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(HANSARD)

Tuesday, October 30, 2012

The Honourable NOËL A. KINSELLA
Speaker

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Debates Services: D'Arcy McPherson, National Press Building, Room 906, Tel. 613-995-5756
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THE SENATE

Tuesday, October 30, 2012

The Senate met at 2 p.m., the Speaker in the chair.

Prayers.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, before I call for Senators' Statements, I would like to draw your attention in the presence in the gallery of Prof. Dr. Andreas Vobkuhle, President of the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany; Prof. Dr. Ferdinand Kirchhof, Vice-President of the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany; Prof. Dr. Reinhard Gaier, Justice of the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany; Prof. Dr. Johannes Masing, Justice of the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany; Prof. Dr. Peter M. Huber, Justice of the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany; Ms. Monika Hermanns, Justice of the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany; Mr. Peter Weigl, Director of the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany; and Dr. Margret Böckel, Head of Protocol with the Court..

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

MR. TREVOR KNOWLTON

PRIME MINISTER'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Hon. Nancy Greene Raine: Honourable senators, I rise today to talk about a very special secondary school teacher from Summerland, British Columbia, Mr. Trevor Knowlton, who recently received a Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence. These awards honour outstanding and innovative teachers who instill in their students a love of learning and who utilize information and communications technology to better equip their students with the skills needed to excel in the 21st century society and economy.

I believe, however, that Mr. Knowlton's lasting legacy will be his establishment of Stop a Bully, a creative and innovative program that harnesses the best of the Internet to help take action against bullying in our schools. Since the tragic death of Amanda Todd, who shared so poignantly the pain she suffered as a result of being bullied, people all across Canada are seeking solutions to the serious bullying problems experienced by far too many of our youth.

Last spring I sat in on a meeting of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights where they were studying cyberbullying. In fact, it is appropriate that their report will soon be released. Trevor Knowlton was one of the witnesses there, and I was struck by the practicality of the Stop a Bully program. It really works, as outlined by the many testimonials on their website.

Stop a Bully strives to promote and enhance social wellness among youth by empowering them to address bullying. Stop a Bully is committed to providing any student, parent or educator the opportunity to report physical and cyberbullying in a safe and anonymous manner by giving them an effective online reporting system. Stop a Bully aims to enhance and foster a school's ability to address bullying incidents in a proactive and timely manner by providing detailed reports of bullying incidents as well as education and preventive strategies.

Honourable senators, the mission of Stop a Bully is to be a charitable organization similar to the Kids Help Line, both committed to providing practical help for children who need it. School districts across Canada are embracing the Stop a Bully program. The challenge the organization is facing, however, is that the demand for their service is growing faster than their volunteers can handle. Hopefully new custom reporting software being introduced this week will assist them in processing applications from new schools, but now they need some financial help, either in the form of government grants or corporate donations, but it is not easy.

Honourable senators, I encourage you to look at the Stop a Bully website and learn more about the work they are doing.

[Translation]

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SEVENTH ASSEMBLY, QUEBEC CITY

Hon. Dennis Dawson: Honourable senators, I would like to speak to you about the Inter-Parliamentary Union conference, which was held in Quebec City last week.

[English]

The Canadian IPU will table a regular report later in this session, but as leader of the Canadian delegation at the one hundred and twenty-seventh meeting of the IPU last week in Quebec City, I want to take the opportunity to comment on our meeting.

It is with great pride that I report that it was an immense success. On the policy side, three declarations were adopted. The first one was on Mali, condemning the serious human rights abuses by armed rebel groups in the north of that country. The IPU is backing international military efforts to regain control of that area.

[Translation]

The IUP Assembly also adopted the Quebec City declaration on citizenship, identity and linguistic and cultural diversity in a globalized world. It calls on parliaments to use all the means available to them to protect diversity as a global value. The declaration also states that this includes enacting legislation and ratifying instruments that protect human rights and diversity.

Although they make up half of the world's population, women represent only 20 per cent of the 46,000 parliamentarians in the world. IUP members therefore adopted a detailed action plan to have gender equality systematically debated in parliaments and considered at all levels.

Participation in the debate was phenomenal. We also had debates about youth and politics and the use of social media in modern government management. The session held by the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs was also a success.

The Quebec City Assembly gave more impetus to French as a working language of the IPU. More than 950 parliamentarians from almost 135 countries — His Honour the Speaker will shortly draw our attention to the presence in the gallery of a guest who also attended the Assembly — and representatives of 50 UN organizations were in Quebec City.

Honourable senators, I would like to thank many people. I will start by thanking His Honour the Speaker of the Senate, who hosted the Assembly along with the honorary chair of the conference, the Speaker of the House of Commons, who warmly welcomed participants at the official opening. I believe that participants were truly appreciative.

Senator Oliver, president of the Canadian Group, also did a brilliant job of presiding over the assembly. Senator Fortin-Duplessis — who, like me, calls Quebec City home — was very proud of the warm welcome that Quebecers extended to the IPU.

• (1410)

I cannot mention all the members of the delegation by name, but it included many MPs and senators as well as dozens of observers from both Houses who went to meet people in Quebec City. In addition to the debates, there were several dozen official and unofficial bilateral meetings. The Honourable Speaker participated in bilateral meetings too.

I would like to thank all the employees of Parliament who participated in the assembly, including clerks and people in communications, the library and the interparliamentary organization, for the phenomenal work they did. The 135 participating countries welcomed them warmly, even those that had some reservations initially.

I would like to thank Quebec City Tourism, the mayor, Mr. Labeaume, and the Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr. Chagnon, who is currently being re-elected as Speaker of the National Assembly. We wish him a long career. Thanks to his help, the National Assembly accommodated over 900 people — more than ever before.

Honourable senators, as I said, a full report will be tabled later this session.

[English]

SASKATCHEWAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ABEX AWARDS

Hon. Pamela Wallin: Honourable senators, on October 20 I was honoured to be in Regina to emcee the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce ABEX Awards for Business Excellence. These awards recognize entrepreneurs who embody excellence in innovation, service, community involvement and the environment.

The awards for Exporting Excellence and Business of the Year in Saskatchewan, two key awards, were presented to Alliance Grain Traders, formally known as Saskcan Pulse Trading. Established and owned by Regina local Murad Al-Katib, Alliance employs 720 people in Canada and exports to over 100 countries in the Americas, Europe, Africa and Asia. The core of the business is simply supplying customers with items such as lentils, chickpeas, beans and other pulse, other staple foods and processed ingredients. These products are widely consumed in India and Asia-Pacific countries and are desperately needed.

Murad spoke eloquently at the awards about the international perspective that our youth are embracing today and reminded businesses and governments alike to have a focus on education and to recognize the global nature of options for our youth, and to build their businesses accordingly.

Another great example of entrepreneurship was Neechie Gear. The company won two awards: the Community Involvement and the Aboriginal Business Partnership Award. Kendall Netmaker, who was also nominated for the Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award, is the company's founder and he experienced firsthand the problems for disadvantaged youth without means to participate in sports. His appearance on *Dragon's Den* won him the start-up capital for the company and he has become a true role model for Saskatchewan's youth and the Aboriginal community.

This purpose-driven clothing company gives back to the community through bursaries to young Canadians by creating sports teams and through profit sharing with NG Athletic Club, which supports underprivileged youth in pursuit of athletic achievement.

Dr. Monique Haakensen was nominated for a Young Entrepreneurship Award and her company, Contango Strategies Ltd., was awarded the New Venture Award, in addition to being nominated for the environment award. Congratulations to her for her work with the resource sector to reduce its environmental footprint in ways that can generate profits. There was some creative thinking on display.

Ten Tree Apparel was nominated for the Environment Award because its innovative business model is that they plant 10 trees for every item sold, which has led to the planting of over 100,000 trees in Canada. The company pursues goals of sustaining communities, creating jobs, providing food and raising people out of poverty. It was really quite ingenuous.

I would like to thank the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce for the invitation to participate in these awards. It was nothing short of inspiring. Saskatchewan's future is in good hands when it comes to entrepreneurship and innovation, keeping alive that idea of contribution to community by the business sector, particularly by the young entrepreneurs.

2012 PARALYMPIC GAMES

Hon. Mobina S.B. Jaffer: Honourable senators, from August 29 to September 9 last summer, 145 athletes, 12 athlete support personnel and 134 coaches, managers, support staff and mission staff represented Canada at the London 2012 Paralympic Games.

Led by Chef de Mission Gaétan Tardif and Assistant Chef de Mission Elisabeth Walker-Young, Canadian athletes won 31 medals, including seven gold medals in swimming, athletics, cycling and wheelchair basketball. Canadian Paralympic swimmers were particularly successful, winning 16 medals in the pool. Team Canada finished the games strong when the Canadian men's national wheelchair rugby team won a silver medal on the final day of competition.

Honourable senators, it was inspiring to watch and follow the successes of Canadian Paralympians over the course of the world's second largest sporting event. In fact, the London 2012 Paralympics was the largest ever; 4,294 athletes from 164 countries participated. In terms of the number of athletes, these Paralympics were actually about two thirds larger than the most recent Winter Olympics.

Going forward, our government has a remarkable opportunity to show global leadership in promoting the human rights of persons with disabilities. As the Human Rights Committee's recent report *Level the Playing Field* recommends, we must celebrate and recognize Canadian Paralympians in a manner equal and proportional to the way we celebrate and recognize Canadian Olympians.

What does equal and proportional look like? Much as excellence is the not best measured by medal standings, counting new stories and broadcast is only a rough barometer as we work towards equal recognition and celebration for all Canadian athletes. There was about 12 times as much coverage of the Olympics compared to Paralympics on the front pages of newspapers and in nightly newscasts — the difference in total news stories was just too enormous to count. Obviously, we can and we must do better. Our Canadian Paralympians deserve nothing less.

Ultimately, a truly inclusive and unreserved celebration of Canadian sporting excellence means recognizing that Canadian Paralympians are primarily defined not by their disabilities, but by their extraordinary athletic abilities and incredible determination.

I invite honourable senators to join me in recognizing and celebrating the outstanding achievements of Team Canada at the 2012 Paralympic Games.

ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY

Hon. Hugh Segal: Honourable senators, on this Naval Appreciation Day, I rise to point out that "on station for Canada," at home and around the world, in good weather and bad, in friendly or hostile waters is how we might best describe what the 8,500 regular force and 5,100 primary reserve men and women who wear Canada's naval uniform do for all Canadians every day.

Whether on the sea, beneath the sea or in the air over the sea, the men and women, ships and submarines, helicopters and training and patrol vessels have never been more vital to both our economic and national security. With over 90 per cent of all goods coming to Canada or leaving Canada doing so by sea, our well-being is constantly tied to our navy. Whether at sea, through unmanned surveillance of sea approaches, our Arctic or our shores, the navy is a vital link in the protection of Canada's vital interests. When those interests and supporting values face uncertain risks in the Straits of Hormuz, in the Gulf of Arabia, or from drug cartels in our own hemisphere, our men and women in dark blue are there to embody, contain, patrol and secure our national interest with allies and partners.

We are not the largest navy in the world nor are we seen as a dominant military power, but through a mix of solid training, character, leadership, strategic and tactical acuity, the determined use of multi-source intelligence and a fleet that is dependable, technologically more than competitive and in the process of being complemented by modernized platforms above, beneath and upon the seas, Canada's naval future has never been more compelling.

[Translation]

Honourable senators, we have men and women with a wide range of weapons and navigation, fire safety, electronic warfare, intelligence and leadership skills that are second to none. As I have said before and will say again, it is much harder to become the 21C of one of Her Majesty's Canadian ships than it is to become a deputy minister of a federal department. Commanders are trained, tested, certified and evaluated in the exercise of various specialized skills and their ability to lead other men and women in uniform. Technical prowess is not a matter of generalization or specific skills. Experience is not about trial and error. The navy is a highly technical service.

The men and women who wear Royal Canadian Navy uniforms must confront an unrelenting sea and a wide variety of maritime risks and hazards, and they must meet a range of stringent requirements with respect to strategy.

• (1420)

[English]

Please join with me in saluting the men and women of Canada's navy, who serve with courage, capacity and skill. Please join with me in saluting the naval reserve units across Canada, where reserve officers and able seamen train, prepare, study, drill, deploy and generally support every aspect of the Royal Canadian Navy's work on our three coasts and around the world.

[Translation]

Together, let us salute the families of the men and women in dark blue, who are often separated from their loved ones for months on end when they are sent into secret theatres of operation, where the risks are high and the dangers are very real.

[English]

Please also salute with me the Navy League of Canada, which partners so dynamically with the navy and the many Sea Cadet programs right across Canada, a program that affords young people a remarkable chance to build their own lives as citizens through seamanship training, water safety, leadership and team building that affords young people tremendous skills for their future. Courage, training, technical competence, education, tactical and strategic coherence — those are what “On Station for Canada” means in the Royal Canada Navy.

I invite honourable senators to join the navy at five o'clock in Room 237-C to express our appreciation for the work and sacrifice they execute for us every day.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I indeed wish to draw your attention to the presence in the Speaker's Gallery of members of the Royal Canadian Navy this Navy Appreciation Day. Numbering among them are six navy heroes who received earlier today the award from the Navy League of Canada.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I would say to the shipmates, welcome to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, before calling for tabling of documents, we have a very special guest in the Prime Minister's gallery. I draw your attention to the presence of Lord Faulkner of Worcester, who is the Deputy Speaker of the House of Lords.

To Lord Faulkner, we welcome you in a special way to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

TREASURY BOARD

2011-12 PUBLIC ACCOUNTS TABLED

Hon. Claude Carignan (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Public Accounts of Canada for the year ending March 31, 2012, under section 64 of the Financial Administration Act.

[Translation]

JUSTICE

COURTS ADMINISTRATION SERVICE—
2011-12 ANNUAL REPORT TABLED

Hon. Claude Carignan (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 2011-12 annual report of the Courts Administration Service.

[English]

BANKING, TRADE AND COMMERCE

SEVENTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE
TABLED—UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURE
OF CONFIDENTIAL COMMITTEE DOCUMENTS

Hon. Irving Gerstein: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the seventh report of the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce, which deals with the unauthorized disclosure of confidential committee documents.

(On motion of Senator Gerstein, report placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting of the Senate.)

[Translation]

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT RETIRING ALLOWANCES ACT

BILL TO AMEND—REPORT OF NATIONAL FINANCE
COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Joseph A. Day, Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, presented the following report:

Tuesday, October 30, 2012

The Standing Senate Committee on National Finance has the honour to present its

THIRTEENTH REPORT

Your committee, to which was referred Bill C-46, An Act amend the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act, examined the said Bill and now reports the same without amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

JOSEPH A. DAY
Chair

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

(On motion of Senator Carignan, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for third reading at the next sitting of the Senate.)

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO EXTEND DATE OF FINAL REPORT ON STUDY OF EMERGING ISSUES RELATED TO CANADIAN AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Hon. Dennis Dawson: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That, notwithstanding the Order of the Senate adopted on June 15, 2011, and on March 27, 2012, the date for the presentation of the final report by the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications on emerging issues related to the Canadian airline industry be extended from November 30, 2012, to March 28, 2013.

[English]

QUESTION PERIOD

NATIONAL DEFENCE

F-35 AIRCRAFT SECRETARIAT

Hon. James S. Cowan (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. In April, Auditor General Michael Ferguson issued a scathing report on the government's handling of the proposed acquisition of the F-35 fighter jets for our air force. The government responded by establishing a secretariat called the F-35 secretariat, to carry the project forward and also to look at other options for our new fighter jets.

The government also subsequently awarded a contract for about \$600,000 to KPMG to audit National Defence's forecast with respect to the acquisition and has now posted another RFP for another audit of the process at a cost approaching \$200,000.

Is the government truly exploring other options to meet its requirements, or is it more interested in auditing the Auditor General's report so that it can continue with its plans to purchase the F-35?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, the National Fighter Procurement Secretariat is in place to ensure transparency and due diligence in the decision to replace our aging CF-18s, and it is informed by the independent advice of people such as the former Auditor General Denis Desautels. Funding for the acquisition of the CF-18 replacement has been frozen until due diligence is complete and conditions have been satisfied. Canada will not sign a

contract to purchase new aircraft until all steps of our seven-point plan are completed and development work is sufficiently advanced.

Therefore, honourable senators, the work of the oversight committee, the seven-point plan we put in place and the independent audit of KPMG all fit within the government's plan to fully review and have an open and transparent process with regard to the replacement aircraft for the CF-18.

Senator Cowan: The leader has provided all of that information at least twice before. My question was this: Is the secretariat looking at other options besides the F-35?

Senator LeBreton: I am not on the committee. I am not privy to what the committee may ultimately recommend to the government.

The fact of the matter is that nothing has changed. In terms of the program, there was a "stop button" — I think that popular phrase was used — to deal with the issues that surfaced in the Auditor General's report.

I cannot add anything more than I have said before, honourable senators.

• (1430)

Senator Cowan: When I spoke of other options, those were not my words; those are the words contained in the mandate given by the government of which the leader is a part. Surely she is aware of whether the secretariat that her government set up is carrying out its mandate, which included the examination of other options. Is it or is it not looking at other options?

Senator LeBreton: The honourable senator is quite incorrect: The government set up the secretariat and put people on it like former Auditor General Denis Desautels to completely review all aspects of replacing the CF-18s. Therefore, it is doing its work. When the government has completed its work, it will then be privy to the recommendations of the oversight body.

Senator Cowan: Minister, my question is whether part of the work mandated by the government to the secretariat was to look at other options. Is the secretariat looking at other options or not? Surely the leader knows the answer to that question.

Senator LeBreton: I would not know. We have put in place a secretariat and a seven-point plan.

I can only say what I reported last week and will repeat now: We will not purchase a replacement for the CF-18s until the seven-point plan is completed, including an independent verification of costs. As stated by the Royal Canadian Air Force on October 22: "The options analysis is a full evaluation of choices, not simply a refresh of the work that was done before." They are working with the oversight committee.

That is the only information I have at the moment. I cannot specifically answer the honourable senator's questions because I am not part of the oversight committee. The oversight committee will, in due course, report to the government. That has not yet happened.

Senator Cowan: Then the question is whether the mandate of the secretariat has been changed. If it has not been changed, then the mandate it had been given and which one would expect the government to require it to carry out would be the examination of other options.

I repeat my question: Will other options be explored and will the secretariat be reporting to the government on other options?

Senator LeBreton: The mandate has not been changed. The government has set up the oversight committee, which includes several very senior public servants and qualified people such as Denis Desautels. Let the oversight committee do its work.

It is a clear statement from the official from the Royal Canadian Air Force regarding the speculation about other options. However, at this point in time, the oversight committee is conducting due diligence and it is at arm's length. That will be the way it is until it reports its findings to the government.

Senator Cowan: I have a supplementary question, honourable senators. The newly appointed Commander of the Royal Canadian Air Force, Lieutenant-General Yvan Blondin, told the press repeatedly in a recent interview that he has assigned a staff officer to work with the secretariat on other options. However, the government has not yet given to the secretariat the order for the Royal Canadian Air Force to look at those other options.

How does the leader square that circle? How can the senior office in the Royal Canadian Air Force be ready and willing to look at other options and say he cannot proceed until the government gives the order and yet my honourable friend says that the secretariat is continuing to carry out its mandate, which includes looking at other options? How does that square?

Senator LeBreton: All I can say is what I have said all along, honourable senators. The process is a result of the Auditor General's report. There was a reset button — I think that was the term in the media. A secretariat was established. There were seven points that the secretariat was dealing with. They had credible people from senior levels of the public service, such as Denis Desautels. It is independent and at arm's length.

When this secretariat reports its findings to the government, the government will make its recommendations known in the interests of transparency. I cannot be any clearer than that.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, before we go to the next question, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of a distinguished delegation from the National Legislative Assembly of South Sudan, led by the Honourable Speaker James Wani Igga. He is accompanied by His Excellency the Ambassador Joseph Malok, Head of South Sudan Liaison Office in Canada. With them also is Mr. Morris Lado, Political Advisor to the Speaker; and Mr. Wani John Tomby, Secretary to the Speaker. They are guests of the Honourable Senator Oliver, our Speaker *pro tempore*.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

NATIONAL DEFENCE

F-35 AIRCRAFT PROCUREMENT—KPMG REVIEW

Hon. Wilfred P. Moore: Honourable senators, my question is also for the Leader of the Government in the Senate and follows on from the question posed by Senator Cowan.

Is the \$600,000 that is being paid to KPMG designated to cover the independent cost estimate?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, KPMG has been contracted to work with the oversight secretariat. I am not — nor would I be or should I be — privy to the work of the secretariat or the people with whom they contract. I can only say what I have said to the honourable senator and others in this place: When this issue was noted by the Auditor General, the government took immediate steps to address the concerns of the Auditor General.

That is what we are doing. The secretariat is working; they have distinguished public servants and former public servants working on the secretariat. I would suggest it would be in the interests of all us to let them complete their work and make their report. We will then know what their recommendations are and where they can go from there.

Senator Moore: The independent costing of this program, including its entire life cycle, was supposed to be issued in June 2012. I thought the \$600,000 was for that purpose. Now we hear there is another \$200,000. What is that for and when will we see that independent costing report?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I absolutely do not have the answer to that query. I will take the honourable senator's question as notice and provide a written response.

[Translation]

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

PUBLIC SERVICE—PRIORITY HIRING OF VETERANS

Hon. Roméo Antonius Dallaire: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

In 1992, under the Mulroney government, a policy was created to prevent veterans from being recruited into the public service. The reason for this policy was to maximize the number of women hired. It seems that another reason was that members of the military held a number of positions in the public service, particularly within the Department of National Defence, which prevented civilians from being promoted.

After several years of discussions, and because of the increasing number of wounded veterans, this decision was reversed in the late 1990s. After that, veterans were given priority for hiring, in accordance with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms,

which states that the government must hire individuals with certain disabilities from among former civilian public service employees, but particularly from among wounded veterans. It is ideal to hire them.

• (1440)

My question has to do with the fact that we learned from Minister Blaney that there would be a focus on giving veterans priority in the public service hiring process and that the president of the Public Service Commission would examine the issue.

Does the Leader of the Government in the Senate realize that, aside from the Department of National Defence and the Department of Veterans Affairs, the other deputy ministers are under no obligation to give priority to hiring veterans, because hiring is done by the individual departments, which can choose whether or not to enforce this rule?

[English]

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): Our government, as honourable senators know, has enormous respect for the men and women who have made many sacrifices in the service of our country and, obviously, we are forever grateful to them.

Minister Blaney has asked the Public Service Commission to explore options regarding priority hiring of medically released veterans. The Public Service Employment Act specifies how the Public Service Commission can designate groups for priority access. The government is not only supporting the hiring of our veterans in the public service, but has also embarked on many other programs for men and women who are coming out of the Armed Forces.

We are moving them into education programs and training programs for other jobs that they may be desirous of having after their service in the Armed Forces.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Dallaire: Well, that is fine, applause.

Honourable senators, the regulation is already there. The way the information has been presented by Mr. Blaney and the way it has been written out in official correspondence is as if he is inventing something new. The thing has been there for 13 years. There is nothing new.

What is new and what should have been said is that he will be working at trying to get all the other government departments and agencies to apply that rule and employ veterans in a priority fashion, such as National Defence and Veterans Affairs are doing. Why did he not say that and be transparent about it, instead of giving us the impression that the government is bringing in something absolutely new, which is false? Can the leader tell us why he did not tell the story completely? Why is it that the Clerk of the Privy Council will actually study this when it is a rule? Why is it not applied?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I would argue that it is being applied. The government, and that includes Minister Blaney and many other members of the government, has asked the Public

Service Commission to explore options with regard to hiring medically released veterans. The Public Service Employment Act specifies how the Public Service Commission can, in fact, designate groups for priority access.

I think, honourable senators, Senator Dallaire and I are talking about the same program that is being encouraged to be used for all veterans, no matter which department it is.

Senator Dallaire: Honourable senators, here we are wearing our poppies. It is close to November 11 and there is this announcement that the minister is asking that we apply a rule, giving the impression, first, that it is a new rule and, second, that we actually apply the rules throughout government.

There are no matters of study required. There is no asking to review the Public Service Employment Act or its applications of rules in order to apply this. It should have been already applied. The question should be why have they not been doing it, versus their studying to maybe implement it.

It is rather interesting that, as we have used these men and women in the field who have operationally committed themselves and now are injured veterans back home, because of the budget cuts and the reduction of civil servants, we find out those who are being displaced in the civil service will have a priority above the injured veterans. The veterans will be moved back by how many thousands of positions in order to respond to that dimension of the problem?

Can the leader tell me whether that upcoming study, — which is not needed and is just someone giving orders to get on with the job, will also look at the fact that the injured veterans are being moved further down the list because of the displacement of civil servants due to the budget cuts?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, everything that this government has done with regard to veterans' issues has been to seek to improve on the services available. We have a new cohort of veterans that we are dealing with, as opposed to decades ago when veterans were mostly veterans of the First and Second World Wars and the Korean War.

However, I will put this on the record again with regard to veterans, because we work very hard. I talk to veterans all the time. Obviously, there are isolated cases and some issues are still to be addressed, but, generally speaking, if you talk to our veterans, they are very happy with the efforts of the government and the continuing work of the government on their behalf.

We have been working with veterans with regard to issues surrounding transition services for veterans. Our Veterans Transition Action Plan goes beyond the recommendations in the Auditor General's report. As well, we are providing funding to the Veterans Transition Program at UBC to provide group-based therapies. We are simplifying the reimbursement process for the Veterans Independence Program so they will no longer have to submit receipts for housekeeping and ground maintenance services. We supported the Helmets to Hardhats program, to which I made reference a few moments ago, to help veterans make the transition into civilian jobs. We have created a

[Senator Dallaire]

benefits browser to make it easier for veterans to find information on benefits and services they can access. We have improved health-related travel, so veterans will no longer have to submit receipts to receive financial support to cover travel expenses incurred for medical appointments.

Honourable senators, rather than trying to diminish all of the good things done for veterans, perhaps it would be nice, especially leading up to Remembrance Day on November 11, to give credit where credit is due. I believe that our government — and I am proud to be a part of it — has worked diligently to improve the lot of our veterans, whether they are older or in the new cohort of veterans.

Senator Dallaire: Honourable senators, why is it that when we raise a concern, it is as if we wanted to attack the government, as if we wanted to diminish the government, or as if we wanted to render it the ogre of our system of governance? Surely, a mature government is capable of handling a critique that is brought in an objective fashion in this institution. I will agree that, certainly, the government has done a bunch of things for veterans, but there are a few areas that require some help.

By the by, the leader asked me if I talked to veterans. First, I am one. Second, so is my son. Third, I am surrounded by them every day. So, yes, I am talking to them. Yes, there have been positive gestures. However, we have raised one that could have a bit more focus and it was also raised in, I would nearly say, an unethical way by the minister by trying to announce it, in the way it was described, as something new that is not something new. It is something old that simply has not been applied, so that one is sort of fiddling with the veterans.

• (1450)

I am asking the leader if she would please seek from the Clerk of the Privy Council or from the ministers, even from the Prime Minister, in fact, a determination that the government will make this thing work, apply it, and not displace the priority of veterans by civil servants who are now being displaced because of budget cuts.

Senator LeBreton: I believe I was talking about the veterans that I talk to and I meet.

In the honourable senator's preamble, he talks about motives and attacking the government. I cannot speak for the honourable senator's motives. I can only speak for the motives of the government, and that is to work tirelessly in defence of our veterans and to make their lives better.

ENVIRONMENT

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS— CARBON TAX—REGULATIONS

Hon. Grant Mitchell: Honourable senators, during the course of the three-year study on the energy strategy by the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources,

it became very apparent that business leaders see the value of pricing carbon. Many of them would actually choose cap and trade; literally none of them chose the alternative the government has chosen, which is regulation.

Now we see yet another business leader, Craig Alexander, one of the economists at TD Bank, speaking positively of cap and trade as the way to put a price on carbon emissions so that we can begin to deal with this issue in a credible way. He made these points moments after leaving a meeting with Minister Flaherty, who seems committed to this more expensive idea of regulation, which is not market-driven in any way.

Has the government given any thought to actually consulting with business leaders like Craig Alexander and energy and industry leaders to confirm that their preference would be something like cap and trade over the much more expensive and far less market-friendly regulation that the government says it is working on?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, that is a very easy question to answer. We consult with business leaders all of the time. I believe that Minister Flaherty met yesterday with many prominent business leaders.

The answer is very clear in terms of a carbon tax: Only the Liberals and the NDP want to have a carbon tax, which will raise the price on everything. This government is firmly committed to not having a carbon tax.

Senator Mitchell: My colleague is pointing out that the leader is actually confusing polling with consultation, and I do not know how many senior business leaders get called in those polls.

Has the government done any studies that they could perhaps table here or in the other place that compare the costs of regulations versus the costs of a carbon tax, which anybody who looks at these things knows full well is much cheaper, much more amendable to business and much more market-driven?

Senator LeBreton: With regard to the honourable senator's misinformation on polling, that was something done by previous governments. We actually have very broad consultative processes in which all ministers of the government and members of Parliament consult and meet with business leaders and all interested parties.

Again, yesterday Minister Flaherty met with many prominent business leaders, and he did not poll them; he sat down and had a face-to-face meeting with them.

Senator Mitchell: Does the Leader of the Government, the minister or the Prime Minister not understand that unless we start to show real progress on the real reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in this country, we will not earn the social licence and social permission, both nationally and internationally, to build the infrastructure to get our energy products diversified offshore or even to get them across Canadian soil, like B.C., to get them to diversify markets? Can the government not understanding that

they have to start doing something truly credible in reducing greenhouse gas emissions or these projects will be stalled for an awfully long time?

Senator LeBreton: The fact is, we have been and are doing something. According to *Canada's Emission Trends* report, we are now halfway to our target of reducing total greenhouse gas emissions by 17 per cent from 2005 levels by 2020. This shows the significant progress we are making in meeting our Copenhagen commitment. We are focused on a realistic approach to greenhouse gas regulations that will reduce emissions while continuing to create jobs and encourage the growth of the Canadian economy. We are making great progress.

For the first time in decades, Canada's economy has grown without greenhouse gas increases. We are making progress by taking a sector-by-sector approach. We targeted the largest emitting sectors first, and we are delivering on our promise through our work on light-duty vehicle regulations, short-lived climate pollutants, heavy-duty vehicle regulations and our finalized coal-fired electricity regulations, which were announced on September 5.

Honourable senators, we will continue to work with our partners to reduce emissions from other sectors, including gas and oil. To say we are not doing anything is wrong; the facts state just the opposite.

Senator Mitchell: Does the leader not get that it is more than a simple coincidence that any progress they have ever made — and, believe me, there has not been very much — to actually trend down in greenhouse gas emissions has been related to a trending down in the strength of the economy, which of course is related to their absolute, fundamental inability to manage it adequately?

Senator LeBreton: The honourable senator is on the wrong track because the OECD and many other world economic forums have applauded Canada for our economic stewardship through very difficult times. The Canadian economy has grown and it continues to grow, thanks to the free trade and the tax reform policies of Brian Mulroney and the steady stewardship of Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Minister of Finance Jim Flaherty.

QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Hon. the Speaker: On October 25, Senator Marshall raised the question of privilege without notice pursuant to rule 13-5(a). The issue dealt with a meeting of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance held earlier that day. Since the events giving rise to the question of privilege took place less than three hours before the Senate sat, the normal written notice could not be provided.

[Translation]

Senator Marshall explained that, after hearing the scheduled witness on Bill C-46, she had intended to move a motion for the committee to proceed to clause-by-clause consideration of the

bill. Before she could move the motion, the chair declared the meeting adjourned. This prevented her from proposing a motion for decision by the committee.

Following this intervention, other senators participated in consideration of the question of privilege, including the Honourable Senators Carignan, Chaput, Cools, Hervieux-Payette, Mercer, Mitchell, Moore, Nolin, Stratton and Tardif. Senator Day, the chair of the committee, then indicated that efforts were being made to facilitate consideration of the bill. He noted that, after hearing from the scheduled witness, he had outlined the committee's agenda for its next meeting and, since there was no further anticipated business, had declared the meeting adjourned.

[English]

In terms of the general process, rule 13-5 allows flexibility in raising a question of privilege when the matter arises after the time for giving written notice. The rule seeks to accommodate unusual or urgent circumstances and, as such, correct processes were followed by Senator Marshall.

The fundamental issue of the question of privilege is whether the chair of a committee has the power simply to end a meeting. Here in the Senate, adjournment always occurs following the adoption of a motion or by the operation of the Rules. The Speaker does not act unilaterally. Even in a case of grave disorder, rule 2-6(2) puts limits on how long the Speaker can suspend the sitting.

• (1500)

Rule 12-20(4) states that “[n]o Senate committee shall adopt procedures inconsistent with the Rules or practices of the Senate,” so the limitations on the Speaker's power would, with modifications required by the circumstances, apply to committees. This conclusion is supported by reference to page 1087 of the second edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, which notes that “[t]he committee Chair cannot adjourn the meeting without the consent of a majority of the members, unless the Chair decides that a case of disorder or misconduct is so serious as to prevent the committee from continuing its work.”

[Translation]

In practice, however, the consent of the committee to adjourn is usually given implicitly, rather than explicitly. To again cite page 1087 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, “most meetings are adjourned . . . informally, when the Chair receives the implied consent of members to adjourn”. This also holds in Senate committees, and may have contributed to misunderstanding in the situation at issue. To avoid such incidents, and to assist the orderly flow of proceedings, it would be desirable for the chair, in the absence of a formal motion to adjourn, to verify whether any senator has business to bring forward at the end of a meeting. Similarly, committee members who wish to raise matters should clearly signal this to the chair. This should help the committee to function better and also help to prevent any premature adjournment in the future.

[English]

To return to the fundamental issue of whether there was a breach of privilege in this case, parliamentary privilege is the sum of rights, beyond those existing under the general law, that are

necessary for the houses of Parliament and their members to accomplish their work. The Speaker's role when dealing with a question of privilege is to assess whether a prima facie case has been made out. In making this assessment, the Speaker is assisted by the provisions of rule 13-3(1), which outlines four criteria to be used in determining whether priority should be given to a question of privilege. The question of privilege must meet all the criteria.

[Translation]

While the question of privilege before the Senate certainly fulfills some of the criteria, it is not clear that the requirement of rule 13-3(1)(d) is met. That provision states that the question of privilege must "be raised to seek a genuine remedy that the Senate has the power to provide and for which no other parliamentary process is reasonably available." In this case, the action of the committee chair in adjourning the meeting without verifying if there was other business is really one of order, and, as such, there is another reasonable parliamentary process available. The matter could be raised as a point of order in committee, where it can be dealt with more effectively. This may help avoid such situations in the future.

[English]

This is not to deny the serious nature of this incident raised by Senator Marshall. Upon consideration, however, it would seem that there is another mechanism to deal with this problem. The matter can more appropriately be taken up as an issue of order in the committee itself.

[Translation]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

JOBS AND GROWTH BILL, 2012

CERTAIN COMMITTEES AUTHORIZED TO STUDY SUBJECT MATTER

Hon. Claude Carignan (Deputy Leader of the Government), pursuant to notice of October 24, 2012, moved:

That, in accordance with rule 10-11(1), the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance be authorized to examine the subject-matter of all of Bill C-45, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures, introduced in the House of Commons on October 18, 2012, in advance of the said bill coming before the Senate;

That the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance be authorized to sit for the purposes of its study of the subject-matter of Bill C-45 even though the Senate may then be sitting, with the application of rule 12-18(1) being suspended in relation thereto; and

That, in addition, and notwithstanding any normal practice:

1. The following committees be separately authorized to examine the subject-matter of the following elements contained in Bill C-45 in advance of it coming before the Senate:

(a) the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce: those elements contained in Divisions 1, 3, 6 and 14 of Part 4;

(b) the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources: those elements contained in Divisions 4, 18 and 21 of Part 4;

(c) the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications: those elements contained in Divisions 5, 12 and 20 of Part 4;

(d) the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples: those elements contained in Division 8 of Part 4; and

(e) the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry: those elements contained in Division 19 of Part 4;

2. The various committees listed in point one that are authorized to examine the subject-matter of particular elements of Bill C-45 submit their final reports to the Senate no later than November 30, 2012; and

3. As the reports from the various committees authorized to examine the subject-matter of particular elements of Bill C-45 are tabled in the Senate, they be deemed referred to the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance so that it may take those reports into consideration during its study of the subject-matter of all of Bill C-45.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Some Hon. Senators: No.

(Motion agreed to, on division.)

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING— DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Vernon White moved second reading of Bill C-299, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (kidnapping of young person).

He said: Honourable senators, I am pleased to voice my support for private member's Bill C-299, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (kidnapping of young person) introduced by the Member of Parliament for Kootenay—Columbia.

This is a simple proposal with a straightforward objective — strangers who kidnap children must be held accountable for their crimes. This means ensuring that severe penalties are imposed. Stranger child abduction is a pressing matter. Dire consequences are too often the result of this type of conduct. Although such cases are thankfully relatively rare in Canada, children who are kidnapped are at extremely high risk of being murdered and/or sexually assaulted. The criminal law must come down hard on those who seek to harm children. Bill C-299 seeks to achieve this laudable goal, and I am proud to support it.

A number of different offences may apply in cases involving kidnapping of children by strangers. For example, in addition to the kidnapping offence, subsection 279(1), there are two child-specific child abduction offences in the Criminal Code — sections 280 and 281. Separate offences apply to cases involving abduction of children by their parents — sections 282 and 283. The kidnapping offence prohibits kidnapping another person with intent to cause the person to be confined, imprisoned against their will or unlawfully transported outside of Canada, or with intent to hold a person for ransom or for service. This offence carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment and mandatory minimum penalties of four years' imprisonment where a firearm is used, five years' imprisonment where the offence involves the use of a prohibited or restricted firearm or organized crime, and seven years' imprisonment for subsequent offences. However, there is currently no mandatory minimum penalty where the victim is a child.

Section 280 of the Criminal Code prohibits taking a person under the age of 16 out of the possession and against the will of their parent. The maximum penalty for this offence is five years' imprisonment. Also, section 281 prohibits taking, enticing away, detaining, concealing, receiving or harbouring a person under the age of 14 with intent to deprive their parent of the possession of the child. The maximum penalty for this offence is 10 years' imprisonment.

Some child abduction cases by strangers might also proceed under other offences, such as forcible confinement or one of the child-specific or general sexual offences in sections 151 to 153 or sections 271 to 273, depending on the facts of a given case.

• (1510)

Given that the kidnapping offence — section 279(1) — is one of general application, it could apply to a parent who kidnaps his or her child, for example, in the context of a custody and access dispute. Although parental child abduction is also a serious offence, it generally occurs in a different context and often for a different purpose. While the impact of a parent abducting a child can be devastating to the child and family members left behind, there are sometimes a variety of factors at play in these cases.

To foreclose the possibility that the proposed mandatory minimum penalty could apply in the context of parental child abduction, the government proposed an amendment to exempt parents, guardians and persons having lawful care or charge of the child from the application of the mandatory minimum penalty.

I am pleased that the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights saw fit to adopt the amendment, which clarifies that the bill's proposed mandatory minimum penalty applies

only to cases involving kidnapping of children by strangers. This approach is consistent with the sponsor's intention to impose severe penalties on cases involving child abduction by strangers.

There was fairly extensive discussion at committee in the other house about the meaning of the government's amendment, which would exempt a "parent, guardian or person having lawful care or charge" of the child from the application of the mandatory minimum penalty.

I would first like to point out to honourable senators that this terminology is also used in the Criminal Code child abduction provisions. In fact, the term "guardian" is defined in subsection 280(2), for the purposes of abduction provisions, as "any person who has in law or in fact the custody or control of another person."

Family law principles also help to provide guidance about who is intended to be included in this class. First, it goes almost without saying that any person with lawful custody of the child is included. For example, a grandparent who has custody of a child as a result of a court order is a child's guardian under this definition. It is clear that the phrase includes all persons who have de facto custody of the child, such as a situation where a young child goes to live with an aunt because her parents are no longer able to care for her. While the aunt would not necessarily have lawful custody through an order or agreement, she would nonetheless be considered the child's guardian for the purpose of the abduction offences.

Thus, in addition to parents, the phrase "parent, guardian or person having lawful care or charge" is intended to include individuals with substantial and relatively long-term responsibility for the child. I am satisfied that this phrase, which judges have already been interpreting in the context of the stranger child abduction provisions, provides sufficient guidance to sentencing courts, should they be required to determine whether the proposed mandatory minimum penalty applies in a given case.

The Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights also amended the bill to direct sentencing courts to take into account the child's age and vulnerability when imposing sentence. These amendments ensure that sentencing courts have the tools they need to impose appropriate sentences in cases involving the kidnapping of children by strangers.

I understand that a recent British Columbia case in the sponsoring member's riding has brought this issue once again to the fore. A young child was taken from the safety of his home. Authorities mobilized quickly to ensure his safe return and, thankfully, the child was returned to his home uninjured. All too often, this is not the case. We must ensure that such offenders are brought to justice. We achieve this objective through the comprehensive framework of offences that I have just described, but there is a gap in the applicable penalty structure. Bill C-299 provides us with the opportunity to address this gap. Through legislative reform, we can ensure that severe penalties are imposed on strangers who would kidnap children.

Specifically, Bill C-299 would ensure that, when imposing a sentence in cases involving kidnapping of children by strangers, the court would start its sentence calculation with the five-year

mandatory minimum penalty. It would then consider the age and vulnerability of the child, along with any of the aggravating factors, including those listed in section 718.2 of the Criminal Code, to determine an appropriate sentence in a given case. These aggravating factors include any evidence that the offender abused a person under the age of 18 and evidence that the offender abused the position of trust or authority in committing the offence.

The sentencing judge must also turn his or her mind to the general sentencing principle that sentencing courts are required to treat offences involving the abuse of a child more seriously by giving primary consideration to the objectives of denunciation and deterrence under section 718.01.

This overarching sentencing framework should ensure that strangers who kidnap children receive the punishment they deserve. Also, Bill C-299 is consistent with the legislative reform in Bill C-10, the Safe Streets and Communities Act, which received Royal Assent in March 2012, to increase existing and impose new mandatory minimum penalties for child sexual offences. These amendments came into effect on August 9, 2012, and ensure that conditional sentences of imprisonment will not be available to those convicted of abducting children under section 281.

I would also like to emphasize that Bill C-299's reforms are situated in a much broader social policy context. The importance of this context cannot be overstated. Specifically, the government has in place a number of initiatives aimed at preventing these crimes from happening in the first place, as well as achieving effective enforcement of the law, when these types of offences are committed. Bill C-299 forms a part of a broader response to a very complex issue.

This broader response includes the RCMP's Canadian Police Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, home to the National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre and the National Missing Children Services, which oversees Our Missing Children Program, a program that is integral to the successful search for recovery and return of a missing child to parents.

Further, AMBER Alert has been implemented in every Canadian province. This alert is a voluntary national cooperation effort between police and local broadcasters to rapidly disseminate information about a child who is believed to have been abducted and whose life is believed to be in grave danger. The National Missing Children Services provides information to law enforcement agencies by coordinating and monitoring the implementation of this alert system.

In addition, supported in part by the Government of Canada as well as private sector organizations, the Canadian Centre for Child Protection is a non-profit, charitable organization dedicated to the personal safety of all children. The centre's new MissingKids.ca website provides a link and information portal for parents, particularly of missing children, and in an in-depth resource for law enforcement agencies across Canada.

All of these initiatives support the legislative framework that addresses this terrible crime. They support the important goals of prevention and effective enforcement. Bill C-299 fits squarely within this framework: It seeks to strengthen the criminal justice response by ensuring the imposition of stiff penalties for a crime that warrants them.

I am truly pleased that we have been given this opportunity to turn our minds to this important issue. We all wish that such crimes did not happen, but given that they do, and often with the most severe of consequences, we must do something about it. This bill provides us with an excellent opportunity. Let us join together today in support of this important proposal for law reform.

Toward that end, I wish to express my support for Bill C-299. Likewise, I would like to urge all honourable senators to support this bill. Protecting children from those who would seek to harm them is undoubtedly an objective we can support.

(On motion of Senator Tardif, debate adjourned.)

CANADA POST CORPORATION ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING— DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Donald Neil Plett moved second reading of Bill C-321, An Act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act (library materials).

He said: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Bill C-321, An Act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act (library materials), introduced in the other place by my good friend and colleague, the Member of Parliament for Brandon—Souris, Mr. Merv Tweed.

This legislation has been introduced on four previous occasions and seeks to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act to include the Library Book Rate, allowing Canada Post the ability to regulate the rate charged to libraries to ship materials. Since 1939, Canada Post has offered a discounted postal rate to libraries, as MP Tweed stated in the other place:

The bill would solidify that reduced rate and protect libraries from any other rate increases without a debate in the House to verify how much and when it should take place.

The rate is significantly discounted, up to 95 per cent of the regular parcel rates available to Canada at a Canada Post counter. As public institutions, libraries seek to minimize their costs while maintaining a high level of service to Canadians. Saving on postage rates allows libraries to increase their investments in educational programs and to expand their collections.

• (1520)

For example, under this current discounted rate, sending a two-pound book between libraries would cost just 97 cents. If this rate were to increase to normal postal rates, it would be \$18. This discounted rate has never been an official agreement; it has been more of a handshake agreement between libraries and Canada Post. With Canada Post being under great pressure over the last few years to increase revenues, this might be one area where they could change and charge full retail prices to increase profits.

I feel that this would be detrimental to rural libraries. I am sure that all of my colleagues from both sides of the chamber would agree that all Canadians need and deserve fair access to libraries, whether they are rural or urban. The library book rate plays an important role in the Canadian library system, allowing for the seamless sharing of books between libraries and communities. Coming from rural Manitoba, I share the frustration of not always having access to larger city centres. With the library book rate, libraries can easily participate in interlibrary loans allowing rural and urban libraries alike to have access to vast library collections from across Canada.

It also enables libraries from all across Canada to ship books to those who do not necessarily have access to a library. It is estimated that approximately 1 million Canadians — many of them being rural Canadians — and over 2,000 libraries actively use and benefit from this library book rate annually.

This legislation would also include a definition of library materials in the Canada Post Corporation Act, allowing it to expand to include modern-day technology. For the last few decades, the library community has been calling for the library book rate to be expanded beyond books to include new media that are an increasingly important part of their collection. Currently, as it is offered, the library book rate is only available for books. When this rate was first established many years ago, it was not envisioned that one day there would be such technologies as CDs. Including a definition of library materials in the Canada Post Corporation Act would make the book rate available for modern-day materials, such as CDs, DVDs and books on tape.

Previous attempts at this legislation and Bill C-321 itself have received unanimous support and praise in the other place. In fact, Bill C-509, this legislation's predecessor in the fortieth session of Parliament, unanimously passed the House of Commons, made it to second reading in the Senate, and then unfortunately died on the Order Paper with the call of the last federal election. It is my sincere hope that senators will join together on the fifth attempt at this legislation and pass it without delay.

This legislation has also received generous support from groups all across Canada, including the largest national library group in Canada, the Canadian Library Association, which stated:

Bill C-321 is critical to guaranteeing the long-term sustainability for the discounted library rate, which contributes to the public policy goals of literacy, lifelong learning, inclusion and vibrant communities.

Thousands of Canadians, from coast to coast, have also signed petitions in support of this legislation. I applaud the Member of Parliament from Brandon-Souris, Mr. Tweed, for bringing forward this comprehensive bill.

Honourable senators, it is my sincere hope that this great piece of legislation will receive the unanimous support within this chamber that it did in the other place and that we can see it fully studied and swiftly debated.

As Liberal Member of Parliament from Bourassa, Denis Coderre, stated:

Without a doubt, this bill will ensure that all Canadians, regardless of where they live, have access. It makes sense to establish a library book rate to help people become better citizens and to fight ignorance and illiteracy.

It is my hope that his colleagues in this place will agree with him in their support of Bill C-321. I urge all honourable senators to support this excellent piece of legislation.

(On motion of Senator Tardif, debate adjourned.)

LITERACY

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Callbeck, calling the attention of the Senate to the importance of literacy, given that more than ever Canada requires increased knowledge and skills in order to maintain its global competitiveness and to increase its ability to respond to changing labour markets.

Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I rise today to speak on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Callbeck, calling the attention of the Senate to the importance of literacy, given that Canadians require knowledge and skills in order for Canada to maintain its global competitiveness and to increase its ability to respond to changing labour markets.

I would like to begin by thanking Senator Callbeck for bringing awareness of this issue of great concern and, of course, our colleague, Senator Fairbairn, for being such a relentless advocate of literacy in Canada. Senators Callbeck and Fairbairn's commitment to helping Canadians improve their literacy skills and to calling for a national literacy strategy are efforts that I am both proud of and happy to support.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization defines literacy as:

The ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning to enable an individual to achieve his or her goals, develop his or her knowledge and potential and participate fully in the wider society.

To comprehend the magnitude and implications of this issue, one must first take note of the disquieting statistics of illiteracy in Canada. Although the literacy rate in Canada is reportedly high, around 97 per cent, there is debate about what that measure really means. When broken down by literacy levels, Statistics Canada data shows that almost half of all Canadians adults — that is 48 per cent — have low literacy skills.

As President Margaret Eaton of ABC Life Literacy Canada, a non-profit organization that aims to inspire Canadians to increase their literacy skills explains:

There is learning to read and then there is reading to learn. Not enough Canadians have that skill.

As I have said previously in this chamber — even going back to November 8, 2006 — it is my belief, honourable senators, that most Canadian take it for granted that we are a literate nation. If one were to ask the average Canadian about the definition of literacy, I am certain most would respond with the same answer — the ability to read a book. The fact is that our conception of what literacy means has fallen far behind what being literate actually entails. In a day and age where technology and knowledge accelerate at such a rapid pace, the essential skills required to function and prosper involve much more than the ability to read a printed text.

The basic literacy standard is expanding to consider literacy skills needed for today's working skills. These can be broken down into different categories, such as health literacy, computer literacy and statistical literacy, that reflect the demands of a complex world.

• (1530)

[Translation]

As the United Nations' definition suggests, literacy includes more than basic reading abilities. It also includes the ability to understand ideas, analyze problems and use a society's symbols and technology to promote personal and community development. Can individuals draft a resumé on a computer? Can they use the Internet to look for a job? Can they solve problems whose solutions are not obvious? Those are some of the skills that have become essential in our knowledge-based society.

The 2003 international adult literacy and skills survey, which enabled Statistics Canada to collect the data I mentioned earlier, measured adults' proficiency in four domains: prose literacy, document literacy, numeracy and problem solving. Then individual skills were rated from one to five, one being the lowest and five the highest. It is generally accepted that level three is the minimum desirable level for those living in a knowledge-based society like Canada. Currently, 48 per cent of Canadians over 16 years of age are below that level for prose literacy and 55 per cent are below level three for numeracy, or basic math skills.

[English]

The Canadian Literacy and Learning Network is the national hub for research, information and knowledge exchange and for increasing literacy and essential skills across Canada. According to the network, impoverished adults often do not have the literacy skills required to get into job training programs. They may need literacy skills upgrading before they can succeed in training programs, but only about 5 per cent to 10 per cent of eligible adults enroll in programs. The network also notes that fewer than 20 per cent of people with the lowest literacy skills are employed. This means that the ability of close to 9.8 million adults in this country to fully participate in civic and work life is severely compromised.

Honourable senators, a mere 1 per cent increase in the literacy rate would generate \$18 billion in economic growth every year, which indicates that investment in literacy programming has a 241 per cent return. Unemployment and low literacy levels are thus inherently related. The foundation of strong literacy and essential skills is absolutely necessary to enter the labour market at any level; and no workforce can acquire advanced skills without that quintessential foundation.

Ms. Lindsay Kennedy, President and CEO of the Canadian Literacy and Learning Network highlighted the importance of adequate skills for the Canadian labour force in her testimony last June before the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development with the following remarks:

... low job skills, as we used to know them ... have really disappeared. Most of them have been automated in the last decade. ... we have not equipped those who have traditionally held those positions with the skills to continue to work in those positions. What's emerged is the fact that we have an ever-widening gap between high- and low-skilled Canadians.

Canada is one of the few industrialized countries without a national system for basic adult education. Literacy and basic adult education, like most social issues such as welfare, health, and education and training fall mainly under the jurisdiction of provincial and territorial governments. However, the federal government plays a role in developing policy directions and in delivering some funds for literacy initiatives through provincial transfer payments, labour market development agreements, and other specialized federally delivered programs as well as the Adult Learning, Literacy and Essential Skills Program.

The provinces and territories are under no obligation to designate specific funds in support of core literacy programs. As a result, literacy services in Canada vary considerably in resources and accessibility from one region of the country to another. Within the provinces and territories, literacy programs may be delivered by various providers, including colleges, school boards, unions and community-based agencies. These may deliver targeted services to a variety of population groups and are usually delivered by trained volunteers. Each province and territory has a coalition that is funded to provide a support network to local literacy organizations within their region.

[Translation]

Literacy is a serious issue for our official language communities. The vitality of these communities and their ability to chart their own course depend in large part on the skills and abilities of their members. Given the importance of literacy and basic skills in a knowledge- and information-based economy, it is clear that having information skills will enable official language communities to develop and thrive.

The particular circumstances in which many francophones find themselves with regard to their reading, writing and arithmetic skills require these communities to obtain information and data that will help them to better understand the challenges faced by their members and, in so doing, better target their interventions.

It is in that context that the 2003 International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey I mentioned previously was conducted. The main purpose of this survey was to gain a better understanding of different aspects of the literacy and language proficiency processes among official language minorities. The survey shed light on a number of facts regarding the literacy situation of official language minorities. I am referring particularly to the fact that there are significant differences between the levels of literacy of anglophones and francophones. The survey shows that francophones, both within and outside Quebec, face significant obstacles, which is the main reason why, for a long time, they have had lower literacy levels than anglophones.

More specifically, 56 per cent of adults whose first language is French have a hard time understanding what they read, compared to 39 per cent of adults whose first language is English. Although the situation of anglophones in Quebec differs from one region to another, overall, their average level of literacy is higher than that of francophones.

The study revealed an important phenomenon with respect to reading and writing habits. At the same education and income levels, francophones are less likely than anglophones to have developed frequent reading and writing habits in their daily life. The differences observed in the literacy levels of francophones living in minority communities are likely the result of a combination of institutional and cultural factors. For example, the fact that English is more commonly used in the workplace and the community, the low value placed on French within political and legal institutions and a lack of French-language infrastructure are factors that can contribute to the insufficient mastery of one's mother tongue.

Clearly, these factors are detrimental to the preservation of the language and the tradition that it represents. We need to better understand how these factors exacerbate education problems within official language minority communities.

• (1540)

[English]

Canada's current approach for adult literacy is best described as:

... an uneven, under-resourced patchwork that reaches only 1% to 2% of the approximately 9 million less-literate working age Canadians who do not have the literacy skills necessary to fully benefit from, and contribute to, the economic and social development of their communities and our country. This shortfall is unacceptable and it is time to develop a concerted, national plan to address the serious literacy challenges in Canada.

Canada's literacy community has been working for over 25 years to advance literacy in Canada and to make the issue a priority for policy development and action.

In recent years, the federal, provincial and territorial governments, and representatives from business, labour and the community sector have all identified literacy advances as an important and necessary Canadian priority. In June 2003, an all-party parliamentary

standing committee of the House of Commons released a report entitled *Raising Adult Literacy Skills: The Need for a Pan-Canadian Response*.

As I have tried to highlight through this inquiry, we have serious literacy challenges in Canada. Only a small percentage of Canadians are in training programs to improve their skills. Canada's current literacy infrastructure is not equipped to fill these gaps. As a result, access to literacy services varies widely depending on location and personal circumstances. This is unacceptable in a nation that prides itself on its quality of life and its belief in social equity.

The Government of Canada must serve as a leader on this front. A national literacy strategy is necessary to set policy standards and elementary guidelines for the provinces and territories in order to ensure that all Canadians have the basic skills necessary for today's workforce. Such a strategy must address the regional and language disparities presented throughout this inquiry.

I would like to conclude with the following remarks prepared by the Movement for Canadian Literacy in its National Literacy Action Plan 2006-2016. I quote:

Traditionally, the literacy community has been left to address the literacy challenges alone, with insufficient, short-term funding and too few professional supports; and without the benefit of a coordinated national vision and strategy. As a society, we can no longer afford to ignore this urgent reality. Addressing Canada's literacy challenges will pay off in terms of the most pressing issues of our time: the labour market and the economy, children's outcomes, population health, community development and safety, immigrant settlement, social cohesion, and more.

This is a call for leadership, attention and action on this very serious issue. Thank you.

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Claude Nolin: Would the honourable senator accept a question?

Senator Tardif: Of course.

Senator Nolin: When you prepared your presentation, did you consider federal-provincial relations?

Senator Tardif: May I have five more minutes?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Tardif: There is no doubt that some of these matters fall under provincial and territorial jurisdiction. However, the federal government still has the power to offer support by providing the necessary resources. Cash transfers can certainly take place through HRSDC programs and labour market agreements. I think the government has a role to play in that sense.

There is also the whole question of a national strategy, in which the federal government could play a leadership role by establishing certain fundamentals and standards.

[Senator Tardif]

[English]

Hon. Catherine S. Callbeck: I wonder if the honourable senator would take another question.

Senator Tardif: Certainly.

Senator Callbeck: First, I want to thank the honourable senator for her comments on literacy and I certainly agree with what she has said. There are many reasons why we should be doing more for literacy in this country. She pointed out that even if we raise the literacy rates 1 per cent, that means another \$18 billion into the economy. As well, literacy rates mean, as studies have shown, better health for individuals and that people make higher salaries and tend to be happier. People that have high literacy rates volunteer their time more.

It seems to me that putting money into more literacy programs is a win-win situation for everyone. As the honourable senator mentioned, we now have a very uneven, underfunded patchwork across the country. As she mentioned, this shortfall is unacceptable and I fully agree with her.

Why does the honourable senator feel that the federal government is not doing more in this whole field? To me, it makes perfect sense that we should be investing in literacy programs because of the positive spinoffs.

Senator Tardif: I thank the honourable senator for the question. I certainly cannot answer for the government. I know that the government has put great emphasis on the economy and on jobs, and to me this would be the best place to start. If we want to have our children, our young adults and our older adults being employable, we must begin at the basic level of whether they have the skills to even apply for these jobs. That is where I would begin. I cannot answer the question for the government, but certainly the emphasis on the economy and jobs is the place to start.

Hon. Don Meredith: Would the honourable senator accept a question?

Senator Tardif: Yes.

Senator Meredith: Honourable senators, as someone engaged with youth across the GTA and seen the dropout rates, I am so glad the honourable senator has raised the issue today. It is critical that we look at this national strategy.

In the honourable senator's opinion, how does she see the strategy moving forward? She talked about the government supporting and taking the leadership role on this. What sort of recommendations can one make in looking at a national youth strategy? As well, in a few months I will put an inquiry to this Senate chamber that incorporates education, employment, and ensuring that our young people are successful for the future. It is a valid point she has raised today, but I would like to hear her opinion on how she sees the strategy going forward.

Senator Tardif: That is a complex question, honourable senators, and I would have to give it more thought than I can in the next few minutes. However, it all begins with dialogue and

communication. It would be vital to have consultation between the federal and provincial governments on this issue, and that there is communication of what exists, what is in place and where the gaps are.

Certainly, in that sense, we know that there have been few encounters between the federal and provincial governments on many matters. In the matter of dealing with education — post-secondary education and skills training — it would be key to begin by having a meeting of those responsible in the different provinces and the different regions with the federal government.

[Translation]

Hon. Roméo Antonius Dallaire: Would the honourable senator accept a question?

Senator Tardif: Of course.

Senator Dallaire: In terms of strategy, is it possible that there is a fundamental flaw in Canada's system of governance and the way responsibilities are shared? Some people have criticized Canada's confederation, which will soon celebrate its 150th anniversary and is definitely not the most progressive. Many people have described it as stagnant or even conservative in terms of its ability to renew itself and adapt to the requirements of the modern age.

Younger confederations are much more advanced. Does the senator believe that we should correct such basic elements as people's ability to educate themselves?

• (1550)

Senator Tardif: Unfortunately, I think my time has expired, Senator Dallaire. I would be very pleased to answer your question through another means.

[English]

The Hon. the Speaker: Is there further debate on this inquiry?

(On motion of Senator Lang, debate adjourned.)

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, before the table calls the next item, I would like to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of the family members of the Honourable Senator St. Germain.

I would like to introduce his wife, Mrs. Margaret St. Germain; his sister-in-law, Beverly Kennedy, and her husband, Bob; daughter Michelle Cartwright and son-in-law Tom; daughter Suzanne St. Germain as well as granddaughters Krissy and Jenna Van Loon, and Carley Tanner and his great-grandson Tanner.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome the St. Germain family to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

CURRENT STATE OF FIRST NATIONS SELF-GOVERNMENT

INQUIRY—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Gerry St. Germain rose pursuant to notice of October 24, 2012:

That he will call the attention of the Senate to the current state of First Nations self-government in Canada.

He said: Honourable senators, I am pleased to rise this afternoon to draw to the attention of this great chamber an issue that has become an important topic of study for me and the centrepiece of my Aboriginal affairs work over the last 13 years.

My inquiry today concerns the inherent right of an indigenous culture of people to self-govern their affairs and to do so in a manner that is in harmony with the sovereign nation in which they exist.

In Canada, this principle of expression finds its roots in the oldest law, the Magna Carta. When the rights of the Aboriginal peoples were violated by the early settlers, the Crown took action to safeguard these rights in the Royal Proclamation of 1763. Today, Canada recognizes these rights in our Constitution Act, 1982, and most recently further recognized them by signing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

Ever since the arrival of the newcomers, the Aboriginal peoples of Canada have asserted their right to decide and to control all matters integral to their existence and to do so as partners in a sovereign Canada.

The assertion of the existence of these rights and how to express them within the laws of Canada is a topic that has been deliberated upon for far too long. We have seen this with the white paper, the red paper, the Penner report, the Meech Lake Accord, the Charlottetown Accord, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, and the list continues. All of these discussions have been valuable in the sense that they furthered our understanding of the customs and practices of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures that make up Canada.

Honourable senators, the time has come for Parliament to uphold the principles and fulfil the duties as set out in our Constitution and to do what it must to put the Aboriginal peoples on an equal footing with the non-Aboriginal peoples of Canada.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator St. Germain: History shows us that change is slow but that it does take place. It was not until the time of the Progressive Conservative John Diefenbaker that Parliament started to slowly change the way it viewed the Aboriginal peoples of Canada.

Prime Minister Diefenbaker broke new ground by naming the first Aboriginal to serve in the Senate of Canada, Senator James Gladstone, a member of Alberta's Blood Tribe. Less than two years later, Prime Minister Diefenbaker took another step in the right direction by allowing all non-enfranchised Aboriginals the right to vote in federal elections. It was unheard of until that time.

Honourable senators, the light of modern day and the teachings of our past have shown us that the current system of governance for Aboriginal people under the Indian Act is prohibitive both socially and economically. Minor advancements have been made by the federal government toward self-government for some, but not all First Nations. For the most part, those who have self-government are doing well and are proud of what they are accomplishing in their own communities and of their growing contributions toward the betterment of Canada generally.

Tlicho of the Northwest Territories, Cree-Naskapi of northern Quebec, as well as, in my province of British Columbia, the Westbank First Nation, the Tsawwassen First Nation and Maa-Nulth First Nations. These are good examples of success, but more, much more, needs to be accomplished.

Despite the best efforts of some individuals, the process is fraught, for too many First Nations, with almost insurmountable challenges that seem to do nothing other than delay and therefore deny Aboriginal peoples their fair enjoyment of the riches of Canada's bounty.

Honourable senators, if we continue to do what we have always done, we are certain to get what we have always gotten. While the legal community widely supports the existence of the inherent right to self-government, no Canadian court and no government of Canada has defined the parameters in law. Honourable senators, where there is no rule of law, it behooves Parliament to construct one.

As I approach my final hours in this fine chamber, I shall, for the fourth time, introduce a Senate public bill proposing an act for the recognition of self-governing First Nations of Canada. This particular bill originated with our late colleague, Senator Walter Twinn, who set out to improve the standard of living for the citizens of the Sawridge First Nation. Walter knew that the basic levers of governance had to be in place at the local level to make such change possible.

Years later, the Harvard project of native American studies articulated these same factors essential to ensure any First Nation's existence.

Senator Twinn passed the torch to our colleague Senator Tkachuk, who in turn passed it on to me in 1999. I urge you all to give it careful consideration.

• (1600)

Honourable senators, I am a Metis.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator St. Germain: I am a son of St. François Xavier, Manitoba. I am an Aboriginal person. I have had the true privilege of utilizing the past 19 years as a senator to help advance certain issues of importance to the Aboriginal community, particularly in the past six years as Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples. However, this opportunity and my work that followed would have never come to reality had it not been for the ones who helped me along the way, and there are many.

I feel privileged to have experienced such a varied yet successful career, but not because I was privileged from the start — far from it. My privilege came from having the ability to learn from those around me, to get an education and to set goals. My personal success was measured by my ability to meet my goals. I wanted to be a pilot. I was; I flew in the Royal Canadian Air Force and as a commercial pilot later. I wanted to be a policeman and I was. I served in St. Boniface, Manitoba, and later in the Vancouver Police Department. I wanted to become successful in business, and I was.

The opportunity to serve in public life, which comprises the last 30 years of my career, was not planned, but I am thankful for the experience.

[Translation]

Honourable senators, before going any further, I want to talk about my early days. I cannot forget to thank my mother and father, as well as my Aunt Dorothy and her wonderful husband Lucien for their support during my childhood. I was fortunate to get started on the right foot and to get a good education.

Many of my friends did not have that opportunity, and many of them ended up on the streets of Winnipeg, unable to partake in the riches of our great country. That was the sad reality of being Metis at that time.

I went to school, from grade one to grade eight, in a one-room schoolhouse in Petit Canada.

Later on, the Grey Nuns oversaw my high school education, in a small two-room school, École Secondaire de Saint-Francois-Xavier, on the banks of the Assiniboine River in Manitoba. I want to sincerely thank one of my teachers, Sister Jeanne Monchamp, who encouraged me to study math.

I remember that she often told me, “Gerry, if you excel at math, you will excel in life.” She was right. The tools I learned there enabled me to achieve my goals.

[English]

Honourable senators, as I reflect on my time, I am struck by the thought of how this chicken farmer found his way into the Senate of Canada, but I guess that is the brilliance of our democracy. Some of my detractors may argue otherwise.

It was in the late 1970s when I left the Vancouver Police Force and entered the real estate development business that my career became political. In the business world, every potential deal or transaction has some sort of political undertones. I was exposed to this and became more familiar with it every day.

It was around that time that I purchased a chicken farm and joined the B.C. Chicken Marketing Board, eventually becoming chairman. My experiences in both the agricultural and real estate business sectors made me acutely aware of the impacts governments have on business. I already had developed a certain amount of disdain regarding the policies of the Trudeau government as a policeman, and that only grew as a businessman in Western Canada.

It was in the spring of 1983, when Margaret and I were just leaving our home for the day to run some errands, when the telephone rang. The voice on the other end advised me that Progressive Conservative leadership candidate Mr. Brian Mulroney would be making a stop at the Villa Hotel in Burnaby that afternoon and they asked if I would attend. I said that I was busy and that I had already put some thought into supporting John Crosbie. The voice on the other end persisted and I agreed to try to stop by.

We arrived at the Villa Hotel and waited nearly an hour for the late arrival of Mr. Mulroney. However, once he did arrive, Margaret and I engaged him in a brief chat. After our conversation was over, Margaret turned to me and said, “We just spoke to the next Prime Minister of Canada.”

Shortly after that, I was off to the PC leadership convention in Ottawa, as a Mulroney supporter, where I bore witness to our former colleagues, Senator Len Gustafson and Senator Brenda Robertson. They nominated Mr. Mulroney for leader. One thing led to another and I soon found myself the newly minted PC candidate for the riding of Mission-Port Moody in anticipation of an upcoming by-election that was to be called.

On the evening of August 29, 1983, I was confirmed as the riding’s newly elected MP and was off to Ottawa to join my new party leader, Brian Mulroney, who was elected for the first time to the House of Commons in the riding of Central Nova in Nova Scotia that same night. The rest is history, honourable senators.

Like the other opportunities in my life, this one would not have come to reality had it not been for the people who helped me along the way. I want to thank those who believed in me, trusted me and were willing to take a chance on this Metis chicken farmer from the Fraser Valley.

There are those who helped to get me elected. A large amount of credit is owed to my staff in the early days of my life as an MP, notably Bob Ransford. His advice, writing ability and loyalty were key to some of my early successes on Parliament Hill. I want to acknowledge Bruce Pollock, who served as my trusted executive assistant during my time as minister. I want to thank Doug Eyford, who was my chief of staff. Doug brought a level of management, intelligence and expertise to my minister’s office that has gone unparalleled.

Most of all, I thank the Right Honourable Martin Brian Mulroney for having shown me implicit trust when I served as his government caucus chairman of the largest government caucus in Canadian history — 211 MPs. That record still stands. I thank him for allowing me to serve at his cabinet table and for appointing me to serve in this great and noble chamber with all of you and others before.

Words cannot rightly address the full value of the gratitude that I have for the relationship we established. I thank him for the moments shared alone and together with Margaret — who is in the gallery today — and Mila. I thank him for the work that got done, and for the friendship that has lasted the test of time.

Let me also say that I am confident historians will rightly position Brian Mulroney as Canada's greatest prime minister. The achievements of his government were founded upon his courage to rightly position Canada for the future. I speak of the GST, the free trade agreement — the first major free trade agreement — and Canada's support for Nelson Mandela in his fight against apartheid.

The hallmark of a true leader is showing the confidence to risk your political capital in order to do what is right to protect the future of your country, knowing that the pages of history, and not the electorate, will be the judge of your actions. Martin Brian Mulroney was that kind of a leader.

• (1610)

Honourable senators, upon my appointment to this place on June 23, 1993, I was then serving both as PC Party president and as senator. This was a busy time, particularly after our defeat in the fallout of that year as the rebuilding got under way, but the electoral dismantling of our party left behind few to pick up the pieces.

I will be forever grateful for the assistance of the Honourable Jim Prentice and Senator Terry Stratton, who pitched in with both feet to help sort out the administrative shambles, as well as Glen Doucet, my executive assistant at PC headquarters, who later helped to get my Senate office set up and running.

As we all came to know, in spite of our best efforts to breathe new life into the old PC Party of Canada, we were not successful. This was a difficult time in Canadian politics, with competing forces at play. The right wing of our political spectrum was deeply divided. For every ounce of opposition we threw at the policies of the Liberal government, we threw a pound at each other for our largely petty differences. I knew —

Some Hon. Senators: Five more minutes.

Some Hon. Senators: Fifteen minutes.

Senator St. Germain: Do I have the permission of the Senate?

The Hon. the Speaker: Carry on.

Senator St. Germain: I knew that if the Conservative movement was ever to hold power again, the dysfunction that precipitated under the leadership of the day had to end. On June 30, 2000, I made the toughest decision of my political career; I withdrew from caucus and as a member of the Progressive Conservative Party to sit as an independent Conservative senator.

In October of that year, I made a decision to sit as the first and only Canadian Alliance senator under the leadership of the Honourable Stockwell Day, for it is when you stand up, my friends, and defend the courage of your convictions that you put your friendships to the test.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator St. Germain: There are some former colleagues of this place and some who are still present who did their best to have my participation in the Senate squelched a bit because they were

displeased with my stance, which I can sort of understand, but I tried my best to bury the hatchet, for the greater cause had yet to be achieved. If it were not for the bold steps taken by a certain group of like-minded Conservatives, we may not have been successful in uniting the right and offering a viable alternative to the Canadian electorate.

Honourable senators, we most certainly would not be sitting here today on the government side of this historic chamber under the able and steadfast leadership of the Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada. I have enjoyed and sincerely appreciated the privilege of serving our Prime Minister as a member of his caucus, for the political trust he invested in me when I co-chaired the party's campaigns in British Columbia, for the parliamentary advice we sought from each other over a wide variety of issues and for his friendship.

I have also enjoyed the privilege this chamber has bestowed upon me in chairing the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples for the past six and a half years, and I say thank you to all of you for that. As a direct result of steady cooperation from senators on both sides of the chamber, the committee produced great work. We put the needs of our constituency, the Aboriginal peoples of Canada, above partisan interests. This unique and cohesive relationship was fostered by excellent support from the deputy chairs, Senator Sibbeston and Senator Dyck, and further supported by Senators Lovelace-Nicholas, Campbell, Hubley and Peterson, just to name a few, and many from our side, of course, whom I will not name at this time.

I do not believe Senator Campbell is with us today, but I want to make special mention of his friendship and kindness when I was dealing with a health problem that erupted in my life; he was always there offering to pair with me to make certain that I was not putting pressure on my side and I was able to do what I had to do.

Honourable senators, over the past six years, the committee produced eight substantive reports on important topics. A few of these reports had a significant impact. The recommendations contained in the committee report on specific claims were mirrored in the government's legislation that followed. The committee's report on First Nations education brought the lack of quality education for our Aboriginal people to the forefront of the public policy agenda last fall and garnered national media attention.

Honourable senators, these are two fine examples of the good work produced by the Senate of Canada, and it defines our purpose as senators. However, this work was not accomplished by senators alone. The committee has been blessed to have such talented and dedicated support staff: the translators, stenographers, analysts, communications officers, clerks and their assistants. Your work makes our work not only possible but credible. Without you, we could not have accomplished what we did.

I want to take a moment to single out a few people with whom I worked closely during my time as chair: clerks Gaetane Lemay and Marcy Zlotnick; library analysts Mary Hurley, Lisa Patterson, Tonina Simeone and Shauna Troniak; and communications officer

Ceri Au. It has been a real privilege for me to work with a group of such dedicated women. You are true public servants, and we as senators owe you a debt of gratitude for all that you do and have done in support of us.

I know that I could not have accomplished what I set out to do without the support staff of Parliament. Far too often, I feel that their work is not recognized as it should be. From the people at Senate Administration to our trusted security guards and able messengers, I want to sincerely thank all of you for the great work you have done and continue to do.

I have also been fortunate to have a number of dedicated individuals serve in my Senate office. Their advice and loyalty of service kept me on the straight and narrow. For that, I owe a debt of thanks to my former staff members Byng Giraud, the late Helincka Dyer, Marjorie Allen, Sue Lang and Katarina Shave, whom I saw here today. Hi Kat!

To my current staff, Ed Sem, whose loyalty and dedication goes back 18 years; Niilo Edwards, my executive assistant, who has kept my office running smoothly for the past six and a half years — his dedication and loyalty to me and the work of my office I will sincerely miss — and Stephen Stewart, my senior adviser for the past 13 years. His sound advice and counsel helped steer me through some major accomplishments of my Senate career. For that I will forever be grateful.

Honourable senators, this chapter of my life is coming to a close. I will look back on this time fondly and without regret, with one exception of a personal nature.

Like me, many of you in here have spent a great deal of time in public life and can appreciate it when I say that our families often pay a heavy price to support our political careers. My job kept me away from home and I missed a lot of family events. However, I was fortunate enough to have a strong foundation at home. The strength came from one strong lady in particular — she is with us here today in the gallery — my loving wife of 51 years, Margaret.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator St. Germain: She raised our children while I was on the road during the week and too often when I was away on weekends. She is the rock and the stability of our family. It is because of her devotion to our children and me that I was able to accomplish everything that I have spoken of. My three children — Michelle, Suzie and Jay — while I worked away from home far too often, I did so only with our family's best interests at heart.

In all that I have accomplished, I hope I have set an example for our family that you can be proud of, just as I am proud of the three of you.

To my grandchildren Krissy and Jenna, Carley and Jordan, along with my great-grandson Tanner, who is here today — when he was small I called him “Sweet Pea” — Pa is proud of all of you and truly blessed to have you in my life.

Honourable senators, I have spoken for far longer than I had planned. It was my intention that this speech be reflective of my career in such a way that my words paid tribute to those who

helped me get as far as I have in life. I hope I have done that, but time in no way permits me to speak to each and every one. However, I know that in my heart, those not mentioned are part of this wonderful journey.

In closing, I wish to return to the beginning of my remarks. Looking back, I have been so blessed by the Good Lord to have led such a privileged life. Upon my departure, I give hope that my time spent here has had a positive impact on the issues I chose to champion.

• (1620)

That, however, is not for me to judge. To that end, it was President Ronald Reagan who said in his farewell speech:

Whatever else history may say about me when I'm gone, I hope it will record that I appealed to your best hopes, not your worst fears; to your confidence rather than your doubts. My dream is that you will travel the road ahead with liberty's lamp guiding your steps and opportunity's arm steadying your way.

Honourable senators, may you continue to experience this wonderful journey down the road ahead, not only in service to the public but also in service to each other — all of you — as colleagues and as friends. I leave you with the words of William Butler Yeats:

Think where man's glory most begins and ends, and say my glory was I had such friends.

God bless you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, it is typical of Gerry St. Germain that he would choose the inquiry route to take his leave of this place and not the traditional Senate tribute route. We have discussed, many times, the whole tribute issue, so it is absolutely typical of Gerry to have picked the inquiry and have something meaningful to say on his departure. I will not speak to the inquiry per se, other than to make reference to it, but will simply use this occasion to mark Gerry's departure from here.

Honourable senators, as Gerry pointed out, after almost two decades of service in the Senate of Canada and five years as a member and cabinet minister in the House of Commons, it is unfortunately time to bid farewell to our colleague, Gerry St. Germain.

Gerry, who officially takes leave of this place on November 6, I do not think really ever said the word “retiring,” because that would be an oxymoron. Gerry St. Germain will never retire from anything that he does.

All honourable senators know that Gerry is a true original — an imposing figure in that black Stetson hat, with a good heart and an optimistic spirit. He is also a true Renaissance man, with experience in a wide variety of fields as a Royal Canadian Air Force pilot, a commercial pilot, a police officer, a businessman, a rancher, a farmer, a member of Parliament, a cabinet minister, a

national caucus chair and, for two terms, the President of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada during times, at least in the latter part of his term, when it was not easy, as he mentioned, to be president.

He is proud of his Metis heritage and I would be remiss if I did not mention that, in 1988, he became Canada's very first Metis to be named to the federal cabinet as Minister of State for Transport and Forestry.

Honourable senators, over 19 years ago, on June 23, 1993, Senator Gerry St. Germain was appointed to this chamber by former Prime Minister the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney. He was Brian Mulroney's last appointment to the Senate. Mulroney used to joke, "I will go out the door, Gerry, and you can turn out the lights."

Since that time, he has represented British Columbia in this place with passion and distinction. Although he has served on several committees over the years, I know that he would say that he is most gratified by the work he has done with the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, most notably as its chair for the past six years. He can be justifiably proud of the committee's reports on specific claims, safe drinking water, economic development and, most recently, education for Aboriginal youth.

His inquiry today on self-government further illustrates his knowledge and commitment. While there is much work to do, I know that, even as he leaves this place, the Aboriginal peoples of Canada will continue to have a committed advocate and champion in Gerry St. Germain.

Honourable senators, it is difficult to sum up in a few words what Gerry has meant to the Conservative Party of Canada. One of the greatest strengths of our party lies in those people who have been through the highs and lows of the past few decades and, boy, we went through some highs and some lows. Long before many others — including me, I might add — came to the same realization, he saw the need for a strong, united Conservative Party in Canada and worked for years to make it a reality.

Honourable senators may not know, but Senator St. Germain was one of a very small group of negotiators involved in the negotiations that culminated in the merging of the Canadian Alliance Party and the Progressive Conservative Party, the results of which are on display for us to see today under the inspired leadership of the Right Honourable Stephen Harper.

Although Gerry St. Germain is taking his leave of the Senate, I know that, in his remarkable life's journey, it is simply another turn, one that will provide him with even more adventures in the years ahead.

On behalf of myself and all Conservative senators, I wish to extend to Senator St. Germain, his wife Margaret, whom I see in the gallery, their daughters Michelle and Suzanne and son Jay, our very best wishes for health and happiness as they embark on the next phase of their lives.

Thank you, Gerry, for your hard work and support and your enthusiastic approach to everything that you do.

[Senator LeBreton]

Hon. James S. Cowan (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I know that many colleagues on both sides of the house want to rise today to say a word about our retiring colleague, but I thought I would say a few words as the Leader of the Opposition on behalf of my colleagues here. I am sure that I speak for all of them.

Gerry St. Germain, as the Leader has indicated, has had a remarkable career, not only in business and in law enforcement, but also, for the past 30 years, in the political life of this country. I look forward to the book, Gerry. I think that you have just touched on some of the highlights in your summary today. I am sure that there are many more things that, even without the protection of parliamentary immunity, you might be able to put on paper. I am sure it would be of great interest, not only to us but also to people who want to learn more about the history of that very tumultuous period in Canada.

As Senator LeBreton has said, Senator St. Germain is really, in many ways, larger than life. It is not simply the Stetson hat. It is his enthusiasm, his reaching out to so many people and his embracing of so many good issues. The work that he has done over the past few years on the Committee on Aboriginal Peoples is an indication — but only an indication — of the good work that he has done in the Senate. When people ask what a senator can do and what the Senate can do, they can look at the contributions that he has made to this place and this Parliament. That is what we do so well.

We will miss his plain speaking and his independent streak. Perhaps that independent streak was sometimes enjoyed more by those on this side than those on that side, but it was something that we all talk about. We talk the talk and, perhaps, do not often walk the walk as often we should and as he did.

On behalf of all of your friends on this side, Gerry, we wish you and Margaret a very happy time in retirement as you return to British Columbia. I know that we have not seen the last of you. No doubt, as we stray from where you think we should be, we will hear from you. All the best to you for good health and a happy retirement.

Hon. David Tkachuk: Honourable senators, a rather unfortunate remark in the Senate one day by Senator St. Germain lent itself to one of my favourite Gable cartoons in *The Globe and Mail*. Gerry is receiving a cheque from an employee of the Senate. The employee is presenting the cheque on a silver tray while Gerry sits comfortably in a chair, and the employee says, "Your paycheque from Canada's taxpayers, including Whities, is ready, Senator St. Germain."

• (1630)

Honourable senators, Whitey would like to say a few words.

Our Senator St. Germain is a story of hard work and determination, service and family. He is the ultimate Horatio Alger of humble beginnings and success. Like many Canadians of his generation, success was not about money, although truth be told he has a bit of that, but about service. He has been a pilot, a policeman, a politician — elected and appointed — and a businessman. In his bio he still calls himself a rancher, but his acreage along the U.S. border close to White Rock, B.C., would

be described more aptly as a gentlemen's ranch. He was president of our party, and he likes to call himself "the advance man to the Alliance." Many of us thought we had lost him, but he reappeared as a leading voice in the merger negotiations. He had an intimate knowledge of both parties.

His leaving, though, did cause a little animosity, and he was always a little concerned about his relationship with that other power in our caucus, our leader, Marjory. There would be Terry, Gerry, and I. Gerry would pull the closest flower he could find — she loves me, she loves me not. Terry and I would reassure him and we would say to him, "Gerry, she loves you. You always have the best chairmanships and she always gives you great seating." For a big policeman, Gerry would get that kind of puppy look — like he is getting beaten up — and would ask, "Do you think so?"

Margaret, if he is pulling petals in his sleep, it is not about politics.

The two of them in their own ways held the party together — kind of yin and yang; and we will miss him very much. Our loss is Margaret's and his family's gain. The gentle side of Gerry is so evident around Margaret.

To his family here today, know that we all loved him and respected him. We respected your father, grandfather and great-grandfather. Gerry, we have been well served.

Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer: Honourable senators, the fact that Senator St. Germain chose for his final inquiry in this place the current state of First Nations self-government in Canada should come as no surprise. It reminds me of the values of mutual understanding, mutual respect and human rights recognition — values that our colleague has championed throughout his career. Senator St. Germain's career and life have spanned decades in industry, the provinces and vocations. He served as a Royal Canadian Air Force pilot, a police officer in Winnipeg and Vancouver, a building contractor, a businessman, a poultry farmer, a parliamentarian and, most notably, a humanitarian. Parliamentarians, Canadians, British Columbians, First Nations peoples are all blessed to have been touched by the sublime humanity of Senator Gerry St. Germain.

Humanity is a quality that his friend and fellow British Columbian, Bob Ransford, highlighted in a recent tribute in Vancouver to our colleague. That tribute evoked the essence of Senator St. Germain's character and passion, which I so deeply respect and admire. Mr. Ransford told a story about a drive that Senator St. Germain and he took 20 years ago to Mount Currie Reserve, home of the Lil'wat people. He said they drove down a gravel road to an old part of the reserve that Gerry called Dodge.

It was a collection of very old shacks along a short, dusty road. Half the shacks were built literally with a rough-hewn lumber. There were gaps between the boards and half the shacks were mostly tar paper and plywood boxes. People lived there. I saw a few small kids running about. I cannot tell you what a depressing place it was. As we drove slowly through the settlement, Gerry did not say much, but I saw the look on his face. I could see a determination in his eyes. It was a deep concern that I had seen before. I didn't really understand that concern then — where it came from, how important it was, and where it would take him.

Honourable senators know how important that concern is and where it could take Senator St. Germain. I will share with you further Mr. Ransford's account. He said:

A few months ago when I read the report on Aboriginal education that Gerry signed as Chair of the Aboriginal Peoples' Committee, it dawned on me that the greatest contribution that Gerry had made as a servant of the people for over 30 years wasn't uniting Conservatives, wasn't setting up the Vancouver International Airport Authority, wasn't helping to secure a commitment to build a gas pipeline to Vancouver Island, and wasn't fighting for a softwood lumber agreement to secure B.C.'s jobs. No, Gerry's biggest contribution has been a commitment to his humanity, exposing to us the opportunity we have in this great country to be a country of one people, to truly unite our country, to do that finally by recognizing that our first peoples define our Canada, a country enriched further by those who came later from all parts of the globe.

Honourable senators, that is Senator St. Germain's vision of Canada. As he retires from this place, it is a vision that we must recommit to preserving and promoting with all that we are.

Honourable senators, in 1974, my father was a new refugee to Canada with no friends in B.C., and he wanted a job to feed his large family. Minister Whalen met my father at an event and gave him some ideas of what he could do. After that conversation, my dad applied to become an egg farmer. He applied for egg quotas through the Egg Marketing Board. Senator St. Germain was the chair of the board. The farmers in the area did not want my father to be one of them. My father was different. My father was sitting outside the room when the decision was to be made. My dad was sure he would not succeed in obtaining the quotas.

Little did my father know that a complete stranger was fighting for my father's rights. Senator St. Germain, who did not know my father or his circumstances, stood up for my dad. Senator St. Germain would not accept the prejudices of the farmers. My father obtained the licence. My father has been an egg farmer for 38 years in the Fraser Valley because of our colleague Senator St. Germain.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Jaffer: Honourable senators, this is who our friend is. He stands up for all of us regardless of race, religion or creed — even people he does not know. Gerry treats all people equally. He opens the door of opportunity for all.

Senator St. Germain, thank you for your service, friendship, example and commitment to all Canadians. We will miss you. I will especially miss the long plane rides from Vancouver to Ottawa and from Ottawa to Vancouver when you gave me a lot of sage advice. Some of it I have followed and some of it I have parked.

We wish you a happy time with your great family and your great-grandson, Tanner, who is sitting in the gallery and who never leaves your side.

[Translation]

Gerry, I will miss you.

• (1640)

[English]

Hon. Lillian Eva Dyck: Honourable senators, I feel compelled to get up to say a few words to respect our colleague, the Honourable Senator St. Germain.

I wish I could have followed Senator Tkachuk when he was talking about how he would say “She loves me; she loves me not” with respect to Senator LeBreton. At the end of our meeting this morning, his last meeting of the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, Gerry said, “I love you all,” and I said, “Gerry, I cannot believe that I am saying this: I love you, too, and you are a Conservative.” I never thought I would say that to a Conservative. Next time, he should say “She says she loves me; she loves me; she loves me.” There is no “She loves me not.”

It is fitting that your last speech is an inquiry on the issue of First Nations self-government. That shows how relentless you are in trying to get to that goal, but it also shows you are a Metis man and that you are very proud of that. We all know that on the committee. Yet, you do not mention the Metis in your final speech, except with regard to you, yourself, and we had to convince you to do the Metis study.

I have learned so much from you, my honourable friend. I have been the vice-chair of the committee for the past two or three years and learned so much from you and your style. I am a very shy person, believe it or not. You have a very extroverted style and, as you said, you put the goal up there so we work together.

I hope we continue to do that. I know that we will, because the members of the committee all share that vision of us working together. I see good things happening, but we will definitely miss you. That is for sure.

You also talked about your accomplishments in life. You mentioned education with the Grey nun who told you to get into math. Honestly, in my life, too, education was such an important piece for me and all Aboriginal people to get ahead. As a role model, you received the highest honour from the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation, now called Indspire, when it recognized you with a lifetime achievement award last year. It was well deserved.

I am sure your family was thrilled to see the video. I thought it was so touching when you were walking along hand in hand with your grandson; what a beautiful image. I can see your family crying, because you have done a tremendous job. They are so proud of you. You are such a great role model for the rest of Canada, for all Metis people, for all people in general, and for senators in general.

Now, the question I have for you is really quite serious. With a new chair — we always worry with a new chair — you are leaving big shoes to fill. My question is: What about the big hat — that big black hat — and all the turquoise? Will he or she have as much? You are the only man I know who has more turquoise

jewellery than I do. We were trying to convince you to get us back to Arizona or New Mexico so we could get more new turquoise. Perhaps our new chair will welcome that suggestion and maybe we will be able to dress him up so he is able to fill the shoes, the hat and the jewellery.

Thank you so much. I enjoyed working with you. I love you, Gerry.

Hon. Jane Cordy: I was delighted to hear you thanking teachers today, and perhaps Senator Martin and I will bring forward a motion that all honourable senators should thank their teachers in their departure speeches. I am sure there are a lot of teachers around Canada who are shaking their heads saying, “Who would have thought?” Here we are.

It is a pleasure to have worked with you over the past 12 years. You understand fundamentally that just because senators disagree politically, it does not mean they cannot work together and I truly appreciate that.

I had the privilege of sitting in on a number of Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples meetings which you chaired and always at the meetings, regardless of party affiliations, all senators were treated with respect and dignity by you in your role as chairperson.

We were neighbours on the third floor of the Victoria Building and it was always fun to visit and look at the pictures you had on your walls, which gave a panorama of the life you have led.

Gerry, you are a gentleman and person of principles. You certainly were not afraid to stand up for your convictions and for what you believed in. You were the only Reform Alliance senator for quite a while and I am sure that there were quite a few lonely times when you were in that role. However, you stuck to your beliefs and, lo and behold, the Progressive Conservative Party and the Reform Alliance came together and your “Unite the right” came to be. I am sure many people believed you would have been in the leader in the Senate because of the work you had done behind the scenes. I am sure there were many people who thought that. That is no reflection on you, Senator LeBreton, but certainly a lot of people felt it at the time.

Gerry, my best wishes to you and to your family. You have made a difference in the Senate. You have shown such great passion and conviction for the causes in which you believe and you will be missed in this place. Thank you.

[Translation]

Hon. Roméo Antonius Dallaire: Honourable senators, it is essential to note that Senator St. Germain never denied his francophone past — quite the opposite in fact — and is proud to be a Metis. Gerry, French may not be your first language or the first language of your community, but it remained important to you. Those of us who live in Quebec are very proud to see you keep that spirit alive.

You did not mention the time that you spent in aviation. I am wondering whether the industry has recovered from your time there and whether the damage you may have caused to planes was

[Senator Jaffer]

factored into the budgets at the time. Yet, you still managed to become a pilot and, as you have often told me, that training was extremely useful to you later on.

When I was a member of your committee, I thought it was an innovative idea that you had to invite all the members of the committee and the minister with whom you worked most often — the Minister of Indian Affairs — to an informal dinner in the New Zealand Room, to try to have healthy discussions and to make the minister understand that the Senate could make suggestions to move issues forward.

The idea of inviting a minister to share a meal with the entire committee should be adopted by all the committees because it is an initiative that I think is truly remarkable.

I congratulate you and your family, and I wish you health and prosperity.

[*English*]

Hon. Nancy Greene Raine: Honourable senators, I, too, would like to pay tribute today to Senator Gerry St. Germain, a man who served as my mentor since he accompanied me into the Senate chamber almost four years ago. Not only has he given me wise counsel as to how the Senate works and what our roles should be, but he has shared many great stories of his life, his business and political careers, and especially his hopes for a better future for Aboriginal people in Canada. It has been a pleasure to serve on the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Peoples under his

chairmanship. I really appreciate how he has led the committee to operate in a non-partisan way.

I know the study on Aboriginal education that we released last year was near and dear to his heart. In fact, I have come to understand that his view of education as a lifelong process is fundamental to his values. Gerry believes that each one of us has the same aspirations and desires to be productive, to be contributors, and not to be dependent on society. He believes that education empowers people and gives them an equal opportunity to succeed, to make their dreams come true, and it gives them an opportunity to be a giver instead of a taker in society.

Gerry, you are a great example of someone who has been a giver, making a difference in many ways. I know you credit those who helped you along the way, especially the teachers who made a difference, but I can tell you that you are making a difference just like they did to people who are following you.

I will miss you and your entertaining stories, and I thank you for all you have done for me. Good luck, Gerry. May you be blessed with good health to enjoy this next phase of your life with your wife Margaret and all your family. I hope to see you and Tanner on the ski slopes at Sun Peaks this coming winter.

(On motion of Senator Carignan, debate adjourned.)

(The Senate adjourned until Wednesday, October 31, 2012, at 1:30 p.m.)

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