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(HANSARD)

Tuesday, February 23, 2016

The Honourable GEORGE J. FUREY
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Tuesday, February 23, 2016

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

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

LEOPOLDO LOPEZ AND ANTONIO LEDEZMA

CONGRATULATIONS ON GENEVA SUMMIT COURAGE AWARD

Hon. A. Raynell Andreychuk: Honourable senators, I rise today to honour this year's recipients of the prestigious Geneva Summit Courage Award. This award is presented each year at the Geneva Summit for Human Rights and Democracy to acknowledge the ongoing dedication and sacrifice of international human rights activists. Recipients are selected by a 25-member NGO coalition spearheaded by UN Watch. This year, Venezuelan opposition leaders Leopoldo Lopez and Antonio Ledezma have been recognized with this honour.

Leopoldo Lopez, leader of the Popular Will party, was sentenced to serve nearly 14 years in prison for inciting violence during the 2014 protest. Last Thursday, February 18, marked the second anniversary of his incarceration in the Ramo Verde military prison.

Antonio Ledezma, mayor of Venezuela's capital, Caracas, was detained in February 2015 for allegedly plotting a coup. He is awaiting trial under house arrest.

In the words of UN Watch Executive Director Hillel Neuer, both men were chosen for the award "... for inspiring the world with their extraordinary courage in the defense of liberty and universal human rights."

Mr. Lopez and Mr. Ledezma embody the plight of hundreds of Venezuelans persecuted for peacefully opposing their government. This award reaffirms international support for the ongoing struggle of the people of Venezuela. Today I encourage Canadian parliamentarians and Canadians to stand with the members of the Geneva Summit Courage Award selection coalition in recognition of Mr. Lopez' and Mr. Ledezma's bravery.

Since early February 2014, Venezuela has been seized by frequent and violent political struggles. Shortages of basic necessities, such as food and life-saving medications, and rising inflation coupled with depleted national reserves have crippled the country. United in discontent, the people of Venezuela elected the first opposition-controlled Parliament in nearly 16 years on December 6, 2015.

The newly elected legislature has been tasked with finding a viable and sustainable solution to the challenges facing Venezuela. We should call on all parliamentarians to work together in

Venezuela for political, economic and social reconciliation. This must include the immediate release of all political prisoners, including Leopoldo Lopez and Antonio Ledezma. We call particularly on President Maduro to work with the new legislature for the benefit of the people of Venezuela.

Noting the Motion to Urge the Government of Venezuela to Immediately End all Unlawful Acts of Violence and Repression against Civilians, adopted in this chamber on March 12, 2015, I again stand today in solidarity with the people of Venezuela, urging the Government of Venezuela to uphold the principles of human rights and the rule of law. Thank you, honourable senators.

[Translation]

THE HONOURABLE CLAUDETTE TARDIF

CONGRATULATIONS ON FRENCH LEGION OF HONOUR

Hon. Serge Joyal: Honourable senators, on Wednesday, February 17, at the Embassy of France, the Ambassador of France to Canada, His Excellency Nicolas Chapuis, presented the insignia of Officer of the Legion of Honour, the highest honour in France, to our esteemed colleague from Alberta, the Honourable Senator Claudette Tardif.

This honour bestowed by the French Republic is a resounding acknowledgment of Senator Tardif's passionate contribution to promoting the French language and the French fact through her unwavering commitment to the Francophonie and her ongoing involvement in developing relations between France and Canada.

Senator Tardif's life and work have revolved around two well-defined objectives: education first, and then the French language. In fact, we could even broaden that horizon to linguistic duality and the rights of minorities, as protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Senator Tardif is a descendant of Quebec pioneers who settled in Alberta more than 100 years ago. From her ancestors she inherited the determination to overcome any challenge, no matter how big, to the recognition of her mother tongue, and her unshakeable belief in preserving her francophone identity, sharing it with her fellow Canadians and promoting it abroad.

Her experience as a teacher at Catholic schools in Edmonton and as a professor at the University of Alberta at the Faculté Saint-Jean, where she later served as a researcher and dean, illustrates her exceptional commitment to perpetuating the use of the French language and claiming its rightful place in the Canadian identity.

Following her Senate appointment in 2005, she was named Deputy Leader of the Opposition and chaired the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, and she used those platforms to defend language rights.

In 2009, Senator Tardif became the chair of the Canada-France Inter-Parliamentary Association, bringing fresh energy to the ties that bind our two countries, whose history and values are closely connected, and to the defence and promotion of the French language and the humanist culture they are founded upon.

Too often, the media focus on incidents that can tarnish the reputation of a particular senator. They always fail to recognize the exceptional qualities that many senators exhibit in the service of Canadians, minorities and the communities they hail from.

Senator Tardif is a perfect example of tireless dedication, a person driven by the strength of conviction, qualities that France has now officially recognized. She has done the Senate proud, and we should all congratulate and thank her.

[English]

SASKATCHEWAN

ESTEVAN—EFFECTS OF ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

Hon. Denise Batters: Honourable senators, I rise today to bring to your attention the detrimental effects that the collapse of oil prices and the economic downturn have had on communities in my home province of Saskatchewan.

The small city of Estevan, Saskatchewan, is a case in point. Estevan is particularly close to my heart, as this was my husband's hometown; it was where I first practised law and where I got married. Estevan is also at the heart of Saskatchewan's economy. It is the energy capital of Saskatchewan — a normal bustling, thriving, entrepreneurial place. Many say it is a microcosm of the city of Calgary.

• (1410)

As in Calgary, the downturn in the oil sector has had a devastating effect on Estevan. Retail services and restaurants are down by about 30 per cent; and hotels are down by 50 per cent. Four restaurants have closed, and the landmark Derrick Motor Hotel has shut its doors for good. Traffic patterns in the city have completely changed due to lessened industrial activity. Most significantly, the people of Estevan are hurting. Unemployment is on the rise, and families face an uncertain future. The Employment Insurance benefits of those who have lost their jobs are about to run out.

But Estevan is known as the sunshine capital of Canada, and for good reason. Its people are resilient; they are optimistic; and they are hopeful that their oil industry will once again thrive. And there is hope on that vast Prairie horizon — the proposed Energy East pipeline. It would allow the West's oil resources to flow to Eastern Canada and on to new markets. Communities like Estevan — communities built on hard work and entrepreneurial spirit — would be able to capitalize on these new markets to better weather the current economic slump.

Given the obvious advantages of the Energy East pipeline, one would expect the Trudeau government to leap at the chance to break ground on this crucial project. Yet, it seems that this Liberal government's "sunny ways" campaign doesn't extend to Saskatchewan's communities. In fact, the Trudeau Liberals have

practically employed a full-time fog machine as they stall, waffle and obfuscate on this issue. The people of Estevan recognize the Trudeau government for what it is: all talk and no action — or as we in the West like to say, all hat and no cattle.

Former MP Peter MacKay wrote in yesterday's *National Post*:

... without access to tidewater, Canada will forever be forced to sell Canadian oil and gas to a limited number of markets at discounted prices.

Clearly, this puts the citizens of Estevan, of Saskatchewan and of Canada at a significant disadvantage.

Honourable senators, the people of Estevan are industrious. They want to contribute to their communities and their country. They want to hope for a better future. That future lies in the Energy East pipeline. It's time that this Liberal government started taking advice on the oil sector from the hard-working people in resource communities like Estevan — people who are the economic engine of this country — rather than from Montreal Mayor Denis Coderre. The future of Estevan and the country depends on it.

WORLD THINKING DAY

Hon. Elizabeth Hubley: Honourable senators, yesterday, February 22, was World Thinking Day to members of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. The date marks the shared birthdays of Guiding and Scouting founders Lord and Lady Baden-Powell.

More than a century ago, when Lord Baden-Powell organized a Boy Scout rally in London, a large number of girls ignored convention and showed up wearing backpacks and Scout hats. Now there are 10 million Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in 146 countries around the globe. Here at home, tens of thousands of girls and women are proud to be Guiding members.

This year's theme for World Thinking Day is Connect with Guiding, and the theme aims to help girls explore how connections unite us, inspire us and help us to communicate with one another. Through educational and fun activities, they will learn more about their Guiding friends locally, their twinning partners in the western hemisphere and Guiding sisters around the globe.

February 22 is also called Founder's Day by the World Organization of the Scout Movement. It seems appropriate for me to pay special tribute here to one of Prince Edward Island's most devoted Scouting members, Mr. Roscoe Pendleton, who passed away earlier this month at the age of 75. Mr. Pendleton had been a member of the Scouting movement for 65 years and an enthusiastic and hardworking adult volunteer in a variety of Scouting roles. I have no doubt that his passing will leave a considerable void.

After Lord Baden-Powell passed away in 1941, his last message to members was released, in which he described the purpose of Scouting and Guiding. He wrote:

Its aim is to produce healthy, happy, helpful citizens, of both sexes, to eradicate the prevailing narrow self-interest, personal, political, sectarian and national, and to substitute

for it a broader spirit of self-sacrifice and service in the cause of humanity; and thus to develop mutual goodwill and co-operation not only within our own country but abroad, between all countries.

This message is just as important today. Guiding and Scouting help youth learn essential life skills and to be leaders in their own communities and around the world, bringing them together in peace and understanding.

Honourable senators, please join me in recognizing the members of Girl Guides of Canada and Scouts Canada, as well as their counterparts around the world, and wishing them all a very happy World Thinking Day.

THE LATE JOHN (JACK) CENNON

Hon. David Tkachuk: Honourable senators, on January 29 this year a Saskatchewan icon died. Jack Cennon was 93. He had a long life by any measure, but longevity isn't everything. The thing about Jack is that he filled those 93 years. He was a musician, a radio broadcaster, a veteran of World War II, a husband, and a father of five children, Janet, Gale, Robin Patrick, and the late Paul. He made a living in radio, a profession that he was practically born to. At the tender age of 12, he won a talent contest at CFQC, and at 16 he led his own dance band on a radio program sponsored by the Dairy Pool.

His obituary was 800 words, and listing the number of organizations he belonged to took up a good portion of that. He was a member of the St. Albans Cathedral and choir for 30 years, a Kinsmen member, a member of the Prince Albert Chamber of Commerce, Chair of the Tourist Convention Committee, a member of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters, and a director of the United Appeal. And the list goes on.

He was best known for his work in radio and TV. He started out in Saskatoon working at CFQC from 1936 until 1941. After the war, in 1948 he moved to Prince Albert to join CKBI radio where he hosted the popular *Wake up, Shake up* show for 40 years. It's a show that I grew up with.

But none of this actually describes Jack. As his good friend, Jim Zapaniuk, put it: "I don't know of anyone who didn't like Jack." When asked about Jack's work ethic, Jim said, "Jack didn't have any; he was just a natural at being personable, entertaining and likeable." That likability came out in a segment of his radio show known as "mental munching." He would ask for, or find, listeners to send in something positive or uplifting that happened to them; and you could count on it. At 10 minutes to nine o'clock, he would convey that to his other listeners so that they could start their day on a positive note. He turned those anecdotes into eight books over the years. That about sums up Jack. He was kind and caring, and people loved him, which explains why for some time he had the largest radio audience in the province.

He also ran for the Progressive Conservatives in 1988, which is another reason why I liked him. In the 800-word obituary, the 10 words that stuck out most to me were these: "He laughed often and often laughed until the tears flowed."

Hon. David Tkachuk

He was a larger-than-life radio personality in my province. He was a recipient in 1980 of the Order of Canada. On behalf of the Senate, condolences go out to his children, his other family members and his close friends who survive him.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

THE ESTIMATES, 2015-16

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (C) TABLED

Hon. Joan Fraser (Deputy Leader of the Senate Liberals): Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 14-1(3), I ask for leave to table, in both official languages, the Supplementary Estimates (C), for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

[Translation]

THE ESTIMATES, 2016-17

PARTS I AND II TABLED

Hon. Joan Fraser (Deputy Leader of the Senate Liberals): Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 14-1(13), I ask for leave of the Senate to table, in both official languages, Parts I and II of the 2016-17 Main Estimates.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

• (1420)

[English]

NON-NUCLEAR SANCTIONS AGAINST IRAN BILL

FIRST READING

Hon. David Tkachuk introduced Bill S-219, An Act to deter Iran-sponsored terrorism, incitement to hatred, and human rights violations.

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AMEND THE RULES OF THE SENATE AND THE ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST CODE FOR SENATORS TO PROVIDE FOR A REPRESENTATIVE OF INDEPENDENT, NON-PARTISAN SENATORS TO BE ELECTED TO THE ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR SENATORS COMMITTEE

Hon. John D. Wallace: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That, in order to provide for a representative of independent, non-partisan senators to be elected to the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators;

1. The *Rules of the Senate* be amended by replacing rule 12-27(1) by the following:

“Appointment of Committee

12-27. (1) As soon as practicable at the beginning of each session, the Leader of the recognized party with the largest number of Senators shall move a motion, seconded by the Leader of the recognized party with the second largest number of Senators, on the membership of the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators. This motion shall be deemed adopted without debate or vote, and a similar motion shall be moved for any substitutions in the membership of the Committee.”; and

2. The *Ethics and Conflict of Interest Code for Senators* be amended by replacing subsections 35(4) to (6) by the following:

“Election of members

(4) Two of the Committee members shall be elected by secret ballot in the caucus of the recognized party with the largest number of Senators at the opening of the session; two of the Committee members shall be elected by secret ballot in the caucus of the recognized party with the second largest number of Senators at the opening of the session; the fifth member shall be elected by secret ballot by the majority of the Senators who are authorized to attend sittings of the Senate and who do not belong to the caucus of the recognized party with either the largest or second largest number of Senators at an in camera meeting called by the Clerk of the Senate at the opening of the session.

Presentation and adoption of motion

(5) The Leader of the recognized party with the largest number of Senators, seconded by the Leader of the recognized party with the second largest number of

Senators, shall present a motion on the full membership of the Committee to the Senate, which motion shall be deemed adopted without any debate or vote.

Chair

(6) The Chair of the Committee shall be elected by its five members.”

[Translation]

THE ESTIMATES, 2015-16

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE NATIONAL FINANCE COMMITTEE TO STUDY SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (C) AND MEET DURING SITTINGS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Larry W. Smith: 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 National Finance be authorized to examine and report upon the expenditures set out in the Supplementary Estimates (C) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016; and

That, until March 31, 2016, the committee be authorized to meet for the purposes of this study even though the Senate may then be sitting, with the application of rule 12-18(1) being suspended in relation thereto.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

The Hon. the Speaker: Accordingly, it is ordered that this motion be placed on the Notice Paper for later this day.

THE ESTIMATES, 2016-17

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE NATIONAL FINANCE COMMITTEE TO STUDY MAIN ESTIMATES AND MEET DURING SITTINGS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Larry W. Smith: 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 National Finance be authorized to examine and report upon the expenditures set out in the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017, with the exception of Library of Parliament Vote 1; and

That, until June 30, 2016, the committee be authorized to meet for the purposes of this study even though the Senate may then be sitting, with the application of rule 12-18(1) being suspended in relation thereto.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

The Hon. the Speaker: Accordingly, it is ordered that this motion be placed on the Notice Paper for later this day.

[English]

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE JOINT
COMMITTEE ON THE LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT TO
STUDY VOTE 1 OF THE MAIN ESTIMATES

Hon. Joan Fraser (Deputy Leader of the Senate Liberals): Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament be authorized to examine and report upon the expenditures set out in Library of Parliament Vote 1 of the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017, if and when that committee has organized; and

That a message be sent to the House of Commons to acquaint that House accordingly.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

NATIONAL SEAL PRODUCTS DAY BILL

SECOND READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Hervieux-Payette, P.C., seconded by the Honourable Senator Joyal, P.C., for the second reading of Bill S-208, An Act respecting National Seal Products Day.

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak in support of Bill S-208, An Act respecting National Seal Products Day.

I would like to begin by thanking Senator Hervieux-Payette for her long-time support for and defence of the seal industry in Canada.

It's difficult for me not to get emotional in discussing the subject of this bill since I have been privileged, as have Senator Hervieux-Payette and other honourable senators in this house, to have lived and hunted with the Inuit, so I know this subject well. To me, this bill is about another step in restoring the credibility and dignity of the Inuit around this issue of sealing. While I will confine my remarks to the Inuit in my region, I would like to strongly express my great respect for the sealers of the

St. Lawrence, the Magdalens and the Atlantic, those in Newfoundland and Labrador in particular. I hope they can benefit from this bill as well as the Inuit.

Why do I get emotional about this? Because I know from my seal hunting friends how dispiriting it was for proud, independent, respected hunters to quickly lose the market for their pelts and be told that it was because sealing was considered to be cruel and inhumane. This resulted in the decline of a traditional renewable resource economy of the Inuit.

• (1430)

I also get emotional because I know full well how hazardous and demanding seal harvesting is in the Arctic. Last April, a well-respected and beloved local hunter where I live, Sandy Oolayuk, did not return from spring seal hunting at Ward Inlet, near Iqaluit. This was a devastating blow to our community in the midst of our annual festival celebrating the coming of spring, called "*Toonik Tyme*."

Just three weeks ago, on a minus 30-degree day, Mosesee Kownirk's harpoon, snowmobile and sled were found at the floe edge, where he'd been hunting seals for his family. Mosesee is believed to have slipped into the sea while recovering a seal. And there are many more.

Let me take a moment to explain a little bit about how I came to know about seals and seal harvesting.

My first summer in the North, I was invited to go to a fishing spot at Iqalugarjuk, in Pangnirtung Fjord, by the late Meeka Kilabuk and her family. It was the summer of 1975 and Meeka's brother, Josephee, was given responsibility for taking care of an ill-dressed and ill-prepared for the cold white guy from the South — that was me. We travelled in sub-zero waters and I sat on the floor, in the bow of a canvas and wood 26-foot freighter canoe. How cold I got after a day of travelling in those frigid waters! Seawater in the Arctic is actually below zero in temperature in the summer, and in that wooden canvas-covered freighter canoe, I was cold to my bones. My ski jacket with no hood was useless and my leather boots did not help keep my feet warm at all.

Josephee, our leader, spotted a seal and shot it. As it was being brought into the canoe and expertly butchered, his wife Annie started up the Coleman stove to boil some Lipton's vegetable soup for that fresh seal meat. Upon eating the fresh cooked seal meat, I almost immediately felt powerful warmth surging through my blood vessels like molten metal, warming my hands and feet, giving me energy and a great feeling of well-being. That seal meat was like a tonic which warmed me from head to toe. It amazed me. Power food, I thought. And it is.

Meeka went on to become a famed seamstress. In 2008, she was awarded first place for the North American Fur and Fashion Exhibition in Montreal Student Design Award and the following year was recognized again with second place. After graduating in 2009, Meeka was chosen as one of the eight finalists from 300 worldwide entries in the International Fur Trade Federation's REMIX competition for emerging designers. This accomplishment was rewarded with the opportunity to return to Milan to study and work with international fashion and fur trade members and marked the first time an Inuk woman from Canada was a finalist in this prestigious competition.

Later, after that first memorable experience discovering seal meat, I learned the great art and challenge of hunting seals on the spring sea ice. I know Senator George Baker knows about this, because he has hunted seals on the ice. He knows how nutritious and healthy they are. So does my friend Senator Watt and my colleague Senator David Wells.

Stalking seals that lie by their seal holes in the spring sun is very challenging, for the seal can see and hear and smell you as you stalk. I used the traditional white blind, the *taluaq*, while I was learning. One only has one chance to shoot the seal in the head at 200 yards, in blinding bright sunlight. Although I was in my late 20s at that time, I was feted like an adolescent celebrating his first hunt when I brought back my first seal. Seals have provided heat, light, clothing and sustenance for Inuit for millennia.

Like many Aboriginal cultures, it was important to harvest only what was needed and to ensure that nothing was wasted. Seal fat was rendered into oil for a traditional crescent-shaped stone lamp, called a *qulliq*; while the skin was used for everything, from clothing, to boots, to tents and harpoon lines. Even the bones were repurposed into tools and utensils, while the bladders were used to make floats for harpoon lines.

Seals are hunted respectfully and humanely by Inuit.

Today, northern communities buy meat, fruits and vegetables from southern Canada that must be flown in over great distances and at great expense. So-called “country foods,” like seal meat, are a healthier, more nutritious option than most southern food. It’s got all the vitamins and nutrients of lettuce and tomatoes and much more. Seal is the best omega oil you can find. It’s part of my daily diet and it’s made in Canada. Senator Nancy Greene Raine knows all about the benefits of seal oil and omega. Just look at her.

For Inuit to harvest and eat country food makes economic sense and is a very healthy food choice. We should encourage this in a land where junk food and smoking are sadly endemic.

Today, sealskin continues to be a popular choice for clothing in the North and is becoming increasingly in demand in southern markets. The Nunavut Arts and Crafts Association recently examined the sales of seal products at southern events such as the recent Northern Lights Conference in Ottawa and at fashion shows. The association has found a 25 per cent increase in sales over the previous two years.

In a recent raw material sale in Iqaluit, the community had access to 100 pelts which were sold in less than one hour, indicating a need and a demand for raw materials. The Nunavut Arts and Crafts Association, which is well placed to promote marketing of seal products made by Inuit, will soon be hosting another sale that will offer 700 pelts to various communities to increase the availability to designers across Nunavut.

Despite this encouraging news, the seal industry has been adversely affected for decades after being severely maligned by mainstream media reports rooted in ignorance and a misguided European Union regulation banning the import of Canadian seal products.

Inuit were portrayed as savage; the seal hunt was labelled a massacre, a slaughter by reckless, gleeful barbarians. This harsh language has been deeply hurtful to the Inuit, who have a spiritual relationship with the land and who hunt seals and other marine and land animals respectfully and effectively.

However, Greenpeace, the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals and all the celebrities, including Brigitte Bardot — a woman whom I worshiped as a goddess in my younger days, I’m ashamed to confess — and Pamela Anderson, who is no Brigitte Bardot, were very successful in seriously damaging the market for seal pelts without offering any reasonable alternative to the Inuit, whose very existence in their harsh ecological niche is predicated on hunting animals. This has also led to the dangerous overpopulation of seals, who are gobbling up tonnes of our valuable fish products.

The 2010 EU ban on Canadian seal product was implemented on the notion that it caused undue pain and suffering to the animals. When this was challenged by the Inuit of Canada, the General Court of the European Union stated, in its April 25, 2013 ruling, that the claim that the EU ban drastically reduces the market for seal products was “general in nature and not substantiated” and, as such, these claims did “not demonstrate that the Inuit communities have suffered harm which is disproportionate compared with the objective pursued by the basic regulation.”

Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated President Cathy Towtongie expressed her outrage at this ruling, stating:

Respect for Indigenous Peoples in the contemporary world means accepting that Indigenous Peoples are best positioned to know their self-interests. It is arrogant and condescending for an EU court to claim to know better particularly when it is abundantly clear that the seal ban adds to the difficult economic and social challenges being faced by Inuit. It amounts to an attack on our way of life.

I saw the devastating impact of this ban and the subsequent slump in the price of seal. It was a cruel blow to a proud and self-reliant people.

But now things have changed. I believe the Europeans now understand the devastating impact their ban had on indigenous harvesters and are now allowing seal products into their huge markets via an exemption for products harvested by Aboriginals. I am confident that the Inuit will capitalize on that opportunity.

• (1440)

I’m also happy that Environment and Climate Change Canada has given Nunavut-based organizations \$150,000 that will enable them to resume marketing to the EU through the granted Aboriginal exemption on seal products. The Nunavut Arts and Crafts Association, for example, is hoping to tour internationally a recent exhibition featuring the use of sealskin in the contemporary arts scene.

I believe many of you have been to Seal Day on the Hill in previous years. Some have even modelled beautiful seal fashion creations. I am confident Inuit will leap into the fashion world

with stunning new designs and arresting creations, while also expanding their market for the rejuvenating benefits of seal oil and meat. This bill will encourage that to happen.

In closing, I'd like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to former MP Leona Aglukkaq as Canada's representative on the Arctic Council. From the first time she represented Canada in Greenland, she stood up for sealers. It was her quiet diplomacy that led to the European Union's application for observer status to the Arctic Council being put in abeyance to determine whether the EU would make efforts to meet the prerequisite of being respectful of indigenous rights in the Arctic.

I hope that she will write her memoirs about how she persuaded Secretary of State John Kerry to help her broker a deal with the Europeans to reconsider their approach to the Inuit, in particular. It was that deal that led to the breakthrough we are celebrating in this bill. That is why we are able to finally give meaning and respect to the Aboriginal seal hunter.

Qujannamiik.

Hon. David M. Wells: Honourable senators, I am pleased to rise in support of Bill S-208, An Act respecting National Seal Products Day. As my esteemed colleague Senator Maltais so correctly stated in the chamber last week, by having a national seal products day, we are paying homage to an important industry that many Canadians quite rightly rely upon.

The bill will designate May 20 as national seal products day. The seal hunt generally takes place from late March to mid-May. I am pleased to see that Senator Hervieux-Payette has incorporated last session's Fisheries and Oceans Committee's amendments to her previous bill. I and other members of that committee felt that removing "and seafood products day" would bring greater significance and would highlight the importance of the seal industry.

This designation is much more than symbolic. It's a rallying point to defend our traditions and our industries.

It's crucial to promote Canada's sustainable humane seal hunt and to defend this important way of life for our coastal Canadians. In Budget 2015, the previous government's allocation of \$5.7 million over five years to help secure new market access for Canadian products was seen as an important step.

For Canada, sealing is more than about fur. It is a way of life for thousands of families and an activity of great importance to the people of the Atlantic provinces, Quebec and the North, as well as to my colleagues Senator Patterson, Senator Watt, Senator Baker — I wasn't aware he had spent time on the ice — and me.

As Senator Patterson just pointed out, this is as much a cultural activity as it is an economic one. In other words, seal harvesting is not a hobby or a pastime; it has deep roots in the cultures of the North, Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador, and it continues to contribute to their communities, both culturally and economically.

No part of the animal goes to waste. The meat is prized for its high protein and taste, while the skin is used to make warm waterproof boots, mitts, coats and hats. Artisans also use sealskin

to make arts and crafts for the tourism industry, and the oil is processed into important nutritional and health products.

The principle of sustainable use entails full utilization of the seal. It's important to support a sustainable, humane seal hunt and continue to encourage the full use of the seal. We should tell the facts about sealing and the effects of seal populations on marine ecosystems to combat misleading attacks on the hunt from radical animal-rights activists.

As Canadians, we should not shy away from defending the interests of legitimate sustainable and lawful activities of any industry against misinformation campaigns — campaigns that are entirely focused on fundraising. I respect the right of organizations and individuals to voice their opposition to the seal harvest, but I do not condone the spread of lies and misinformation about the humaneness and sustainability of Canada's seal harvest. Animal-rights groups often use charged imagery to elicit emotional responses. The reality is quite different. Sealers are highly trained and prosecute the hunt responsibly and with respect for the rules and regulations. Further, it is unacceptable and inexcusable to punish the Canadian seal-sector workers based on this information.

The Canadian seal harvest is clearly sustainable. The overall Atlantic seal population, including harp seals, grey seals and hood seals, is healthy and abundant. The harp seal biomass is currently estimated at 7.5 million animals, which is over three times what it was in the 1970s. The exponential growth of seal populations is having a severe effect on Canadian fish stocks. In the Gulf of St. Lawrence, an exploding grey seal population is responsible for almost half the mortality of adult cod, according to DFO and independent science.

The notion that there is no demand for Canadian seal products is not accurate. There is global demand for seal products. Between 2004 and 2010, Canada exported over \$70 million worth of seal products to more than 35 countries, including seal pelts, value-added garments and edible products.

The seal harvest in Atlantic Canada is subject to stringent regulations and licence conditions put in place in 2009, based on the recommendations from the Independent Veterinarians Working Group, a team of international experts brought together by the World Wildlife Fund to look at animal-welfare issues in the context of the Canadian seal harvest. These rules ensure that animals are harvested quickly and humanely.

In addition, there are fines, penalties and forfeitures, and orders are assessed by provincial courts. The Fisheries Act provides for a fine of up to \$100,000 for a first offence upon summary conviction. Seven years ago, the Government of Canada — the previous government — strengthened the Marine Mammal Regulations to formalize already well-established humane harvesting practices. Regulatory amendments articulate a prescribed three-step process that is in keeping with international scientific standards and provide for a safe and humane harvest.

We should remain committed to supporting jobs and economic growth, which include the benefits to northern and coastal regions of the country provided by the responsible use of our natural resources, including that of the seal industry.

Designating May 20 as a national day to support this industry is another way to defend the traditions of Canada's Aboriginal people and coastal communities. By raising awareness of the cultural, health, economic and environmental importance of the seal harvest, we can help continue the fight against misconceptions and prejudice.

Colleagues, even though I am the critic of this bill, it is important to the sealing industry, and as a proud Canadian who has participated in the annual seal hunt, I encourage you to support this very important bill and the industry as a whole.

Thank you.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and bill read second time.)

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

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

(On motion of Senator Hervieux-Payette, bill referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.)

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Mr. Andriy Parubiy, First Deputy Speaker to the Ukrainian parliament, and Mr. Andriy Shevchenko. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Andreychuk.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

• (1450)

[Translation]

THE SENATE

MOTION TO AFFECT QUESTION PERIOD ON FEBRUARY 24, 2016 ADOPTED

Hon. Claude Carignan (Leader of the Opposition), pursuant to notice of February 18, 2016, moved:

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.

He said: Honourable senators, I move the motion standing in my name.

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

(Motion agreed to.)

[English]

NATIONAL FINANCE

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

Hon. Larry W. Smith, pursuant to notice of February 18, 2016, moved:

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 tabling of the final report.

Hon. Joan Fraser (Deputy Leader of the Senate Liberals): Would Senator Smith accept a question?

Senator L. Smith: Certainly.

Senator Fraser: Can you please tell us whether the committee is envisaging special expenses, notably travel, for the purposes of this study?

Senator L. Smith: At this point, it would look like most activity would take place in Ottawa, where we would have witnesses coming in to discuss issues of infrastructure. There may be a point when we would decide to visit certain communities, but there is nothing on the books at this particular time.

We would come back to the people that look at budgets of travel, like I used to when I was chair, and make sure that we submit something that was in order and credible for the committee to review.

Hon. Jane Cordy: This looks like an excellent study that this committee is undertaking, and there is no better committee to be studying this issue than the Finance Committee.

I note that the report is due December 31. The majority of reports that we're hearing about are planned on being released either the end of December or the end of June. I'm wondering if you understand that if there are 10 other committees with the same date the communications department of the Senate can only do so much work, and it's better if it's off one of those dates.

Senator L. Smith: We're aware of the challenges that committees are faced with in terms of getting the reports out and attracting public interest. At this particular time I would suggest that it's early in the stages of what we're doing. We're going to be very active in the next two months with the estimates and the budgets and, of course, with Supplementary Estimates C. It's all part of a plan.

The reason we selected this issue is because it is something that is important to our country and needs to be analyzed in further detail so that we can see results, priorities and make sure that the taxpayers receive the maximum benefit and economic spinoffs.

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

(Motion agreed to.)

SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY THE ISSUE OF DEMENTIA IN OUR SOCIETY

Hon. Kelvin Kenneth Ogilvie, pursuant to notice of February 18, 2016, moved:

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.

He said: Honourable senators, I think the importance of this issue is not lost on anyone in this chamber. It is a topic that arises continuously within our country. There have been certain senators who have been on a committee recently in which this issue has appeared as a very important one, and the question of services available to those suffering in this area across the country is a major concern. That is one of the major reasons that we ask to be given permission to review this.

With regard to expenses, it is anticipated at this time that the major expense would be the production of a report in the end. The committee has no plans to travel at this point.

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

(Motion agreed to.)

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY THE ELEMENTS RELATED TO ITS MANDATE FOUND IN CERTAIN MINISTERIAL MANDATE LETTERS

Hon. Kelvin Kenneth Ogilvie, pursuant to notice of February 18, 2016, moved:

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.

He said: Honourable senators, you will recognize this as a motion very similar to those from other committees, requesting permission to invite ministers whose portfolios and mandate letters fall within the mandate of our committee, to be able to speak with them, to question them and get advice from them with regard to issues facing the government in those areas.

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

(Motion agreed to.)

• (1500)

THE ESTIMATES, 2015-16

NATIONAL FINANCE COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (C) AND MEET DURING SITTINGS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Larry W. Smith, pursuant to notice of earlier this day, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance be authorized to examine and report upon the expenditures set out in the Supplementary Estimates (C) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016; and

That, until March 31, 2016, the committee be authorized to meet for the purposes of this study even though the Senate may then be sitting, with the application of rule 12-18(1) being suspended in relation thereto.

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

(Motion agreed to.)

THE ESTIMATES, 2016-17

NATIONAL FINANCE COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY MAIN ESTIMATES AND MEET DURING SITTINGS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Larry W. Smith, pursuant to notice of earlier this day, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance be authorized to examine and report upon the expenditures set out in the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017, with the exception of Library of Parliament Vote 1; and

That, until June 30, 2016, the committee be authorized to meet for the purposes of this study even though the Senate may then be sitting, with the application of rule 12-18(1) being suspended in relation thereto.

He said: I will add a quick comment. As everyone understands, we are in a period of financial instability throughout the world, and our ability to have the necessary time to go over these documents in great detail is of paramount importance. I thank you again for your anticipated support of our study of the Main Estimates.

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

(Motion agreed to.)

(The Senate adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.)

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