma is a neurodegenerative disease rather than an ocular one, affecting major vision pathways in the brain.

[Translation]

Her most recent study showed that rapid eye movements slow down considerably in patients with glaucoma, even those who are in the early stages of the disease.

[English]

Rapid eye movements are the quick, simultaneous movements of both eyes in the same direction.

[Translation]

Rapid eye movement is required in a host of everyday activities, from reading to grasping one's immediate environment, whether it is a busy transit station, grocery store shelves, or oncoming traffic.

[English]

People with glaucoma showed delayed eye movement reaction times by about 15 per cent, even if they were in the early stages of the disease. By knowing that eye movement reaction times are delayed in people with glaucoma, there's an opportunity to understand its effect on daily living that most of us take for granted, like walking up and down stairs, driving, navigating and reading. These findings suggest that new approaches to measuring vision loss, beyond eye charts or visual field tests that relate to real-world settings, may provide important clues to how the disease affects the lives of those with glaucoma.

Yet the degree of innovation doesn't end there. Research by Dr. Gupta and her team continues to be visionary. For over half a century, it was believed that lymphatics, which play such a huge role in drainage of toxins from the body, did not exist in the eye. Only recently has it been determined that lymphatic circulation indeed does exist in the eye, aiding in drainage of fluid from the eye. This is important because all glaucoma treatments target drainage pathways to lower eye pressure.

This discovery means that new treatments can be developed targeting the lymphatics to stimulate fluid flow out of the eye, with benefits not only those fighting glaucoma, but that could aid in treating immunity issues, the spread of cancer and many other eye diseases.

This discovery has enormous implications in terms of investigating how this circulation works, what might drive it to work harder and how it might be applied in the treatment of disease, in the sense of being directly relevant to patients with potentially blinding diseases and giving them hope in terms of vision loss prevention, and by bringing about industry opportunity in the development of new pharmaceuticals and pushing more innovation as we learn more about these new discoveries.

[Translation]

We must invest in vision. We must create a strong, modern movement that addresses vision health and promises to put an end to preventable blindness in Canada.

[English]

Let us integrate vision care into a strong national health system that addresses primary and secondary health care and treats avoidable blindness. Let's shorten the time from discovery to patient application.

[Translation]

We need to create an environment that is conducive to encouraging unique interdisciplinary collaborations to tackle vision loss.

[English]

Let's get physicians, surgeons and medical scientists working with biotechnicians, engineers and the computer science community to boldly deliver bionic eyes and introduce further technological innovations.

Dr. Gupta eagerly pointed out the extent of the opportunity being laid at our doorstep, since nowhere in the world is there yet such an institute that would bring together in a bowl of concepts and marshal multiple disciplines to overcome preventable vision loss.

[Translation]

Honourable senators, there is no reason why the economic stimulus plan should not include measures for vision care.

[English]

We can do this by increasing productivity through re-entry of rehabilitated workers into the workforce, by reducing tax burden to fund health costs through greater employment for those being treated with vision loss, and by achieving direct health system savings as affliction is diminished.

In closing, honourable colleagues, the cost of eliminating avoidable blindness is much lower than the cost paid by society for it.

(On motion of Senator Jaffer, debate adjourned.)

• (1510)

HEALTH CARE ACCORD

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Callbeck, calling the attention of the Senate to the growing need for the federal government to collaborate with provincial and territorial governments and other stakeholders in order to ensure the sustainability of the Canadian health care system, and to lead in the negotiation of a new Health Accord to take effect at the expiration of the 2004 10-Year Plan to Strengthen Health Care.

Hon. Catherine S. Callbeck: Honourable senators, a decade ago, first ministers — federal, provincial and territorial — came together under the leadership of then Prime Minister Paul Martin to negotiate a comprehensive health accord. The document, the *10-Year Plan to Strengthen Health Care*, was built on the renewal agenda that had been set forth by former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and other first ministers at their meeting in February 2003.

During his opening remarks, Prime Minister Martin spoke of the responsibility that comes with the role of first minister. He said:

With authority comes responsibility: Our responsibility as First Ministers is to ensure there are no second-class Canadians in terms of the scope, standard, quality and timeliness of care. It's a responsibility that alone we cannot meet. Only together can we succeed.

First ministers then set out to develop a health accord that would be based on a number of essential principles, mainly universal accessibility, increased collaboration and improved accountability. All governments, including the federal government, recognized that timely access to quality care was of the utmost importance and that improving this timely access would require cooperation among governments, as well as collaboration with health care providers and patients.

In all, this action plan covered a wide range of priority areas, including human resources, home care, innovation, health promotion and reducing wait times.

It also included \$41 billion over the next 10 years in new federal funding in support of the plan, specifically meant to supplement the Canada Health Transfer to help bring the federal contributions back to its historic share of 25 per cent and to address wait times.

These first ministers, led by Prime Minister Martin, recognized that making health care sustainable and adaptable would take time and continued commitment. Now, as the 2004 Health Accord expires, there seems to be no movement whatsoever by this federal government to renegotiate another long-term plan.

When I was a member of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, the committee studied the progress made in the 10-year plan. The committee's final report was released in April 2012 and made 46 recommendations for further action by the federal government and others. The committee heard that there has been progress, but more work needs to be done. Recommendations to move forward included improved home care, increased prevention and health promotion, and enhanced health human resources.

The committee also recommended a national catastrophic drug coverage plan, for which I have long advocated. Shockingly, Canada is one of the only developed countries in the world without a plan to cover expensive prescription drugs. Little more than a decade ago, when the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, of which I was a member, issued its report on health care, at least 100,000 Canadians encountered drug expenses of over \$5,000 per year; and that was over a decade ago.

Coverage for these prescription drugs is sporadic. According to a survey by Statistics Canada, about one quarter of Canadians are not covered by public drug plans through their provinces or territories. An estimated 2 per cent of our population — more than 640,000 people — have no prescription drug coverage at all. In the Maritimes and Alberta, that number is between 20 per cent and 30 per cent — a staggering number. Every day, Canadians are falling through the cracks. Research published in 2012 in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* found that one in ten admitted to skipping a dose or not filling a prescription because of financial costs.

The 2004 Health Accord sought to address this problem, but I've been very disappointed by this government's refusal to follow through on the accord's commitment to implement a national pharmaceutical strategy that would include a national catastrophic drug plan.

A Ministerial Task Force began work on a strategy shortly after the first ministers meeting in 2004, with the federal Minister of Health acting as task force co-chair. A progress report was released in the fall of 2006, with Minister Tony Clement as co-chair. The report laid out a number of goals and recommendations, including a national catastrophic drug program and a national formulary. Sadly, work on the strategy then stalled completely. For a time, provinces worked alone and urged the federal government to return to the table, but ultimately the national strategy was abandoned because the federal government had walked away.

I was also pleased that the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology chose to build on the accord's recognition that health promotion, and disease and injury prevention are critical to achieving better health outcomes for Canadians. The committee recommended that the federal government work with others to develop a pan-Canadian public health strategy that would cover healthy living, obesity, injury prevention, mental health and reduction of health inequalities among Canadians, especially children.

We all know that we can better ensure the long-term sustainability of medicare by reducing pressure on the health care system. The benefits in health care spending, productivity

and other costs by preventing heart disease alone are estimated to be about \$20 billion per year by 2020.

There's no question that a healthy population simply requires less government spending on health care, but Canadians may not be as healthy as we hope. According to Statistics Canada, about 13.5 million adult Canadians are considered overweight or obese. For children, about one third are overweight or obese. In fact, childhood obesity in Canada has tripled over the past 30 years. A pan-Canadian public health strategy to address problems like this would certainly go a long way towards reducing our health care costs.

During debate on the Social Affairs Committee's report on the 2004 Health Accord, I spoke in this chamber about the importance of home care, and other committee members shared their thoughts about the progress made by the 2004 accord and about their hope for the future. The committee had found that more could and should be done. I hoped that the government might seriously consider implementing the committee's recommendations in order to negotiate a new deal with the provinces and the territories.

However, in September 2012, the Government of Canada replied to the committee's report. The government completely ignored the committee's repeated recommendations to stay involved in health care. In all of its 20 pages, the response did not address any plans to negotiate a new accord for 2014 and did not even lay out any plans for the future. Indeed, it would appear that the federal government does not plan to play a role in health care at all.

André Picard of *The Globe and Mail* wrote a column last year about the federal government's stance on health care. He said:

The government of Stephen Harper has taken a wash-my-hands-of-it approach to health care for years. It made some interesting moves early in its mandate, notably the funding of a Canadian cancer strategy and the creation of the Mental Health Commission of Canada, along with a big investment in immunization, with \$300-million for HPV vaccine. But, in recent years, Ottawa's only health-care interventions have been hostile ones . . .

• (1520)

Even the Canada Health Transfer itself is cause for concern. The 2004 accord laid out funding for a decade; however, almost seven years ago, this government announced, without a First Ministers meeting, that the cash portion of the transfer would be changed to a per capita amount after 2014.

Until the change takes effect in April this year, each province receives a different amount of cash based on how prosperous it is. Wealthier provinces get some cash; poorer provinces get more cash to make up for the differences between provinces.

Under the new system, every province will get the same amount of cash per capita, ignoring completely regional disparities. For my own province of Prince Edward Island, the change to per capita funding means a decrease in the Island's share of the overall health care pot. Under the previous system, P.E.I. would

expect to receive more than \$138 million in 2014-15. With the move to per capita cash funding, we will receive only about \$133.5 million.

Even more new changes are coming without discussion with the provinces. In December 2011, the Minister of Finance announced the federal government had already set the level of health care funding to begin when the 2004 health accord expires. The current 6 per cent escalator would be cancelled starting in 2016-17, replaced by increases tied to the GDP after 2016. Given that the GDP's changes over the last five years were well below 6 per cent, and indeed even dipped into negative numbers in 2009, the change could represent a big loss to provincial health care funding.

That will certainly be the case in my province. Under the changes set out in Budget 2007, plus the original 6 per cent escalator, Prince Edward Island would have received more than \$220 million in fiscal year 2023-24. Under the new system, with the increases tied to the GDP, it is projected we will receive just \$188 million, an overall loss of more than 15 per cent. This is especially hard at a time when our health spending in Prince Edward Island has increased by more than 40 per cent in only six years.

The Conservative government's unwillingness to engage is disappointing and is in stark opposition to the principles of a united federation. In his opening remarks at the First Ministers meeting that produced the 2004 health accord, former Prime Minister Martin said:

One of the reasons Canada's health care system stacks up so well is our particular brand of federalism. A federalism that enables us to work together toward a common goal, building on each other's strengths, but with the flexibility to not only allow, but actually foster adaptation and innovation. Together, this makes us stronger. We benefit from each other's ingenuity and hard work.

Honourable senators, I agree. There's much to be said for collaboration between the federal, provincial and territorial governments. We could accomplish so much together. I urge the federal government, particularly the Minister of Health, to work with provincial and territorial counterparts to negotiate a 2014 health accord and to improve our health care system together.

Hon. Jane Cordy: If there are no questions, I would like to adjourn the debate in my name.

(On motion of Senator Cordy, debate adjourned.)

LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO TRAVEL

Hon. Bob Runciman, pursuant to notice of February 11, 2014, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs have the power to travel within Canada, for the purpose of its examination and

consideration of Bill C-14, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the National Defence Act (mental disorder).

He said: This is a budget request for the committee to travel. The request is essentially to travel about an hour from Ottawa to the St. Lawrence Valley Correctional and Treatment Centre.

Senator Mercer: Are you familiar with that territory?

Senator Runciman: A little bit. It is a 60-bed medium-security forensic facility.

As noted, the committee will be considering Bill C-14, which deals with the issue of not criminally responsible. The committee felt that it would be an opportunity for us to not only meet the staff but also talk to some of the professionals who are treating those individuals and receive their input during the deliberations on this very important piece of legislation.

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to.)

THE HONOURABLE CHARLIE WATT AND THE HONOURABLE ANNE C. COOLS

THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF APPOINTMENT TO SENATE—INQUIRY—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. James S. Cowan (Leader of the Opposition) rose pursuant to notice of February 5, 2014:

That he will call the attention of the Senate to the 30th anniversary of the appointment of Senators Charlie Watt and Anne Cools.

He said: Honourable senators, it is with great pleasure that I rise to extend congratulations on behalf of all of us on this side of the chamber to our colleague Senator Watt as he marks 30 years of public service as a member of the Senate.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Cowan: This is indeed quite a milestone. Senator Watt is only the second Inuk senator ever appointed to this chamber. The first, Senator Willie Adams, also served here for more than 30 years. Like his long-time friend and mentor, Charlie has devoted his 30 years here to protecting and enhancing the rights of Canada's Aboriginal peoples and, for Senator Watt, especially the Inuit communities of Nunavik.

This has been a lifelong commitment. He was still in his twenties when, as one article put it, "Charlie Watt showed the world that a giant can be slain." He led the Inuit of northern Quebec in standing up to the Quebec government to challenge the legal and moral legitimacy of the immense James Bay hydroelectric project. His toughness and principled leadership led directly to the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, the first modern land claims treaty in Canada.

When the Constitution was patriated in 1982, Senator Watt's efforts were central to the inclusion of section 35, ensuring the constitutional protection of Aboriginal and treaty rights — the recognition of Aboriginal rights in the Canadian Constitution. I believe that he considers that his greatest accomplishment, at least so far.

• (1530)

In appointing Senator Watt, Prime Minister Trudeau placed his confidence in our colleague's dedication to the people of Nunavik. And indeed, Senator Watt's efforts have strengthened the bonds between Inuit communities and Canadians from all backgrounds and regions.

Of particular note, along with Senator Willie Adams, Senator Watt has spearheaded the introduction of Inuktitut as an official language in the Senate. We heard him speak that language earlier this afternoon. This chamber is and will remain a more truly Canadian institution as a result of this contribution. On behalf of everyone here, I want to thank him for that.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Cowan: Senator Watt has also used his leadership abilities and business acumen to play a major role in the economic development of his region. He enjoys hunting, fishing and training husky dog teams, which I understand he considers much easier than whipping a vote.

Charlie, it is a pleasure to work with you. We appreciate your friendship and the benefit of your many years of experience, and we look forward to many more years of productive partnership.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Joan Fraser (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, Senator Cowan and I divvied up our pleasurable labour and I am going to say a few words about Senator Cools. But before I do, I would just like to say what a privilege, as well as a pleasure, it has been for me, since I came here, to work with Senator Watt.

As I have said more than once, I have learned a great deal from Senator Watt. He was the one who first brought home to me by telling me what was going on up there, the impact of global warming on the North. This was many years ago now. He has, by example and through his really unique gift of telling stories with the utmost simplicity and with deep meaning, taught me many other things about the North and about life. He has taught me, among other things, a precious gift for anyone who comes to this place and that is the gift of patience. Some people think I may not have fully absorbed it, but I am better than I used to be and it's in good measure because of him.

When I came to this place nearly 15 and a half years ago —

Senator Mercer: Wow! A mere child.

Senator Fraser: Colleagues, you know what it is like the day you are sworn in. You are rattled, you are awed, sitting in your seat looking up at that incredible ceiling and the paneling and you are

overwhelmed. I was sitting up where Senator Tannas sits, which, incidentally, is the best seat in the house, in my view. Down in that corner where Senator Beyak sits, as the afternoon went on, a woman with the most glorious crown of white hair and an extraordinary voice rose.

She was then sitting as a Liberal and I didn't know her. I cannot remember now exactly what she was speaking about, but I would be willing to bet that it was an attack on the Liberal government, because Anne Cools has never hesitated to say what she thinks.

What did register that day was my sense of incredible awe. It was what one might call a "Cools special" of a speech. It was about Parliament and it was quoting authorities and precedents and principles with passion — we all know the passion she brings to these topics. I sat and looked down there and thought, "My Lord, is this the standard that we all are supposed to meet?" Fortunately, I soon realized that we weren't all supposed to meet that standard.

It was a unique and wonderful introduction to this place. Ever since then, I have never stopped — nor have any of us ever stopped — being awed by the passion, dedication, work, study and the analysis that Senator Cools brings to the Senate and, indeed, to Parliament.

It is no secret to anybody, least of all to Senator Cools, that we have frequently failed to agree on various topics. But I want her to know — and this seems like a good day to tell her — how much I respect and honour her dedication to those principles that underlie the work we do.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Fraser: She was then, as I said, a Liberal. Later, she became a Conservative. Now she sits as an independent and I really think she was born to be an independent.

This is not a woman who takes direction lightly or easily, but she is a wonderful independent senator. All of us are enriched by knowing her and having her among us, reminding us of all the things we must never forget, and we're grateful. Thank you, Senator Cools.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Claude Carignan (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I am pleased to speak today in recognition of the 30 years of service of two of our colleagues, Senator Watt and Senator Cools. My colleague Senator Martin will say a few words about Senator Watt and I will pay tribute to Senator Cools. It's not because I don't like Senator Watt — on the contrary, I respect him very much — but let's say that I have always had a weak spot for Senator Cools.

[Translation]

What would that be in French?

[English]

Some Hon. Senators: Oh, oh.

[Senator Cowan]

An Hon. Senator: It finally came out.

Senator Carignan: Still, I would like to congratulate Senator Watt for his 30 years of contribution to the Senate's work.

[Translation]

Senator Cools, for her part, is someone who has made her mark. From my first days here in the Senate, which was nearly five years ago now, I couldn't help but notice Senator Cools immediately, given the depth of her interventions, the quality of her research and the many sources she consulted when preparing her speeches.

[English]

I also quickly found out that Senator Cools has a fiery temper and is quite determined. As the months passed, I realized that she is an institution within our institution — a fact she often makes clear through her institutional memory.

[Translation]

More than once, Senator Cools has also demonstrated her knowledge of the *Rules of the Senate* and how they are interpreted. Although I did not do a thorough search, I don't believe I would be mistaken to say that she is probably one of the senators who most often raise a point of order.

Of course, Senator Cools and I do not always agree, but I nevertheless have tremendous respect for her informed viewpoints, and I enjoy listening to her express them with the passion and fervour she is known for.

Honourable senators, we are lucky to serve with Senator Cools every day. Considering her 30 years of active service in the Senate, many senators have had that chance.

[English]

Some will argue that the word “chance” is not the most appropriate, especially those of us who have had a taste of Senator Cools' medicine. But in general, while Senator Cools has a passionate speech, she is always respectful of others.

• (1540)

[Translation]

It is immediately clear that she values social justice, gender equality, equality between the majority and minorities, peace and social harmony. Knowing that, it is not surprising to learn that Senator Cools studied social work and, in 1974, established and ran one of Canada's first shelters for abused women. She was already a trailblazer in Canada.

Unlike some of our colleagues who have worked with her for much longer than I, I cannot speak of all the social causes she has embraced or the issues she has championed and moved forward here in the Senate. All I can do is speak from the heart, based on the mere four and a half years of experience I have had working with her.

Senator Cools was the first person of colour to be appointed to the Canadian Senate. Although that was frequently mentioned when she was appointed in 1984 by former Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau, people may not have realized, when Senator Cools was referred to as a person of colour, that she was a person of many different colours.

[English]

In fact, Senator Cools is like a rainbow of colours, and I would like to thank her for her colourful presence in the Senate over all these years.

[Translation]

Congratulations and thank you, Senator Cools. We hope that you will stay here with us until the age limit for retirement.

[English]

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I, too, rise to celebrate this very important milestone for our two colleagues and to honour them, the Honourable Charlie Watt and the Honourable Anne Cools, on the occasion of their thirtieth anniversary as senators of Canada.

I, too, have seen their devotion and the passion that others have spoken of, their passion for Canadians, for this esteemed institution and for our parliamentary system.

[Translation]

We are celebrating Black History Month, so it is only appropriate that we are also paying tribute to Anne Cools and marking her 30 years of service to her community and Canadians.

[English]

On behalf of our Senate caucus, it is my distinct pleasure to say a few words about our colleague Senator Watt as he celebrates his thirtieth-year milestone. On January 16, 1984, the Honourable Charlie Watt was appointed to the Senate by the late Pierre Elliott Trudeau to represent the province of Quebec in the senatorial division of Inkerman.

[Translation]

He was a member of the Committee on Aboriginal Peoples and today is a member of the Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs and the Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

[English]

Before being appointed to the Senate of Canada, Senator Watt was known as a hunter and businessman by profession. Born in Kuujuaq — Fort Chimo — Quebec, Senator Watt, an Inuk, served as a northern officer for the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs from 1969 to 1979. He is one of six founding presidents of the Northern Quebec Inuit Association, founding president of Makivik Corporation and president of Air Inuit Limited.

[Translation]

In 1997, he was awarded the National Aboriginal Achievement Award as a result of his experience in and knowledge of Aboriginal affairs, which have been indispensable in his work as a senator for 30 years.

[English]

On a personal note, Charlie and I have enjoyed a friendship, sitting opposite one another in this chamber and exchanging smiles and nods every sitting day. As well, we share a sense of kinship that is actually rooted in history. Korean and Inuit people have a shared history and ancestry that dates back thousands of years. Inuit are descendants of settlers who migrated to Alaska from Siberia after the end of the Ice Age. At that time, the Bering Strait separating North America and Asia was bridged by a glacial ice. Evidence shows that today's Inuit share a common ancestry with Mongols, and Koreans are believed to be of Mongolian descent. It is believed that the Mongolians travelled across the northern passage, settling in North America, Canada, Korea, Japan and China. They brought with them their unique cultures and traditions, which are still seen today.

[Translation]

Senator Watt visited Korea, where he noted the similarities and connections between Korean and Inuit culture. Masks and totems are important elements of both cultures and are an expression of a complex culture and heritage.

[English]

Upon his return, Charlie told me that the masks he saw in Korea looked identical to those made by the Inuit and those he had grown up with. He felt right at home in Korea.

Since his experience in Korea, he has referred to Koreans as his cousins and part of his extended family.

Honourable senators, as members of this great institution, we are also part of a greater family, from the work that we do as individuals representing our communities, to our knowledge and expertise, our shared discussions, debates, analysis and decisions in this chamber and in committee. I ask you to join me today in congratulating both of our colleagues on reaching this very important milestone.

Cousin Charlie, Anne, congratulations on your thirtieth anniversaries.

Hon. Claudette Tardif: Honourable senators, I would also like to take this opportunity to extend my best wishes to Senator Watt and Senator Cools on their thirtieth anniversary in the Senate.

Senator Cowan has already presented a good summary of Senator Watt's achievements before and while in the Senate, notably his role as the chief negotiator for the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement in 1975.

The agreement represents the culmination of many years of struggle and advocacy by Cree and Inuit leaders to have their rights recognized by the Crown. It is also significant because it is

[Senator Martin]

considered to be the first modern land claim agreement in Canada. The agreement has served as a guide for the many agreements that have been made since that time and gained constitutional protection, along with all existing Aboriginal and treaty rights, in 1982.

Honourable senators, this is no small feat. Very few among us can say that they have contributed in such a direct way to our constitutional documents.

The Charlie Watt I have come to know over the last nine years is certainly not one to rest on his laurels. As a senator, he has continued to advocate for the recognition of the rights of Aboriginal peoples and on behalf of Northern communities.

Over the past 30 years, he has frequently drawn attention to the particular challenges of Northern communities and the need to take concrete action to address their problems. One of his latest efforts was, of course, Bill S-207, which aimed to offer better protection for the Aboriginal and treaty rights recognized by section 35 of the Constitution. It was adopted at second reading, but it died on the Order Paper. Hopefully, we will see it again, senator.

In addition, he has also highlighted the vital role that Northern communities continue to play today, not only in being the home of many Inuit and other Aboriginal peoples but also for our heritage and our national identity, for the understanding and knowledge of the North that they preserve and for the Canadian sovereignty that they assert on our behalf.

Senator Watt has also brought to the attention of the Senate the need to preserve Inuit culture and to better share our historical collection of artifacts. Along with Senator Adams, he has led efforts to introduce Inuktitut to this chamber.

Honourable colleagues, Senator Watt is a pioneer and a leader who cares deeply for his people.

Thank you for sharing that love of your people with us, Senator Watt. It has always been an inspiration to all of us and to me.

• (1550)

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Tardif: With each passing year, he brings integrity, wisdom and an independent spirit to our institution. I consider it a privilege to have Senator Watt as a colleague.

Without a doubt, another senator truly embodying the spirit of this chamber as the place for independence of thought and action is Senator Anne Cools. From my first day in the Senate a mere nine years ago, I have always been impressed by Senator Cools' deep knowledge of our parliamentary traditions. Her strong understanding of and respect for the parliamentary system help us — all of us — hold in mind the principles and values that have shaped and still govern our institution. These values have guided her actions throughout her time in the Senate and have made this chamber a better place.

Honourable senators, the Senate is extremely fortunate to have Senator Watt and Senator Cools as two of its members.

I wish to express my sincere thanks for your ongoing contributions to the Senate and congratulations on your thirtieth anniversary in this place.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer: I, too, want to add a few words to what has been said about Senator Cools and Senator Watt. I spoke a bit about Senator Cools yesterday, so today I just want to say a few words about Senator Watt.

Before I do that, I want to say to you that when I first came here, I sat near Senator Cools and Senator Watt, and they both taught me the ropes. Senator Cools taught me the rules, and she still thinks I haven't quite learned them; she is always trying to correct me. I am a slow learner; I am sorry.

Senator Watt, I want to say to you that, through thick and thin in the last 13 years, from the day I arrived, we have walked to the Victoria Building together, we have talked about the challenges of this place and the challenges of our communities, and I have learned so much from you. You have taught me how to go about dealing with issues.

The most important thing you have taught me is patience. It is something I lack, but you continue to tell me, "Be patient." You have taught me determination. The most important thing that I value from you, Senator Watt, is your friendship. I will always hold that close to my heart.

To Senator Cools and to Senator Watt, I want to thank both of you for serving us here in the Senate and for the work you two have done and will do for Canadians.

Hon. Serge Joyal: Honourable senators, I feel privileged today to speak to underline the contributions of our colleagues Senator Cools and Senator Watt for a very specific reason. I was in cabinet when both of them were appointed. Prime Minister Trudeau in those days — of course, I will try to make sure that I respect my oath of office for the secrecy of the cabinet. Rarely did Prime Minister Trudeau inform the cabinet before he made a recommendation to the Governor General for a very simple reason. According to a decision taken by Prime Minister Laurier in 1898, renewed in 1935 by Mackenzie King, the privilege to recommend to the Governor General names of candidates for appointment to the Senate is the sole privilege of the Prime Minister; it's not a cabinet decision. A prime minister is not compelled by that decision, which was taken more than 120 years ago, to consult or even inform the cabinet.

I attended many cabinet meetings where the Prime Minister would just say, "Today I will recommend some people to the Governor General to be appointed to the Senate." He would not mention a name, but in the case of Senator Cools, he made an exception. If you will allow me, honourable senators, I will recall the context and the information that Prime Minister Trudeau shared with us on that day. I am looking to my friend Senator Smith, and he will probably remember this.

The Prime Minister said, "I intend to appoint a very strange person to the Senate, not because of the colour, because of her past action."

You will recall the activities of Senator Cools at Concordia University when she was a member of a group of persons who expressed their convictions very strongly. I am using diplomatic terms here.

When Mr. Trudeau gave the details of the event of which Senator Cools was a part, some members of the cabinet said, "Is this really a person you want to appoint?" He said, "Well, yes, because when she is in the Senate, she will jazz the institution."

I have shared the Senate floor with Senator Cools on several different occasions, and she has performed very well on that mandate; she continues to jazz this institution. I think sometimes we must make sure that we hear the sound of the music, but we will remain grateful to her for her dedication to the work of the Senate. I am very thankful to Senator Cools for that.

When Senator Watt's name was brought forward, Mr. Trudeau had in mind the fresh patriation of the Constitution. He especially had in mind the specific role that Aboriginal representatives played in improving recognition of Aboriginal people.

I want to underline the role that Senator Patterson played during this time. I am sorry we cannot share that with him today, but Senator Patterson played an important role. As a matter of fact, he appeared as chair at the committee that reviewed the constitutional resolution and strongly suggested section 35. At the time, Senator Watt and the other Aboriginal leaders were instrumental in changing the history of Canada. The history of Canada changed that day — oh, Senator Patterson, there you are. I'm sorry. I was looking for you over there. You've changed seats. I apologize. I do not need to repeat what I said because I strongly believe in it. Thank you again, senator.

That day was a very important one for Canada. With what we have seen in this chamber, with the apology to Aboriginal people, Prime Minister Harper's announcement about the importance of Aboriginal people mastering their own school system, the capacity for Aboriginal people to teach their language and their traditions, to come about with their history, to be able to revamp their legal traditions, which is a very important asset that we have forgotten about throughout history, I think that the presence of Aboriginal senators in this chamber is of great significance. We need more Aboriginal senators in this room because in this room they make a difference.

Senator Mercer: Hear, hear!

Senator Joyal: I think that is very important on all sides of the chamber.

I remember Senator St. Germain standing up in his seat and speaking on behalf of the Metis people and Senator Chalifoux speaking on behalf of the Metis people. When issues of Aboriginal people arise, honourable senators, considering the road we have completed in our history by re-establishing their rights and proper status, that is something we owe to those senators.

I sincerely hope that future Aboriginal senators will be appointed in as great a number as we have had in the past years, when we have had seven or eight senators of Aboriginal

ancestry. I hope they take direct part in our discussions and debate in making them full Canadians — that is, shaping the country on the basis of respect for the rights and dignity that those senators have incarnated on a daily basis so well in this chamber.

Senator Watt, through you, I thank all Aboriginal senators. I think what you bring to this chamber makes a difference and in fact addresses one of the themes that our colleague Senator Nolin has put on the Order Paper, which is the role of the Senate in relation to minority rights. If there are minority rights that we need to care about, they are of all the Aboriginal people and the people that Senator Cools defends so well.

Honourable senators, both of you have played a significant role and have made a difference in our institution, and I think the Prime Minister who appointed you 30 years ago made the right decision.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

(On motion of Senator Watt, debate adjourned.)

(The Senate adjourned until Thursday, February 13, 2014, at 1:30 p.m.)

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