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(HANSARD)

Wednesday, May 6, 2015

The Honourable LEO HOUSAKOS
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Wednesday, May 6, 2015

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

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

JOURNALISTS AND MEDIA WORKERS LOST IN THE LINE OF DUTY

Hon. Joan Fraser (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I rise again this year to place on the record the names of the journalists who were killed in the last calendar year.

In 2014, the Committee to Protect Journalists says that 61 journalists were killed because they were journalists. Eleven of them were killed while they were on dangerous assignments; 23 were killed in crossfire or while covering combat; and 27 were simply murdered because they were journalists. They were:

In Afghanistan: Zubair Hatami, Anja Niedringhaus, Nils Horner.

In Bangladesh: Sadrul Alam Nipul.

In Brazil: Marcos de Barros Leopoldo Guerra, Pedro Palma, Santiago Ildio Andrade.

In the Central African Republic: Camille Lepage.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Germain Kennedy Mumbere Muliwavyo.

In Egypt: Mayada Ashraf.

In Gaza: Simone Camilli, Sameh al-Aryan, Rami Rayan and Khaled Reyadh Hamad.

In Guinea: Facely Camara.

In India: MVN Shankar, Tarun Kymar Acharya.

In Iraq: Leyla Yildizhan, Firas Mohammed Attiyah, Muthanna Abdel Hussein, Khaled Abdel Thamer, Khalid Ali Hamada.

In Libya: Muftah Bu Zeid.

In Mexico: Octavio Rojas Hernández, Gregorio Jiménez de la Cruz.

In Myanmar: Aung Kyaw Naing.

In Pakistan: Irshad Mastoi, Ghulam Rasool, Shan Dahar.

In Paraguay: Pablo Medina Velázquez, Edgar Pantaleón Fernández Fleitas, Fausto Gabriel Alcaraz Garay.

In the Philippines: Rubylita Garcia.

In Somalia: Mohamed Isaq, Abdulkadir Ahmed, Abdirizak Ali Abdi, Yusuf Ahmed Abukar.

In South Africa: Michael Tshele.

In Syria, 17 journalists killed: Mahran al-Deeri, Salem Khalil, Rami Asmi, Yousef el-Dous, Zaher Mtawe'e, Atallah Bajbouj, Mohammed al-Qasim, Steven Sotloff, James Foley, Mohamed Taani, Ahmed Hasan Ahmed, Al-Moutaz Bellah Ibrahim, Mouaz Almoar (Abu Mehdi Al Hamwi), Bilal Ahmed Bilal, Ali Mustafa, Omar Abdul Qader, Turad Mohamed al-Zahouri.

In Ukraine: Andrei Stenin, Anatoly Klyan, Vyacheslav Veremiy, Igor Kornelyuk, Andrea Rocchelli.

Finally, in Yemen: Luke Somers.

They died in the service of us all, in the service of truth. Let us honour them.

SENATE COMMITTEES

Hon. Richard Neufeld: Honourable senators, I rise today to highlight the good work of our Senate committees and the important value of our committee studies. Allow me to explain.

On April 13, the National Energy Board launched an online interactive "Pipeline Incident Map" that offers Canadians the opportunity to view all pipeline incidents in Canada since 2008 in an attempt to be more transparent.

The creation of this map was one of the 13 recommendations that your Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources published in its August 2013 report entitled *Moving Energy Safely: A Study of the Safe Transport of Hydrocarbons by Pipelines, Tankers and Railcars in Canada*.

As the CBC reported last week, a Senate report called for the NEB to create such a tool for Canadians. This, to me, is a clear sign that our reports are being read and, most importantly, that they are providing outstanding policy direction for government and industry.

But that's not all. Other recommendations in our *Moving Energy Safely* report have also been implemented by the Government of Canada.

For instance, our report recommended that Transport Canada review the use of DOT-111 tank cars because the committee was concerned about the risk to the public and environment. In April 2014, eight months after the publication of our report,

Transport Canada ordered the removal of the least crash-resistant DOT-111 tank cars from dangerous goods service. Transport Canada is also requiring that all DOT-111 tank cars that do not meet the industry's tough new standards be phased out within three years.

Just last week, Transport Minister Lisa Raitt, along with her American counterpart, announced higher safety standards for new tank cars carrying flammable liquids.

Two months ago, Minister Raitt also introduced Bill C-52, An Act to amend the Canada Transportation Act and the Railway Safety Act. Among other things, this proposed legislation seeks to implement a new liability and compensation regime for federally regulated railways, including minimum insurance requirements based on the type and volume of dangerous goods they carry. In other words, Bill C-52 will make railways and shippers responsible for the cost of accidents, based on the polluter pays principle. That is exactly what our report recommended. It called for appropriate minimum liability coverage threshold to ensure rail companies have the financial capacity to cover damages caused by major incidents.

Honourable senators, these examples tell me two things. One, that the Government of Canada is focused on improving Canada's railway safety system; and, two, that the Senate's committee reports are taken into consideration by policy-makers, governments and industry. The NEB's most recent announcement reaffirms the important role of Senate committees in contributing to legislation and advancing public policy issues. I am particularly proud of the work of the Energy Committee, which I have the honour to chair.

HONOURABLE TERRY M. MERCER

Hon. Jim Munson: Before I give my main statement here, honourable senators, I'd like to wish Senator Mercer a happy birthday on your behalf. I have no doubt we'll see Senator Mercer in the near future, meaning sometime this year. He's doing very well.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

LESOTHO

Hon. Jim Munson: Honourable senators, I'm going to talk about the country of Lesotho. I say "lesutu" because the people of Lesotho say "lesutu." The American version is "lasoto" but it's not that, it's Lesotho. That comes from the *Cambridge* dictionary.

Honourable senators, Lesotho is a small, mountainous country landlocked within the borders of the Republic of South Africa, and 42 per cent of its 2.2 million people live far below the international poverty line; 24 per cent are infected with HIV. The country has the second highest level of AIDS in the world. More than 180,000 children in Lesotho are orphans. A generation has been sliced out of the family cycle, with helpless children alone or being raised by their parents' parents — typically, their poor, rural grandmothers.

[Senator Neufeld]

• (1340)

I had the opportunity to visit Lesotho recently with the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association, and I can tell you that in some places in Lesotho, the picture is grim. Fortunately, though, life in Lesotho is not a picture. It is a reality in constant motion, and thanks to the involvement of an Ottawa-based NGO called Help Lesotho, the direction of that motion is forward.

Founded more than a decade by former University of Ottawa professor Peg Herbert, Help Lesotho is present in the rural areas of this struggling country, implementing programs to educate, build self-reliance and foster leadership among people whose troubles would otherwise outweigh hope. Every year, support is delivered to 10,000 orphaned and vulnerable children, youth, teachers, young mothers and grandmothers. Seventy-five per cent of them are girls and women.

It is the voices of these beneficiaries that shape Help Lesotho's programs. That is the crux of the organization's success in addressing key issues in a meaningful and sustainable way: listening. Help Lesotho is creating a critical mass of people committed to preventing and treating HIV/AIDS, to recognizing the rights of girls and women and to taking action for the benefit of others. I'm inspired — I'm sure you are, too — by what development dollars can do when they are well spent.

This organization also has a remarkable capacity for building partnerships and a community of giving right here in the capital. Help Lesotho rallies schools, children, family foundations and, as Peg says, human hearts.

I know we can't use props. Nobody can see this, because we're not on television, but I have this beautiful calendar. You always have this beautiful calendar. They are in your offices now. This group was kind enough to offer a calendar for each honourable senator. This tenth anniversary edition, which arrived in your offices earlier today, features the cover photos from past years and offers a glimpse of life in the country.

I encourage you to use this calendar for the rest of the year and discover more about the tremendous work of Help Lesotho.

HONOURABLE DENISE BATTERS

CONGRATULATIONS ON 2015 CHAMPION OF MENTAL HEALTH AWARD

Hon. Donald Neil Plett: Colleagues, I rise today to pay tribute to our colleague and good friend Senator Denise Batters. Last night, many of us had the privilege of attending the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health's Champions of Mental Health Awards. The Champions of Mental Health Awards is one of Canada's most notable social and advocacy-focused events, bringing together political decision makers, business leaders, members of the national media, sponsors and other stakeholders to celebrate individuals who have significantly advanced the mental health agenda in Canada.

Last night, Senator Batters was honoured as the 2015 Parliamentarian Champion of Mental Health —

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Plett: — for her tireless work for mental health awareness and her support of those living with mental illness.

Senator Batters knows from personal experience the devastation that can come from mental illness and suicide. Her husband, former Member of Parliament Dave Batters, suffered from anxiety and depression and died by suicide in 2009 at the young age of 39.

Dave was seen as a trailblazer as he bravely and openly acknowledged his struggles while sitting as a member of Parliament. Since Dave's death, Senator Batters has continued this legacy, working diligently to raise awareness about mental health issues. She has spoken to many large audiences about her personal experience as a family survivor of suicide. She organizes an annual event, the Dave Batters Memorial Golf Tournament, which funds a television ad encouraging those suffering from depression to reach out for help. The ad also seeks to raise awareness about mental health issues, specifically pertaining to men.

Since her appointment to the Senate, Senator Batters has used the Senate as a national platform to speak to Canadians about mental illness, the attached stigma and suicide prevention. While we have come a long way when it comes to reducing the stigma around mental illness, Senator Batters has contended that suicide is the final frontier of stigma and an issue that needs to be at the forefront of discussions around mental illness.

It has been my pleasure to work closely with Senator Batters on the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. Her unique perspective on mental illness issues and relatability to victims who have suffered tragedy in their lives are always invaluable as we consider justice legislation. For example, she often encourages victims' families to put aside the bill at hand and tell us a little more about the victim.

I would like to thank Senator Batters for all she has done to promote this important cause. I look forward to seeing what she will do next to help those suffering from mental illness.

Colleagues, please join me in congratulating Senator Denise Batters as the 2015 Parliamentarian Champion of Mental Health.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Dr. Mahmoud Eboo, the Aga Khan Development Network's Resident Representative to Canada. He is accompanied by his wife, Ms. Karima Eboo. They are guests of the Honourable Senator Jaffer.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

MAHMOUD EBOO

Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer: Honourable senators, I rise today to recognize the appointment made in September 2014 by His Highness the Aga Khan of Dr. Mahmoud Eboo as the Aga Khan Development Network's Resident Representative to Canada. This appointment follows the signing of a protocol of understanding between the Ismaili Imam and the Government of Canada on February 27, 2014, immediately after His Highness's address to Parliament.

I'm also very pleased to inform you that our government has appointed the former premier of British Columbia, my province, High Commissioner Campbell, as our Canadian representative to work with the Aga Khan Development Network. High Commissioner Campbell is very much aware of the work of His Highness the Aga Khan, and I can say with confidence that Dr. Eboo and High Commissioner Campbell will work hard to foster and advance our mutual interests.

Honourable senators, Dr. Eboo was born in Kenya and educated at Harrow School in England. He obtained a B.Sc. in materials technology in 1975 and subsequently, in 1979, a Ph.D. in laser engineering at Imperial College London.

He has been a member of the institutional leadership of the Ismaili Muslim community in the U.S. and internationally for the past 28 years. Today, he's accompanied by his wife Karima Eboo.

The Ismaili community first settled in Canada just over a half century ago, and this protocol seeks to strengthen and deepen, through a newly created Resident Representative's office, the nearly 40 years of engagement the Ismaili Imam has had with Canada, both domestically and abroad, on joint initiatives that include the promotion of human rights; socio-economic development; the promotion of culture, including the promotion of pluralism, inter-faith dialogue and religious freedom; the promotion of trade and economic objectives, including private sector development; the cooperation between the representatives abroad in select areas of mutual interest, particularly in the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, south Asia and central Asia, including Afghanistan; lastly, the coordination and development of their priorities toward the building and strengthening of civil society institutions, leading to the improvement in the quality of lives of all peoples in stable, plural and democratic societies.

Honourable senators, I am very pleased to inform you that His Highness the Aga Khan is an honorary Canadian, and I know he carries that honour with great pride. His appointment of Dr. Eboo, a person of exceptional skills, is an indication to us all how much His Highness values his relationship with Canadians.

I would like to welcome Dr. Eboo and Karima Eboo to Canada, as they work hard to strengthen Canada's relationship with the Aga Khan Development Network.

Thank you.

• (1350)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INDUSTRY

USER FEE PROPOSAL—REPORT TABLED AND REFERRED TO TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, pursuant to section 4 of the User Fees Act, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, Industry Canada's User Fee Proposal to Parliament concerning Fixed-Satellite Services and Broadcasting-Satellite Services Spectrum in Canada.

After consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the designated committee chosen to study this document is the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 12-8(2), this document is deemed referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications, and, pursuant to rule 12-22(5), if that committee does not report within 20 sitting days following the day it received the order of reference, it shall be deemed to have recommended approval of the user fee.

[Translation]

ADJOURNMENT

NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I give notice that at the next sitting, I will move:

That when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, May 12, 2015 at 2 p.m.

[English]

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO TAKE NOTICE OF THE MONTH OF JUNE AS THE BIRTH MONTH OF HELEN KELLER AND TO RECOGNIZE IT AS "DEAF-BLIND AWARENESS MONTH"

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Senate take notice of the month of June as the birth month of Helen Keller, who is renowned around the world for her perseverance and achievements and who, as a person who was deaf-blind, is an inspiration to us all and, in particular, to members of the deaf-blind community; and

[Senator Jaffer]

That the Senate recognize the month of June as "Deaf-Blind Awareness Month", to promote public awareness of deaf-blind issues and to recognize the contributions of Canadians who are deaf-blind.

QUESTION PERIOD

FINANCE

BUDGET 2015—EDUCATION

Hon. Lillian Eva Dyck: Thank you, Your Honour. First of all, I would like to offer my warm congratulations to you on your new appointment.

Honourable senators, my question today is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate and has to do with Budget 2015. Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde and Congress of Aboriginal Peoples National Chief Betty Ann Lavallée have both condemned the federal budget that was tabled just a few weeks ago. Lavallée said the budget was a disappointment and did nothing to help the more than 1 million Aboriginal people who live off reserve. Bellegarde said there was no significant investment to close the gap that sees First Nations people living in poverty, ranked at sixty-third on the United Nations' Human Development Index in a country that ranks sixth overall.

Honourable senators, you know that in the last 10 years I've asked a number of questions about the funding gap when it comes to education of First Nations children living on reserve compared to those living off reserve. For many years, the government has denied that there is such a funding gap, that children on reserve receive the same funding as those off reserve.

However, as part of the Cindy Blackstock case at the Human Rights Tribunal, a document was tabled in June 2013 entitled *Cost Drivers and Pressures — The Case for New Escalators*, and this document was actually prepared by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. It clearly states that the 2 per cent cap on education funding has created a gap in education funding between on-reserve schools and off-reserve schools and that an escalator of 4.5 per cent should have been implemented in 2014-15; that is, last year's budget.

My question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate is: Why didn't this federal government listen to their own department and remove the 2 per cent funding cap on First Nations education and replace it with a 4.5 per cent escalator in Budget 2015? This is what their own department had recommended. Why wasn't it changed?

[Translation]

Hon. Claude Carignan (Leader of the Government): Senator, as you know, Economic Action Plan 2015 will create jobs and stimulate long-term economic growth and prosperity for all

Canadians, including Aboriginal Canadians. Our budget includes strategic investments in key initiatives to improve the well-being of First Nations by enabling them to take full advantage of Canada's economic prosperity.

This includes various measures such as investments in First Nations education to ensure that Aboriginal youth can have access to the high-quality education they need to enjoy the benefits associated with a well-paying job; investments in skills development for Aboriginal people in order to create more opportunities; and investments to support the expansion of the First Nations Land Management Regime, which will open up new economic opportunities on reserve.

Senator, Economic Action Plan 2015 contains specific measures that will help Aboriginal Canadians. As you know, the budget implementation bill will be introduced in the next few days. We will have the opportunity to study it here. I invite you to pay particular attention to the measures being proposed and to support them.

Over the next few weeks, you will learn much more about two different visions. One is about cutting taxes, creating jobs and balancing the budget. The other is about believing that the budget will balance itself, which will result in higher taxes and a deficit.

I hope that, if you are as independent as you say, you will publicly oppose Mr. Trudeau's plans and vigorously support Economic Action Plan 2015.

[English]

Senator Dyck: My question was why the federal government didn't remove the 2 per cent cap and replace it with the 4.5 per cent escalator instead, and you didn't answer that. You talked about jobs. We all know that in order to get a good job, you need to have a good education, and to get an equitable education you also need money to have books and good teachers. The government chose not to do that.

They also had a second chance. We see in Budget 2015 that much of the spending is future oriented and it won't start flowing until 2017, things such as security and infrastructure spending. It's a promise in a couple years' time.

Why couldn't the government commit to a promise of funding for First Nations education at the 4.5 per cent cap starting in 2017 instead of the 2 per cent cap that we have now? Why couldn't they put that promise forward? It wouldn't have changed the balanced books or anything. It would say in two years' time, we commit to doing that. That would have been something good. That would have been a promise and given hope to First Nations children on reserve.

[Translation]

Senator Carignan: Senator, since 2006, our government has invested more than \$10 billion in primary and secondary education to support approximately 117,000 aboriginal children on reserve. We also invested some \$1.7 billion in school infrastructure.

• (1400)

Furthermore, I could add that last year our Prime Minister announced an investment of \$500 million over seven years in school infrastructure for Aboriginal peoples.

Consequently, I reject your accusations. I believe that you should withdraw them in light of these figures. I invite you once again to condemn the tax hike plan of your leader, Justin Trudeau, and to support our Economic Action Plan 2015. Our action plan will help families, lower taxes, create jobs and balance the budget, as opposed to a risky plan that will increase taxes and produce deficits.

[English]

Senator Dyck: With regard to education and the 2 per cent cap, this budget didn't even mention the \$1.9 billion that has already been approved as part of Budget 2014 for First Nations education. That's being held at the side. You could have taken some of that \$1.9 billion and used that to implement the 4.5 per cent escalator instead of the 2 per cent, and that wouldn't have affected your balanced budget.

So the money is there, but you chose not to use it. Then this cap on funding is an enormous impediment to getting an equal education. This was an opportunity that you could have put forward as an act of good faith. Why wasn't that done?

[Translation]

Senator Carignan: Senator, as I pointed out, our government has made very significant investments since 2006. More than \$10 billion has been allocated for the primary and secondary education of almost 117,000 First Nations students who live on reserve. As I mentioned earlier, Economic Action Plan 2015 contains specific measures to support education on reserve. The Senate will examine this action plan in the next few weeks. I hope that you will vote with us so that we can continue to build schools, among other things, on reserve and ensure that we have an action plan that creates wealth and jobs. I also hope that you will use your independence, as you call it, to oppose Mr. Trudeau's plan to hike taxes.

[English]

Senator Dyck: I will go back to what I said before. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development in June 2013 tabled a report that clearly said there is a gap in funding.

So despite however many millions of dollars you have spent on education, that is a treaty right; you have to spend that money. The report clearly states that there is a gap and that it should be increased to 4.5 per cent. That remains as a fact that the department has said. Therefore, are you saying you don't believe what your own department has said?

[Translation]

Senator Carignan: With regard to the restructuring of the education system, our approach does not consist of disbursing additional money, but of making structural reforms in order to use the money we have as efficiently as possible. The money is there. You used the term “millions.” We have invested billions, not millions, of dollars in First Nations education.

I will repeat that our Economic Action Plan 2015 provides for investments in First Nations education so that Aboriginal youth have access to the quality education they need to enjoy the benefits associated with a well-paid job. It also provides for investments in skills development for Aboriginal people and the expansion of the First Nations Land Management Regime, which will open the door to new economic development on reserve.

Senator, the action plan will generate wealth for all Canadians, and that includes Aboriginal Canadians. Once again, I hope that you will vote in favour of it.

[English]

BUDGET 2015—ECONOMIC PROPOSALS

Hon. Joan Fraser (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Leader, in your rosy descriptions of the economic action plan in response to Senator Dyck’s very precise questions about education, a few times you made reference to the tax package proposed the other day by the leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, Mr. Justin Trudeau. If I heard you correctly, you were suggesting that he’s planning to raise taxes. This raised, in my mind, echos of the statement by your colleague in the other place, Mr. Poilievre, the other day, who actually had the nerve to allege that Mr. Trudeau was proposing to raise taxes on the middle class.

Now, Mr. Trudeau does propose to raise taxes on the wealthy and those with incomes of more than \$200,000, and I and, I think, the vast majority of Canadians, would argue that it is fair to say that those who have the most should pay the most. But his plan very specifically calls for a tax reduction for the middle class of one and a half percentage points. Will you please now place on the record your understanding that that is the case?

[Translation]

Hon. Claude Carignan (Leader of the Government): Senator, I knew the Liberal red would come through in the end. Your leader, Mr. Trudeau, wants to raise taxes for families that earn less than \$60,000 a year and that have a tax-free savings account. When you reduce the tax-free savings account and take away income splitting for seniors, families and people with children under the age of 18, all of that is basically the same as raising taxes. Budgets don’t balance themselves.

[English]

Senator Fraser: I believe we have before us a case of terminological inexactitude, senator. Nobody gets a tax break for contributing to a TFSA. You get a tax break sometime down the line when you take out the money and it’s not taxable. But

nobody gets a current tax break for contributing any amount at all to a TFSA, whether it is \$5,500 or \$10,000 or whatever. Nobody would be getting a tax increase if the proposed ceiling for the TFSA were not allowed to rise. On the other hand, everybody in the middle class would be paying less income tax from the day the Trudeau proposals were adopted. Now, I fail to see how you can possibly have the audacity to suggest that a tax cut is a tax hike.

Would you wish to be more accurate?

[Translation]

Senator Carignan: I don’t want to go out of my way to correct you on the tax-free savings account. The tax break doesn’t occur when you withdraw the money, but rather when you deposit money in a tax-free savings account. Any gains realized over the period of investment in a tax-free savings account, in the current year, are not taxable. That has nothing to do with when you withdraw the money. You seem to be confusing it with RRSPs. Tax-free savings accounts are another tool.

You really should speak with Mr. Trudeau. Maybe he is also getting the two tools, mixed up; otherwise he would maintain the TFSA. He would understand that over 60 per cent of Canadians have a tax-free savings account. Many people understand the benefits of tax-free savings accounts.

Instead of having a “Trudeau tax” and accumulating another \$2 billion deficit, we should be working together, in a non-partisan way, in order to pass the Economic Action Plan 2015.

• (1410)

[English]

Hon. Grant Mitchell: There’s another feature of this issue that underlines how out of touch this government truly is with the average Canadian, and that relates to your good friend Jim Prentice. Speaking about being out of touch, how did that work out, that hard-nosed, right wing Conservative stuff? Unbelievable.

What is really underlined by this ridiculous, disingenuous argument made by Mr. Poilievre and, because he has the same talking points, by Senator Carignan, is that it demonstrates fundamentally that this government doesn’t understand what it’s like to be earning less than \$60,000 a year. Does this government, does Senator Carignan, honestly believe that somebody earning less than \$60,000 a year after they pay their rent, pay living expenses, pay for the daily pressures of life and economic pressures that they face, has anywhere near \$11,000 a year to save? Do they really think the TFSA would do anything for them at all?

[Translation]

Senator Carignan: That’s why we need to continue lowering taxes, creating jobs, and creating prosperity and wealth. Increasing taxes and returning to a deficit of over \$2 billion is not a good plan, in our opinion.

You mentioned the Alberta election results. I don't know whether there will be a recount, but I will remind you that based on the results I saw, just one Liberal was elected.

[English]

BUDGET 2015—EDUCATION

Hon. Jane Cordy: This is a supplementary question going back to Senator Dyck's question, but in light of the recent line of comments and questions I guess the old saying is, "Never let the truth get in the way of a good Conservative talking point."

I would like to go back to the 2 per cent funding cap on education. Leader, you said that billions of dollars have been invested in Aboriginal education. That really surprises me, because less than 25 per cent of Aboriginals across Canada are graduating from high school. Have you in fact done a study as to how wisely these billions of dollars have been spent?

If you in fact have spent billions of dollars, surely the percentage of those graduating from high school would be higher than 25 per cent.

[Translation]

Hon. Claude Carignan (Leader of the Government): That is why we must continue to work with Aboriginal communities to ensure that they have access to a high-quality education system and to investments in skills development, which will help create more opportunities.

This is one of the many reasons why senators on your side should support Economic Action Plan 2015. Like most observers said when the budget was tabled, this is an exceptional budget that will create prosperity and that should be supported by the whole community. It was lauded by the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, by non-profits like the Canadian Cancer Society, by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. These are people who work on the ground, either in the economic sector, creating jobs, or in the social sector, helping the poor or helping those dealing with serious illness. These are people who work on the ground and they have recognized the benefits of Economic Action Plan 2015.

If, as you said, you represent the people of your regions who have specific needs, I think that you have every reason to support Economic Action Plan 2015, a balanced plan that reduces taxes. Accordingly, I hope that many of you will speak out against the new "Trudeau tax."

[English]

Senator Cordy: I guess as a former teacher I could say, "A for remembering speaking points, but F for answering the question asked."

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Cordy: The leader said in his comments in reply to Senator Dyck that billions of dollars had been invested in Aboriginal education. The reality is less than 25 per cent of

Aboriginals across the country are graduating from high school. My question was: Have you studied how efficiently and effectively this money has been spent?

Clearly there is a problem. If billions of dollars have been spent and the outcome is less than a 25 per cent graduation rate from high school, there will be no prosperity and no creation of new wealth across the country on Aboriginal reserves. As Senator Dyck rightly stated, in order to escape from poverty one needs an education.

[Translation]

Senator Carignan: Senator, as a teacher, you must pay more attention to the answers than to the questions, so you should have understood a little better what I was getting at.

Earlier, I told Senator Dyck that an important aspect of our approach involves making structural reforms so that the money we have is used as effectively as possible. We would not have said that if we had not looked into the matter, senator.

[English]

Senator Cordy: Are the structural reforms working?

[Translation]

Senator Carignan: You and I both know that the provisions of the agreement concerning the partnership with Aboriginal communities were rejected. As a result, we are still waiting to reach an agreement with the communities in this regard.

[English]

HEALTH

HEALTH SERVICES FOR FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES

Hon. Wilfred P. Moore: My question is also for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

Leader, it pertains to the Auditor General of Canada's spring 2015 Report 4 regarding access to health services for remote First Nations communities in Manitoba and Ontario. That report informs us that First Nations' health status is considerably poorer than among other Canadians, where higher disease rates, mental health issues and substance abuse issues persist. Overcrowded housing, high unemployment and unsafe drinking water continue to contribute to poor health outcomes.

As you may be well aware, there have been untold numbers of reports by untold numbers of organizations detailing these circumstances. I ask you, why do health care standards for First Nations communities in Canada continue to fail their basic needs?

[Translation]

Hon. Claude Carignan (Leader of the Government): Senator, as you know, the Auditor General tabled his report, and we thank him for that. Since 2006, funding for Aboriginal health has

increased by 31 per cent. Over half of First Nations reserves have fewer than 500 inhabitants. At certain times of the year, there is no road access, which prompted the creation of 215 telehealth sites.

With regard to the number one priority identified in terms of Aboriginal access to health care providers, there are nurses on the reserves who are skilled and educated. They are trained and licensed, and we are going to redouble our efforts to ensure that, in addition to having a degree, they also meet the department's training requirements. We have also encouraged medical practitioners to work on reserve. We are going to forgive the Canada student loans of doctors and nurses who work in remote regions. We have implemented a recruitment and retention strategy for nurses who have just completed their studies and an integration strategy for graduates. We have been receiving over 250 applications per month since February in this regard.

• (1420)

Certain measures are being taken in response to the Auditor General's report and something tangible is being done to address the concerns. We will continue to ensure that remote First Nations communities have access to high-quality health services.

[English]

Senator Moore: I'm pleased to hear you mention the nursing services and the need for actions with respect to their facilities in the North.

In that report, the Auditor General mentions that nursing stations serving remote communities in Manitoba and Ontario experience a great many maintenance problems. Health Canada could not indicate whether, in a sample of 30 deficiencies identified, anything had been done to rectify the situation. One of the residences at a nursing station that the AG attempted to visit had been shut down for two years due to a septic system that had failed.

Having heard what you said before, I have to ask: Why has your government not maintained the nursing stations meant to receive First Nations patients in northern Manitoba and Ontario?

[Translation]

Senator Carignan: Senator, our government supports 734 First Nations care facilities. Our \$30 million annual investment and the construction of five new facilities over the past three years will ensure that services continue to be delivered.

We are providing \$2.5 billion a year. That is a lot of money. It is the equivalent of the projected deficit in the economic action plan of your friend, Mr. Trudeau.

We are investing \$2.5 billion a year in Aboriginal health programs, including access to nursing care 24 hours a day, seven days a week on 80 reserves for more than 91,000 people. We are providing home care and community care on 500 reserves.

When I say that \$2.5 billion is being invested, I do not want to give Mr. Trudeau the idea that he can cut those services in order to balance his budget and make up his \$2 billion shortfall.

[Senator Carignan]

[English]

Senator Moore: On a supplementary, honourable senators, I was glad to hear the leader mention nurses earlier, as they do provide the front-line service for health care in the First Nations that we're discussing here today.

The federal government — and you may not even know this — has mandated five courses its nurses must take in order to best serve First Nations peoples. The Auditor General discovered that only one of the 45 nurses it sampled had completed the courses. This problem was first pointed out in his 2010 report.

So why has your government failed to help nurses gain the courses they need to best serve these First Nations peoples?

[Translation]

Senator Carignan: As I said, we are going to redouble our efforts to ensure that the nurses meet departmental training requirements, in addition to their credentials.

[English]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MAIN POINT OF CONTACT WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA IN CASE OF DEATH BILL

THIRD READING

Hon. Wilfred P. Moore moved third reading of Bill C-247, An Act to provide that the Department of Employment and Social Development is the main point of contact with the Government of Canada in respect of the death of a Canadian citizen or resident.

He said: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to third reading of Bill C-247, An Act to provide that the Department of Employment and Social Development is the main point of contact with the Government of Canada in respect of the death of a Canadian citizen or resident.

Perhaps that is a bit of a technical title, but nevertheless it's a bill which will make the lives of many bereaved Canadians much simpler.

Most of us are aware of the difficulties surrounding the paperwork which must be filed regarding the death of a loved one in Canada. It is a necessary and practical component of completing the affairs of a deceased person. We also know that dealing with this process at times of sadness can be a very trying exercise as these duties usually fall to a family member.

Currently in Canada the family or representative of the family must make contact with several government departments to alert each to a death. For example, the Canada Revenue Agency,

Human Resources and Skills Development, Service Canada and other departments all require a separate notice from the family of the death of a beloved one.

The reasons for those contacts are practical but we have here an opportunity with Bill C-247 to streamline this process and ease the burden for Canadians.

This bill attempts to make government more “user friendly” in such times by making Service Canada the single point of contact for government to provide notification of a death. Service Canada is the best choice to provide such a portal; from its inception it has been designed to perform this role. As noted in this chamber previously, the mandate of Service Canada is, “. . . to improve services for Canadians by working with partners to provide access to the full range of government services and benefits that Canadians want and need in person, by telephone, Internet or mail.”

This is the obvious choice to facilitate contact with all departments necessary in such circumstances.

Bill C-247 relies on the use of a deceased person’s social insurance number as a means of sharing information between relative departments regarding a death. At the moment not all departments access the social insurance number, but as part of this endeavour, the Minister of Employment and Social Development will work diligently to have all departments use the social insurance number as soon as possible.

We also heard in the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology that there stands to be a cost savings benefit in establishing this one source of contact. The United Kingdom and France have both enacted such legislation and in the U.K. a savings of £300 million over a decade are the estimated results of such legislation.

Senators, as you can see, Bill C-247 is an example of a good idea becoming law through the cooperation of parliamentarians. I congratulate Mr. Frank Valeriotte for his dedication to the public good. The Minister of Employment and Social Development, the Honourable Candice Bergen, also deserves our thanks for supporting such a decent initiative.

And, our sincere thanks to Senator Demers for his passionate support of this bill.

Thank you.

Hon. Jacques Demers: Honourable senators, I am pleased to rise today in support of Bill C-247, An Act to provide that the Department of Employment and Social Development is the main point of contact with the Government of Canada in respect of the death of a Canadian citizen or resident.

Bill C-247 has reached its final stage and we now have a well-balanced bill that is in the best interests of all Canadians.

• (1430)

As the title implies, this bill intends to make Employment and Social Development Canada the main point of contact for reporting the death of Canadians to the federal

government. ESDC is uniquely qualified since it already serves as a point of contact for many programs and services that are already provided to the population.

[*Translation*]

The main goal of this bill is to make things easier and simpler for those who are grieving and going through what we know is a very hard time.

[*English*]

Under the current circumstances, the registration of death requires contact with several departments as this information is not generally shared, let alone centralized. You can imagine the merry-go-round when someone has to register the death of a loved one and cancel existing benefits while applying for others. This is why I believe that Bill C-247 will help those who are grieving to go through these necessary steps without feeling overwhelmed by all the paperwork.

I’m sure all honourable senators can understand how important it is to cut red tape and make things simpler for families, especially under such painful circumstances. It will take some time to implement this new legislation as we will need to work with a wide range of partners, but Canadians can rest assured.

[*Translation*]

As we move toward implementing this suite of measures, Canadians can still count on the death notification process currently in place in Canada.

[*English*]

Employment and Social Development Canada will receive death notifications from provincial vital statistics agencies in a safe, secure and efficient way. Once this bill is in full effect, it will be easier for Canadians to report the death of a loved one. Family members or representatives of the estate will no longer have to travel all over the place to fill out paperwork, and they will no longer need to physically show up at a Service Canada centre to bring the proper identification and documentation when dealing with the death of a loved one. That’s exactly what I mean when I talk about cutting red tape for Canadians.

Of course, Bill C-247 will continue to protect the privacy and personal information of Canadians as that has always been the top priority. This is why only one program that already is authorized to use social insurance numbers will be implicated, and only in the case when a death notification is absolutely required to protect the integrity of these programs. In the future, the Minister of Employment and Social Development will also be required to report to Parliament annually on this initiative through existing mechanisms, such as the Departmental Performance Reports. This will ensure full accountability in implementing the new measures.

Thanks to this bill, it will be much easier for Canadians who are coping with the death of a loved one to get the information and service they need from the federal government.

I just want to add that for some who have gone through that, it's extremely difficult, especially, as I mentioned, with all the problems that could occur with the next of kin. If it happens in the future, this bill will help people to mourn and take care of the next of kin. This will help.

Senator Moore, I think it's a good bill, and I cannot see any obstacles in the future.

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

CANADA PENSION PLAN OLD AGE SECURITY ACT

BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING—
DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. John D. Wallace moved third reading of Bill C-591, An Act to amend the Canada Pension Plan and the Old Age Security Act (pension and benefits).

He said: Honourable senators, Bill C-591 proposes to amend the Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security Act to officially align them with the long-standing common-law principle that an individual should not benefit from his or her crime. Specifically, this bill would deny survivor benefits to anyone convicted of murder, whether first or second degree, and anyone convicted of the manslaughter of a parent, spouse or partner.

Currently, payments of survivor benefits in these circumstances are not permitted. When the government becomes aware that someone who has been convicted of murdering a parent, spouse or partner is receiving their survivor benefits, those payments cease. Bill C-591 would enshrine this existing practice in law, and it would also deny benefits to those convicted of manslaughter.

This provision regarding manslaughter was incorporated into the bill after it passed second reading in the house. Rare and exceptional circumstances do occur in which a person convicted of manslaughter receives a suspended sentence. In these cases, Bill C-591 would allow that individual to receive survivor benefits.

Honourable senators, there are four separate survivor benefits that Bill C-591 would apply to: the Canada Pension Plan's survivor's pension, orphan's benefit and death benefit, and, under the Old Age Security Act, the survivor's allowance. In 2014, the Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security each had more than 5 million beneficiaries. However, the number of individuals who would be denied benefits under the provisions of Bill C-591 — that is, those who have committed the most violent crime against their parent, spouse or partner — would be very low. It is anticipated that this bill would affect approximately 30 convicted criminals each year.

Moving forward, the government should continue to work closely with victims' organizations to facilitate the reporting of all cases in which individuals convicted of murder or manslaughter are receiving benefits as a consequence of their crime.

Bill C-591 would become effective immediately upon its enactment, and, further, it would apply retroactively. If the government becomes aware of a convicted individual who has been receiving survivor benefits in error, then action would be taken to recover the survivor benefits that were paid since the time of the homicide.

Honourable senators, Bill C-591 would greatly assist in ensuring that criminals will not benefit from their crimes. I respectfully request your support of Bill C-591.

(On motion of Senator Merchant, debate adjourned.)

• (1440)

PAYMENT CARD NETWORKS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—NINTH REPORT OF BANKING,
TRADE AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE—
DEBATE ADJOURNED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the ninth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce (Bill S-202, An Act to amend the Payment Card Networks Act (credit card acceptance fees), with a recommendation), presented in the Senate on April 21, 2015.

Hon. Douglas Black moved the adoption of the report.

He said: Honourable senators, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to the Banking, Trade and Commerce Committee's report.

The Senate Banking Committee has discussed Bill S-202 at length, and we have heard from many knowledgeable witnesses. Based on what we have learned and on action taken to date, the committee believes it is time for the committee and the Senate to move on to other issues. This would include the two other private members' bills that are currently before our committee.

First and foremost, I wish to thank, on behalf of the committee, Senator Ringuette for her hard work on this bill over the last few years. She has continually pushed for the issue of high credit card acceptance fees to become a part of the government's agenda. Thanks to her initiative, this issue has become one of public debate and Senate consideration that has led to action to assist Canadians. However, it is the opinion of the committee that government intervention in this area will be neither helpful nor necessary.

The goal of the bill was to cap credit card acceptance fees through legislation. As the report states, both before and since the committee commenced hearings, there has been considerable movement on this issue, all without a legislated solution. We've seen major credit card companies move to voluntarily reduce the acceptance fees they charge Canadian merchants and agree upon a code of conduct that benefits merchants and, therefore, consumers. While these voluntary reductions are not as much as the caps the bill proposed, there has clearly been an effort by all players to establish a solution through consensus that works for business and consumers.

There is a balance to be achieved, which we believe has been achieved at this time. Therefore, our committee submits that government intervention as proposed by Bill S-202 is unnecessary.

(On motion of Senator Ringuette, debate adjourned.)

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

BUDGET—STUDY ON THE REGULATION OF AQUACULTURE, CURRENT CHALLENGES AND FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR THE INDUSTRY— NINTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the ninth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans (budget—study on the regulation of aquaculture, current challenges and future prospects for the industry in Canada), presented in the Senate on May 5, 2015.

Hon. Elizabeth Hubley moved the adoption of the report.

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR SENATORS

BUDGET—SEVENTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Conflict of Interest for Senators (budget—mandate pursuant to rule 12-7(16)), presented in the Senate on May 5, 2015.

Hon. A. Raynell Andreychuk moved the adoption of the report.

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

INTERNAL ECONOMY, BUDGETS AND ADMINISTRATION

TWELFTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Furey, seconded by the Honourable Senator Eggleton, P.C., for the adoption of the twelfth report of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration (Senate budget for 2015-2016), presented in the Senate on February 25, 2015.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Government): Question.

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

THE SENATE

MOTION TO URGE THE GOVERNMENT TO ESTABLISH A NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF CONFEDERATION—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Joyal, P.C., seconded by the Honourable Senator Robichaud, P.C.:

That the Senate urges the Government to take the necessary measures to establish a *National Commission for the 150th Anniversary of Confederation* charged with the responsibility of preparing and implementing celebrations, projects and initiatives across the country to mark the 150th anniversary of Confederation during the year 2017. Further, the Senate urges that the membership of this commission include representatives from all the provinces and territories and that, in addition to any budget voted by Parliament, the commission be able to receive contributions from Canadians.

Hon. Michael L. MacDonald: Honourable senators, I wish to adjourn the debate in my name.

(On motion of Senator MacDonald, debate adjourned.)

[*Translation*]

RECREATIONAL ATLANTIC SALMON FISHING

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Maltais, calling the attention of the Senate to the protection of the Atlantic salmon sports fishery in the marine areas of eastern Canada, and the importance of protecting Atlantic salmon for future generations.

Hon. Percy Mockler: Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of cooperation and collaboration, I move, for Senator Cowan, that the debate be adjourned after my speech.

Hon. Ghislain Maltais (Acting Speaker): Senator Mockler has moved that we wait until the end of the speech.

• (1450)

Senator Mockler: Honourable senators, I would be remiss if I did not speak to Inquiry 29. I feel that I must recognize the excellent work accomplished by this inquiry, which was raised by our colleague, Senator Maltais.

Senator Maltais raised this inquiry because he has a vision of protecting the “king of the rivers.” I feel compelled to share some comments related to my limited knowledge of Atlantic salmon, the “king of the rivers.”

[English]

Honourable senators, when I look at Inquiry 29, in recent years, annual counts of salmon reached some of the lowest returns on record for many rivers, including rivers in Newfoundland and Labrador, rivers in Nova Scotia, rivers in Quebec and rivers in New Brunswick, such as the Miramichi and the Restigouche Rivers. This follows similar low counts in 2012 and 2013, following high returns in 2010 and 2011.

Just to share with you, in Eastern Canada, total abundance of Atlantic salmon at sea, prior to marine exploitation, was as high as 1.7 million fish in the mid-1970s and is presently about 600,000 fish, a decline of 69 per cent over 42 years. It is very alarming.

So today, I rise to speak on an important issue that impacts Quebec and Atlantic Canada and the tourism industry in all of those provinces, in particular the tourism industry in the province of New Brunswick; namely, the survival of the salmon recreational fishery and the protection of the Atlantic salmon, which has been declared an endangered species.

Our colleagues, Senator Cowan, Senator Maltais, Senator Gerstein and many others —

[Translation]

— with whom I've had the opportunity to tease the precious king of the rivers —

[English]

— understand the importance of protecting Atlantic salmon and the impact of the recreational fishery on our economy and our quality of life in la belle province and Atlantic Canada. I am sure the same can be said also for our colleagues from Western Canada, who share a similar view of the importance of the recreational fishery on the West Coast, particularly the province of British Columbia.

[Translation]

Honourable senators, as Senator Maltais so capably explained in a recent speech in the House:

Every fisher who goes fishing in a large or small salmon river spends on average \$500 to \$1,000 in the municipality he goes through. Multiply that amount by a large number of fishers and that is a huge contribution to the economy.

When we look at the numbers, they represent about 300,000 Canadian salmon fishers. This is a huge economic contribution, and many Canadian families earn a living this way, as he pointed out in his speech. This represents hundreds of millions of dollars invested in rural communities in Eastern Canada.

[English]

I want to share with you that a recent study by Gardner Pinfold concluded that the total annual economic value was \$255 million for Atlantic wild salmon in Canada in 2012. I want to share with

[Senator Mockler]

you also that the same study estimated that 3,872 full-time equivalents in number of jobs are directly created annually by the Atlantic salmon recreational fishery in this country.

In fact, I would also like to share with you that, if I look at those approximately 4,000 FTEs, this economic activity represents the equivalent of approximately 10 manufacturing companies with a labour force estimated at 400 people per year.

[Translation]

I would now like to share some comments in my second language, French. Imagine 4,000 people. In the agricultural and forestry industries, that represents the equivalent of 10 manufacturing businesses with a labour force of 400 people per year.

My friends, we know that the economic value of sport fishing and its spinoffs means a great deal to hundreds of small rural communities in Atlantic Canada.

Back home in New Brunswick, on Quebec's north shore, and in other provinces, such as Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia, people in many communities live off sport fishing. This economic activity is how many people in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador make their living.

[English]

I want to share with you that the same Gardner Pinfold study looked at the economic impact of the wild salmon recreational fishery in four case studies on the following rivers: the Exploits River in Newfoundland and Labrador, the Margaree River in Nova Scotia, the Grand Cascapédia in Quebec and the mighty Miramichi River in New Brunswick, in my own province.

According to the study, honourable senators, the impact is the greatest on the Miramichi River, where annual spending by local and international fishers is estimated at \$20 million annually. That is a lot of revenue generated by such an important economic activity in our rural communities along this great river. It is also estimated that the economic impact of the Restigouche River is similar, and it represents a manufacturing company that would have a labour force of 400 people per year.

Dear colleagues, it is, therefore, not surprising that the President of the Miramichi Salmon Association, Mr. Mark Hambrook, recently spoke of the importance of protecting the wild salmon stocks in his river and other similar ones in Eastern Canada. Recently, Mr. Hambrook gave an excellent speech in which he identified many possible actions to increase the survival rate of the returning adults and ensure that juvenile protection is maximized. It is also important to share that these actions are intended for the Miramichi River but could also apply to all other rivers, including *la très belle rivière de la Matapédia* in Quebec and the most famous, the Restigouche River in the region of Senator Ringuette and myself.

• (1500)

Mr. Hambrook identified 18 fresh water, 6 tidal water and 5 marine water action items that could be undertaken by all stakeholders, governments, the private sector and the salmon associations. Why? In order to ensure enough fish survive to spawn and help us reach conservation requirements. If not, we are looking at a loss of the king of the river: Atlantic salmon.

I have a list of these action items at my office, and I am prepared to share it with any of my colleagues who would like to add their voices to this cause and take action on this issue. Mark identified many possible actions to increase the survival rates of the returning adults and ensure that juvenile protection is maximized.

[*Translation*]

There is no doubt in my mind, honourable senators, that we will have an opportunity to learn more about the whole issue the next time he speaks. Senator Maltais will be closing the debate and will have the opportunity to describe the greatest threats and discuss the fact that we do have tools at our disposal.

[*English*]

My colleague Senator Maltais identified overfishing by European fishermen and also natural predators, such as seals, as serious threats to the survival of the Atlantic salmon. For his part, the president of the Miramichi Salmon Association mentioned cormorants and an invasive species, the striped bass, which population is estimated in the 200,000 range by DFO.

It is important to note that our own Fisheries Committee has determined that the grey seals are preventing the recovery of the Atlantic cod stocks in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Mr. Hambrook, Ms. Jacqueline Girouard and many others believe that the grey seals, numbering in the thousands on our coasts, are also an important eater of adult Atlantic salmon on their way to spawn.

Time, honourable senators and Canadians, is of the essence. We must act now. As honourable senators are no doubt aware, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the Honourable Gail Shea, struck a ministerial advisory committee on Atlantic salmon on March 9 to provide her with recommendations on this major issue. I want to commend this action plan. The committee's mandate is to focus on conservation and enforcement measures; on predation; on a strategy to address international, unsustainable fishing; and on areas of advanced science. It has to be science-based and factual, rather than based on hearsay over a coffee.

Consider the urgent need to make management decisions for the 2015 angling season. The federal government listened and action was taken. Minister Shea had asked the chair of the committee to produce interim recommendations. The committee includes three very active supporters of the recreational fishery from my province, namely, Vice-Chair Bill Taylor of St. Andrews; Richard DeBow of Moncton; and Jacqueline Girouard of Sainte-Marie-de-Kent. Committee members took their mandate very seriously and began meeting immediately with

stakeholders from Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and, very soon, Quebec. As requested by the minister, the committee recently tabled a preliminary —

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Does the honourable senator need a few more minutes?

[*Translation*]

Senator Mockler: With your indulgence, I would ask for five more minutes.

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Is leave granted, honourable senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

[*English*]

Senator Mockler: As requested by the minister, the committee recently tabled a preliminary report that I want to share with you, following the consultation process with stakeholders. As a result of the committee's work and the numerous suggestions and recommendations they received, Minister Shea made two important conservation announcements on April 7, 2015. First, the minister directed that all Atlantic salmon caught this year in the Gulf region have to be hooked and released. Second, Minister Shea announced increased recreational fisheries opportunities for striped bass, a known predator to the king of our rivers.

[*Translation*]

I sincerely believe that, together with First Nations communities and all other stakeholders in sport fishing, we need to join forces to protect the salmon, the king of our rivers. These concrete measures were recommended by the minister's advisory committee, which held hearings all around the Maritime provinces, with others planned for Quebec in the near future.

[*English*]

As the minister said while making the announcement, these concrete steps demonstrate “that our government is committed to protect the Atlantic salmon” regardless where we sit in this chamber, “as this resource is of critical economic, historic and cultural importance to Atlantic Canada.”

[*Translation*]

The same is true for Quebec's North Shore. I have no doubt that Senator Maltais and Senator Meighen will pursue this initiative.

[*English*]

I agree with Mark Hambrook and the Miramichi Salmon Association that our efforts must intensify to examine the share of responsibility played by each of the possible causes of low salmon returns in our rivers. Others have blamed the commercial and ceremonial fishing by First Nation communities and other commercial fishing activities such as the commercial gasperaux fishery on the Miramichi River. We must be at the same table to find concrete resolutions to save the king of our rivers.

[*Translation*]

In closing, I would like to once again salute the courage shown by Senator Maltais and the fishing associations, such as the Miramichi Salmon Association, and commend them for their efforts and their determination to protect the Atlantic salmon.

I commend the excellent work done by the committee members, individually and collectively, in consulting the stakeholders. All stakeholders have a role to play, honourable senators.

[*English*]

These concrete measures are excellent steps in the conservation and protection of this important marine resource, and I encourage all stakeholders, regardless of where they live, to continue working with the minister and the committee in order to find concrete resolutions to protect this species.

It is an important economic activity. As I close, let's remind ourselves individually that this represents 10 manufacturing companies with a labour force of 400 people. This is important for the livelihood of our rural Canadians in Eastern Canada.

(On motion of Senator Cowan, debate adjourned.)

• (1510)

CANADIAN MILITARY AND CIVILIAN SERVICE IN AFGHANISTAN

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONCLUDED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Segal, calling the attention of the Senate to the contributions of our men and women in uniform and of Canadian civilians in their efforts in the 12 year-long mission in Afghanistan in the war on terrorism and to their support for the Afghan people.

Hon. Joseph A. Day: Honourable senators, I intend to speak now on Item No. 28, which is an inquiry left here by Senator Segal before he departed. It deals with Canada's contribution in Afghanistan and the record of the Canadian Forces.

Over the years, Senator Segal has made many noteworthy contributions to public life in Canada, not the least of which has been his stewardship in maintaining the highest standard of participation in the work of this chamber. I am pleased that before he left us he sponsored this inquiry into the contributions that the Canadian military and civilian personnel made to the revival of the Afghan nation-state after the withdrawal of the Soviet occupation.

The inquiries that we address here are often couched in such broad perspectives that one is free to pursue one or more of the aspects of the topic at hand. In the case of the stellar service of the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan over a 12-year period, there is

more of an understanding of what our countrymen were able to do — and what challenges were to follow the Soviet occupation of that country — when one takes a look at the successes and failures of the Soviet occupation itself, which preceded our involvement, in comparison with the later contribution of NATO, the United Nations and the Canadian Forces.

Afghanistan is rather unique in relation to its neighbours. It's a nation-state that is 200 years older than its immediate neighbour, Pakistan, which was created only in 1947. The formation of Afghanistan was not unlike the process of ethnocultural conflicts in periods of forced occupation by their neighbours that many smaller countries of Europe endured prior to drawing their defined borders and developing consensual governance.

Afghan sovereignty eventually emerged from the instability of succession conflicts, general domestic rivalries and an overarching sense of territorial fragility. Its own religious dimensions and resistance to foreign challenges were constant destabilizers over the years.

From 1800 to 1979, no foreign power ever occupied Kabul, the Afghan capital. The nation served as a buffer between Russia and the British interests in that part of the world for many years. In World War II, it was neutral. In 1978, there was a communist coup. The Soviets occupied it from 1979 to 1988. This was in response to the coup of 1977-78.

However, the great blunder of that occupation by the Soviet Union was the near exclusion of Soviet political and historical analysis as the basis for the decision making of governance. There was no non-military analytical lens contributing to the strategies of state-building, in spite of directives from the Kremlin. Instead, Soviet generals had free reign on the ground. Unfortunately for the Soviets and for Afghanistan itself, Afghani military planners were the ideological captives of the Soviet model of centralized planning and centralized governance.

In its attempt to alter Afghan history, the Soviets were brutal. It might be an oversimplification to say that through their excessive brutality the Soviets were able to enforce some degree of stability, but the centralization of its control mechanisms ignored the long-term decentralized patterns of Afghan life and the importance of a measure of laissez-faire autonomy for rural communities.

This corresponded to the traditional framework of tribal leadership, which ultimately led to the collapse of the country following the Soviet withdrawal. In short, the Soviets were not good seed-sowers, and once they were gone, the old Afghan patterns of tribalism and corruption immediately returned, almost as if they had never been altered during the Soviet occupation.

These were the challenges that NATO forces met following the Soviet withdrawal. In the case of Canada's contribution, I'm proud to say that the Canadian presence in Afghanistan did make some differences, and hopefully those differences will result in long-term solutions of state-building for that part of the world.

For two years of our engagement there, Canadian Forces were in the forefront of training of Afghan military personnel. That, in itself, was a substantial contribution to nation-building.

[Senator Mockler]

“Success” is a slippery word in the process of state-building. The very concept of success defies universal definition, since success is clearly a matter of perception. Success from our point of view and success from the other side’s point of view is a challenge in objectivity.

By whose standards are we to judge success in Afghanistan? First of all, there are two kinds of wars: wars of choice and wars of necessity. From the Canadian perspective, the discussion of which kind of war was fought will be debated by military historians and political scholars for some time.

The Canadian operation was multi-faceted, resulting in both military and civilian participation. Personnel from Foreign Affairs and the Canadian development agency were deployed with the Canadian Armed Forces to pursue development projects and diplomatic and military agendas.

The great challenge in the field of conflict is that development and diplomatic objectives always require military protection. Ultimately, the troika of divisions of diplomacy, development and security always needed to be synchronized. One element of that troika could never be allowed to eclipse another, in spite of the overarching military imperative.

Our multi-faceted operation in Kandahar consisted of military and civilian participants at a given moment. Military personnel were constantly arriving and leaving. This was an ongoing logistics challenge, needing constant management, and Canada did very well with that logistical management in Kandahar for several years.

Looking back on the Canadian experience in Afghanistan, several factors are clear. Our lack of participation in Iraq, the great conflict involving our traditional allies prior to Afghanistan, notably strained our relations with our friendly and powerful neighbour to the south. However, our contributions and the efforts of our allies in Afghanistan appeared to have revived that faltering friendship quite nicely.

The first factor in analyzing our participation is to ask what the quid pro quo was for Afghanistan participation. What did we get in exchange for participating there? What consideration were we given because of our acquiescent response to the military imperatives of our allies? Where were the diplomatic advantages for Canada?

One might think that reasons to go to war should be clear, if not compelling. Were we actually compelled to go to Afghanistan, or was it our choice? Is the question simply too complex and too sensitive for general domestic discussion and consumption? Or, stated differently, what were the details of the carrot-and-stick diplomacy behind the scenes that were likely employed to persuade the Canadian government to engage with our usual allies in the Afghanistan project?

• (1520)

Our participation in Afghanistan was probably a combination of necessity and a matter of choice. Only the history books will ultimately settle on a definitive answer. However, there is a compelling view, articulated by scholars currently, that Canada

went to Afghanistan for reasons that have never been precisely stated. It remains clear that our United States allies are much more pleased with us now since our Afghanistan participation.

The second factor is the considerable contrast between our treatment of ordinary Afghans, which had a sensitive human-needs awareness to it, and the sheer violence of the Russian tactics used to impose their rule.

Another factor to take into consideration was the contribution to the containment of the Taliban, the push back — for which we suffered a number of unfortunate casualties.

A fourth factor in considering our participation was the Canadian contribution to the very basis of governance — the capacity and the ability for the exercise of universal suffrage, for example.

A fifth factor was our thoroughly commendable contribution to nation building at the humanitarian level. We built 30 schools and a dormitory for women students at a university, and we accelerated teacher training. Women’s rights and improved literacy were ongoing objectives, as well as irrigation training. That’s water for farmers. In the beginning of Canadian deployment in 2006, children would throw rocks at Canadian vehicles as they passed. By 2009, the children were waving Canadian flags as our soldiers passed. We must have been doing something right.

It follows that the sixth objective in being there was to initiate local projects that would provide much needed employment and support for the rank and file of Afghans. The major Canadian development project — the Dahla Dam, 35 kilometres north of Kandahar — to promote irrigation is unfortunately not projected to be completed for a couple of years or more, even though it was started while we were there. It is predicted that the ultimate cost will now be \$200 million more than the original \$50 million that was earmarked for this project when we started.

Another factor is health care. When Canadians arrived in Afghanistan, the country had the fifth least level development and the fifth lowest gross domestic product on the planet, and that has been improved considerably as a result of the work that Canadians did while we were in Afghanistan.

In such circumstances, what do policy-makers decide to tackle first? Obviously, many diverse undertakings were pursued by Canadians while we were in Afghanistan, but the enormously successful answer for Canadians, and for Afghans, was the simple issue of the provision of safe drinking water. In fact, Canadians became known as the miracle well-diggers to such an extent that we have earned that stereotypical characterization probably forever in Afghan folklore. Nothing we did there impressed the general population more than our repeated success in rural areas in providing the sudden availability of safe and unlimited drinking water.

One can imagine the positive, long-term impact of this Canadian contribution leading to increased longevity and reduced persistence of health issues in future decades. We hope that this is true. I believe that we can be quite self-congratulatory about that contribution.

Of course, this last issue speaks directly to the perceptions of success from our own perspective, compared to the perspective of our success on the part of Afghans themselves. We excelled at digging water wells, and that was no mean feat. In other matters, admittedly we missed the mark in terms of receiving overarching applause both from the Afghan perspective and from our perspective as well.

The final matter is the shift of emphasis in one of our most important public policy mantras, our almost sacred role in international peacekeeping. How did the Afghan experience impact on our long-term loyalty to our concept of peacemaking and peacekeeping?

I wonder if I might have a little while longer?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Day: Thank you, colleagues.

I was referring to the long-term cherished policy of peacemaking and peacekeeping that has been a characteristic of Canada's foreign policy for more than 50 years. How did this new framework play out in the context of our sudden adoption of a combative role against the persistent Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan? In retrospect, it is clear that our role in Afghanistan was a major game changer from Canada's usual foreign policy initiatives.

Our participation there in combative activities has redirected the previous 50 years of Canadian foreign policy — 50 years of peacekeeping that was purposely non-combative. Perhaps this change will last forever. This dramatic change occurred under the watch of Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Graham and under the direction of military chief of staff General Hillier. Perhaps our new way of engaging in "peacekeeping" will never revert to our traditional concept of peacekeeping.

For the first time in decades of peacekeeping, our troops engaged in classical counter-insurgency practices. This was not immediately obvious to Canadians since there were only seven Canadian deaths in Afghanistan prior to 2006. After that, Canadian deaths multiplied, and by 2012 more than 2,000 Canadians had been wounded there. So-called peacekeeping took on new meaning, and for war to be considered a success, the domestic observer must believe it to be a success.

Eventually, opposition to the war increased here at home with more than half of Canadians being opposed to our continued participation in that activity in Afghanistan. Thereafter, it seemed to be time the leave, and so we left. Of course, increasing Canadian opposition may have been partly due to the lack of a well-crafted, persuasive public narrative of why we had gone to

Afghanistan in the first place. The negative realities of war always require great care in the deployment of the purposes of war for domestic consumption.

There are those who may lament the Canadian shift in the nature of peacekeeping participation, and there are those who will commend it. The world is changing dramatically and has changed over the last 50 years, making our lives both apprehensive and hopeful for the future.

However, our contribution to nation-state building in Afghanistan will, I believe, stand the test of time.

We commend those Canadians who participated in this process. We remember those who gave the supreme sacrifice for a noble cause. We honour those who remain among us who bravely served in Afghanistan, and we declare to all of them, sincerely and gratefully, well done.

(Debate concluded.)

• (1530)

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: A few minutes ago, I called Senator Eggleton by another name. I apologized to him. Please accept my apologies on behalf of your colleagues. I misspoke. I apologize to you in this chamber.

[*English*]

LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

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

On Motion No. 124 by the Honourable Yonah Martin:

That, for the purposes of its consideration of Bill C-377, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (requirements for labour organizations), the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs be authorized to meet from 3 p.m. on Wednesday, April 29, 2015, even though the Senate may then be sitting, and that rule 12-18(1) be suspended in relation thereto.

(Motion withdrawn.)

(The Senate adjourned until Thursday, May 7, 2015, at 1:30 p.m.)

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