



DEBATES OF THE SENATE

1st SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT • VOLUME 148 • NUMBER 114

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, October 31, 2012

The Honourable NOËL A. KINSELLA
Speaker

CONTENTS

(Daily index of proceedings appears at back of this issue).

Debates Services: D'Arcy McPherson, National Press Building, Room 906, Tel. 613-995-5756
Publications Centre: David Reeves, National Press Building, Room 926, Tel. 613-947-0609

Published by the Senate
Available on the Internet: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

THE SENATE

Wednesday, October 31, 2012

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

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Hon. Grant Mitchell: Honourable senators, I have the happy task of reporting on a wonderful weekend event that my wife and I attended in Whitehorse, Yukon. The Senators' Annual Ball was arranged and hosted by Senator Daniel Lang and was completely non-partisan. Senator Lang invited Senator Larry Smith and me to round out the "senator-ness" of the senators' ball, as well as members from both sides of the other place.

It was two of those very good days that we have once in a while in politics. The first day was absolutely magical. We arrived at the Whitehorse Wild Game Reserve, which is a world class establishment that I would recommend to anyone who is remotely interested in this kind of thing. It is set in a beautiful valley and it was a crystal clear day with brilliant blue sky. The sun was so appealing as it glinted off the skiff of snow and the hoar frost on the trees. It was magical. We went from paddock to paddock. Moose were gathered right alongside the fence and, at one point, a muskoxen was only 100 metres away and then came right up to the fence. As we drove away, the muskoxen ran along beside the van. Later we spotted a red fox sitting in the middle of the road hunting gophers. It was excellent. The next day got even better.

This event was held to recognize and raise money for the Special Olympics. Whitehorse is one of 12 organizations across the country that do this. We spent the day meeting volunteers, board members, coaches of these young Special Olympians and supporters. It was very rewarding and quite inspirational to see the kind of energy, commitment and effectiveness that this organization has had on the lives of many Special Olympians. Especially inspirational was the time we spent bowling with about 40 Special Olympians. We hear so much about their purpose and energy and the pure joy they bring to this kind of physical sporting activity — if ever you need a lesson in sportsmanship. I went bowling, which I have not done for a number of years. It was truly fun to bowl with this group. A young woman named Amy was standing beside me. I had just come back after throwing three consecutive gutter balls. She looked up at the electronic screen and said, "You know, Grant, I have 61 points and you have 44. You need to catch up." Given that in this sport the most points wins, it was quite a lesson in sportsmanship. It was a wonderful, wonderful time.

I congratulate the people of Whitehorse, Yukon, for their community spirit. You can just see the sense of character, and when you know and feel that, you know it has to be a wonderful community in which to live. I am grateful to Senator Lang and Val, his wife, who were remarkably wonderful hosts, and to all of the people who run that organization and Special Olympics there, and across the country. Congratulations, and thank you.

THE LATE HONOURABLE LINCOLN M. ALEXANDER, P.C., C.C., O.ONT.

Hon. Don Meredith: Honourable senators, last Friday Canadians said farewell to one of our country's greatest leaders — the Honourable Lincoln MacCauley Alexander. The streets were lined with many Hamiltonians and well wishers from across Canada. My wife, Michelle, and I had the privilege of attending his state funeral where members of the Alexander family and dignitaries such as Governor General David Johnston, former Governor General Michaëlle Jean, Lieutenant Governor David Onley and many others paid their respects. As a reflection of the vibrancy with which Lincoln lived his life, his home going was more of a celebration than a time of sadness. The Hamilton All Star Jazz Bands played his favourite songs and gospel hymns, and laughter filled Hamilton Place. Cherished memories were shared by his grandchildren, Marissa and Erika, in a moving letter about intimate moments with their grandfather. Other officials, such as former Ontario Premier David Peterson, reminisced about their dear friend and colleague.

Days before the funeral, I had the privilege of joining Prime Minister Harper in Toronto to pay our respects as Lincoln lay in state, and I reflected on the unique impact he had on the province of Ontario. His passing marked the first time in 30 years that an Ontarian laid in state in the provincial legislature at Queen's Park. His wife, Marni, expressed to Michelle and me that her stepson, Keith, and his two children were very appreciative of all the love and support demonstrated by Canadians.

As a Black Canadian serving in politics, the man affectionately known as "Linc" had a profound impact on my life. I saw him as a mentor and role model whose approach as a bridge builder helped to shape my work with the police and the faith community to end youth violence in Toronto. He was an inspiration to all visible minorities who taught us to challenge the status quo and believe that anything is possible. His favourite line when he went into schools to talk to school children was: I did; you can; you will. Despite losing his parents at 20 years of age, he embraced life to its fullest and became a trailblazer for future generations with a career marked by many firsts.

Lincoln Alexander was a strong Progressive Conservative in the Ontario riding of Hamilton West who became Canada's first Black member of Parliament in 1968. He was the first Black person to serve as Chancellor of the University of Guelph. He had the longest tenure in the school's history.

• (1340)

He was the first Black person to serve as Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario and the first to serve in a viceregal position in Canada. He was a bridge builder who transcended party politics and cultural divides. He was a man whose primary focus was to make the lives of Canadians better by putting the interests of people first.

I am filled with mixed emotions that, although this nation will continue to foster great leaders, Canada will never see another Lincoln Alexander.

Honourable senators, please join me in showing our appreciation for this great provincial and national hero who has forever left his mark on the Province of Ontario and Canada.

Hon. Donald H. Oliver: Honourable senators, it is with mixed feelings that I, too, rise today to pay tribute to one of Canada's much engaging and much-loved politicians, the Honourable Lincoln Alexander, who passed away on October 19 at the age of 90.

I associate myself with the tributes paid by Senators LeBreton, Housakos and Meredith. I am also honoured to refer to Lincoln as a friend.

Lincoln Alexander is a Canadian legend. Despite his stature, Lincoln Alexander was a simple, down-to-earth man. How many times have we all heard him say "just call me Linc"?

Lincoln Alexander was born in Toronto in 1922. In 1942 he served his country in the Royal Canadian Air Force during the Second World War. After the war, he attended McMaster University and graduated in 1949 with a B.A. in history and political economy. In 1953, he was called to the Bar of Ontario. Then, for the next few decades, Lincoln would become known as the man of firsts.

In 1955 he was the first Black person to become a partner at Canada's first interracial law firm, Duncan and Alexander. He was the first African-Canadian elected to the House of Commons in 1968. He was the first Black man to be appointed to the cabinet. He served as Minister of Labour in 1979. He was the first person of colour to serve as Lieutenant-Governor of a Canadian province. From 1985 to 1991, he served the people of Ontario as the Queen's representative. From 1991 to 2007, he served as Chancellor of the University of Guelph. His appointment was renewed five times. He would become the longest-serving chancellor in the history of the institution, and I was honoured to receive an honorary degree from him.

Honourable senators, I had the honour of collaborating with Lincoln on many occasions over the years. Eleven years ago — in honour of Lincoln's eightieth birthday — Galen Weston Sr., a good friend of Linc's, and I organized a fundraiser to establish the Lincoln Alexander Chancellor's Scholarships at the University of Guelph. We hosted a black tie gala dinner in Toronto where family, friends and special guests came together to celebrate Lincoln's life. We raised more than \$50,000 that evening for the new chancellor's scholarships in his name.

These scholarships are intended to enhance student diversity and recognize students of academic distinction who have made significant contributions to their schools and communities. They are awarded to students who are Aboriginal, a member of a racial minority, or a person with a disability. That fundraiser was a major achievement that showed my deep affection for Linc.

Honourable senators, Lincoln Alexander was a great friend but, above all, he was a mentor to me. I still remember the day he was first elected to the House of Commons. It was June 25, 1968. I was a young lawyer in Halifax at the time. The African-Canadian community was ecstatic and filled with joy when he was elected to Parliament. It gave our community a sense of empowerment at a time when racial segregation and discrimination was still prevalent in our society.

Honourable senators, please join me in honouring one of our country's greatest Canadians, a man of wisdom, kindness and generosity. He will be forever missed.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

JOB CUTS

Hon. Catherine S. Callbeck: Honourable senators, last week the Public Service Commission released its annual report for the 2011-12 fiscal year. The numbers with regard to job losses in each province were disturbing, especially for my home province of Prince Edward Island. The report shows that my province lost more than 6 per cent of its permanent federal public service jobs, more than twice as many as the national average at 2.4 per cent.

Given the job losses that Prince Edward Island has already experienced, it is no wonder Islanders are justifiably worried about the job cuts to come. In May of this year, McInnes Cooper released a report that estimated future cutbacks in the federal workforce could account for between 379 and 458 positions on Prince Edward Island, or about 10 to 12 per cent of the current permanent federal workforce in the province. However, in the rest of the country, the cuts will make up less than 5 per cent of the federal workforce. Once again, Prince Edward Island will lose a greater share of the federal workforce.

The McInnes Cooper report also estimates that job cuts in my province may result in an additional 250 to 300 jobs lost in the private sector.

The economic impact of these job losses could be devastating. Taken together, the public and private sector losses could take between \$50 million and \$61 million out of the Island's economy. In addition, it is impossible to estimate the social, cultural and skill losses that are generally associated with having a federal workforce in the province.

In my small province, we know one another. The people who work for the federal government are members of our families, our friends, and very involved in our communities. The impact of drastic job cuts across the province will be felt by all of us in Prince Edward Island.

The unemployment rate in the whole region routinely surpasses the national average. In Prince Edward Island, the rate is now more than 11 per cent. The last thing we need is federal jobs being eliminated at a rate higher than in other parts of the country. This is extremely unfair and I urge the federal government to ensure that my province is not hit harder than other parts of the country.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Mr. Stavros Arnaoutakis, Governor of Crete in the Republic of Greece, with Mrs. Irine Arnaoutakis, and Mr. Emmanuel Revelakis, President of the Cretans Association of Montreal, together with a delegation. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Housakos.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

CANADA-GREECE

SEVENTIETH ANNIVERSARY
OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

Hon. Leo Housakos: Honourable senators, I am taking this opportunity to bring to your attention that this year is the seventieth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Canada and Greece. The relationship between Canada and Greece has been one that is strong and based on friendship. We were allies during two world wars, fought in Korea, and participated in the security of Europe during the Cold War through NATO.

Canada has been a destination for Greeks leaving their country in search of a new home and Canada has always been welcoming to Hellenes.

Interestingly, there has always been a Greek-Canadian connection at critical times in history.

[Translation]

When Samuel de Champlain landed at Quebec City in 1604 with the goal of establishing a colony, the ship's manifest included the name of the first Greek person to arrive in Eastern Canada. All we know is that he was identified as "the Greek."

One of our esteemed Prime Ministers, Lester B. Pearson, became very familiar with Northern Greece in 1918 when he served as a pilot in the Royal Flying Corps, based in Macedonia.

Georges Vanier, another eminent Canadian, was the first ambassador to the Hellenistic royal court in 1942. The Greek royal family was living in exile while Greece was suffering under Nazi occupation.

[English]

Two years later, a Canadian warship, the HMCS *Prince David* carried the Greek government-in-exile from Italy to Greece, a practical but symbolic gesture.

Effectively, Canadian-Greek relations have had little reason for disagreement and have been built upon mutual respect and inspiration. Millions of Canadians have travelled to Greece to marvel at the antiquities and, of course, the beautiful sand and beaches.

[Translation]

Greek people understand that Canada has had a positive influence on the world stage. Canada has always taken a moderate path and demonstrated common sense. However, the future will determine Canada-Greece relations. Both countries have a great deal to gain from trade and tourism, as well as lessons to learn.

The economic crisis in Greece serves to remind us that we live in an economically interdependent world, and it goes without saying that, by helping our neighbours, we are also helping ourselves.

[English]

The Canada-Greek relationship can further blossom through trade and investment and we can help Canada and Greece by helping to generate wealth in both countries. Let us all join together at 6 p.m. this evening in room 216-N, Centre Block, to celebrate 70 great years of Canada-Greece diplomatic relations and wish for many more to come.

• (1350)

FEDERATION OF SASKATCHEWAN
INDIAN NATIONS ELECTION

Hon. Lillian Eva Dyck: Honourable senators, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations held elections for three of five leadership positions last Thursday, October 25. Congratulations to Perry Bellegarde, who was elected as chief, Edward Lerat as third vice chief, and Kimberly Jonathan as first vice chief.

Chief Bellegarde, who was chief of the federation for two terms, from 1998 to 2003, said he looks forward to assembling the team that will lobby governments in support of treaties. Chief Bellegarde indicated that when the treaties are finally honoured and implemented, the gaps in housing, education and health care will be taken care of.

Faced with the impending reduction of more than half of the core funding for the federation from the federal government, Chief Bellegarde sees this as an "opportunity" for First Nations to rally behind their organization. Amongst other things, he said that he opposes unilateral federal government elimination of the Indian Act. He said, "We should be designing the process. We should be there . . . on any kind of legislation to do with the Indian Act."

I would like to send special congratulations to Vice Chief Kimberly Jonathan. She is the first woman to be elected to the FSIN executive. In the mid-1970s, Kathy Merasty of Cumberland House was elected vice-president of what was then known as the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians.

Vice Chief Jonathan said she was humbled and honoured to stand shoulder to shoulder with Saskatchewan First Nation leaders and promised to bring her values, strength and integrity to those already present on the executive. She also said, "It's all about perspective. It's been a boys' club, but what we've seen today is we're looking forward to a better tomorrow."

Vice Chief Jonathan joins a growing movement of women being elected to the position of chief or band councillor across reserves in the country. It is hard to believe that up until 1951 only males aged 21 and over could vote for chief, but now about 17.5 per cent of chiefs are women. There are 111 women chiefs in the 633 First Nations. In Saskatchewan, 16 out of 74 chiefs are women.

First Nation women are taking leadership roles, not only through political organizations, but in business, education and health services. Honourable senators may recall some of my earlier statements about how First Nation women are making greater strides than First Nation men in educational attainment.

I look forward to working with FSIN Chief Perry Bellegarde and Vice Chiefs Kimberly Jonathan, Edward Lerat, Simon Bird and Bobby Cameron on issues and legislation affecting First Nations Canadians in Saskatchewan and Canada.

[Translation]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

BANKING, TRADE AND COMMERCE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO MEET DURING SITTING OF THE SENATE

Hon. Céline Hervieux Payette: Honourable senators, I give notice that at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce have the power to sit at 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 6, 2012, even though the Senate may then be sitting, and that Rule 12-18(1) be suspended in relation thereto.

[English]

SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR CHRONIC CEREBROSPINAL VENOUS INSUFFICIENCY (CCSVI) BILL—NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO HEAR WITNESSES

Hon. Lillian Eva Dyck: Honourable senators, in light of comments by Dr. Barry Rubin, a member of the CIHR expert panel, who stated that: "... as this is a transparent process ... you should absolutely hear from patients that have MS, patients who have benefited from their procedure and patients who had the procedure and had no benefit or indeed had complications. I think that would give you the opportunity to understand the full spectrum of what is going on and will help in making an informed decision"; and by Dr. Bernhard Juurlink, from the National CCSVI Society, who stated: "They are the individuals who are often refused treatment when they come back to Canada. I think it would be

good to hear ... [their] stories."; at the request of Senator Cordy, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, she will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology which is studying Bill S-204, An Act to establish a national strategy for chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency (CCSVI), invite Canadian MS/CCSVI patients who have undergone the venous angioplasty for CCSVI treatment to appear before this committee as witnesses, as their experiences and expertise will provide this committee with a better understanding of the realities faced by those directly affected by this legislation.

QUESTION PERIOD

HUMAN RESOURCES AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

FOOD BANK USAGE

Hon. Art Eggleton: Honourable senators, a new report from Food Banks Canada released yesterday shows that food bank use has hit record levels. This year, more than 882,000 Canadians have had to use a food bank just to make ends meet.

That is 2.1 per cent higher than last year. Supposedly, the recession is over, but still even more people are using food banks. Actually, it is 31 per cent higher than before the recession began. Some families have to choose between paying their rent and buying groceries.

When will the government adopt a comprehensive, long-term strategy on food security?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): I thank the honourable senator for the question. Obviously, the news that people are accessing food banks is of concern to all Canadians, no matter what they do, where they live or of what political persuasion they might be. We are concerned, as the honourable senator is. That is why our government's top priority is the economy and the creation of jobs and growth.

Since 2006, our government has seen some significant progress in helping Canadians in need. For example, we introduced the Working Income Tax Benefit, which helped over 1.5 million Canadians in 2011 alone, and helped to remove 1 million Canadians from the tax rolls completely.

We helped 775,000 Canadian households with affordable housing and created 46,000 new affordable housing units. I need not remind honourable senators that cutting the GST from 7 per cent to 6 per cent to 5 per cent has been very helpful to people on low income because they were affected disproportionately by the sales tax.

All of this to say, honourable senators, that all of the programs of the government are geared towards building a strong economy and creating jobs. As Senator Segal said way back many years ago, and it is still as true today as it was then, the best social policy is a job.

Senator Eggleton: I specifically asked the leader about food security. Obviously, there is something wrong here with all the statistics that she gives when we are hearing that food bank use is going up. There is not sufficient targeting to deal with these issues.

• (1400)

Something is definitely wrong because food bank usage is going up. It has gone up substantially since 2006, or even since the recession began. It obviously needs attention, minister.

Let me ask another question on a related issue: child poverty. A recent report by Citizens for Public Justice indicated that child poverty is marginally down from 9.4 per cent to 8.2 per cent. They give two reasons for this. The first is the National Child Benefit, which was installed by a previous government. The second and most important one is provincial and territorial efforts to battle poverty, such as the Ontario government's "25 per cent over five years" child poverty reduction strategy.

Even with that, there are still some 550,000 children living in poverty in this country, which is simply appalling. I think we all agree with that, particularly when one considers that the House of Commons said back in 1989 it wanted to eradicate child poverty by the year 2000. Both the Senate and the House of Commons again a few years ago reiterated that they wanted to eliminate child poverty. In spite of that, we still have many children living under those conditions.

Will the government do more to help reduce child poverty by supporting the provincial efforts that I have noted, and raise the National Child Benefit to a level of \$5,000, which was recommended by the Senate itself in the report entitled *In From the Margins: A Call to Action on Poverty, Housing and Homelessness*, which was adopted unanimously by the Senate?

Senator LeBreton: I thank the honourable senator for his question. There remains a great deal of work to be done. I have indicated to honourable senators in previous answers on the issue of child poverty the various programs the government has implemented. There is considerable work yet to do and that is why we as a government will continue to work very hard to implement the next phase of our economic action plan. The important thing to do is to lift everyone who lives in our country, especially those in the lower-income group, into a position where they will have good, meaningful jobs and will be able to get the education and skills needed to have such jobs.

Honourable senators, there is a lot of work yet to do. There is no denying that, but the government is very cognizant of it and we will continue our hard work in this regard.

Senator Eggleton: The leader mentioned the Working Income Tax Benefit program in her first answer, and I am happy the government put that into effect. However, at least a quarter of the people — or a very high percentage of them — in the Food Banks Canada report are working poor. In spite of having a job — which is a great thing to have, yes — and in spite of perhaps qualifying for the Working Income Tax Benefit, it is still not enough for these people to feed themselves properly. They still have to go to food banks.

Will the government consider raising the allowance for Working Income Tax Benefit in the next budget as a means of helping the working poor get out of the food bank situation?

Senator LeBreton: There is no question that WITB, as it has come to be known, is a good program and has assisted a great many families. I will be happy to pass the honourable senator's comments and suggestions along to the Minister of Finance, who is beginning his round of budget consultations for next year's budget.

CANADIAN HERITAGE

CANADIAN CONFERENCE OF THE ARTS

Hon. James S. Cowan (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question is also for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Yesterday, the Canadian Conference of the Arts, the largest national alliance of the arts, culture and heritage sector in Canada, announced that it will be shutting its doors after 67 years. Since 1965, that organization has received a portion of its funding from Canadian Heritage, but the Harper government has decided to terminate and eliminate its funding.

The CCA made what seemed to most people to be a reasonable request for time to transition to self-financing; they asked for two years. They began to work on a plan to become self-financing within that time.

However, in April the government announced its decision to cut off funding after six months. After 67 years, the government has decided that six months is all that is required for that organization to retool its financing.

In Budget 2012, the government said:

The Government believes that supporting the arts is essential to supporting Canada's economy and quality of life and will continue strong support for Canadian culture.

Why did the government not at least provide a reasonable period of time to allow the Canadian Conference of the Arts to transition to a new funding model?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, the fact of the matter is that the government provided the Canadian Conference of the Arts with 18 months' notice and hundreds of thousands of dollars in bridge money to help them transition to a sustainable model. That is 18 months. Our government has delivered unprecedented levels of support to the arts, and we will continue to invest in affordable, effective programs that support culture in Canada.

The honourable senator asked for examples. Our government increased funding for the Canada Council for the Arts, a world-class organization that fosters and promotes the arts, by 20 per cent, the largest increase in decades. We have also created two new museums in Canada.

Senator Cowan: I did not ask for examples, but I appreciate the minister providing them. Perhaps in my supplementary I will provide examples.

The government spent some \$30 million to celebrate the two-hundredth anniversary of the War of 1812. It is spending \$25 million to rebrand the Museum of Civilization as the Canadian Museum of History. Budget 2012 talked extensively about the government helping galleries and museums to “attract more internationally-acclaimed treasures to Canada.” Meanwhile the leader’s government has approved more than \$64 million to advertise itself to Canadians. Those are examples.

Why is this government so eager to spend taxpayers’ money to promote itself, to rebrand Canadian history and to support foreign artists showing their works in Canada but then shuts the door on an organization dedicated to advocating for Canadian artists and performers working today, in 2012, here in Canada?

Senator LeBreton: I could ask why the Liberal Party of Canada and the official opposition in the Senate have such an aversion to Canadians being educated about our own history. The War of 1812 is a tremendous Canadian historical story. There are events associated with the War of 1812 that are important to the makeup and character of Canada. I believe that the effort to educate Canadians about our history is not partisan. This is an important Canadian issue that we should all be celebrating.

As I have already pointed out, we have massively increased funding to the Canada Council for the Arts. As I said earlier, the Canadian Conference of the Arts was given 18 months and considerable funding to bridge over to new resources.

Senator Cowan: The Canadian Conference of the Arts compiles statistics on the impact that the arts, culture and heritage sector has on our economy. Once again this is another example where the government does not like Canadians having easy access to facts and evidence. However, the materials this organization has provided show that the median earnings for artists in Canada are \$12,900, less than half the average earnings of all Canadian workers, which stands at \$26,900.

This is who we are talking about. These are not people, as Prime Minister Harper referred to awhile ago, who are “‘rich’ artists who gather at galas.”

Some have suggested that the real reason for the government’s decision was its displeasure at the position of the Canadian Conference of the Arts in recommending amendments to Bill C-11, which was the government’s copyright bill. This was the bill, the leader will recall, that was rushed through this chamber in 11 days.

• (1410)

Why does the honourable senator’s government continue to stamp out anyone whose views are not perfectly aligned with its own?

Senator LeBreton: Again, honourable senators, I will repeat what I have said many times. I do wish that people would not get up and ask questions they know are blatantly false.

As a matter of fact, Minister James Moore, our Minister of Canadian Heritage, has gone to great lengths to promote the arts and Canadian artists. We are promoting Canadian history and culture. There is no evidence whatsoever that this government in any way does not support Canadian artists.

Senator Cowan: Honourable senators, let me read two quotes. There are many, but I will put simply two on the record. They are from people who are members of this organization. I remind honourable senators that this organization represents 200 arts and cultural associations from coast to coast to coast, such as arts councils, galleries, the Arts Network for Children & Youth, book publishing associations, musicians, dancers, and theatre companies such as the Cirque du Soleil, which performed the other day in Quebec City for the IPU. The list goes on and on.

Here are two statements, the first from the President of the Canadian Musical Reproduction Rights Agency, the CMRRA:

We support the work of the CCA because it’s the only voice in Canada for the entire spectrum of Canadian creators, rights owners and investors in culture. Only the CCA can speak for such a broad constituency, and only the CCA has a track record of having done so for decades.

The second quote is from Gerry Barr, the executive director of the Directors Guild of Canada:

There is only one organization in the country that brings together the whole of the Arts community — that’s the Canadian Conference of the Arts. Support for the CCA is really a way of keeping Canada’s cultural narrative alive and relevant.

I ask again: Why did the government decide to shut down its support for this organization that has carried on and done good work for more than 65 years? Why did it do so without providing an adequate transitional period to enable the organization to move to a self-financing model?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I already answered the question about the bridge funding. All I can say again is that this government will continue to invest in affordable, effective programs in support of Canadian arts and culture.

PUBLIC SAFETY

SPECIAL NEEDS FOR PRISONERS

Hon. Elizabeth Hubley: Honourable senators, my question is for Leader of the Government in the Senate.

Her government’s decision to cancel the contracts of all part-time Correctional Service of Canada chaplaincies is an infringement of inmates’ rights to freedom of religion. These cuts will mean the virtual elimination of funded chaplaincy services to non-Christians, leaving only one out of 80 full-time chaplains that is non-Christian.

Will the government reconsider these cuts and reinstate multi-faith chaplaincy services to our federal prisons?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I believe I answered this question last week, but I will provide the same answer again.

The Government of Canada strongly supports the freedom of religion of all Canadians. The government funds full-time spiritual advisers to provide spiritual services to prisoners. These advisers can be of any faith and will make themselves available to provide spiritual advice to the general offender population.

Additionally, there are over 2,500 individuals who provide spiritual services to prisoners of many faiths on a volunteer basis.

Senator Hubley: Honourable senators, by taking away inmates' non-Christian religious counsel, the government is taking away valuable assistance that inmates need to help with rehabilitation and reintegration into society. One cannot simply expect a Christian chaplain to explain and teach the intricacies of other faiths. Counting on volunteer help is not sufficient, as the volunteers perhaps do not have the proper pastoral skills, education or professional training to assist prisoners with complicated needs.

Churches and prison chaplains of all faiths have written the honourable senator's government with their concerns about these radical changes and cuts. Will the government do the right thing and reverse these cuts that discriminate against minority faiths?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I do not know if I did not communicate clearly in my first answer, but I said that the government funds full-time spiritual advisers to provide spiritual services to prisoners. These advisers can be of any faith and will make themselves available to provide spiritual advice to the general offender population. That is the answer. These are full-time chaplains who provide spiritual services of all faiths, because we do support freedom of religion. I do not know what part of that answer anyone could have any problem with.

[Translation]

DELAYED ANSWER TO ORAL QUESTION

Hon. Claude Carignan (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table the response to an oral question raised by Senator Cordy on March 13, 2012, concerning mental health.

HEALTH

MENTAL HEALTH

(Response to question raised by Hon. Jane Cordy on March 13, 2012)

Health Canada has invested and will continue to invest in mental health programs and supports for First Nations and Inuit — the populations for which the department is specifically responsible — while also investing in a variety of mental health initiatives that benefit all Canadians.

Working to improve the health outcomes of Aboriginal peoples is a shared undertaking among federal, provincial and territorial governments, and Aboriginal partners. Health Canada's role involves supplementing and

supporting provincial and territorial health services with an aim to providing culturally appropriate health programs and services that work to decrease the gap in health status between First Nations and Inuit and other Canadians. To this end, Health Canada supports:

- Health promotion and disease prevention programs, focussing on healthy child development, mental wellness, and healthy living (chronic disease management and prevention, and injury prevention).
- Public health protection, focussing on communicable disease control and environmental health.
- Primary health care services, including home and community care for First Nations and Inuit communities, and the provision of primary care nursing services in remote and isolated First Nation communities.
- Supplementary health benefits through the Non-Insured Health Benefits program, which provides eligible First Nations and Inuit with a range of medically necessary health related goods and services not provided through provincial or territorial health programs or private insurance plans.
- Health infrastructure support through the construction and maintenance of health facilities, encouraging Aboriginal people to pursue health careers, investments in technologies to modernize health services, and the integration and closer alignment of provincial health services for First Nations and Inuit.

Going forward, Economic Action Plan 2012 provides \$330.8 million over two years to build and renovate water infrastructure on reserve, and to support the development of a long-term strategy to improve water quality in First Nation communities. It also commits to working with Aboriginal communities and organizations, provinces and territories to improve the mental health and well-being of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. This builds on previous investments to improve the health of First Nations and Inuit, including \$218.9 million in additional funding for fiscal year 2011-2012 to support the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program, and the delivery of primary care nursing services in remote and isolated First Nation communities.

In 2010-11, Health Canada invested \$2.232B in health care programs and services for First Nations and Inuit.

Health Canada funds community-based programs and services to reduce risk factors, promote protective factors and improve health outcomes associated with the mental wellness (mental health and addictions) of First Nations and Inuit. The goal of these programs is to provide First Nations and Inuit communities, families, and individuals with mental wellness services and supports that are responsive to their needs.

[Senator LeBreton]

In 2010-11, Health Canada invested a total of \$336M on mental health and addictions programs and supports for First Nations and Inuit — approximately 15% of Health Canada's total funding for First Nations and Inuit health.

This includes transfers to communities for mental health and addictions programming (\$46.6M), and the Non-Insured Health Benefit Program — Mental Health Benefit (\$13.4M) and prescription drugs to treat mental health conditions (\$41.6M).

The majority of funding is provided for mental health and addictions programming across Canada, including mental health promotion, addictions and suicide prevention, mental health counselling, addictions treatment and crisis response services (\$234.4M). For fiscal year 2010-11 this included \$65.3M for the National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program, \$51.2M for the Indian Residential Schools, Resolution Health Support Program, \$40.8M for the Brighter Futures Initiative, \$34.7M for the Building Healthy Communities Initiative, and \$11.8M for the National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy, as well as other mental health and addictions programming.

[English]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT RETIRING ALLOWANCES ACT

BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING

Hon. Elizabeth (Beth) Marshall moved third reading of Bill C-46, An Act to amend the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act.

Hon. Grant Mitchell: Honourable senators, I do not think I will speak for too long, but I would like to summarize several things.

I would like to say that we have not had long enough to adequately study this bill. As I said in my opening comments at second reading, there were serious issues that at least should be raised and given the light of day, and I have been told by many members on both sides of the house that, in fact, they share the concern that there are serious issues that need to be discussed.

Having said that, I think it was unfair to levy the criticism that somehow we had delayed this bill. We have until January 1 to pass the bill, in effect, before it would be implemented. Having said that, here we are and we will pass it, I am sure, today.

We have had some chance to look at it. The committee's work was very productive and favourable. While we had a bit of a hiccup over whether or not we would get to speak to the Chief Actuary, cooler heads prevailed and it was the right thing to do. In the end, we found some clarification that was very helpful and

maybe identified a few issues that probably in the future will require some attention amongst us in whatever way we could do that. It was a very useful process to speak, particularly, with the Chief Actuary, because much of the technical consideration of this bill really comes down to actuarial calculation.

I would recommend members who were not in the committee hearings, particularly during the Chief Actuary's testimony — and, of course, that would be most of us — that they pick up that transcript and look at it because it is very helpful, and it will clarify, to some extent, many of the questions that people have had. I recommend, in particular, that honourable senators look at the line of questioning by Senator Finley, who raised significant, interesting issues about what could be some options and possibilities, about how this is being assessed, and so on. I congratulate him on that line of questioning.

• (1420)

I also want to mention, in particular, the questioning by one of our new members, Senator Bellemare. Her line of questioning on valuation was sophisticated. After all, she has a PhD in economics. Her questioning was clear and she got to the heart of the issues. This raises one of the issues that I think we need to be at least cognizant of, and that is the question of valuation.

Of course, valuation comes down to actuarial assumptions. One of the assumptions made by the Chief Actuary in this pension plan, which is good news, is that we will all live to age 90. It would be interesting to know how that was assessed. I am not saying they are wrong, but I am not sure how many retired senators and MPs have lived to age 90. That is the kind of question we should probably have a look at.

The other issue that emerged from our discussion and questioning is that there are fundamental differences between the demographics of the Senate and the demographics of the House of Commons, and those kinds of valuation questions are worth some consideration. I will leave it at that.

The bigger question for me is not the question of benefits, since our benefits are guaranteed by the Government of Canada, but the question of how this pension is reported and managed. I think it is not reported as clearly and in as transparent a fashion as it should be. I do not want less information about the pension; I want more information and I want clear information about it.

In the Auditor General's report, he frequently refers to the pool of money, which is calculated to be \$992 million. In a properly functioning pension, that money would exist; it would be in accounts, being invested, and it would generate money to pay the pensioners. MPs' and senators' monthly money would go into it, and the employer's share would go into it as well. That is more or less what is happening now with CPP, for example, since it was brought back on track in 2000.

In fact, that fund is only notional. There is no money in that fund, period. When Canadians read this report, they would be led to believe — unless they catch the one or two places where "notional" is mentioned, and who would know what that is — that \$992 million is there to fund our retired colleagues' pensions and ultimately would be there to fund our pensions.

In fact, if that \$992 million actually existed, at a basic 5 per cent, it would pay \$50 million a year, and the government would not have to put up any money today to pay the pensioners who are receiving pensions now, because we are paying only \$31.187 million to pensioners today. If this were managed like a private sector pension has to be managed, by law — the money has to be there — then that \$992 million would generate, at today's interest rates, at least 40 per cent more than is needed to support the people who paid that money.

I think it is very misleading to Canadians who think there is money there and who would say, "Why is the government now paying out \$31 million a year of general revenues when this fund would be generating \$50 million a year?" I think it is only fair that that should be noted, and noted properly.

As I said to one of the actuaries after the committee meeting, you cannot have it both ways. You cannot say that that fund exists, to get some sort of credit that the government has been managing that money properly, and then, on the other hand, not at least show that our share of that fund is 25 per cent. Our share and our colleagues' share from before, whose money would have gone into that, would be 25 per cent, or \$250 million. At 5 per cent, that is \$12.5 million. That \$12.5 million should, at least notionally — just our share, not to mention the government's share — go against the \$31 million that is being paid out. There should be a notation of that, because it would be less costly to Canadians. You cannot have it both ways, Mr. Actuary. You cannot say this fund exists notionally and then not show notionally that it is at least generating some money that puts into perspective the kind of money that is actually being paid out.

I am not saying we should not pay 50 per cent. Absolutely, these pensions are too rich. Any reporter who ever refers to this issue again, please understand that it is too rich and we should pay 50 per cent. However, if the pension were managed properly, like a real pension plan, then there would be \$992 million there, and it would generate income, and to this day it would be subsidizing the pension fund; the government's general revenue would not do it at all.

I will take it one step further. As of 2017, roughly speaking, pensioners — like our colleagues Senator Banks and Senator Corbin — will receive about \$32 million a year in total. We will be paying \$16 million into the general revenue, under the new regime, and the government would top that up another \$16 million, and that will pay the \$32 million. This money is going straight through from us to pay the pensioners. We are subsidizing because there is no fund to stop it along the way.

My point is this: I think that if we were to do what government needs to do, and that is to manage every feature of the Canadian fiscal responsibly, that money should be set aside and a fund should be developed and managed effectively. That is only reasonable. It should also be reported properly. Even if we never put money into that fund, there is something deeply misleading, I believe, about the Chief Actuary's report. It is not intentional; I am sure it is within the guidelines. However, I think that needs to be clarified for Canadians generally. There is nothing in it for us. It does not help or hurt our benefits, but I believe it is the right thing to do.

[Senator Mitchell]

I was mistaken in the first instance when I said that \$992 million is not recorded as debt. It turns out — and this is one of the useful answers we received — that it is recorded as debt. If the country's debt is \$700 billion, then it is \$701 billion, in fact, because this is included in it. That is important. As the government pays off debt, it will one day have to fund that fund if it is ever to pay off all the debt of this country, because of course it is real debt.

That is really what I want to say. I think we could improve the administration of this pension for Canadians if we looked at how it is reported and ultimately how it is funded. I think it is certainly a reasonable thing to look at the way it is reported so that we can clarify that for Canadians. There are questions that all of us have, and perhaps in the future we could look at doing some more analysis, just so we are sure this thing is being done in the way it should be done.

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: Honourable senators, I rise to speak to this bill in third reading, not because I am opposed — along with Senator Mitchell, I agree that we need to pay more into this fund — but because I am concerned that we are doing this sort of blindly in that we do not have all the facts. Currently, 413 individuals are directly affected by this. Those people who will follow us after we leave here and after an election will make changes in the other place.

We are doing this without all the facts. When we ask questions about what it means to us personally, any honourable senators on that side or any one of us on this side, we cannot get the answers. In this place we are all individuals, with 105 different stories. We arrived here with different histories, at different ages and at different times.

One of the things I thought we should have done with this process is that when the bill was introduced, the Senate administration should have been involved. They have all the records and they produce a report each year telling us what we might be entitled to under the current rules. They should have been able to sit down and say here are 105 reports — each one of us would get our own confidential report — and say what this bill means to each of us. This is how it will affect Senator Mercer. This is how it will affect Senator Duffy. This is how it will affect Senator Day. Then we are all dealing with the facts.

• (1430)

I understand that we will proceed with this bill, but they are asking us to buy a bit of a pig in a poke, if you ask me.

Senator Mitchell raised some interesting points. I think perhaps there should have been two plans, one for members of the other place and one for senators because of the difference in the current structure. Most of us stay here until we are 75 or 70. Our retirement age is much older than that of MPs in the other place, which has a significant effect on the money paid out. Senator Mitchell spoke about "if" the government's portion of the money was actually there, and the \$50 million one could probably earn on that money, and that they are paying out \$31 million. This is not rocket science, and it seems logical to me. These are the discussions we had.

I also do not quite understand the big rush. We got this bill last week. We are about to pass it today. That is pretty fast in terms of how things operate in government and in this place. We do not

have to pass this until we leave here in December because we do not need to have it kick in until then. We will, and I know we will, but I am concerned. The 105 of us here, the 308 members in the other place, are doing this without full knowledge of how it affects not just us but those people who will come after us and will take our places as we all move on.

Hon. Joseph A. Day: Honourable senators, perhaps I can say a few words as the chair of the committee before which this bill passed.

Let me remind honourable senators that we are dealing with Bill C-46, An Act to amend the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act. The Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act is a fairly substantial piece of legislation. In order to understand the amending document, you must have them both in front of you and flip through the two documents. That is what many of us on the Finance Committee have been doing over the past week since we received this piece of legislation.

Honourable senators will recall that 7 per cent of our income as senators is what we are currently paying in to help cover the service costs of the pension plan, as the actuary refers to this in pension terms. The service costs are, of course, costs paid out to now-retired parliamentarians.

This means 7 per cent of our income amounts to and covers 14 per cent of the costs. The plan, as stated in the supporting documentation to the amending bill, is to move our share to 50 per cent of the service costs, which amounts to 20 to 25 per cent of our annual income, or annual indemnity.

I have not heard any honourable senator say we should not pay our fair share, the fair share being 50 per cent: the employer pays 50 per cent and the individual pays 50 per cent. All honourable senators seem to accept that. It sounds logical. The question is, 50 per cent of what? That takes us to the issue of costs.

If we are paying 50 per cent of the cost, and that takes 25 per cent of our annual income, we should have some confidence in the costs. That is where the actuary comes in to tell us what the costs are. We, at length, tried to find information in relation to the costs. The costs are, again, to cover the current and future liabilities of the plan.

Usually, honourable senators, these costs are covered out of a fund. There is full disclosure of how much the fund is generating in terms of growth on an annual basis and in terms of interest. If the fund was used like the teachers' fund, there would be capital gains on an annual basis. If it were like the Canada Pension Plan, we could go and look at what the independent board is managing, how they are managing the funds and how much they have made.

The problem that we have discovered is that there is not a fund to which we can go. The money goes into general revenue. All the money that senators donate to the pension plan goes into general revenue and is paid out when a member retires and he or she begins to draw a pension. It comes out of general revenue. We asked what the interest was on that. The contribution by the members, plus the interest, plus the employer's amount that is

paid in would normally determine the size of the pot. The problem is that the employer is putting nothing in. The employer just says we are there, the employer being the Government of Canada.

The interest rate that appears in the statute is 10 per cent, and that is being changed to 5 per cent. We hear from the actuary that he never really used the 10 per cent figure anyway. He said he used 5.2 per cent even though, if you were reading this legislation, you would say 10 per cent. That 10 per cent is too high nowadays, but it should change on a regular basis. When the economy recovers, 10 per cent might not be too high, but we are now legislating 5.2 per cent.

Honourable senators, we have something that we see referred to on a regular basis as an unfunded liability of the federal government. In addition to the accumulated debt that has gone up through the last few years of huge annual deficits, we have an unfunded liability by the government.

We heard about that with respect to all the pensioners of Nortel and their unfunded liabilities. I hear back in my home area that municipal pension plans are under tremendous strain. Senator Wallace will know that. His Honour knows that our municipalities are under tremendous strain because they are being required by legislation to fund their liabilities for pensions.

Why should we not be saying that this particular pension plan should be equally funded, properly funded, actuarially funded, so that the funds will be there? We know they will be there, and they will not be just another debt tucked away for future taxpayers to cover. I submit to honourable senators that that is the first area of concern that we discovered during this particular study of the bill.

There are a couple of interesting points that Senator Marshall was able to bring out during questions that she asked. These are Senator Marshall's words from the transcript of a hearing before the Chief Actuary: "I want to talk about the minimum benefits and the minimum death benefits."

Honourable senators, as I have discovered, if the person receiving a pension dies or if there is no survivor, then a minimum amount is paid out to the estate. The amount that is paid out to the estate would be typically what was left that could be attributed to that pensioner before he or she died, including what he or she had paid in, plus interest, plus what the employer might have paid in. However, that is not so in this program.

• (1440)

In this particular program we find that there is no interest and there is no employer amount that would be paid out to the estate — not survivors as that is defined because they can draw a pension — for others. All they would get is what they had paid in and, as Senator Marshall has pointed out, the money could be sitting there for 20 or 30 years. It is only the capital paid in that will be returned as a minimum death benefit.

Honourable senators, that is another inequity in this particular matter that should be rectified but we are not in a position to do so at this stage. Therefore, I am raising issues that senators should be aware of, otherwise we would be voting without knowing about some of the issues.

We have discovered that this particular plan is a plan that has two parts. There is the basic plan, which is like a registered retirement savings plan, and it is the amount that the Income Tax Act provides that can be put into a plan. That amount changes on an annual basis, somewhere around \$38,000, but all of our income is a tax benefit. We can have a benefit through a pension, so the additional amount is provided for through a retirement compensation arrangement. There are two pieces, which is what makes the legislation so complicated.

The second portion does not have the same tax treatment as the first portion. When the actuary gets involved and starts dealing with the two portions and the different tax treatment for the two portions, most of us wonder where we are in terms of explanation. It was very, very difficult for us, honourable senators.

The impact is something that we can understand. In order to determine the impact, the actuary said he uses an average age for a member of the House of Commons. When a member goes in, he or she is approximately 50 years of age, stays for approximately 10 years, pays into the plan for 10 years and draws on the plan for approximately 30 years. Senators, on the other hand, go in at an average age of 60, retire at 75, so they are paying in for an average of 15 years and receive for an average of 15 years.

There are different assumptions being made, which would lead one to believe that if a member of the House of Commons is drawing their pension for 30 years and a senator is drawing their pension for 15 years, then there should be some different treatment. Why would there not be a different actuarial treatment? There is no difference. We are all in the pool together. In effect, senators — and I am just telling honourable senators this so they will know — are subsidizing the House of Commons' pensioners. Members, after tax with this new plan in three years, are going up to \$38,000 before tax and \$21,000 of their income after tax.

Honourable senators, the effect of this legislation is that we will be paying \$32,000 of our pre-tax annual income, and after-tax the figure is \$18,000. That is what senators can expect to have deducted from their paycheques on an annual basis.

I want honourable senators to know that we had difficulty finding witnesses who could come to our committee and explain this legislation. That is probably one of the most serious aspects of this measure that we have had to deal with. The Internal Economy Committee tried to have someone come and explain the legislation to members of Internal Economy, who could then talk with their colleagues. The Internal Economy Committee was unable to arrange for anyone to come and talk to them.

The Finance Committee asked for the Senate finance department to come and explain; not in actuarial terms but in terms that would help us to understand the impact on the average senator and the average member of the House of Commons. They said they had not been briefed on the legislation and could not tell us that. They said they were not at a stage to come to the committee and talk about that.

We talked to many private sector companies, honourable senators, and asked the same question. They said that this was new legislation and it had just been out for a short while, even in

the House of Commons. The private sector companies told us they could not explain what the impact would be because they had not had the opportunity to analyze the legislation.

Treasury Board was the only government department that could speak to the legislation and would come and talk to us about the bill. That was Ms. Arnold, who was the main representative of Treasury Board. I have a quote from Ms. Arnold from her appearance before us. In talking about the legislation she said:

Some changes were kind of a little bit late in the drafting process, which is why you will see it set out this way. If we made these changes or if those changes had been decided upon at an earlier stage, we would not have done it not quite like this.

Honourable senators, that is Ms. Arnold from Treasury Board talking about this legislation that we are expected to understand and vote on.

I asked the chief actuary about this legislation, and Mr. Jean-Claude Ménard, Chief Actuary, stated:

This is one of the most complicated plans in Canada, but that is the reality.

Honourable senators are being asked to vote on one of the most complicated plans in all of Canada, if not beyond. That is what we have to deal with.

I am almost finished, honourable senators. I wonder if I might have an additional five minutes.

Hon. Senators: Five minutes.

Senator Day: Thank you.

Honourable senators, we invited witnesses from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation because they had been calling for change to pension legislation for many years. However, they really had not had any opportunity to analyze the legislation. We brought in the Chief Actuary and representatives from the Treasury Board, and that was it, because that was all we could find of witnesses or potential witnesses who were able to help us.

Ms. Arnold, again, came in twice to talk to us, and we asked her about this issue of integration of CPP; how that works and how we can understand the impact of paying into Canada Pension Plan against our normal pension. Really, honourable senators, I could read you a quote that I have, but suffice it to say that she basically has the same difficulty understanding the matter that we do in this particular case. Maybe I will read this one. This quote refers to how an allowance will be payable under Part 1 of the act. Part 1 is the first piece of the two pieces in our program, which is the registered plan in respect of one's situation as a member from January 1, 2016 forward.

You will see, in the chapeau of subsection 2 of 17.1, which is the top of page 12, the calculation set out for the integration with CPP. It is a number of years of service multiplied by 0.02, and then you subtract a percentage, which is fixed by my colleague the Chief Actuary, of the person's average

maximum pensionable earnings, which of course are the average maximum pensionable earnings under the CPP. That is then multiplied by the number of years of pensionable service as the member has. That is as uncomplicated as I can make it. It was a difficult provision to draft.

• (1450)

Honourable senators, that is the evidence received by the committee to try to understand this proposed legislation so we could bring it back to the house. I am sorry that we did not hear from the sponsor of the bill because I overheard her indicate during the hearings that she had heard enough, implying that she understood this. Certainly, I would have appreciated hearing from her in the chamber. I cannot tell honourable senators that I understand this clearly enough to vote for it.

[Translation]

Hon. Claude Carignan (Deputy Leader of the Government): Would Senator Day accept a question?

You spoke about inequity in a very specific situation, namely, if a person dies without a spouse. When a married person dies, the spouse receives 60 per cent of the pension. However, if a person who does not have a spouse dies, the pension allows the survivors to receive a refund on the premiums paid by the participant. But this situation is rare. I have rarely seen it. No one will lose the premiums they paid into the plan because those premiums will be paid as benefits: either the spouse will receive the benefits or the person's estate will be reimbursed for the premiums paid.

You explained that, in other situations, the pension plan would pay the estate the employee's benefit, the employer's benefit and even interest when the person was receiving a pension. I have never seen this type of pension plan in my life.

Could you name one plan, in the specific context that we are talking about here, that reimburses the employer and employee benefits with interest when an individual dies?

[English]

Senator Day: Honourable senators, I see that my time has run out. I am sorry that I did not realize Senator Carignan had such a depth of knowledge in this matter or we would have had him appear before the committee.

Ms. Arnold is a senior director at Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. After reading her comment, it appears as though this provision is not set up in the same way that return of contributions and withdrawal of allowances are set up, which have interest. That was my point. Senator Marshall said that there is no interest, per se, given for the fact that this has been sitting in the pension plan for 20 years.

Senator D. Smith: Good point.

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

An Hon. Senator: Question.

The Hon. the Speaker: It was moved by the Honourable Senator Marshall, seconded by the Honourable Senator Martin, that Bill C-46, An Act to amend the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act, be read a third time.

Those in favour of the motion will signify by saying "yea." Contrary-minded will say "nay."

Some Hon. Senators: Yea.

Some Hon. Senators: Nay.

The Hon. the Speaker: In my opinion, the yeas have it.

Some Hon. Senators: On division.

(Motion agreed to, on division, and bill read third time and passed, on division.)

FISHERIES ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING— DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Harb, seconded by the Honourable Senator Poy, for the second reading of Bill S-210, An Act to amend the Fisheries Act (commercial seal fishing).

Hon. Fabian Manning: Honourable senators, I am pleased today to have the opportunity to participate in the debate of Bill S-210. As Senator Harb stated in the chamber on October 16, just a few days ago, the debate "focuses on the facts." I would like to touch on a few things related to the seal industry before I get into some other comments that I have.

Honourable senators, the coastal peoples of Canada have survived for hundreds of years on what nature provides. Sealing is still a very important and essential part of the way of life in many parts of Canada. Seal hunting remains an important part of Canada's cultural heritage. For decades, seals have been harvested for food, fuel, clothing, shelter and other products. In remote fishing communities, there are very few employment opportunities, and many people make a living from the fishing industry, which includes sealing. I will talk about that distinction later.

The commercial hunting of seals is critical to the livelihood of more than 6,000 sealers in rural communities across Atlantic Canada, Quebec and the North. Sealing can provide as much as 35 per cent of a sealer's annual income. Sealing in Canada is a sustainable and economically viable activity. Through the efforts of government, seal populations are managed using a precautionary framework; and quotas are set annually based on peer-reviewed scientific advice. Seal quotas are determined on the basis of an ecosystem approach and considerations such as ice conditions, climate and the abundance of seal herds.

The management of Canada's seal hunts is supported by regulations, monitoring and enforcement. Sealers are trained and are required to carry out a three-step process of stunning, killing, confirmation of unconsciousness, and effective bleeding. Honourable senators, this very important process was recommended originally in 2005 by the Independent Veterinarians' Working Group and is consistent with the recommendations of the European Food Safety Authority. I note that harp seal pups, known as white coats, have not been commercially hunted in Canada since 1987 because it has been illegal to do so since then. I will touch on the harp seal population for a moment and about a grey seal study just completed by the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

The current estimated population of harp seals in Canada is about 9 million to 10 million. It has more than quadrupled since the early 1970s. Canada conducts rigorous monitoring and assessment programs on a regular basis. In excess of 1 million harp seal pups are born each year. Contrary to what honourable senators heard here on October 16, which I will follow up on, and what you may hear from animal rights people, seals eat large quantities of a variety of fish and are part of a complex ecosystem. At current population levels, harp seals off Canada's East Coast consume 9 million to 10 million tonnes of fish each year. That is not counting the hooded seals, the grey seals, the ring seals, the bearded seals and the harbour seals, which also consume large quantities of fish.

Seals frequently swim up rivers to feed. We have heard stories from Atlantic Canada and Quebec about seals that are swimming up rivers to feed, eat the bait from traps and cause significant damage to aquaculture and fishing gear.

• (1500)

Most of the debate around seals, honourable senators, has been about the selling and marketing of seal pelts. However, there are many other opportunities and products from seals. Such an example is seal oil, which is an excellent source of omega-3 and has been marketed in capsule form in Canada, Europe and Asia for 15 to 20 years now.

Promising research out of Europe has determined that harp seal heart valves are superior to those currently used in human heart valve transplants, so we have other opportunities we can avail of.

I would like to refer to the debates of October 16 when Senator Harb made some comments in relation to this bill. I want to preface my remarks with the fact that Senator Harb has been a member of the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans for over a year. While we do not agree — and I stress we do not agree on very much — I must give him credit for being a true gentleman and very cooperative at the committee; he even has a sense of humour on most days. Just like a seal, he flops around a bit, but he is consistent in his views. As an old saying goes, I do not necessarily agree with what he says, but I respect his right to say it.

Senator Harb focused on the facts in his comments on October 16. I want to make my comments against his.

Senator Harb refers to polls that show Canadians are supporting this bill and that Canadians do not support using tax dollars to promote the hunt. We all know that polls can derive

any answer we want them to come back with. Ask the right question which leans in your direction and you will have the desired result.

Look at some of the latest political polls. I have seen several polls that show a majority of Canadians support sustainable management of the seal populations when humane harvesting practices are used, which is the case in Canada by law.

Senator Harb and his followers — I am not sure who is following whom and that could also be up for debate — and some in the animal rights movement say the government should support Canada's Inuit and other First Nations whose seal products are exempt from the European seal ban and can benefit from unique access to the EU market. In clear Newfoundland and Labrador language, honourable senators, this is speaking out of both sides of your mouth. I have talked to many Aboriginal seal harvesters, as well as senators who represent Aboriginal communities, who say it is not economically viable for them to try to market and sell abroad. The small amount of seal product that they are allowed to harvest — the pure economics — deters these groups from making this happen. The animal rights groups know this full well, so they are definitely playing both sides.

I read Senator Harb's speech a couple of times and of all the things he said that I do not agree with, I definitely do not agree with this quote:

Seals are not responsible for the lack of fish.

Senator Harb referenced scientific evidence to this effect. Once again, emotion is taking the place of fact. No one I have spoken to who has appeared before our committee in the three or four years that I have been here, none of the scientists we talked to and no one in the fishing industry is blaming only the seals for the demise of cod stocks and other species.

There are definitely issues with overfishing and mismanagement. However, trying to convince people that seals are not a large part of the problem by saying that seals do not eat fish is like trying to say that fish do not swim. Both statements are untrue and unfair. A grey seal, for example, can grow to approximately eight feet long, weigh in excess of 800 pounds and consume between 1.5 to 2 tonnes of fish per year. Senator Harb and others will try to convince you this is not the case, and that seals definitely do not eat fish. I have had the privilege to travel around the country and I like going to fast food outlets, and I have never seen a seal pull up to McDonalds or Tim Hortons yet. Seals eat fish. There is no doubt in our minds about that. The question is how much they eat and how much effect they have on the sea population. That debate will be ongoing.

Recently, a well-known and respected scientist from Memorial University in Newfoundland and Labrador, Dr. George Rose, was speaking at the St. John's Rotary Club luncheon. He was discussing the harp seal population off Newfoundland and Labrador. I want to quote some of what he said:

We do not understand very well the parameters limiting how big the herd will grow, but short term projection will be that the herd will grow. Down the line is anybody's guess. There have to be limits out there. The herd will not grow forever but in the meantime seals will eat a lot of fish.

Dr. Rose went on to say:

If our fish stocks were not in such a delicate situation, primarily northern cod but also capelin and turbot, it would not matter so much. However, they are in a very delicate situation. The hunt was probably beneficial to the recovery of the cod and capelin stocks that went down. Without it, we are kind of in a new world.

For those who may not know of the reputation of Dr. Rose, he is renowned in our neck of the woods, has a great history of studying fish stocks of all kinds, and is very well respected by people in and outside the industry.

Honourable senators, DFO recently completed a report on northern cod stocks in the area of 2J3KL off the east coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. They tell us it is at 8 per cent of what it was during the 1980s. We have seen a small increase in the biomass, but those gains could be jeopardized by a decrease of at-sea survival. We know with the latest number of harp seals off Newfoundland and Labrador being estimated at between 9 and 10 million, at-sea survival for the northern cod is greatly diminished. Think of the numbers, honourable senators. For every man, woman and child in Newfoundland today, there are 20 seals. The numbers are staggering.

Senator Harb also said on October 16 that sealing no longer provides a livelihood in east coast rural communities. I have heard this so many times, repeated over and over. Once again, the people who put forward this notion are giving half of the picture. It has been a long time, if ever, that a fisherman has made his complete livelihood from the seal fishery. This is what the animal rights groups and others do not understand. The seal fishery is a very important part of their livelihood. It is an important part when the markets are good, the price is good and the catch is good. However, through the mistruths and slander by the animal rights groups, that important part of the livelihood has almost been destroyed. We will not sit idly by and let them have all the say. They can continue to go out, spread the mistruths, raise millions of dollars and misrepresent the facts, but on behalf of the people involved in the fishing industry, we will continue to tell the truth.

• (1510)

The Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans has spent over a year now hearing from people involved in the industry. We did a study into the grey seal herd off the East Coast of Canada. We sent that report here a few days ago.

Honourable senators, we heard from many people, including government, university and independent scientists; federal government officials from both DFO and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade; representatives from several provincial governments; representatives from the animal welfare organizations; and representatives from environmental groups. We heard from fishermen, harvesters and processors; representatives from coastal communities; and representatives from the First Nations.

As part of our report, we called for a targeted removal of 70,000 seals to begin, hopefully, when the sealing industry starts next spring.

We provided a set of recommendations. I will not read them all, but I will touch on a few. Starting with the 2013 season and for a period of four years, we recommend in Recommendation 3 that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans implement and manage a grey seal targeted removal program in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence to reduce the level of the herd by 70,000 animals.

We recommend that this program, based on the Fisheries Resource Conservation Council's report entitled *Towards Recovered and Sustainable Groundfish Fisheries in Eastern Canada*, work with continuing research and evaluation, which should lead to a long-term, sustainable management plan of grey seals in Atlantic Canada and Quebec.

We recommend that research protocols to be performed during the removal of grey seals be established to test the hypothesis that predation is the major factor preventing the recovery of groundfish stocks in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence, as well as to better understand and monitor the effects of the targeted removal.

We recommend that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans officials appear before the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans at the earliest opportunity after the first harvesting season to report on the progress made with the grey seal targeted removal program.

Recommendation 4 is that the harvest of grey seals be performed by qualified and trained seal harvesters under the monitoring of at-sea observers and in a manner respectful of established humane harvesting protocols. We recommend that adequate and fair compensation — the level of which is yet to be determined — be provided to seal harvesters for each dispatched animal.

We put forward those two recommendations and another five that I will touch on. We strongly believe, from what we heard, that the population of the seals in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence in the 1970s was approximately 13,000. Right now the population is in excess of 100,000 grey seals. I talked a while ago about the size of them and how much fish they eat per year.

While work has been done on this in the past, the proper research and the proper monitoring was not completed, so we do not have clear answers. We are hoping that through this targeted removal program over the next four years we gain that research, that we have something we can study and learn from and, therefore, that we can look at the opportunities to either expand on that or not continue with it.

We asked people to come before the committee. We had people from the animal rights side of things who came forward with their beliefs and their scientific position and people from DFO and FRCC who came forward with their scientific information. Again, as I get back to what I mentioned earlier about polls, you can get whatever information you want to get if you ask the right people for it.

Therefore, we are hoping through this process that we have recommended to the minister that we will gain the information required to address problems with the cod biomass and other species, not only in the Gulf of St. Lawrence but throughout Canada. We are asking to do it properly.

For some of these people who are involved with the animal rights groups, it does not matter how you kill a seal or how many seals you kill; they will not agree anyway. It is not part of their DNA. It will not happen. The bottom line is that we will have very well-trained harvesters throughout Canada, in this particular case in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence, who know what they are doing and who do it in the most humane way possible.

We look forward to at least gaining the information and the research we need, hopefully, over the next four years, if the minister takes our recommendation.

We did not deal with just that part in our study of the seal industry. We talked about the health benefits. Recommendation 6, as an example, is that Health Canada provide information regarding the possible health benefits of omega-3 fatty acid-rich seal oil, particularly as they relate to cardiovascular health, and that it continue research and explore the possibility of including seal oil in the next iteration of the Canada Food Guide.

Our committee strongly believes with the limited research that we had before us now that the benefits from omega-3 fatty acids will be absolutely great not only for our country but also for the world. We look forward to hearing back from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans on those recommendations, and hopefully we can begin that process.

We released our report and we had our news conference and talked about our report. I want to take this opportunity to thank Senator Hubley, the deputy chair of the committee, for her cooperation and her interest in the sealing industry. I have worked with many people over the years — almost 20 years of political life — and I was delighted to have her as a member of our committee. She is a true lady if there ever was and she has a true interest in what happens in Eastern Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Manning: She has a great interest in the fishing industry in this country. We have gone now from grey seals to lobsters in our study, but we will keep at it until we get something right.

We were delighted when we received, after we released our report, a press release from the Seals and Sealing Network. It applauded the Senate report recommending a targeted grey seal harvest.

To give you an idea of who these people are, the Seals and Sealing Network operate under the Fur Institute of Canada. It is a national non-profit organization whose membership includes a cross section of sealing-related interests, from sealers in Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia to tradespeople, Inuit, animal welfare experts and provincial and territorial government managers. The network is committed to promoting sustainable and wise-use principles in the management of seal populations and to communicating a fair and accurate perspective on the topic.

We are delighted that they applauded the diligent and balanced report that was released by the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, which recommended the harvest of

70,000 grey seals in the Gulf of St. Lawrence to help the recovery of cod, which is classified as endangered. This report concludes that seals must be managed responsibly to maintain marine ecosystem integrity and support coastal communities. We are delighted with that.

However, I was not so delighted with an advertisement in the *Hill Times*. I have no problem with anybody putting a different perspective out into the public. I have no problem with anybody who has a difference of opinion; we always have differences of opinions here in this chamber and in every other one I have been in. We live in a great country and people are allowed to express their opinions, and we will continue to foster that.

However, in the *Hill Times*, a couple of days before we released our report on the grey seals, there was a full-page advertisement by the animal rights people. It had several quotes from different scientists, and a lot of it was questionable. However, I will read one:

I have some major misgivings. . . I still doubt that [a cull] can be done in a way that is appropriate with respect to animal welfare.

That is from Dr. Pierre-Yves Daoust, a professor from Prince Edward Island.

There were several other quotes. I was amazed with this advertisement. It is all about grey seals; all the quotes were about grey seals in Atlantic Canada, yet the picture here is of a harp seal.

• (1520)

There is a lot of difference, honourable senators, for anyone that does not know seals, in the size of the harp seal and the size of the grey seal which eats 1.5 to 2 tonnes of fish each year. It is like the difference between an eighteen-wheeler and a Toyota. That is about the size difference, in comparison.

These are the things that we, as Canadians, on both sides of this chamber and in other chambers, have to put up with day in, day out, week after week, year after year: false advertising, mistruths, not telling people the facts, and operating on emotions.

I was in Belgium a couple of years ago as part of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans when I was in what we call "the other place." We were over there and they showed films to the group that talked about the whitecoats, which have not been killed in Canada since 1987. It was a very tough place, honourable senators, to make your case, when you are sitting down with animal rights people showing films of seals being killed that have not been killed in this country under law since 1987, with a beautiful blue sky, white ice and red blood. It was difficult to compete with that.

We have a choice as Canadians to either sit down, take it and let them continue to put forward the mistruths, or we have a choice to fight it and stand up for the people who make a living from this industry. I choose, and I hope most of us here choose, to stand up and fight for the people who make a living from this industry.

Now for a bit of truth and the facts. I ask any honourable senator who has not had the opportunity to get a copy of this book to get one. I am not sure if Senator Harb has this one yet. If he does not, he soon will. It comes from the Canadian Sealers Association. It is not just about continuing to kill seals; it is about continuing to develop an industry. I want to read the greetings from this book:

The Canadian Sealers Association (CSA) is very pleased to present you with the attached sealing booklet entitled *Sealing — Renewable Resource — Responsible Harvesting — Natural Products*, which outlines the historical, cultural and economic significance of the sealing industry to Newfoundland and Labrador.

This publication highlights the many facets of the industry, the extent of the resource, the role that education, training, product and market development will play as we embark upon a major new initiative to raise the profile of the industry, to bring it to new heights and to achieve full potential. It also draws attention to the need for a sustainable sealing industry, the impact an increasing seal population is having on a delicate marine ecosystem and indeed the implications this will have on coastal communities that depend on the harvest from the sea for survival.

For those honourable senators who may not know, the Canadian Sealers Association was formed in 1981 as a voluntary organization with a goal to make necessary adjustments to the industry to make it truly professional, sustainable and an industry that will set the standards for other sealing jurisdictions to follow.

Honourable senators, I am quite familiar with this organization. They have appeared before our committee on a couple of occasions now, I believe. They are people who are straightforward, speak to the facts, challenge the mistruths and myths out there, and come back with facts. These people have been involved in this industry for years and know full well the challenges they have and the challenges they are facing in the future, but they also know the opportunities that are available and a lot of the opportunities that have not been seized yet, that they see as opportunities for the people involved in the industry.

I encourage anybody who wants to read up on what the sealing industry is all about and exactly what it means to the people of coastal communities in Canada to read this book. I advise them to contact the Canadian Sealers Association to get a copy.

I want to touch on a couple more things. We talk about the sealing industry, the economic impact it has and the fact that the animal rights people keep saying it is not such an important part of the overall industry.

In the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence last year — and I will use this example as a small part of the fishing areas in Canada — the landed value of fish product was \$150 million, just in that area alone. We are concerned about the impact the seals are having on that particular area is exactly for that reason: 150 million new dollars. These are new dollars. This is money that comes into the communities, the provinces and the country that is not recycled money; it is new money. It is fresh. It is as fresh as the fish they catch. It creates a lot of economic opportunities in small communities.

I live in the small community of St. Bride's in Newfoundland and Labrador. Sealing has never been a big issue in my area, honourable senators, because I live in the southern part of the province, but fishing is a very important industry there. The population of my community is about 350 to 400 when everyone is at home. However, the fact is, what happens on the wharf in that community affects every bit of our community. I told Minister Flaherty a couple of years ago, the wharf in St. Bride's is like the Highway 401 in Ontario; it is all about what happens on the wharf. It is important that we do our best to help that.

As a committee, we acknowledged the testimony of witnesses who argued that there are no guarantees that a targeted removal of grey seals in the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence will provide the expected results, but we were not convinced of the other side of that equation, honourable senators. Science cannot provide a 100 per cent guarantee that a measure such as this will be effective or not. That is why we are putting this forward and hoping to get the results from that.

I want to touch on seal oil again. It is a conversation that has been had for quite some time now. We received evidence from witnesses on the positive effects of seal oil intake for human health. Diseases related to deficiencies in omega-3 fatty acids include cancer, heart disease, diabetes and others. Grey seal oil is an excellent source of omega-3 fatty acids. These molecules are believed to contribute to preventing heart attacks and strokes. We hope somebody within the departments will take that information, put it out to Canadians, do more research into it, and ensure that what people are saying is correct, which I strongly believe it is.

The sealing industry is an important part of the fishing industry in Canada, as it touches on the effects it has and the importance of fighting the fight, the importance of putting out information and getting the facts and the truth out there. If we have to continue to compete with animal rights people and animal welfare groups, we will continue to do that.

In closing, I would like to say that I believe we should consider all available options when it comes to defending the legitimate economic interests of Canada's humane seal hunt and sealers, including trade challenges, if necessary. It is time for all of us, as Senator Harb would say, to focus on the facts.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

• (1530)

Hon. George J. Furey: Would the honourable senator take a question?

Senator Manning: Yes, I would.

Senator Furey: First, I thank the honourable senator for his comments.

Recently, the European Parliament approved a seal cull to protect its fish stocks. How does the honourable senator reconcile that with the Europeans' constant condemnation of Canada's seal hunt?

Senator Manning: I thank the senator for his question. Even though he is a fellow Newfoundlander and Labradorian, it is not a planted question. I just wanted to be sure we were straight on that.

Honourable senators, it is very hard to reconcile the two. There is a Newfoundlander and Labradorian saying: It is the pot calling the kettle black.

The fact is that culling or removal of mammals happens all over the world, in many, many countries. The overpopulation of animals, mammals, has to be dealt with in some way. The fact is that if we do not deal with it, Mother Nature will eventually take care of things on her own. She is a very powerful lady when it comes to dealing with things, and we have to look no farther than the caribou in Newfoundland and Labrador a few years ago.

I travelled to Europe on a couple of occasions trying to make the case. Honourable senators, the way parliamentarians in Europe look at things in relation to the seal industry itself is absolutely amazing. Again, I stress the fact that the information they have received in most cases is not true. The information they have received in most cases is put together in a way that is very superficial but, at the same time, delivers a hard message for us to compete with when it comes to the white ice and the blue sky and the red blood.

The fact is that they have to control their animal populations over there also. We hope, through the study and recommendations we have put forward, that the minister accepts our recommendations so we can have a clear picture of what 70,000 animals removed from 100,000-plus can do to the cod biomass and other species in that area.

Honourable senators, it is very hard to reconcile. It is hard to understand how they can say one thing with the left hand and one thing with the right hand. Again, we go back to the fact that they are talking out of both sides of their mouth. I believe that is what they are doing.

Hon. Mac Harb: Would the honourable senators take another question?

Senator Manning: Yes, I would.

Senator Harb: The facts speak volumes. There is no market. The United States shut down their market in 1973-74. The European Union just did that. Russia did that. Would my colleague not honestly agree that it is time for us to tell the sealers that there is no more market? I am talking about a commercial market. I am not talking about the individuals who want to go out.

Would the honourable senator not agree we should sit down with the sealers, like we did with the whalers years ago, and buy their licences and support them with programs in order to transition them into a better industry with better jobs?

Senator Raine: Who killed the market?

Senator Comeau: Who killed the market?

Senator Manning: With all due respect, as I mentioned in my remarks, the markets have been destroyed, in my view, by untruths and myths that have been put out there.

An Hon. Senator: Hear, hear.

Senator Manning: The fact is that the concentration of the honourable senator's discussion, and that of the people in animal welfare groups, is about the seals themselves. Let us go talk to the 6,000 people who are involved in the sealing industry or whatever the case may be. The overpopulation of seals is destroying a lot of other parts of the fishing industry. It is not only the people who are catching seals who are being hurt here. There are people who are catching cod and turbot. We had presentations to us where we had a belly of a seal showing maybe 60 or 70 crab. If we are to talk about sitting down with individuals who are involved with the sealing industry, that means we have to sit down with everyone involved in the fishing industry, period, because it affects everyone involved in the fishing industry. It is not just about the sealers. It is important that we promote and support the sealing industry because by doing that we are promoting and supporting the fishing industry.

Senator Raine: Yes.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Harb: The study that was done by the Ministry of Fisheries and Oceans itself concluded the following:

Despite the widespread use of culling to manage carnivore populations with respect to food production, there is rather limited scientific evidence that such management is generally effective.

Would the honourable senator agree that it is mismanagement of the resource that has caused the fish stock to be depleted rather than the seals?

Senator Raine: No!

Senator Manning: Honourable senators, I commented in my remarks, and I have said it many times, that the problem with the cod biomass and with the downturn in the fishery is not only about seals. It is about mismanagement. It is about overfishing. Like everything else, there are several different elements to the problem. Therefore, there are several different elements to the solution. That is why we are putting forward with the grey seal study a possible solution to some of the concerns that are out there. I will not stand up here in the Senate of Canada today or anywhere, for that matter, and say that all the problems in the cod fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador are because of seals. No, they are not, but do not tell me that 9 million to 10 million seals off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador are not part of the problem, because the 9 million to 10 million seals off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador that are eating 9 million to 10 million pounds of fish a day are part of the problem. They are definitely part of the problem.

These seals, as I touched on in my remarks, are adding a million pups a year. Do we sit here and put our heads in the sand and say that the overpopulation of seals off the coast of Newfoundland

and Labrador, or wherever in Canada, is not a major part of the problem? That, I believe, is a problem. We have to address it in some way, shape or manner.

Do we have all the answers here? No. Are we trying to find some of the answers through the study that we have put forward and recommended to the department? Yes. We hope to gain knowledge. I can tell honourable senators that I sat and read all kinds of reports from the animal welfare groups, from DFO, from the FRCC and so on and so forth, and the problem is that a lot of it is conjecture in many cases. No one has really done the solid research that needs to be done. There was a targeted removal back in the late 1970s and early 1980s, but nobody can find a sheet of paper to say what was learned from that. We have recommended a targeted removal, but we have also recommended that intense research be part of that program when it starts next year. Honourable senators, we hope to be able to gain the knowledge from that to be able to say either yes, it has an effect, yes, it is doing something to the cod biomass, or no, it is not. Right now there is a lot of guesswork out there and a lot of myths and untruths. Hopefully, through this process, we can find the truth.

Hon. George Baker: Could the honourable senator verify that the seal fishery, as it is called, off the northeast coast of Newfoundland and the east coast of Labrador is a highly regulated business in which all seals that are killed are actually killed with high-powered rifles and not with bats, as some people would have us believe, and that the rifles have to be regulated, a certain type of rifle with a certain type of bullet?

In fact, there is no problem selling the seal meat because all of the liviers, if you would verify, all along that northeast coast of Newfoundland where I was brought up, always ate seal meat, and it is a part of our diet. The problem that has been created is that they can now not sell the pelts. When they do kill seals, they have to leave the pelts alone, and they can now just bring in the meat. It has made it relatively unprofitable for the sealers to venture forth. That has been the result of a very unfair international campaign. Could the honourable senator verify all of that?

• (1540)

Senator Manning: Absolutely, I say to the honourable senator. The fact is that we might not have had them 15 or 20 years ago, but today we have trained and qualified seal harvesters. If you wanted to install an electric fireplace in your home, what would you do? Would you hire a truck driver, or a scaffolder, or a carpenter? No, you would hire a trained and qualified electrician. Therefore, the government has put programs in place over the past decade or so that have developed trained and qualified seal harvesters in this country that are second to none.

With any organization or group, there will always be those who break the rules. There will always be people who will do things outside the law. However, I am confident, as a Newfoundland and Labradorian and a Canadian, that most of the seal harvesters, 99.9 per cent, who participate in the seal harvest in this country follow the rules and use the proper equipment — the guns and everything else the senator talked about — because they are trained and certified to do so.

The report of the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans did not ask the Department of Fisheries to man the gunboats. We were in Halifax last week aboard a Canadian

destroyer. We did not ask the Department of Fisheries to suit up the HMCS *Ville de Québec* and go out and blow off 70,000 seals in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. We asked for a plan to take 70,000 seals out of the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence over a four-year period, following all the rules and regulations, and using only trained and certified seal harvesters. That is what we have asked to have done. That is what needs to be done in Canada. Some people will take that story, twist it, paint it and do whatever they like with it, and then take it overseas and tell a different story, but that is the truth.

Honourable senators, sooner or later, if we keep telling the truth, it will get out there. However, if we allow the lies, the myths, the mistruths and the deceptions to continue to be told and we do not put our side forward, then eventually that will become the truth. We cannot allow that to happen.

(On motion of Senator Patterson, for Senator Maltais, debate adjourned).

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE SUSPENDED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Ataullahjan, seconded by the Honourable Senator Braley, for the second reading of Bill C-300, An Act respecting a Federal Framework for Suicide Prevention.

Hon. Dennis Dawson: Honourable senators, I apologize to the sponsor of the bill in the Senate, Senator Ataullahjan, for our delay in responding as other matters were keeping us outside of Parliament. I can assure honourable senators that I support this bill and want it passed as quickly as possible.

[Translation]

Honourable senators, I have spoken about this many times, so you know that suicide is a topic very close to my heart. Suicide prevention is a priority for me.

This is not an exciting or lively topic. On the contrary, people tend to avoid the topic when it comes up.

At the risk of repeating myself, talking about it is the primary objective. Simply talking about it encourages discussion, and involvement in the community helps prevent suicide.

As you may know, the 23rd Suicide Prevention Week will be held from February 3 to 5, 2013. The purpose of this week is to promote public awareness of this scourge, and if it saves just one life it will be a huge success.

I repeat, it is important for us to ensure that suicide is not an option. The first fundraiser for the Centre de prévention du suicide de Québec foundation was a huge success in the Quebec City region. It raised \$1.2 million.

This money will enable the Centre de prévention du suicide de Québec to support programs, such as Zippy's Friends and Les Sentinelles, and create new programs, such as Et moi? Comment ça va? in order to continue their prevention efforts. This fundraiser exceeded expectations, as the goal was to raise \$850,000. It was a huge success and they are very proud of that.

They have announced that they have a new spokesperson, Pascale Picard, who became the very first spokesperson for the Centre de prévention du suicide de Québec foundation at the end of the fundraising campaign. She embodies youth, sensitivity and also the hope of being successful in spite of challenges and suffering. With her as a spokesperson, we hope to reach more young people, a group that has a high suicide rate. I will quote her:

No one is immune. I think that the Centre de prévention du suicide de Québec's proposed programs are essential and that it is important to support them financially. The centre is able to take preventive action, help detect signs of vulnerability and provide a listening ear. That is why I am involved in this association.

Let us come back to Bill C-300. On February 15, we unanimously adopted the following motion:

That the Senate agree that suicide is more than a personal tragedy, but is also a serious public health issue and public policy priority; and, further, that the Senate urge the government to work cooperatively with the provinces, territories, representative organizations from First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people, and other stakeholders to establish and fund a National Suicide Prevention Strategy, which among other measures would promote a comprehensive and evidence-driven approach to deal with this terrible loss of life.

This motion clearly indicates the desire of Canada's Parliament to deal with this serious problem. As I said about a year ago, we must do more. Suicide is a topic that is too often overlooked by this Parliament.

It is important to remember that suicide is one of the leading causes of death worldwide. Each day, more than 10 Canadians commit suicide. In the past 30 years, more than 100,000 Canadians have taken their own lives. According to the World Health Organization, there are up to 20 attempted suicides for each death. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth aged 18 to 24, according to the Canadian Psychiatric Association.

Last year, we asked ourselves the following question: What concrete measures can we take to achieve our goal of eliminating or at least reducing the incidence of this tragedy? Bill C-300, An Act respecting a Federal Framework for Suicide Prevention, is one such measure. It is in line with the motion that the Senate adopted last February. Once in place, it will enable us to better understand and respond to this phenomenon.

We all know someone who has done this. We all have loved ones who have been affected by these acts. We can do something to prevent it, and we must. Let us pass this bill as quickly as possible and try to eliminate this scourge. Referring this bill to a Senate committee will give us another opportunity to put pressure on the government.

[Senator Dawson]

In this time of cuts and budget difficulties, we must make every effort to move these priority files forward. By referring this bill to a committee and passing it, we are doing our part for prevention.

I will conclude my remarks with the suicide prevention week theme: "You are important to us. Suicide is not an option."

[English]

You are important to us. Suicide is not an option!

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, before calling the next honourable senator on this debate, I wish to report a message from the House of Commons.

(Debate suspended.)

CRIMINAL CODE

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-309, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (concealment of identity).

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

• (1550)

CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-350, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (accountability of offenders).

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

[Translation]

CRIMINAL CODE

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-217, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (mischief relating to war memorials).

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Ataullahjan, seconded by the Honourable Senator Braley, for the second reading of Bill C-300, An Act respecting a Federal Framework for Suicide Prevention.

Hon. Roméo Antonius Dallaire: Honourable senators, there is not much time left. I do have quite a lot to say, so I hope to begin my speech and finish it tomorrow if that is possible.

[*English*]

Honourable senators, I rise today to speak on Bill C-300, an act to establish a federal framework for suicide prevention. Bill C-300 was sponsored by Member of Parliament Harold Albrecht and received near unanimous support in the House of Commons. This is a great step forward. This bill is most welcome in the framework of our social responsibility within this nation.

Canada is among a small number of countries not to have a national suicide prevention strategy. It is interesting that National Defence has one, but the nation does not. At the moment, suicide is the second leading cause of death among Canadian youth between the ages of 10 and 24, and the Honourable Senator Dawson has articulated that quite well. However, it shows the rates of suicide decrease significantly after a framework is in place to assist them in prevention.

This does not account for the extraordinarily exponential rate of suicide among the Aboriginal children of this country. It is literally off the map. They are killing themselves in those isolated areas by a variety of means. They seem to continuously live with this sense of isolation, but, more importantly, of disenfranchisement that ultimately turns them to suicide.

I believe that it is essential for our country to invest in the mental health of its citizens and, because of my own personal experience, I feel very strongly about this bill. When one has, by personal experience, been pushed to the edge of suicide and only survived because peer support was there to prevent one from succeeding, one has become a person who has changed the face of either his or her life and future.

There is no doubt in my mind that Canada ought to have this national framework for suicide prevention. I wish to speak today about why this bill is a calling for us to do more for a particular group within our society — the soldiers and veterans — who are both victims of mental health issues and at risk of suicide.

We have argued and, in fact, we have presented and recognized that Canada has lost 158 soldiers, sailors and air persons in combat over the last nearly six years in the Afghanistan campaign. That figure, however, does not reflect the ever increasing number of veterans of that campaign who were injured both physically and mentally and who are committing suicide because of those injuries. They are not counted in the list of those who have given their lives for that mission. Figures from anywhere between 20 and 30 are easily identifiable. From previous campaigns, such as the one I was involved with in Rwanda, in one regiment alone, out of 374 members, 11 committed suicide within three years of returning.

This is not an insignificant number within an organization structured to take care of its own, nor is it an insignificant number for an organization that is created to take care of them, which is, in fact, Veterans Affairs. Both departments have a source of ever noticeable suicides due to the operational commitments of those individuals who were injured and, due to those injuries, are taking their lives. Those casualty numbers are not regressing. They continue to increase.

We have not lost 158 in the Afghanistan campaign. We have lost probably anywhere from 178 to 188. The question is, why are those who are committing suicide not recognized, even though boards of inquiry proved that they committed suicide due to the impact of the operational injuries that they acquired during those operations? It is not because we want to present this as an option for them, but we should be recognizing them because it is an injury that can be terminal.

Post-traumatic stress disorder, or what we are calling operational stress injury, is terminal in too many cases. The instrument used is suicide. We have seen cases where the impact of a blast has now been identified as the reason for depression and, when it is not picked up on soon enough, the individuals regress further down and become victims of PTSD. Of course, that is of great significance.

However, there is another angle to this group that I think should not be forgotten. We actually impose so much on them and ultimately they feel this loyalty continue. This is the group who are medically released for other reasons. Some of the prime examples are those who have lost a limb, or two or three. That was the case of a master corporal who was super fit in the reconnaissance unit of his regiment, lost a leg in Afghanistan, got a prosthesis, and was supported by his family and the medical milieu. However, after the visit of a senior officer to demonstrate our solidarity with him — which he appreciated we gather from the note he left — he subsequently shot himself in the face.

In the note, he wrote that, although he was getting all the care and, yes, he had an excellent prosthesis, he would never be a soldier again. He would never be able to serve again. He would never be like the others giving all in the loyal atmosphere that they are nurtured in over the years in service. He could not live with the fact that he would not be able to serve and he killed himself accordingly.

Honourable senators, this is but one example and I raise it because suicide is not something that is always planned months in advance. In fact, it can often be planned within seconds. The example I like to use is the one of driving down Highway 417 on a

wintry night, living the distress and fatigue. All of a sudden, one sees an overpass and, looking at the pillars holding the overpass in the middle, sees that as an ideal target to end the pain that is driving the individual to suicide. The individual swerves the car in order to line it up on the pillar at over 120 kilometres an hour, but fails only because the car cannot make it over the snowbank. It bounces off the snowbank and careens down the road a bit. The individual then continues, crying and trying to recover from the fact that a few moments ago, within seconds, he or she had decided to kill him- or herself.

There are other cases. There was the case of a major who was retired and helping me with veteran cases. He had also lost a leg and was working for months —

The Hon. the Speaker: I regret very much, honourable senator, to have to interrupt, but pursuant to the house order, this item,

when it comes up tomorrow, the honourable senator will be invited to continue for the remainder of his time.

Senator Dallaire: Thank you.

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, it being 4 p.m., pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate on October 18, 2011, I declare the Senate continued until Thursday, November 1, 2012, at 1:30 p.m., the Senate so decreeing.

(The Senate adjourned until Thursday, November 1, 2012, at 1:30 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Wednesday, October 31, 2012

	PAGE		PAGE
SENATORS' STATEMENTS		Public Safety	
Special Olympics		Special Needs for Prisoners.	
Hon. Grant Mitchell	2722	Hon. Elizabeth Hubley	2727
		Hon. Marjory LeBreton	2727
The Late Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander, P.C., C.C., O.Ont.		Delayed Answer to Oral Question	
Hon. Don Meredith	2722	Hon. Claude Carignan	2728
Hon. Donald H. Oliver	2723		
Prince Edward Island		Health	
Job Cuts.		Mental Health.	
Hon. Catherine S. Callbeck	2723	Question by Senator Cordy.	
		Hon. Claude Carignan (Delayed Answer)	2728
Visitors in the Gallery			
The Hon. the Speaker	2724		
Canada-Greece		<hr/>	
Seventieth Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations.		ORDERS OF THE DAY	
Hon. Leo Housakos	2724		
Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Election		Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act (Bill C-46)	
Hon. Lillian Eva Dyck	2724	Bill to Amend—Third Reading.	
		Hon. Elizabeth (Beth) Marshall	2729
		Hon. Grant Mitchell	2729
		Hon. Terry M. Mercer	2730
		Hon. Joseph A. Day	2731
		Hon. Claude Carignan	2733
<hr/>		Fisheries Act (Bill S-210)	
ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS		Bill to Amend—Second Reading—Debate Continued.	
Banking, Trade and Commerce		Hon. Fabian Manning	2733
Notice of Motion to Authorize Committee to Meet During Sitting		Hon. George J. Furey	2737
of the Senate.		Hon. Mac Harb	2738
Hon. Céline Hervieux Payette	2725	Hon. George Baker	2739
Social Affairs, Science and Technology			
National Strategy for Chronic Cerebrospinal Venous		Federal Framework for Suicide Prevention Bill (Bill C-300)	
Insufficiency (CCSFI) Bill—Notice of Motion to Authorize		Second Reading—Debate Suspended.	
Committee to Hear Witnesses.		Hon. Dennis Dawson	2739
Hon. Lillian Eva Dyck	2725		
		Criminal Code (Bill C-309)	
		Bill to Amend—First Reading	2740
<hr/>		Corrections and Conditional Release Act (Bill C-350)	
QUESTION PERIOD		Bill to Amend—First Reading	2740
Human Resources and Skills Development			
Food Bank Usage.		Criminal Code (Bill C-217)	
Hon. Art Eggleton	2725	Bill to Amend—First Reading	2740
Hon. Marjory LeBreton	2725		
Canadian Heritage		Federal Framework for Suicide Prevention Bill (Bill C-300)	
Canadian Conference of the Arts.		Second Reading—Debate.	
Hon. James S. Cowan	2726	Hon. Roméo Antonius Dallaire	2741
Hon. Marjory LeBreton	2726		
		Business of the Senate	2742

Published by the Senate

Available on the Internet: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>