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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, February 18, 2016

The Honourable GEORGE J. FUREY
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Thursday, February 18, 2016

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

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

MONTREAL'S FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Hon. Judith G. Seidman: Honourable senators, today, February 18, marks the official opening of one of the largest winter festivals in the world: Montreal's Festival of Lights, *Montréal en lumière*.

An annual celebration located in the metropolis of Quebec, the festival attracts close to a million fans every year. This year's unique program celebrates the fun of wintertime in Montreal and is a showcase for the performing arts, design and gastronomy.

The festival's eclectic Arts Program will highlight the city's rich and diverse cultures. Experience the circus, music, comedy, dance and theatre with both international icons and local emerging artists. The Arts Program of *Montréal en lumière* shines during these two weeks. In fact, the performing arts have become part of the daily fabric of Montreal life all through the year.

Montreal is also a city of gastronomy, and this festival pairs the finest Montreal chefs with the greatest culinary masters from around the world. An absolute must for all foodies, the festival is renowned for perfecting the harmony between food and wine.

The site of our *Quartier des spectacles* is transformed to its winter beauty where activities are wrapped with outstanding lighting designs. Montreal's spirit for grand entertainment is on display.

[Translation]

Honourable senators, Montreal's Festival of Lights runs from February 18 to March 5. Do not miss the chance to take part in these festivities in one of Canada's most beautiful cities, Montreal.

[English]

Once again, the "city of culture" offers us originality, flavour and diversity. Honourable senators, I invite you all to take part in this world-renowned winter festival, located in the heart of Quebec: Montreal.

2016 INDSPIRE AWARDS

CONGRATULATIONS TO ZONDRA ROY FOR YOUTH AWARD

Hon. Lillian Eva Dyck: Honourable senators, I rise today to congratulate Ms. Zoey Roy, who was awarded the 2016 Indspire Award for Youth. Zoey is a Metis poet, rapper and youth activist

from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Upon hearing she had won the award, she said:

I really think it's a message for kids like me who grew up in the core of Saskatoon, or who grew up transient. We never grew up a traditional indigenous lifestyle, and finding my identity was a true journey.

Zoey is currently enrolled at the University of Saskatchewan in the faculty of education. She was also behind the "Rock the Vote" movement in Saskatchewan, which encouraged disenfranchised populations to make their voices heard in the 2011 federal election.

The Indspire Award is the highest honour the indigenous community bestows upon its own achievers. It was created in 1993 and was then called the National Aboriginal Achievement Award. The awards recognize indigenous professionals and youth who demonstrate outstanding career achievement. The awards promote self-esteem and pride for indigenous communities and provide outstanding role models for indigenous youth.

• (1340)

This year's celebration and awards ceremony was held on February 12 in Vancouver. Zoey organized a fundraiser selling braided bannock and soup in order to raise enough money for her mother to join her and be in the audience when she received this prestigious award.

Speaking on the importance of having her mother with her, Zoey said:

It's intergenerational trauma that we continue to unravel. I think it's very important for me to have my mom there, because she was the one who brought me into this world, and it takes multiple generations to heal.

Congratulations, Zoey. You are truly an inspiration for all indigenous youth. And by the way, your bannock braids were delicious.

[Translation]

LORRAINE DIOTTE, O.N.B.

Hon. Paul E. McIntyre: Honourable senators, last year, I had the great pleasure of presenting Lorraine Diotte with a certificate of recognition from the Senate for her contribution to arts and culture and her many years of involvement in that area.

Ms. Diotte was born in Balmoral, in the Acadian Peninsula of New Brunswick, and today she is known as "La Bolduc acadienne." Ms. Diotte is mainly well known for her talents as a singer and songwriter, but she also writes and is very involved in various Acadian and humanitarian causes.

In 1972, her musical career took off. Her songs are funny and witty, which explains her nickname, and they bring to light the injustices and issues of the time. She did not hesitate to use her art

to share her opinions on anything, from the violation of Acadians' rights to the state of the roads and the situation in schools, but she always did it in a humorous way.

When she approached a community radio station to ask them to play her songs, she was refused because the station worried that her controversial style could lead to legal action. The singer-songwriter then decided to go to a second radio station and it agreed to play her songs.

This new showcase and her witty, cutting style drew the attention of the CBC, which decided to make a recording of her work. From these humble beginnings, Ms. Diotte built a career over the years to become a true institution in the Acadian music world. Today, she has over 200 songs and six albums to her credit.

In addition to this impressive discography, Ms. Diotte has also published two books. The first, which was published in 2000, is an autobiography entitled *Le tour de mon jardin*, which describes her journey as an Acadian woman following her own path. Her second book was published in 2005 and is entitled *Reflets de ma vie*. Now retired after decades dedicated to teaching, Ms. Diotte is still actively singing and writing.

In addition to the certificate of recognition that I gave her, she received the Order of New Brunswick in 2014. This award, the province's highest honour, was bestowed upon her by Lieutenant-Governor Jocelyne Roy-Vienneau. Hundreds of people attended a ceremony at the Balmoral community centre to recognize Ms. Diotte's contribution to her community and to thank her for putting it on the map.

Lorraine Diotte touched generations with her talents as a teacher and an artist. She made and continues to make an exceptional and wonderful contribution to Acadia as a whole.

[English]

THE LATE VICTOR CHARLES GOLDBLOOM, C.C., O.Q.

Hon. Joan Fraser (Deputy Leader of the Senate Liberals): Honourable senators, on Monday this week, Canada lost one of its most eminent, illustrious citizens when Victor Goldbloom died in Montreal of a heart attack at the age of 92.

Dr. Goldbloom was originally trained and practised as a pediatrician, like his father before him, but the political bug bit him, and in 1966, he was elected to the Assemblée nationale du Québec as the member for D'Arcy-McGee.

In the first Bourassa government, he was the Minister of Municipal Affairs, and in that capacity, he basically saved the Olympic Games, whose construction, as the games neared, was a complete mess, a swamp. Dr. Goldbloom saved them.

He was Quebec's first environment minister, and indeed later, after leaving politics, he was President of the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement.

[Translation]

Much later, he chaired the regional health and social services authority board, but his greatest contribution and his life's work was to foster mutual respect and understanding among all Canadian communities.

[English]

In that capacity, he was probably best known to most non-Quebecers for having been Commissioner of Official Languages between 1991 and 1999. Before that, between 1979 and 1987, he was President of the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews. He was also president of the Quebec region of the Canadian Jewish Congress.

Always, everywhere, he worked to build bridges, and his success can be measured by the variety of high honours he was awarded, in addition to the usual array of honorary degrees and whatnot. He was a Companion of the Order of Canada and an officer of the Ordre national du Québec. Pope Benedict XVI made him a Knight of the Order of Saint Sylvester, and he was the honorary President of the Jules and Paul-Émile Léger Foundation. That's Cardinal Paul-Émile Léger. An eminent member of the Jewish community, he was so respected that he was named honorary president of that foundation.

And close to my heart, the Quebec Community Groups Network has called its annual prize for the greatest contribution to the English community of Montreal the Sheila and Victor Goldbloom Distinguished Community Service Award. Sheila Goldbloom is Dr. Goldbloom's wife and a power in her own right, a professor at McGill, a tireless worker for every good cause you can imagine.

Dr. Goldbloom was raised in a family that prized the arts, and he loved the arts all his life. He sang with the most magnificent voice and with great joy. There was a grand piano in their home. Every summer, the family would pack up and go to Stratford to take in as much Shakespeare as they possibly could.

He was eloquent in both official languages. He was a man of wisdom and integrity, a dedicated moderate who never gave in to despair or bitterness, no matter how bleak the world might look, and he contributed tirelessly to making it less bleak.

To his wife Sheila; to his children, Michael, Jonathan and Susan; to his grandchildren and his great-grandchildren, all sympathy.

TRIBUTE

THE HONOURABLE MARIA CHAPUT

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: Honourable senators, I rise today in anticipation of a number of speeches that will be given in this chamber next week in my absence; I will be away on government business, along with Senator Maltais. He and I will be travelling on affairs of importance.

Next week you will be paying tribute to one of our colleagues, Senator Maria Chaput, and I wanted to associate myself with the comments that you will be making, but also to pay tribute to her as someone who has spent a lot of time sitting close to me and was my seatmate for a bit in our time on the opposite side.

The first Franco-Manitoban woman to be appointed to the Senate, she is a senior volunteer in the province of Manitoba. She's the mother of three girls and the grandmother of four granddaughters.

In 2010 the first Maria Chaput Bursary was awarded to a student from the Collège Universitaire de Saint-Boniface.

• (1350)

I wanted to pay tribute to Senator Chaput as a student of mine. When we moved to that side and Senator Chaput was sitting close to me, I took it upon myself as a duty to someone in the opposition to teach Senator Chaput the ancient art of heckling. Senator Chaput was a very reluctant student — she didn't like the idea, couldn't grasp the concept of heckling — but I hope that you all remember that prior to our leaving that side, she had gotten the idea. She was one of my best students. She was destined to be great as a heckler.

Senator Day: If only we could have stayed.

Senator Mercer: But then the damndest thing happened: October 19 came along and the Liberal Party won. Then we had to move over here.

Some Hon. Senators: Oh, oh.

Senator Mercer: Now there's not even a Question Period during which heckling can happen.

I accept some of the blame for Senator Chaput's departure because she learned all about how to heckle, and we took the opportunity away from her.

Honourable senators, I did want to pay tribute to Senator Chaput as my number one student who has paid very close attention to the art of heckling, and I'm sure that my colleagues opposite may have paid some attention and will put those lessons to work in the future.

Maria, best of luck and good health to you in the future. We will all miss you. The people of Manitoba have been well served by your presence here in this chamber.

[Translation]

HOOKED ON SCHOOL DAYS

Hon. Jacques Demers: Honourable senators, I rise today to tell you about Hooked on School Days. This is a very important week. We are seeing a rise in the school dropout rate among young people and the prejudice against them. Often the parents

[Senator Mercer]

are blamed and sometimes they really are at fault. The teachers are also being blamed, sometimes unjustly so. However, as senators, we have an extraordinary opportunity.

[English]

We have a great opportunity as senators to be able to pass the word around. I will be meeting with the Minister of Education for the Province of Quebec, because every time I talk to people, it's always about money, but this is our future. The young kids are our future. I've never seen more kids not go to school or who are in prison — more kids at a young age that don't know where to go. They have no education. I think it is important to remember that this week.

We spend millions or zillions of dollars for things and we don't know where the money goes. This is crucial that we make something about this.

Forty-two per cent of Quebecers — and we're not talking about people 75 and 80 years old; we're talking about young kids — have a hard time to read. Among First Nations people, it's over 50 per cent. So we must do something about this very quickly and not just ignore it. It's important. As I mentioned, it's our future, and our future must be right.

I end this with just a short note. I left a month ago to become an independent, and I must say that I have had, on the other side, some of the nicest people that I ever met in my life. I had a different job. I will be close. There is a minority of people who I don't give a damn about — they want to act that way. Don't worry, there won't be any names; they know who they are. But I want to say here on the other side that it was nothing personal; it's just a personal decision I've taken. When I look you in the eye, I want to tell you how much I respect you and how much I've learned from you.

[Translation]

Thank you very much. You taught me a lot.

[English]

Thank you for being such a great supporter when I came here and didn't know anything about politics.

Thank you.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

REPORT PURSUANT TO RULE 12-26(2) TABLED

Hon. Bob Runciman: Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 12-26(2) of the *Rules of the Senate*, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Senate

Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, which deals with the expenses incurred by the committee during the Second Session of the Forty-first Parliament.

(For text of report, see today's Journals of the Senate, p. 173.)

INTERNAL ECONOMY, BUDGETS AND ADMINISTRATION

SECOND REPORT OF COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Leo Housakos, Chair of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration, presented the following report:

Thursday, February 18, 2016

The Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration has the honour to present its

SECOND REPORT

Your committee recommends that the following funds be released for fiscal year 2015-2016.

Legal and Constitutional Affairs (Legislation)

General Expenses	\$	2,300
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Total	\$	2,300
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Respectfully submitted,

LEO HOUSAKOS
Chair

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this report be taken into consideration?

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

LATIN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH BILL

FIRST READING

Hon. Tobias C. Enverga, Jr. introduced Bill S-218, An Act respecting Latin American Heritage Month.

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

• (1400)

CANADA-UNITED STATES INTER-PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

2015 ANNUAL SUMMER MEETING OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION, JULY 23-25, 2015— REPORT TABLED

Hon. Janis G. Johnson: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian parliamentary delegation of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group respecting its participation at the 2014 Annual Summer Meeting of the National Governors Association, held in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, United States of America, from July 23 to 25, 2015.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS-WEST, JULY 28-31, 2015— REPORT TABLED

Hon. Janis G. Johnson: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian parliamentary delegation of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group respecting its participation at the Sixty-eighth Annual Meeting of the Council of State Governments-WEST, held in Vail, Colorado, United States of America, from July 28 to 31, 2015.

ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT OF THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES, AUGUST 3-6, 2015—REPORT TABLED

Hon. Janis G. Johnson: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian parliamentary delegation of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group respecting its participation at the Annual Legislative Summit of the National Conference of State Legislatures, held in Seattle, Washington, United States of America, from August 3 to 6, 2015.

ANNUAL MEETING AND REGIONAL POLICY FORUM OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS' EASTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE, AUGUST 16-19, 2015— REPORT TABLED

Hon. Janis G. Johnson: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian parliamentary delegation of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group respecting its participation at the Fifty-fifth Annual Meeting and Regional Policy Forum of the Council of State Governments' Eastern Regional Conference, held in Wilmington, Delaware, United States of America, from August 16 to 19, 2015.

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AFFECT QUESTION PERIOD ON FEBRUARY 24, 2016

Hon. Claude Carignan (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That, in order to allow the Senate to receive a Minister of the Crown during Question Period as authorized by the Senate on December 10, 2015, and notwithstanding rule 4-7, when the Senate sits on Wednesday, February 24, 2016, Question Period shall begin at 3:30 p.m., with any proceedings then before the Senate being interrupted until the end of Question Period;

That, if a standing vote would conflict with the holding of Question Period at 3:30 p.m. on that day, the vote be postponed until immediately after the conclusion of Question Period;

That, if the bells are ringing for a vote at 3:30 p.m. on that day, they be interrupted for Question Period at that time, and resume thereafter for the balance of any time remaining; and

That, if the Senate concludes its business before 3:30 p.m. on that day, the sitting be suspended until that time for the purpose of holding Question Period.

[Translation]

NATIONAL FINANCE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S MULTI-BILLION DOLLAR INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING PROGRAM

Hon. Larry W. Smith: Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance be authorized to examine and report on the design and delivery of the federal government's multi-billion dollar infrastructure funding program;

That, in conducting such a study, the committee take particular note of:

- how infrastructure projects are funded;
- the criteria that applicants (provinces, territories, municipalities, Aboriginal governments, organizations, etc.) need to meet to be eligible for funding;
- the type of infrastructure projects that receive funding;

- how to ensure project funding is timely, efficient and economical;
- the way the money is distributed among large and small communities, actually used and, if need be, monitored;
- should conditions be applied to any project approval, how these conditions are tracked and satisfied;
- lessons learned from previous Canadian infrastructure programs and in other jurisdictions; and
- other related matters.

That the committee submit its final report to the Senate no later than December 31, 2016, and retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings for 180 days after the tabling of the final report.

SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE ISSUE OF DEMENTIA IN OUR SOCIETY

Hon. Kelvin Kenneth Ogilvie: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology be authorized to examine and report on the issue of dementia in our society;

That the committee review programs and services for people with dementia, the gaps that exist in meeting the needs of patients and their families, as well as the implications for future service delivery as the population ages;

That the committee review strategies on dementia implemented in other countries;

That the committee consider the appropriate role of the federal government in helping Canadians with dementia;

That the committee submit its final report no later than January 31, 2017, and that the Committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings until 180 days after the tabling of the final report.

[English]

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE ELEMENTS RELATED TO ITS MANDATE FOUND IN CERTAIN MINISTERIAL MANDATE LETTERS

Hon. Kelvin Kenneth Ogilvie: Honourable senators, I give notice that at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology be authorized to examine and report on the elements related to its mandate found in the

ministerial mandate letters of the Minister of Canadian Heritage, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, the Minister of Science, and the Minister of Sports and Persons with Disabilities; and

That the committee submit its final report no later than November 30, 2016.

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY BEST PRACTICES AND ON-GOING CHALLENGES RELATING TO HOUSING IN FIRST NATIONS AND INUIT COMMUNITIES IN NUNAVUT, NUNAVIK, NUNATSIAVUT AND THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Hon. Lillian Eva Dyck: Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-5(a), I give notice that later this day I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples be authorized to examine and report on best practices and on-going challenges relating to housing in First Nation and Inuit communities in Nunavut, Nunavik, Nunatsiavut and the Northwest Territories, including, but not limited to:

- (a) innovative solutions and technologies for the construction of housing in the North;
- (b) financing opportunities and challenges to the construction, operations, and maintenance costs of housing;
- (c) federal and cost-shared territorial programs and activities in relation to northern housing;

That the committee submit its final report no later than October 31, 2016 and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings for 180 days after the tabling of the final report.

Hon. Joan Fraser (Deputy Leader of the Senate Liberals): I have a question, about leave, Your Honour.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Dyck is asking for leave. Do you have a question, Senator Fraser?

Senator Fraser: I have a question for Senator Dyck. I'm sure there is good reason, but can you tell the Senate why you are seeking leave to adopt this today?

Senator Dyck: We are seeking leave today because we wish to call witnesses for a meeting in Ottawa next Tuesday. In order to do that we have to have our motion passed.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

BUDGET AND AUTHORIZATION TO ENGAGE SERVICES AND TRAVEL—STUDY ON INTERNATIONAL MARKET ACCESS PRIORITIES FOR THE CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL AND AGRI-FOOD SECTOR—SECOND REPORT OF COMMITTEE

Hon. Ghislain Maltais, Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, presented the following report:

Thursday, February, 18, 2016

The Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry has the honour to present its

SECOND REPORT

Your committee, which was authorized by the Senate on Thursday, January 28, 2016, to examine and report on international market access priorities for the Canadian agricultural and agri-food sector, respectfully requests funds for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016, and requests, for the purpose of such study, that it be empowered:

- (a) to engage the services of such counsel, technical, clerical and other personnel as may be necessary;
- (b) to adjourn from place to place within Canada; and
- (c) to travel inside Canada.

Pursuant to Chapter 3:06, section 2(1)(c) of the *Senate Administrative Rules*, the budget submitted to the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration and the report thereon of that committee are appended to this report.

Respectfully submitted,

GHISLAIN MALTAIS
Chair

(For text of budget, see today's Journals of the Senate, Appendix, p. 180.)

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this report be taken into consideration?

Senator Maltais: Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-5(f), I move that the report be placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration later this day.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(On motion of Senator Maltais, report placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration later this day.)

• (1410)

[English]

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, pursuant to the motion adopted in this chamber on February 16, Question Period will take place at 3:30 p.m.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROTECTION ACT CIVIL MARRIAGE ACT CRIMINAL CODE

BILL TO AMEND A BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer moved second reading of Bill S-210, An Act to amend An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Civil Marriage Act and the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

She said: Honourable senators, I rise today on Bill S-210. This is a bill to amend the short title. I am asking us to repeal the short title of the bill, called the Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act. I am asking for the short title to be repealed.

Honourable senators, this bill was studied very carefully in the previous Human Rights Committee. I had the honour of working with the Honourable Senator Ataullahjan and Senator Eaton. Both Senator Ataullahjan and Senator Eaton were members of the steering committee, and both Senator Ataullahjan and Senator Eaton have agreed to support me on this bill. Now I am looking for your support.

Honourable senators, as I said, I rise today to speak to An Act to amend An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Civil Marriage Act and the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

Today I am only asking to repeal the short title of this bill. The short title reads “Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act,” and I would like to see the removal of it.

What this title implies is simply the redepartmentalizing of things that are already illegal in Canada to attempt to reframe it as though a specific culture promotes these practices and, therefore, to claim that the culture is barbaric.

Honourable senators, I believe this is misguided in what it implies. The distinction to some may seem slight, a finicky change in language that is more show than substance but, in reality, it is deep in its significance and heavy in its implications.

In order to understand the gravity of the usage of this word, allow me to reflect on its history. After all, it is by understanding our past that we make sense of the present.

The word “barbaric” conjures up images of colonial times, where many of the words synonymous with the word “barbarian” were used to describe cultures other than one’s own: primitive, savage, unsophisticated, uncivilized.

The word “barbarian” is commonly used when two different cultures meet. This is the case where a practice of one culture is unrecognizably strange to members of the other culture or where one culture is seen as alien or rival by another. Psychologically, the term is associated with stereotypes of those that are not a member of one’s group. This association justifies certain held beliefs:

The barbarian image serves to demean the members of the other group, creating a morally justified reason for separation from that group.

That comes from New World Encyclopedia.

Honourable senators, we have seen what considering one culture morally superior to another can do to our world. It creates divides that affect our society to this day. It fosters sentiments of xenophobia and fear of people different to oneself. It is destructive, especially in a globalized world such as ours.

The history of this word then begs the question: Does it hold a place in modern legislation? Like most things, when it comes to language, it depends on context.

Can we reasonably call terrorists barbaric? Yes. Are certain acts against humanity barbaric? Yes. Would any reasonable person agree with these points? Yes. Do I agree with these points? Yes.

The issue here, frankly, is the pairing of the words “barbaric” and “cultural.” By pairing these two words, we are instead removing the agency from the individual committing an action that is clearly wrong and associating it instead with a cultural group at large. We are implying that these practices are part of cultures and that these cultures are barbaric, rather than recognizing that the individuals committing these acts are the ones at fault and not placing the blame on an entire culture.

The reality is that these extremes pervade society across cultures, race, ethnicities, gender and age. Violence against women does not only happen to women in a certain culture. That is why it was already illegal in Canada. The specific grouping of laws that already exist independently under this act was simply to branch them under the cultural umbrella.

The issue here is not whether we think these acts are barbaric, but rather whether we are willing to ascribe them to a culture and suggest these are cultural practices. This is insulting to cultures in Canada.

• (1420)

Terrorism is barbaric. Each of these acts is barbaric, but then to attempt to affiliate this with one particular culture, to associate the term with a cultural group, is not only insulting and wrong but also extremely dangerous. This is no better than any of the other cultural wars that are happening globally. The most important thing we can be vigilant about now is the use of our language.

Perhaps one of the most dangerous effects is that when we associate a group of extremist ideas as part of a religion or culture we are giving legitimacy to that group, but most members of that group reject the extremist ideology. These are not the representatives of a culture. These are not cultural practices. It is our responsibility to not perpetuate misguided ideas. We as parliamentarians cannot allow divisive language to shape our societies going forward.

Our particular responsibility here in the Senate is to represent the views of the minority. This type of language only propagates xenophobia. It belittles the conscience of our citizens. They are capable of understanding that these practices are barbaric, which is why they are already illegal in our country. They are also capable of realizing that it is the practices that are barbaric, not any one particular culture that is promoting these practices.

And it is important in its depth of impact, in the gravity of what we are choosing to say about ourselves as Canadians and how we conduct our work as legislators.

Others have come forward being critical of this language, and I would like to share a few of their quotes with you. Sharryn Aiken, a professor in the Faculty of Law at Queen's University, stated:

I am not in a camp for being an apologist for violence — not at all. Let's not make any mistake about that. It's rather the pairing of "barbaric" and "cultural" that's the problem, because it seems to imply that the people who are perpetrating harmful practices and/or the victims of harmful practices are somehow relegated to some select cultural communities.

As we know, that is a patent falsehood. We know that family violence, domestic violence, wife assault, and other forms of abuse are endemic across Canadian society. They affect newcomers, long-term residents, aboriginal Canadians and citizens of many generations. They affect Canadians right across the social strata of this country.

That's the problem with the short title. It is suggesting that somehow there are only some communities that we need to be concerned about, rather than dedicating ourselves to eradicating violence everywhere.

Ninu Kang, Director of Communications and Development at MOSAIC, a settlement organization, said:

... this particular legislation targets immigrant communities.... It creates the phenomena of us and them — "us" being Canadians — and somehow that we as Canadians are humans and have good values and practices, and those who come from other parts of the

world are barbaric.... Furthermore, there is legislation that already addresses the issues in this legislation around polygamy and so on, so I guess the question is what is the need for this legislation? What is the purpose of calling this zero-tolerance to barbaric practices and to what cultural group is this targeted?

Nalia Butt, Executive Director of the Social Services Network, who testified at the Human Rights Committee, stated:

We agree that the practices the bill aims to restrict are undesirable. However, the title of the bill has connotations suggesting that a select, privileged few have the status of the civilized preaching to the uncivilized barbarians. This language in a multicultural, open and democratic society like Canada, where the majority of the people are immigrants, will not be conducive to reaching the goals the bill has set to achieve.

And Avvy Yao-Yao Go, Clinical Director of the Metro Toronto Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic, testified:

... at the end of the day, if we go back to the drawing board, some of the provisions might well be kept, but then you need to change the conversation as a whole because, right now, the conversation is not just about whether the families are engaged in criminal acts but whether they are doing so out of their barbaric culture.

Hannana Siddiqui, Head of Policy and Research at Southall Black Sisters in the United Kingdom, testified at the committee and stated:

I would like to say that you need to change the short name of the bill where it talks about barbaric cultural practices. Some communities will find that offensive, and it does stigmatize minority communities. Of course, these are not acceptable practices, and we call them harmful practices.

We also heard testimony at the committee from Deepa Mattoo, Acting Executive Director of the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario; Julie Miville-Dechéne, President of the Conseil du statut de la femme; Alia Hogben, Executive Director of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women; Craig E. Jones, Professor of Law at Thompson Rivers University; and J. Michael Spratt, Partner at Abergel Goldstein and Partners — who echoed similar concerns about the short title of the bill.

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration heard similar testimony from Chantal Desloges, a lawyer at the Desloges Law Group; Rupaleem Bhuyan, a professor at the University of Toronto; Madeline Lamboley, a PhD candidate in criminology; Peter Edelmann, Executive Member of the Immigration Law Section at the Canadian Bar Association; and Suzanne Costom, Vice-Chair of the Criminal Justice Section of the Canadian Bar Association.

Honourable senators, you will note that none of this is about the content of the bill. That is another conversation for another day. Today, I am simply asking that you consider repealing the short title of the bill so that it no longer marries the terms "barbaric" and "cultural."

As Suzanne Costom said in her testimony:

The title is divisive, and it's misleading because it suggests that violence against women and children is a cultural issue limited to certain communities.

On a broader level, the Canadian Bar Association has consistently recommended that the government refrain from using short titles that seek, in our opinion, to inflame the emotions of the Canadian public rather than inform.

Honourable senators, as I have said before, we can call terrorists barbaric, we can call violence barbaric, but we cannot call cultures barbaric. We have evolved philosophically and intellectually as a society and frankly should know better at this point in our evolution than to stir up old tactics of dividing cultures; that is very divisive in society. All I am asking, honourable senators, is that we remove the short title of this bill.

(On motion of Senator Ataullahjan, debate adjourned.)

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

BUDGET AND AUTHORIZATION TO ENGAGE SERVICES AND TRAVEL—STUDY ON INTERNATIONAL MARKET ACCESS PRIORITIES FOR THE CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL AND AGRI-FOOD SECTOR—SECOND REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the second report of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry (budget—study on international market access priorities for the Canadian agricultural and agri-food sector—power to hire staff and power to travel), presented in the Senate earlier this day.

Hon. Terry M. Mercer moved the adoption of the report.

He said: Honourable senators, this is pretty straightforward. We met with the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration and presented our budget. The issue is that there are plans for some travel to Moncton, New Brunswick.

• (1430)

We want to get those things under way as time is short to get the details done. We have the plan in place, but funds will need to be committed for certain things. Obviously, we can't do that without the authority of the chamber.

I can assure you that in committee, both sides are supportive of this study, and this is well within our budgetary limits. I urge all honourable senators to support this.

Hon. Joan Fraser (Deputy Leader of the Senate Liberals): When is this trip to Moncton planned?

Senator Mercer: I knew someone would ask that question. It will be this fiscal year in March.

Senator Fraser: I guess my question really is what is the urgency of rushing this through today. Is it that you're buying cheap advanced tickets, or what is it?

[Senator Jaffer]

Senator Mercer: Well, we need to invite certain witnesses to come; and they will need to make certain arrangements. They'll be coming from all over Atlantic Canada to Moncton. It is not a New Brunswick-based series of meetings. The meetings will include witnesses from the four Atlantic provinces, so we want to make sure that everyone has proper notice. We can't do any of that officially until we have the authority of this chamber. This will simply allow us to do that.

The expenditure of funds is not exorbitant because we have committed to traveling economy as opposed to business class, although I'm going to drive so it doesn't matter to me; and there's the booking of accommodations.

The one issue we do have is translation because we will want to use local people in Moncton as opposed to bringing people from Ottawa, which will keep the costs down. Obviously, that's a primary concern of ours; and I know the Internal Economy Committee will appreciate our making that plan.

We want to get this under way as quickly as possible as soon as we have approval.

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

(Motion agreed to.)

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

STUDY ON BEST PRACTICES FOR LANGUAGE POLICIES AND SECOND-LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CONTEXT OF LINGUISTIC DUALITY OR PLURALITY—MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO REQUEST A GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE SIXTH REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE TABLED DURING THE SECOND SESSION OF THE FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT—COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO REQUEST A GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE SIXTH REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE TABLED DURING THE SECOND SESSION OF THE FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT

Hon. Claudette Tardif, pursuant to notice of February 16, 2016, moved:

That, pursuant to rule 12-24(1), the Senate request a complete and detailed response from the Government to the sixth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, entitled: *Aiming Higher: Increasing bilingualism of our Canadian Youth*, tabled in the Senate on June 16, 2015 and adopted on June 19, 2015, during the Second Session of the Forty-first Parliament, with the Minister of Canadian Heritage being identified as minister responsible for responding to the report.

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

Hon. Senators: Yes.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

[English]

THE HONOURABLE MARIA CHAPUT

MOTION ADOPTED

Hon. James S. Cowan (Leader of the Senate Liberals), pursuant to notice of February 17, 2016, moved:

That, at the start of the sitting on Wednesday, February 24, 2016, tributes be paid to the Honourable Senator Chaput upon the occasion of her retirement from the Senate, with these tributes being governed by the provisions of rule 4-3.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY BEST PRACTICES AND ON-GOING CHALLENGES RELATING TO HOUSING IN FIRST NATIONS AND INUIT COMMUNITIES IN NUNAVUT, NUNAVIK, NUNATSIAVUT AND THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Hon. Lillian Eva Dyck, pursuant to notice of earlier this day, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples be authorized to examine and report on best practices and on-going challenges relating to housing in First Nation and Inuit communities in Nunavut, Nunavik, Nunatsiavut and the Northwest Territories, including, but not limited to:

(a) innovative solutions and technologies for the construction of housing in the North;

(b) financing opportunities and challenges to the construction, operations, and maintenance costs of housing;

(c) federal and cost-shared territorial programs and activities in relation to northern housing;

That the committee submit its final report no later than October 31, 2016 and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings for 180 days after the tabling of the final report.

She said: Honourable senators, as I explained earlier, we tabled this motion today and want to have it passed today because we intend to invite officials from Ottawa to appear as witnesses for

this study next week. We are intending to travel in the North to examine the housing situation in several communities. At a later date, we will table in the Senate an outline of the budget and the travel itinerary, which hopefully will come within the next week or two.

As senators know, in the past we conducted an extensive housing study in the rest of Canada, and we felt it was necessary to extend the study to include the Far North where the challenges, opportunities and responses to housing are unique and so must also be examined.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Question.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker: The Senate has come to the end of its business of the day, and pursuant to the order adopted on February 16, I declare the sitting suspended until 3:30 p.m. when the sitting will resume for Question Period. The bells will start ringing at 3:25 p.m.

(The sitting of the Senate was suspended.)

(The sitting of the Senate was resumed.)

• (1530)

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to advise you that pursuant to the order adopted on December 10, 2015, the Honourable Stéphane Dion, PC, MP, Minister of Foreign Affairs, is with us today to take part in proceedings by responding to questions relating to his ministerial responsibilities.

As was the case on February 3, honourable senators, I would ask that colleagues limit themselves to one question and, if necessary, at most one supplementary question. This will allow as many senators as possible to take part in Question Period today. We have a rather lengthy list.

Welcome, minister.

[Translation]

QUESTION PERIOD

Pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate on December 10, 2015, to receive a Minister of the Crown, the Honourable Stéphane Dion, Minister of Foreign Affairs, appeared before Honourable senators during Question Period.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

CANADA-RUSSIA RELATIONS

Hon. Claude Carignan (Leader of the Opposition): Minister, on behalf of all my fellow senators, I would like to thank you for being with us today.

Minister, on February 13, 2016, the media reported that Dimitri Medvedev, Prime Minister of Russia, equated relations between Russia and the West to a new Cold War. What is more, Russia is building a new military base in the Arctic and acquired new icebreakers. Despite all this, the Russian ambassador to Canada believes that the new ties between Russia and Canada constitute a win-win situation.

What does the Trudeau government intend to do about the growing threat posed by Russia, and how is Russia, which considers itself in a Cold War with the western world, coming out a winner under the Trudeau government's policies?

The Honourable Stéphane Dion, P.C., M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs: Thank you, senator, for your question. I would like to say what an honour it is for me to have been invited to the Senate. I believe the last time that happened was about 15 years ago. I recognize some faces, and ladies, you haven't changed.

Senator, your question is very relevant. You mentioned some behaviours of the Putin government that cannot be condoned, and there are others. What Russia did to Ukraine is completely unacceptable, and its current actions to sow division within that country must be strongly condemned. When Russia, which is supposed to be helping us fight the so-called Islamic State, actually targets opponents of the President of Syria, it is counterproductive. Moreover, Russia's actions sometimes go against international law and cause a great deal of misery and destruction.

However, even in the worst days of the Cold War, the Government of Canada maintained ties with the Soviet Union to try to convince the leaders at the time to behave more appropriately and to serve Canada's interests. For example, when Canada works with the Arctic Council, it has to cooperate with Russia, which is a member of that council. We have an interest in conducting research on the Arctic with excellent Russian scientists. It would be a mistake to abandon all that for ideological reasons.

Therefore, Canada will do what Japan and the United States are doing, even though they profoundly disagree with Russia over their country's northern border. We will maintain direct, open contact with the Russian authorities, but refrain from talking to

them, since cutting diplomatic ties with them was a serious mistake by the previous government that this government will correct.

[English]

CHILD SOLDIERS

Hon. James Cowan (Leader of the Senate Liberals): Welcome, minister. My question pertains to child protection and child soldiers.

You know our friend and former colleague Senator Roméo Dallaire, and the work he is doing to eradicate the use of child soldiers. The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldier Initiative, which is run out of my alma mater, Dalhousie University in Halifax, recently launched its Veterans Trainers program to end the use of child soldiers.

This week General Dallaire stated that Canada needs a strategy to deal with the legions of child soldiers who are being indoctrinated into the Islamic State's extremist and violent cause. He said:

There is no doubt in my military mind that the sustainment of that conflict is based on the early recruitment and massive use of young people.

In your announcement last week on Canada's new role in the fight against ISIS, you made no mention of child soldiers. My question is this: What is your government doing, or what does your government intend to do, to address the issue of child soldiers?

Hon. Stéphane Dion, P.C., M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs: Thank you very much. This gives me an opportunity to say something that we should have said, indeed, which is in the plan that, among other things we intend to do, there are all the fights against radicalization, the fights to counter propaganda, to be strong about education and to be strong about the abuses they are committing at every opportunity they have — the so-called Islamic State — especially against children.

It's part of the plan. It's strengthening the plan, all this capacity we'll have. Not only, by the way, the so-called Islamic State, but in the whole population of Iraq we need to be sure there is no recruitment of youth to fight. It's something that we'll work very hard on, and we will benefit immensely from your expertise and that of Senator Dallaire, for whom I have tremendous admiration. I am closely linked with him on this issue and many others.

IRAN—STATE SPONSOR OF TERRORISM

Hon. Linda Frum: Minister Dion, Iran is widely considered the world's pre-eminent sponsor of state terrorism through its support of terror groups that are listed entities in Canada, including the IRGC Quds Force, Hezbollah, Hamas, al Qaeda and the Taliban. The Iranian regime, therefore, was correctly listed by Canada as a state sponsor of terrorism.

This listing has enabled terror victims to sue Iran in Canadian courts and hold the regime accountable.

Minister Dion, will the government commit to keeping Iran designated as a state sponsor of terror for as long as the regime in Tehran continues to sponsor terrorism?

Hon. Stéphane Dion, P.C., M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs: Thank you very much for the question, senator. Indeed, Canada will continue that. Canada will continue, also, to sponsor the resolution in the United Nations about the necessity for Iran to address the issue of human rights in a much more acceptable way. This is a resolution that we are sponsoring under the Liberals. The Conservatives will continue under the Liberals. We will address that. We will address the threat that Iran represents for its neighbours, including Israel, and the threat that Iran represents for Canadian national interests.

In order to address it, you need to be there. Fortunately Canada was there at the end of the 1970s. We had an embassy, and we have been able to help our American friends. There was a movie about it that was quite fair about the role Canada played at that time.

Today we are not in Iran. In which way is that helping human rights? In which way is that helping the people of Iraq? In which way is it helping Israel or any interest we may have? That's a big mistake the former government made. We need to be there.

By the way, explain to me what the logic is in not being there, but to count on the Italians, who are there, when we need to address Iran. We're saying we are noble and moral, we are out of Iran, but when we need to be in Iran we use the help and facilities of one of our allies. That's hypocritical.

• (1540)

I suggest that Canada be strong on all the issues you mentioned in engaging Iran in a frank and very strong way. Engagement is better than isolation.

RUSSIA IN UKRAINE

Hon. Denise Batters: Minister, the first thing Prime Minister Harper said to Vladimir Putin following Russia's invasion of Crimea was, "You need to get out of Ukraine." In stark contrast, Prime Minister Trudeau's first words to Putin were: "You might have noticed that we, uh, Canada has changed its approach on a broad range of issues . . ." The Trudeau government's policy on Russia's illegal occupation of Ukraine is weak and incoherent.

Minister, I am 1 of 1.3 million Canadians of Ukrainian heritage who want our Canadian government to stand up for Ukraine. We were concerned and dismayed when you recently indicated your willingness to re-engage with Russia. All Canadians want to know what is the Trudeau government doing to ensure that Russia gets out of Ukraine now.

Hon. Stéphane Dion, P.C., M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs: Dear senator, I was in Ukraine recently and the government of Ukraine had only positive remarks about the new Government of Canada and what we are doing to support Ukraine. They were not concerned by the fact that we will say that directly to Russia.

I want to ask you what the world would be if other countries were following the path of the former Canadian government. Do you think it would make sense that Senator Kerry and President Obama would never speak to the Russians? What kind of world would it create?

All of a sudden we understand it doesn't make sense. At the worst time of the world war we weren't talking with the USSR. It doesn't make sense to stop the dialogue or communications. It would be wrong.

If it's wrong for the United States, I suggest it's wrong for Canada. Canada must engage Russia. Canada must say how much we disagree with what Russia is doing in Ukraine. This is in the interests of Ukraine and in the tradition of sound political diplomacy from the Government of Canada. We will return to sound diplomacy. The approach of the former government was far too irrational and ideological.

[Translation]

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY—SYRIAN WOMEN

Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer: Minister Dion, we are very pleased to have you here today. Welcome.

[English]

Before I ask you my question, I want to thank you for helping to bring the Congolese Canadian children home, and I urge you to continue the great work you are doing to bring the other 16 home.

Minister, in 2000 Canada was the leader when it came to women, peace and security. Canada was the leader in the United Nations on Resolution 1325, which ensured that women were at the decision- and peace-making table. We were the first country to take 17 women to the peace table in Darfur.

Minister, I just came back from Sweden. The Swedish foreign minister has made the women, peace and security agenda the foreign policy of Sweden. What are your plans for making sure that Syrian women are at the peace table?

Hon. Stéphane Dion, P.C., M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs: Senator, you mentioned a lot of issues. We'll start with the families and the Republic of Congo. You're right, we have been able to reunite some of these families, but there are still 16 children and 13 families in a terrible situation.

Of course, in France and the United States it's hundreds of families, but we're addressing that with the Government of Congo. They are also facing a situation where it's the tenth anniversary of their constitution, and we want to make sure the next election goes well. They have neighbouring countries where the elections are in jeopardy, and we have terrible concerns. We don't want the same in the Congo as we see in Burundi.

You mentioned the support of this resolution of the United Nations. I thank you very much for giving me notice of your question. My department prepared a long answer for you, but it would take the rest of Question Period to give you all the details.

As you know, Prime Minister Trudeau made it a strong priority to promote gender equity everywhere, in Canada and abroad, for Aboriginal women, for all people in the world. It's part of the mandate letter and is a strong priority, and the symbol of it that resonates around the world is that he appointed as many female as male ministers.

I have this long answer for you, but I see all the honourable senators who want to ask questions so I will provide this answer to my colleagues in the Senate if there is interest.

PROMOTION OF CLEAN ENERGY

Hon. Elaine McCoy: Minister, thank you for the opportunity to ask this question. In your mandate letter, the first priority indicates that you are to work towards preparing for the next North American Leaders' Summit to occur in Canada and to work towards putting together a North American clean energy strategy.

In terms of the North American Leaders' Summit, we know this began at the tenth anniversary of NAFTA when the Americans invited Canadian and Mexican leaders to join them. Since then the U.S. and Mexico have both hosted the event three times. In 2007 Canada hosted it, and since then has refused to extend an invitation.

Three weeks ago you met with your Mexican and American counterparts. Can you tell us what steps you are taking to bring together a North American Leaders' Summit in Canada?

Hon. Stéphane Dion, P.C., M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs: It was odd last year when the former government declined the possibility. It was its turn to welcome the "two amigos," the presidents of the United States and Mexico. It's not understandable why we have not done that. We passed our turn, in some ways.

This year we'll have the "Three Amigos" summit. I would be pleased if it was in Canada, but the Prime Minister and the two presidents are trying to accommodate each other. What is important for me is, above all, to have a summit. I'm sure that if it's not this year, maybe next year it will be Canada.

The key point is not so much where it will be but to have this summit to address the issues like the ones you mentioned: the necessity to have clean energy and an environmental agreement in North America.

Senator McCoy: In terms of the North American clean energy strategy, in Paris your government joined others in what is called Mission Innovation, which is a commitment to double our investment in clean energy technology. It's supported by Bill Gates, who also simultaneously announced the Breakthrough Energy Coalition, which is 28 private-sector organizations that have committed to putting private sector capital into innovations that come out of the Mission Innovation public research pipeline.

Appallingly, of those 28 co-organizations, although 13 are from the U.S., 3 are from the U.K., some from India, and one is even from Nigeria.

Some Hon. Senators: Question.

Senator McCoy: Not one is from Canada. How will you work with the North American clean energy strategy to promote our involvement in Mission Innovation and the Breakthrough Energy Coalition?

Mr. Dion: One of the ways, senator, is to be part of this agreement that commits Canada to doubling its investment in this area, which is key to fighting climate change and sustainable development.

It's not so difficult for this government to have made this commitment, because it was part of our platform and one of the reasons why we have been elected by Canadians as the new government.

[Translation]

OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Hon. Thanh Hai Ngo: Minister Dion, welcome to the Senate. You said that Canada must defend religious freedom abroad, since this freedom must not be separated from other human rights. Similarly, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said that he would have liked to have studied religion in university, because it is part of everything that we decide and think about in life today.

• (1550)

It's hard to see how Prime Minister Trudeau plans to protect and promote religious freedom internationally when he is only briefly extending the mandate of the Office of Religious Freedom until Thursday, March 31, 2016.

Minister, does the Trudeau government plan to cut or close the Office of Religious Freedom and rescind the mandate of its ambassador, Andrew Bennett?

Hon. Stéphane Dion, P.C. M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs: Thank you, Senator Ngo. I am pleased to see you.

Senator, I just want to be clear that I have immense respect for Mr. Bennett, who worked with me at Intergovernmental Affairs the first time you welcomed me in the Senate 15 years ago. That is not what is at issue here. I hope that no matter what happens, he will continue to serve us, serve Canada, at Foreign Affairs.

However, the issue here is determining the best method for defending religious freedom. Is it through this office or through other means? Prime Minister Trudeau talks a lot about gender equality or gender equity. However, it would never occur to him to create an office to address these issues. On the other hand, there is no doubt that we will use the best methods.

Is that the best approach? As you know, according to international convention, rights are indivisible, interrelated and interdependent, and that is the approach we want to develop. Freedom of religion could never be defended without freedom of conscience, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, or

[Mr. Dion]

freedom of movement. That is all very important. That will be the focus of our thinking in determining how best to defend the various rights. Note that we are undertaking this study partly because the previous government was also considering closing this office, on March 31, 2016.

SAUDI ARABIA—SALE OF ARMoured VEHICLES

Hon. Serge Joyal: Minister, I would like to talk about the sale of armoured vehicles to Saudi Arabia. I don't need to go into detail about Saudi Arabia's abysmal human rights record. That country still practices corporal punishment — Raif Badawi is a shocking example of that — as well as the death penalty. In fact, it has one of the highest rates of sentencing people to death. It continues to ignore gender equality, a value that Canada champions on the international stage.

How can you say that selling armoured vehicles to that country is not in direct conflict with your department's guidelines?

[English]

I will read the guidelines in English because I received them in English: "The policy with respect to countries with serious human rights problems places the onus on proving 'no reasonable risk' squarely on the exporter."

[Translation]

Here is my question: Does the government simply lack the will in this situation, or are the guidelines not clear enough to oblige Canada to stand firm on its commitments with respect to the values underpinning its reputation?

Hon. Stéphane Dion, P.C., M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs: Thank you, senator. This is a very, very important subject.

First of all, the government is not approving this contract. The government is simply refusing to cancel a contract approved by the former government, a contract between a private company and Saudi Arabia. That is an important difference because, if we were to cancel a contract that had already been approved, Canadian taxpayers would probably have to pay some pretty hefty penalties. It would also dilute the credibility of the Canadian government's signature on contract approvals, not just in this case, but in many others as well.

Moreover, what would surely happen is that the equipment in question would be sold to Saudi Arabia by a less scrupulous country, and the human rights situation in Saudi Arabia would not change one iota. We strongly object to Saudi Arabia's terrible human rights record, which you just described so well, and we vigorously voice that opinion.

Furthermore, one of the Minister of Foreign Affairs' responsibilities is to review export contracts and to cancel them if the equipment sold to a country is to be used in a manner that would violate human rights or the interests of Canada or its allies. That is my responsibility and one that I will have to exercise with utmost rigour. With respect to this file and every file, in the coming years — this is a multi-year contract — I will exercise this responsibility in accordance with the law and the guidelines that you just mentioned.

Senator Joyal: Do you intend to revise these guidelines in order to make them more binding for the government?

Mr. Dion: In fact, in response to the Prime Minister's call and for a more open and transparent government, I announced a review of these guidelines in order to make them more transparent and easier to verify so that there is greater accountability than is the case currently.

[English]

NORTH KOREA—DETENTION OF REVEREND HYEON SOO LIM

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Minister Dion, yesterday on the Hill was the Day of Action for the Release of Reverend Hyeon Soo Lim, a Canadian pastor and humanitarian who has been detained in North Korea for over a year. Hundreds of supporters travelled from the Toronto region in a show of solidarity, and hundreds of thousands of people have signed an online petition calling on the Trudeau government to bring Reverend Lim back to Canada safely and as soon as possible.

Reverend Lim's life sentence is, in essence, a death sentence; and with each passing day, the family, the church, Canadians and people around the world fear for his life.

Minister Dion, would you please tell us what the Trudeau government is doing to save Reverend Lim from this unjust sentence and to bring him home safely to Canada, and that it has your priority attention at this time?

Hon. Stéphane Dion, P.C., M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs: Thank you very much. I share, my dear colleague senator, all the concerns you have for Mr. Lim. It is a completely unacceptable situation, and we are using all the tools we have to try to free this man, this honest man who did nothing wrong.

We are in touch with the family. Omar Alghabra, my parliamentary secretary for consular cases, is working intensely on that.

However, you will understand that in order to succeed, I don't want to describe publicly every step we are taking. These kinds of things only go through the Prime Minister, Mr. Alghabra and me, in order to succeed. It is not to pretend to be the hero at every step of the story; it is to succeed. Because of that, I cannot give you all the details of what we are doing. I'm sure you understand.

[Translation]

ASSISTANCE FOR EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN FRANCOPHONE COUNTRIES

Hon. Claudette Tardif: Minister, I would like to welcome you to the Senate.

As one of the key priorities listed in your mandate letter, you were asked to increase Canada's educational and cultural interaction with the world, specifically by supporting the

Minister of Canadian Heritage to restore the PromArt and Trade Routes International cultural promotion programs, updating their design and increasing related funding.

My question is this: How do you plan to engage with other countries of the Francophonie in the area of education and culture? Furthermore, what contribution can our official language minority communities make with respect to the PromArt and Trade Routes programs?

Hon. Stéphane Dion, P.C., M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs: Thank you, senator. You are an extraordinary parliamentarian, and I am very proud that France recognized that yesterday. I'm sorry I wasn't able to be there, since I was taking part in a debate in the House, but I would like to say in front of all of your colleagues here what a well-deserved honour it is, especially considering the issues that you just raised. You have worked for these causes for your entire life.

Yes, I think that deserves applause.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Mr. Dion: I find it appalling that cultural diplomacy was dismantled by the previous government. We are trying to rebuild it. It won't be done overnight; we are taking it one step at a time. One of the first steps is to bring back some of the programs, perhaps not exactly as they were in the past, but Minister Joly is working on creating new, different, more modern programs. This will definitely have a considerable impact.

Some things were done that I think were unacceptable. Did it make any sense to withdraw funding supporting Canadian studies abroad? Imagine for a second if the Germans decided to shut down the Goethe Institutes or the French shut down the Alliances françaises.

Do we not want people around the world to be interested in us, to study us? Wouldn't we want our artists to receive help wherever they go? Do we not want to share with the world the varied French expressions unique to our country? Of course we do. We will do it. We will rebuild that capacity step by step. That is one of Prime Minister Trudeau's and our government's election promises.

• (1600)

[English]

FIGHT AGAINST ISIS

Hon. Salma Atallahjan: Minister, given that the audacious strength of ISIS comes from ideological support, even if the mission against them is successful, a void will be created that another extremist group will fill, the same way ISIS filled the void left after the fall of Saddam Hussein.

Your own defence minister this morning said that Canada's approach to the ISIS fight is being done in concert with a wider coalition plan, that dealing with ISIS is dealing with the son of al

Qaeda, and that you have to make sure you don't deal with the grandson of al Qaeda.

As a Muslim woman, I am particularly horrified by the ideology surrounding the treatment of women and young girls. Are any efforts being made to combat ISIS as an ideology rather than as just an army? If our new ISIS mission is in concert with coalition partners, who in the coalition advised Canada to remove our fighter jets?

Hon. Stéphane Dion, P.C., M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs: I fully agree, senator, with what you have said. If the ideology was not available, this terrorist group would not exist. It's because this ideology is available, and it's a perverse, terrible one. It's an ideology that convinces young persons that they will have their heaven if they kill human beings — men, women and children — in the most cruel way imaginable, and they believe it. That's terrible. We need to fight this propaganda, and it's part of our plan to strengthen Canada's contribution to fight the ideology of this completely unacceptable and false interpretation of Islam. So that's the first part.

In our plan, if you read the plan, you will see it's our intention to fight that, and our contribution to the coalition will be stronger.

The second question was about why the six fighter jets that Canada had in the area will stop participating in the bombing. The reason is because in the last weeks, we consulted with our allies, telling them that we have an electoral mandate to work with the coalition in a different way, to deploy our resources in a way that will be optimal for the coalition.

The fact is that the vast majority of experts agree that the coalition has no shortage of air strike capacity, but there is a terrible shortage of training for local troops and an unimaginable shortage of capacity to deploy humanitarian assistance and long-term development assistance. That's what we have decided to do, to address the needs of the coalition in an optimal way as part of a team of 65 countries. It's why this plan has been well received by our allies. It's why we remain confident that Canada will be more effective to fight the awful terrorist group that you rightly describe, and we will do it with courage and determination, as Canada always does.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, the time for Question Period has expired.

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, before Minister Dion leaves the Senate, I am certain that you will want to join me in thanking him for joining us today.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

The Hon. the Speaker: This is, colleagues, a rewarding experience. I hope, Minister Dion, that you will take the opportunity to return and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

ADJOURNMENT**MOTION ADOPTED**

Leave having been given to revert to Government Notices of Motions:

Hon. Joan Fraser (Deputy Leader of the Senate Liberals): Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-5(g), I move:

That when the Senate adjourns today, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, February 23, 2016, at 2 p.m.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to.)

(The Senate adjourned until Tuesday, February 23, 2016, at 2 p.m.)

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