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THE HONOURABLE DAN HAYS
SPEAKER

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THE SENATE

Wednesday, March 26, 2003

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

Prayers.

THE HONOURABLE BETTY KENNEDY, O.C.

TRIBUTES ON RETIREMENT

Hon. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I rise in the chamber to pay tribute today to a former senator who retired from the Senate in January of 2001. Unfortunately, at the time of Senator Betty Kennedy's retirement, we were unable to accommodate a tribute to her in the chamber. However, we are privileged to have her with us today, once again, for the honour of allowing us to do so.

In June 2000, Betty Kennedy was appointed to the Senate of Canada, but her long career began long before she became a parliamentarian.

Betty Kennedy is probably best known to Canadians as a panellist on Canada's longest running television program, CBC's *Front Page Challenge*, but through her long career as a journalist, she did it all. She worked as a print reporter, a radio reporter, as a television reporter and as a broadcaster. Her career as a journalist began right here in Ottawa when, as a teenager, she was a reporter for the *Ottawa Citizen*. After a strike closed down that newspaper in the 1940s, Betty made the move to radio.

In 1959, she became public affairs editor at CFRB in Toronto, one of Canada's largest radio stations. She stayed with them for 27 years and became one of Toronto's best-known media personalities and one of Toronto's best-known voices. As host of *The Betty Kennedy Show*, it is estimated that she interviewed 25,000 guests, including every Prime Minister since Louis St. Laurent. Of course, she is much too young to have interviewed the ones before that.

Betty Kennedy has received numerous honours and awards, including the Order of Canada and an induction in the Canadian Association of Broadcasters' Broadcast Hall of Fame. She also served as a director of some of Canada's largest corporations, including the Bank of Montreal, Simpson's and Northern Telecom. She served on several government advisory committees, including the Ontario Education Communications Authority, the Metro Toronto Hospital Planning Council and the Advisory Committee of the Minister of State for Finance. She was the first woman chair of the University of Western Ontario's Advisory Council and was the first non-medical member of the Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. Between all of this, she found time to write two books.

When Betty Kennedy came to the Senate, she served on the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. She participated in our debates on a variety of

social affairs issues, including health care and early childhood education, issues I know that are very near and dear to her heart. I know, for example by personal experience, that she constantly encouraged me in my work on behalf of those Canadians who are dying and who require quality end-of-life care.

On behalf of the Senate of Canada, I express our appreciation for your many contributions, Senator Kennedy, not the least of which is the time that you spent here with us, in this chamber.

Hon. Consiglio Di Nino: Honourable senators, I am pleased to rise today and add a few words in appreciation of Senator Betty Kennedy. Although she retired from the Senate just over two years ago, this is our first opportunity to properly thank her for her service here and to acknowledge her other considerable accomplishments.

Senator Kennedy is part of a long and proud tradition of talented, capable women in this chamber. At a time when women were not encouraged to enter public life, not to mention work outside of the home, Senator Kennedy pursued a career in broadcasting, first in print, then radio, and most notably in television, as you heard, with 30-odd years as a panellist on CBC's *Front Page Challenge*. I may add, as a Torontonians, that she had a long and distinguished career at radio station CFRB, which I still listen to all the time.

• (1340)

I would add as well, Madam Minister, that one of those 25,000 people she interviewed was myself. I thank you for that. That was the end of her career.

Honourable senators, in addition to her journalistic endeavours, she has given her time and energy to many charitable and voluntary groups. As you heard, she was the first non-medical member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. She has also served as honorary chair for both, the Canadian Cancer Society and the Canadian Save the Children Foundation. The senator has been justly recognized for her many undertakings, including a member of the Order of Canada, and has been inducted in the Canadian Association of Broadcasters Hall of Fame.

Honourable senators, Betty Kennedy has become a household name but, more important, she has earned countrywide respect for her standard of excellence in all of her endeavours and as an exemplary leader, not only for women but also for all Canadians. Senator Kennedy's time in this chamber was, regrettably, of short duration, for her contributions to Canadian society have been numerous and exceptional. We thank her for a lifetime of journalistic excellence and charitable work and congratulate her for her time spent here in the Senate. We wish her and her family the very best in the future.

Hon. Isobel Finnerty: Honourable senators, the name Betty Kennedy is a household word in Canada. It is a name that means excellence in television journalism. It is a name that recalls memories of one of Canada's most popular public affairs programs of all time, *Front Page Challenge*. It is a name that was associated with this chamber for a brief interval.

When Betty Kennedy was summoned here, there was oohing and awing from the media across the country. Everyone applauded the choice of Betty Kennedy. Our Canadian Constitution, however, prevented us from benefiting from her insights for very long. Alas, her appointment was too late in her life and far too brief a period.

I have heard, however, that in her post-senator life she has been busy pursuing other opportunities as a Senate booster. What a worthwhile and noble occupation for a former senator. I believe more and more Canadians are beginning to appreciate the valuable contribution being made by the Senate in the public affairs of this nation. The contribution that Betty Kennedy has been making to promote and enhance the communication of our work is greatly needed and deeply appreciated. I am delighted to join others in wishing Betty Kennedy every success in her endeavours.

Hon. J. Trevor Eyton: Honourable senators, I, too, rise to pay tribute to one of Canada's most remarkable journalism professionals and a pioneer in the television industry. I am proud to say that she has been a personal friend of mine for many years — in fact, more years than I want to confess here.

Betty Kennedy's presence graced this chamber for much too short a time, but all of us in this chamber have had the opportunity of watching this accomplished journalist on television for some 30 years, and we are better for it. It is a testament to her extensive involvement in our Canadian media that I can describe her to most Canadians, without mentioning her name, and the majority who have undoubtedly spent hours riveted by her and by her former fellow panellists recognize her instantly.

Let me set the scene. With host Fred Davis hovering above the panellists, on the far left is Gordon Sinclair wearing a wild jacket and tie; on the far right, flanking the guest panellist, sits the provocative Pierre Berton; and, in the centre of the august panel, like a rose between two thorns, sits our Betty Kennedy, adding class and compassion to the show.

Betty Kennedy remains an icon in the Canadian media, just as her television show, *Front Page Challenge*, is a symbol to Canadian television. She, along with others like June Callwood, and her predecessor, Toby Robbins, opened the gates of journalism to all women. She demonstrated the importance in the media of showing care and witty intelligence.

Honourable senators know, the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications is embarking on a major multi-year study on our media and its present and future challenges. I am sure that that committee would value Betty Kennedy's wealth of experience as it delves into this complex

subject. Her print experience in the 1930s, her radio experience in the 1940s, and her television experience over nearly 3 decades, would be invaluable to this committee, and I hope she will be available.

Betty Kennedy's renowned tenacity has translated into a fervent support of Canadian media and the arts. To Betty Kennedy and to her family, I say thank you for your many contributions to Canada and to Canadians over a long and distinguished career. I am sure that, even though you retired from the Senate after much too short a time, you will continue to make significant contributions to the development of the arts in Canada. For this, Betty, we are all, forever, thankful. We are hopeful that we will continue to see you often, both in the course of our work and our play.

Hon. Raymond Setlakwe: Honourable senators, I endorse everything that has been said about my former seatmate and this great woman who was appointed to the Senate at the same time I was. It was with grace and honour that she bestowed so much pleasure and so much dignity on this place. I would like to add what I have already told her in person, namely, that she exemplifies that type of person who is an outward, visible sign of an inward, spiritual grace.

Welcome back!

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I draw your attention to the presence, in our gallery of our former colleague Betty Kennedy and as well, Nick Taylor. Welcome.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

SENATOR'S STATEMENTS

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

WAR WITH IRAQ—HUMANITARIAN AID AND RECONSTRUCTION

Hon. Noël A. Kinsella (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, the Senate of Canada is ideally situated in our parliamentary system to be helpful in the current international crisis by the advancement of concrete suggestions as to measures Canada could undertake. Therefore, first, I should like to call upon the Government of the Canada to immediately send a field hospital unit to the Persian Gulf to provide for medical assistance to those injured as a result of the current conflict in Iraq, whether coalition forces or Iraqi civilians.

Second, I call upon the Government of Canada to immediately make a significant financial contribution to the international Red Crescent and Red Cross for their work in the Iraqi theatre.

Third, I call upon the Government of Canada to dispatch immediately a shipload of Canadian wheat to the Persian Gulf and Iraq.

Fourth, I call upon the Canadian government to dispatch potable water to the Persian Gulf and Iraq.

Fifth, I urge the Canadian government to forward shipments of other humanitarian aid forthwith.

Sixth, I call upon the Canadian government to instruct Canadian military ships in the Persian Gulf to guarantee safe passage of this aid into Iraq.

Finally, I call upon the Government of Canada to mobilize Canadian diplomats to promote motions and resolutions across the many agencies of the United Nations family to facilitate reconstruction and humanitarian development in Iraq.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

POLICY ON WAR WITH IRAQ

Hon. David Tkachuk: Honourable senators, members in this chamber and in the other place have attempted, during Question Period, to discern Canada's foreign policy and what our goals are in these troubled times. Much has happened in the last number of months, not the least of which has been our utter abandonment of our former closest ally and friend, the threatening rupture of our trade and business with the same neighbour and now the additional abandonment of our second closest ally, Great Britain.

Our non-participation in the debate and the events leading up to the war in Iraq, both at home and in the United Nations, seems to signal a new alarming trend. We have a new pacifist inclination and have delegated our decision-making power regarding our foreign policy to the United Nations. More troubling, we have delegated to the United Nations our sovereign right to declare war. There is no one in Parliament who can seriously argue that the weapons inspectors could have entered Iraq without the presence of the American and British troops at the Kuwait border and the ships in the Persian Gulf. Except for Australians, no other government had offered troops to put more pressure on Saddam Hussein. There is no question in my mind that the presence of China, France and Russia at the border, along with the Americans, British and Australia, would have resulted in the immediate disarmament and compliance with all the United Nations resolutions. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister has been mute, only speaking up against the premier who supports the U.S. President. We must face the reality that our non-participation will be deemed to mean that we are against the British and the Americans in this war and opposed to all the other countries, some 45 in total now, who are giving moral, logistical and, in some cases, military support.

• (1350)

Canada has made a significant strategic change and, I will say, a horrendous change in its foreign policy, the effects of which will be felt by all Canadians for many years to come. As near as I can tell, we are on the side of Iraq and Saddam! The Prime

Minister should call an election on this and let the voters decide who he should side with. Perhaps we could have a debate in this country.

On Monday, Foreign Affairs Minister Graham said:

We as a government are supportive of the United States desire to get rid of Saddam Hussein and to deal with the weapons of mass destruction.

Yesterday, the minister in this place said that only the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister spoke for the government on this issue and that she spoke for it in this place. Then, yesterday again, the Minister of Foreign Affairs said that we are now not in favour of a regime change.

The Prime Minister's office clarified that the Minister of Foreign Affairs got off track. How could he get off track on something so basic? We are either for regime change or we are not. Since the Minister of Foreign Affairs seems to no longer have the confidence of his Prime Minister, I ask for his resignation as well.

WORLD WATER DAY

Hon. Yves Morin: Honourable senators, I will not be dealing with the Iraq conflict. I wish to draw the attention of the Senate to this year's World Water Day.

We, in Canada, are blessed with an abundance of clean water. The theme of this year's World Water Day on March 22 was "Water for the Future," a reminder for each of us of the importance of maintaining and improving the quality of our drinking water. Events such as the E. coli outbreak in Walkerton have shown that we cannot take our water supply for granted. We must take steps to ensure it is clean, safe and reliable.

[Translation]

Honourable senators, the size of Canada and its topography, along with the diversity of its water supplies, makes the task a difficult and complex one. This activity therefore requires the total collaboration of municipal, provincial and federal authorities.

[English]

The Federal-Provincial-Territorial Committee on Drinking Water and the Water Quality Task Group of the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment have recognized the inter-relationship of health and environmental issues when it comes to Canada's drinking water supply. Together, they have developed a multi-barrier approach to safe drinking water, which looks at all the components of a drinking-water system and identifies safeguards needed to provide safe drinking water. The components include source-water protection, drinking-water treatment and distribution systems. The safeguards include managing and monitoring science-and-technology development, legislative frameworks and public involvement.

As one of the safeguards in the multi-barrier approach, research plays a critical role in safe water. Health Canada conducts research that assesses the effects of exposure to contaminants in tap and groundwater. It also conducts drinking water research that supports technology development and assesses drinking water treatment.

Many of these methods generate disinfection by-products. Dr. Frank Benoit of the Safe Environments Program at Health Canada has done research on the types and levels of disinfection by-products. Knowing the identity of these by-products is one step in ensuring safety.

Dr. Ih Chu, also of the Safe Environments Program of Health Canada, has studied the toxicity of many of the common disinfection by-products. This research will help all jurisdictions set safe drinking water standards.

[Translation]

Honourable senators, water is by far our most precious resource. You will, I am sure, join with me in congratulating the Health Canada researchers who work unceasingly to keep our drinking water safe to drink, as well as good-tasting.

[English]

CANADA-UNITED STATES RELATIONS

WAR WITH IRAQ

Hon. Gerry St. Germain: Honourable senators, again I must speak on the Iraqi issue. All Canadians must understand the impact 9/11 had on the American psyche. Canadians have never had to contend with such a blow to the very heart of their nation, an unprovoked assault.

Yesterday, U.S. Ambassador Paul Cellucci blasted the Liberal government for its failure to back the United States in its war on Iraq. He stated:

There is no security threat to Canada that the United States would not be ready, willing and able to help with.

There would be no debate.

There would be no hesitation.

We would be there for Canada — part of our family.

Honourable senators, Mr. Chrétien speaks for the Canadian government, but he does not speak for all Canadians and certainly not for the majority of Canadians. Anti-war protesters claim that most in this country oppose this war. In fact, the majority of Canadians believe the U.S. is right to remove those who would kill and oppress, and they believe the UN should have authorized military action. Editorials have expressed the belief that “Most of those Canadians are troubled by the way Chrétien so cavalierly tossed aside our historic allies.”

[Senator Morin]

Canadians do not believe that Mr. Bush lacks “statesmanship”; nor do they think he is a “moron” or a “bastard,” as other government members believe, or as was said yesterday in this Senate, that we should “screw the Americans.” This is horrific, unacceptable. The Liberal government believes it can insult the U.S. with impunity, without consequence. These personal insults and comments are uncalled for.

Honourable senators, the government has bruised a friendship, and this government will make innocent Canadians and our businesses pay for their misguided actions. The Canada-U.S. relationship is already fraught with trade disputes, uncertainty over security along the world’s longest undefended border, and the cool relations between Mr. Chrétien and Mr. Bush.

Canada is already regarded by many as a haven for terrorists, an irksome source of illegal drugs and now as an unreliable ally. Canada-United States trade now tops \$450 billion a year, hugely in Canada’s favour. A staggering 83 per cent of our exports go to the U.S., and 50 per cent of all jobs in our country depend directly or indirectly on those exports. Twenty-five per cent of Canada’s economy is due to the auto sector. We have 50,000 auto workers producing 2-million vehicles, and we export 90 per cent of those to the U.S. Our current surplus with the U.S. — approximately \$90 billion a year — underlines the triumph of our trading relationship. Take away our foreign investment, our free trade and we would have very little left. Canada must export or die.

Honourable senators, we all know that in the arena of international business, all roads lead to the U.S. We have many bilateral issues to resolve, and the government is doing everything possible to squander our position of favour with the Americans. The Prime Minister’s only abiding passion appears to be his longevity and legacy. It remains to be seen, but it may well be that the Prime Minister’s legacy will be the black mark he has put on Canada-United States relations.

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

Hon. Gérald-A. Beaudoin: Honourable senators, the war in Iraq is in its seventh day. I am not going to ask at this point whether the war was necessary or not, because now it is on. The war is a fact.

There have been some emotionally charged debates, but I do not think that is the path we should take now. Such debates lead nowhere, while well-structured and well-aimed debates in our two legislative chambers may be useful and point out the right way to go.

We must base our stand on the major international conventions and agreements such as the Geneva Convention on the treatment of prisoners, whose numbers seem to be increasing. There are other conventions and treaties about war as well, and we are bound by them. We can take part in these debates, on both the domestic and the international levels.

• (1400)

We have values to defend in this country, and we defend them well. I do not see why we could not defend them equally well in the international forum. The 20th century was a violent one, but it was also the century of charters of rights. The 21st century is starting with violence. We have a duty to create other international instruments. To quote Samuel de Champlain, the first Governor of New France: "In all things, we must preserve reason."

[English]

CARLETON UNIVERSITY

BAN ON DISPLAY BY SOLIDARITY FOR PALESTINIAN HUMAN RIGHTS

Hon. Marcel Prud'homme: Honourable senators, I have just received an e-mail, which I would like to share with you, from the Executive Board of Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights: Carleton University. It reads:

Dear Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights Members and Supporters,

Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights has just received disturbing information that the different bodies within the University community are trying to prevent the Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights from having its exhibition entitled "Carleton Under Occupation" this Thursday (March 27, 2003) in Baker's Lounge. The reason given, NONE! Basically, the university feels that it would not be 'appropriate' to have this display. SPHR is not breaking any laws or policies within the University, and uses credible sources for its information. More importantly, Carleton students have the choice not to see this display while Palestinians living under Israeli Occupation do NOT have the choice of avoiding the brutal Occupation. This is obviously a breach to Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights freedom of expression and the freedom of choice. To make matters worse, campus security will be present under the pretext of Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights safety. This is undeniably a racist and discriminatory practice by the University to hinder our efforts as a club recognized by the Carleton University Student Association.

For these reasons, it is of utmost importance to be present at the event tomorrow and show solidarity with the Palestinian people living under Occupation.

In Solidarity,

Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights: Carleton University.

Executive board.

QUESTION PERIOD

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

POLICY ON WAR WITH IRAQ

Hon. A. Raynell Andreychuk: Honourable senators, during the tenure of Lloyd Axworthy as Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Liberal government put in place a doctrine of human security within the ambit of foreign policy. In fact, it was used to enter Kosovo when the security of its citizens was threatened by forces within their government, most notably terrorist groups and radical groups that were destabilizing Kosovo in the former Yugoslavia.

I understand that today, information is coming out of Basra that indicates its citizens are fighting. It is alleged that those citizens are some of the elite guards of Saddam in active combat with civilians, and that the Americans have been engaged in fighting outside Basra.

From the information being received, it appears that we are on the brink of, not an engagement between certain allies and Saddam's forces, but on the brink of a civil war. If that is the case, will the Canadian position on entering this conflict change?

Hon. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Government): I thank the honourable senator for her question this afternoon, which is clearly based on some stories that are coming out. However, as the honourable senator well knows, the stories are comprised of "alleged" information. There are certain allegations about what is happening in and around Basra. Until such time as we have concrete information, there will be no discussion of a change in Canada's position on the conflict.

Senator Andreychuk: It would appear that independent sources are indicating that civilians are vulnerable to brutality within the ambit of two groups: an elite guard under the strict control of Saddam Hussein and active citizens who are attempting to break out and who are also vulnerable.

Would the government consider a reassessment of our situation? We would not want to see civilians brutalized. We do not want to stand back and watch the count. Would we not, in some way, work on a policy so that, should that be about to happen, we would reconsider our position in order to help avert a civilian disaster?

Senator Carstairs: With the greatest of respect to the honourable senator, all of the civilians in Iraq are vulnerable at the present time because they are in a state of war. They are all being exposed to bombing. They are being exposed to attack. Any independent authority would find it extremely difficult to determine exactly what is currently happening in Iraq. Beyond that, I will not address a hypothetical question.

Senator Andreychuk: Honourable senators, my concern relates to the fact that, in a conflict, civilians are vulnerable. The allies have continued to assure both the outside community and the Iraqis that they will minimize the effects of war on civilians. For some of us that is not acceptable. It is certainly unacceptable for most Canadians on both sides of this issue if civilians are turning on civilians and if, indeed, certain of those civilians are part of an elite guard. That changes the situation dramatically.

I am appealing to the Canadian government to reassess its position carefully in respect of whether Canada should join the coalition and whether Canada should prepare some immediate humanitarian assistance to alleviate the situation.

The UN is in the process of debating a resolution on sanctions. It seems that we could take an assertive role in this debate and suggest to the United Nations that it go beyond the resolutions requested by the Arab League because the humanitarian situation has changed. Supplies are not reaching those increasing numbers of people who are becoming more vulnerable. I do not think that Canadians want to stand by without at least some renewed commitment on the humanitarian level or on the political level.

Senator Carstairs: Yesterday, I carefully and at some length outlined, for the honourable senator, exactly what the Canadian government is doing, in its ongoing negotiations with the United Nations, to provide the greatest amount of help and support. The coalition troops in Iraq are currently doing their utmost to avoid civilian casualties. Having said that, anyone watching television can see, on a daily basis, that there are innocent victims of this war, just as there are innocent victims of all wars.

• (1410)

Hon. Consiglio Di Nino: Honourable senators, Senator Tkachuk stole some of my thunder, but I hope not all of it. I wanted to refer to the comments made by the Honourable Leader of the Government in the Senate, yesterday, in response to a question asked by Senator St. Germain, about who speaks on behalf of the government on the issue of Iraq. I do not want to quote, but basically she said, first, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, then the Prime Minister and then, in this chamber, herself. Obviously, we now know that the Minister of Foreign Affairs does not speak unless he is told to speak a certain line, since he had to change his mind this morning.

Honourable senators, yesterday, in this chamber the Leader of the Government in the Senate stated that it is not the right of any country, including Canada, to change the regime of another country, but that it is up to the people of that country. Saddam Hussein has been in power since 1979. He holds every lever of power and runs a brutal, unrelenting dictatorship backed by a military that easily outguns any domestic opponents. The least sign of resistance to his rule has been brutally put down. Torture and rape are routine. He has even killed his own family members when he felt threatened by them.

Could the Leader of the Government in the Senate please tell us what is her government's strategy to help the people of Iraq change the regime of Saddam Hussein without them getting massacred in the process?

Senator Carstairs: First, let me begin with the honourable senator's preamble. Clearly, the Prime Minister speaks first and foremost for the Government of Canada and, in this instance, for the people of Canada, since the people of Canada very clearly support what the Prime Minister is doing.

As to the issue of regime change, the statement that I made yesterday is clearly the statement of the Canadian government. We do not believe that we have the right as Canadians, nor does any other group of people, to change the government of another country. That is a right of the people themselves.

I would put the question in reverse to the honourable senator: If it is acceptable, in his view, that we change the regime in Iraq, in what other countries does he think we should take out the regimes?

Senator Di Nino: For now, I guess I should continue to ask the questions.

Honourable senators, yesterday, in the other place, Defence Minister McCallum stated that Canada would not bring home the 31 Canadian soldiers serving with the British and American troops because, at best, we would be offending our allies. If the comments of U.S. Ambassador Paul Cellucci, as reported in the papers today, are any indication, that horse has long left the barn. The Leader of the Government has read those remarks, I am sure, so I will not repeat them other than to say that disappointment over Canada's stand, according to Ambassador Cellucci, goes as high as the U.S. President and that there will be repercussions. How do we square the circle? Madam Minister, how can you or the government take the stance regarding the recall of the 31 soldiers in order not to offend our allies, when our whole policy position on the war in Iraq has obviously been a huge offence to them? We have it from the horse's mouth.

Senator Carstairs: The comments that were made yesterday by the American Ambassador to Canada quite frankly reflected his disappointment that the Government of Canada had not joined with the United States and others in the war against Iraq. We understand that they would be disappointed because we have been friends so often in the past. What other country has participated with the United States so often? What other country opened its entire nation for three days and beyond after the disaster on September 11? What about all those planes from all over the world that were supposed to fly into American airspace? We said, "No, we will take them into Canadian airspace." We did not know what was on those planes, but we said we would do it because it was in the interests of our friends and neighbours. They are still our friends and neighbours.

I would turn the attention of honourable senators to the one quote of Mr. Cellucci yesterday that did not receive a great deal of publicity, which is the following: "Canada remains a crucial partner in this global war on terrorism, and we are grateful for that."

CANADA-UNITED STATES RELATIONS

WAR WITH IRAQ

Hon. Consiglio Di Nino: Honourable senators, yesterday, the C.D. Howe Institute issued a report that outlined the central role that the United States will play in Canada's economic future at a time when Canada's stance on the war has sent our relations with the U.S. to its lowest level since 1960. This is their report, not my words. Madam Minister, what is your government doing to repair the damage that has been done by the stance that we have taken on this issue?

Hon. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Government): First, I do not believe there has been great damage done to the relationship between Canada and the United States. Let me give my honourable friend another quote of Mr. Cellucci, which, of course, is not getting much coverage in the media today: “This is a beautiful land, good decent people, and I am very proud to represent the President of the people of the United States here in Canada.” There is still a firm relationship between our two nations, a firm relationship that will continue despite the fact that, as a sovereign nation, we have made a different decision than they have.

Hon. Douglas Roche: Honourable senators, will the government respond to Ambassador Cellucci, perhaps in an official manner, using the forms of diplomacy, to make clear to the United States that Canada took a principled position on the question of war with Iraq and that Canada’s long-standing good relations with the U.S. are not impaired? In other words, will it say that Canada does not need to go to war to exhibit its friendship with the U.S.?

Senator Carstairs: I thank the honourable senator for that question. It is very clear that the United States President and the Canadian Prime Minister have talked about this issue. The President of the United States is well aware of what the Canadian position has been from the beginning of the discussions about this situation, and he will continue to be made aware by the Prime Minister of Canada that we are a sovereign nation and therefore have a right to our own foreign policy.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

WAR WITH IRAQ—HUMANITARIAN AID

Hon. Douglas Roche: Honourable senators, yesterday, the minister said in the Senate that Canada would spend \$5.6 million in aid for Iraq. I took that to mean an immediate infusion of funds for this humanitarian crisis. Could the minister tell the Senate where that money will come from and give us the assurance that it will not be taken from ongoing programs that CIDA is running in developing countries?

Hon. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Government): That money has already been sent, I understand, to the United Nations. It was very clearly not for programming but for the planning of the programming, which will now have to be put in place. This will not be our last donation to the United Nations in order to be there for the people of Iraq in terms of humanitarian aid.

My understanding is that the money comes from discretionary funding, which was not specifically assigned to other program budgeting lines.

[Translation]

NUMBER OF CANADIAN CITIZENS IN IRAQ

Hon. Jean-Claude Rivest: Honourable senators, there are currently Canadians in Baghdad and other Iraqi cities who are working within community groups in order to help civilians. Could the government tell us what effort Canada is making during this war to contribute to international agencies such as the Red Cross? How many Canadians are currently on Iraqi soil, whether individually or as part of agencies that are assisting the victims of the war?

[English]

Hon. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Government): As the honourable senator would know, I would not have the exact number available of Canadians in Iraq. All Canadians were asked to leave Iraq prior to the beginning of the hostilities. Some of them chose not to leave. For example, the son of the Minister of Foreign Affairs is there as a reporter. We know also that Sacha Trudeau is there as a filmmaker. As to other Canadians who are in Iraq, working for NGOs or the like or even peace activists who have indicated that they would not leave the country, I cannot give an accurate number. I can certainly try to obtain that number for him.

• (1420)

As to the second part of the honourable senator’s question, this week both the Red Crescent and the Red Cross have made specific requests of the Government of Canada, which are under consideration at this time.

CANADA-UNITED STATES RELATIONS

WAR WITH IRAQ

Hon. Pierre Claude Nolin: Honourable senators, I wish to go back to the answer the Leader of the Government gave to Senator Di Nino concerning the statement made by Ambassador Cellucci.

Is it the interpretation or opinion of your government that the ambassador was speaking on his own behalf or was he expressing the view of his President and government?

Hon. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I think it is fair to say that when an ambassador speaks, as the ambassador chose to speak yesterday, it would be interpreted that he was speaking on behalf of his government and not on his own behalf. If he was speaking on his own behalf, I would think that he might well be recalled by the government.

JUSTICE

FIREARMS CONTROL PROGRAM—BORDER CONTROL PROCEDURES—DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED IN IMPLEMENTATION

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau: Honourable senators, the Minister of Justice issued a firearms program information paper that lists border control procedures as one of the elements of the Firearms Control Program to which his department allocated a significant amount of funding. Reference was also made to the September 11 control procedures.

We know that the Department of Justice does not have officials standing guard at border crossings. Therefore, these measures must have been implemented by other departments, most likely the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency or another department of government.

Could the Leader of the Government in the Senate inform us as to what specific measures the Minister of Justice was referring to, which were taken with regard to border control procedures by the Department of Justice, and what other government departments did it use in the implementation of such border control procedures?

Hon. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, one of the issues that has been of concern to the Canadian government for many decades, not just this past one, has been the passage across our border of weapons which, frankly, are not allowed into our country. I am referring to weapons that are illegal in our country. That is one of the issues dealt with in these border control procedures.

Senator Comeau: Honourable senators, I do not think that answers my question. My question was: What other departments are being utilized as implementation agencies along with the Department of Justice? If the procedures from the current Firearms Control Program are being implemented then, obviously, some other departments are implementing those control procedures.

Senator Carstairs: Honourable senators, as to the specifics of what departments are involved, I will have to get back to the honourable senator. However, I think it would be reasonable to assume that the immigration authorities, those who deal with the examination of luggage as it comes across the border, would be involved. I cannot give the honourable senator anything further than that. I will seek out an answer for him.

Senator Comeau: Honourable senators, given that it appears that the Leader of the Government in the Senate is not completely aware of the control procedures, she might want to obtain an answer for my following supplementary question.

What I want to know is the cost incurred by those other departments for border control procedures relating to the Firearms Control Program, as noted by the Minister of Justice. Was that cost included in the \$788 million spent to date? If not, could the minister find out how much other departments spent to implement those control measures so that we can keep a running tally of the long rifle implementation program?

Senator Carstairs: The honourable senator asked for some specifics yesterday. I will add the questions that he asked today, to my inquiries.

Generally speaking, when a government agency provides a service for another agency, it is charged back to the agency which makes the request. I would take from that, that any expenditures would be found in the Department of Justice and not in the department that is providing the service.

MAINTENANCE OF ESTABLISHED LINGUISTIC RIGHTS—FEDERAL COURT DECISION— RESULTING AGREEMENT

Hon. Jean-Robert Gauthier: Honourable senators, my question to the Leader of the Government in the Senate deals with the Federal Court's judgment in the case of the Contraventions Act. I gave notice of my question to the leader last week.

Honourable senators will recall that I raised this matter several times in the Senate. The purpose of my inquiry is to ensure that there is full compliance with the Official Languages Act.

The Contraventions Act, as amended in 1966, allows the federal government to make regulations enabling a province or a territory to issue tickets and prosecute infractions under their own procedures on federal lands. Through an oversight, Justice Canada failed to tell the provinces that the Official Languages Act applied to these agreements, and that subsequent agreements must adequately and completely protect the language rights of all Canadians.

In 2001, the Federal Court allowed a year to conclude an agreement. Justice Canada asked for and obtained a delay of an additional year. The deadline was March 23, last Sunday.

Can the minister tell the Senate whether an agreement has been signed and whether she will be able to table this document at the earliest opportunity?

Hon. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, since I recognize that this is an issue for which the honourable senator has great concern because he has raised it a number of times, I am pleased to inform him that, at the end of February 2003, the Government of Canada concluded an agreement in principle with the Ministry of the Attorney General of Ontario concerning the implementation of the Contraventions Act in that province. That complies with the Federal Court decision. The actual agreement will be signed today.

I am also pleased to report that the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages and the Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Ontario were consulted during the negotiating process and are satisfied with the terms of the agreement.

HEALTH

SEVERE ACUTE RESPIRATORY SYNDROME— ACTIONS TO PREVENT SPREADING

Hon. Terry Stratton: Honourable senators, my question deals with the outbreak in Canada of the disease known as SARS, or severe acute respiratory syndrome. In particular, the situation in Ontario seems to be getting much worse. There are now 48 suspected or probable cases reported in that province. Some 25 health care workers from Scarborough General Hospital along with their families have been quarantined in their homes and the hospital has been closed. A school in Scarborough has also been closed until next week as three young children there have shown symptoms of the disease.

The numbers are also growing globally. As of today, there are 487 reported cases, including 17 deaths.

With such a deadly disease spreading rapidly around the world, one that has symptoms similar to the common flu or regular pneumonia, it is imperative that Health Canada give as much information as it can to physicians, not just in Ontario but across the country. Could the Leader of the Government in the Senate tell us if local public health authorities across Canada have been issued warnings by Health Canada as to what symptoms to look for in patients or how to treat the disease?

Hon. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Government): I thank the honourable senator for this question because it is a very important one, and one that is impacting, unfortunately and tragically, on more and more Canadians.

Since the level 4 lab is located in his and my city, the honourable senator will know that there is unprecedented effort going on there, in some cases 24 hours a day, to try to find the cause of this disease. Researchers are working with their level 4 lab partners throughout the world, who are doing the same kind of investigatory work. Health Canada is working very closely with the public health community, and advisories of the type the honourable senator has requested have been sent out.

We are also working around the clock to keep the media, as well as the public, informed, to give advice about travel, to answer the public's questions, and to ensure that any cases are quickly identified and treated.

As I think the honourable senator knows, there are now health officers at both Vancouver and Toronto airports where international flights from Asia arrive. Apparently, over the weekend, the passengers on one flight were examined before they boarded the plane. By the time they got off, one passenger appeared to have the symptoms of this disease. He and other passengers who travelled in close proximity to him were quarantined.

The remaining passengers were kept apart until they could be examined. They were then released, with specific information as to what they should do, should any of the symptoms develop.

• (1430)

Senator Stratton: Honourable senators, are any of the other passengers on the flight taken by the Canadian who originally brought the disease here, showing symptoms of the disease? Is the government checking those passengers in that regard?

Senator Carstairs: The information I have is that, in any instance in which an individual was identified as having been on a flight, all the other people on that flight have been contacted and informed of the situation, made aware of all the symptoms and given express advice as to what they should do.

[Translation]

DELAYED ANSWERS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. Fernand Robichaud (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, it is my honour to table responses to oral questions raised on February 13, 2003, by the Honourable Senator Stratton, regarding legislation to combat cyber crime and the status of health protection legislation.

JUSTICE

LEGISLATION TO COMBAT CYBER CRIME

(Response to question raised by Hon. Terry Stratton on February 13, 2003)

Public safety and security is a responsibility this government takes seriously. The Government is working closely with the United States and other allies within the G8

and the Council of Europe to fight cross-border crime, transnational organized crime and terrorism. In this context, the Government is conducting a legislative and policy review regarding lawful access to communications by law enforcement and national security agencies.

The public consultation process on this initiative was launched in August 2002. More than 300 submissions have been received. These contributions and others which will likely be received during this process, will assist the government in developing a strategy to provide all players in the criminal justice system with the tools they need to prevent, investigate and prosecute serious offences, including threats to the security of Canada. The challenge in introducing legislation on lawful access will be to ensure that privacy and human rights are protected and that a balance is maintained between the legitimate needs of law enforcement with the needs for a competitive and innovative telecommunications industry.

HEALTH

STATUS OF LEGISLATION PROPOSALS

(Response to question raised by Hon. Terry Stratton on February 13, 2003)

Health Legislation

As outlined in the Speech from the Throne, the Government of Canada is committed to renewal of health protection legislation.

The government will modernize and strengthen the legislation aimed at addressing health risks, to ensure that we have at our disposal the legal instruments needed to help protect the health and safety of Canadians.

The next step in the process will be to consult with all interested parties, on a proposal for a new Act that could replace existing statutes such as the Food and Drugs Act, the Hazardous Products Act and the Quarantine Act.

The next round of consultation will be launched in the months ahead and all interested parties will have an opportunity to present their point of view on these important issues to guide the development of the new health protection legislation.

[English]

POINT OF ORDER

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, before going to Orders of the Day, Senator LaPierre has asked for the floor on a matter of order.

Hon. Laurier L. LaPierre: Honourable senator, there are two statements attributed to me in the Hansard of yesterday, March 25, 2003, on page 1002. The first statement should read, "So did the Americans," and I ask that the record be corrected.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Yes.

Some Hon. Senators: No.

The Hon. the Speaker: I will ask one more time for clarification.

Is leave granted, honourable senators?

Some Hon. Senators: Yes.

Some Hon. Senators: No.

The Hon. the Speaker: I hear some saying “no.” Leave must be given without a dissenting voice. Accordingly, I must advise Senator LaPierre that leave has not been granted to change the record.

Senator LaPierre: Will you ask again, please?

The Hon. the Speaker: I will, at your request, ask the question again.

Is everyone clear on what is being asked?

[Translation]

Hon. Fernand Robichaud (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, this is, I think, the usual time when we ask for agreement to correct the record when the official report, the *Debates of the Senate*, does not represent exactly what an honourable senator has said, as is the case here.

After the honourable senator listened to the tape, which is available for us to listen to, he told us that the words attributed to him on the page in question were not his. The honourable senator has just told us what he said yesterday. This is not what appears in the official record, the *Debates of the Senate*.

Given the current situation, I believe that we must pay careful attention to such comments, particularly when those comments were not made and certain senators are accused of sometimes speaking too openly about the current situation. In this case, the Honourable Senator LaPierre is certainly entitled to ask that the record be corrected so that his words are faithfully represented and that comments that could be very offensive to numerous people, as well as our friends to the South, not be left in the official report, the *Debates of the Senate*.

[English]

Hon. Terry Stratton: Honourable senators, I agree with Senator Robichaud with respect to this matter, but clearly this is what the senator said, as was heard by members on this side.

Second, if this were the first or second time that the senator had stood up to retract statements made in this chamber, that would be acceptable. However, this is the fifth or sixth time that the senator has changed his mind the day after making a statement.

As senators are aware, earlier in his career in this chamber, I called the senator to task on more than one occasion for offensive language.

When senators speak in this chamber, they must be aware of what they are saying, in order that we do not continue to have this kind of problem. Senators must think before they speak, because once the words are out of a senator's mouth, they are on the record, and we must be held to account for what we say, for the sake of decorum in this chamber.

[Translation]

Senator Robichaud: Honourable senators, I agree to a certain extent with what the Honourable Senator Stratton has just said, which is that, in terms of everything said in this place, each of us is responsible for what we say. I am in agreement here.

I have a problem with his statement that sometimes things get said that must be withdrawn. I agree that we must avoid such situations. We should not be prejudiced because this might have happened once or twice already. I am not making any judgements about when this happened. We must not let prejudice be our guide, in allowing a senator to ensure that the official record, the *Debates of the Senate*, represents exactly what he has said. Prejudice must not prevent us from clearly seeing the situation at hand.

[English]

Hon. Noël A. Kinsella (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, it is unfortunate that, under the terrible circumstances in which the world finds itself, and as Canadians are trying to work their own way through the situation, we have had less than custody of the tongue demonstrated by senior members of the government. It is incumbent upon us all to be very careful in the choice of our words, because none of us know the future. None of us know how the terrible tragedy being faced by the world today will conclude.

We do know that there are young men and women from the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Poland and other countries, as well as hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, who are in life or death situations. Therefore, it is particularly incumbent upon us to be very prudent and judicious in our language.

There is a custom in Parliament for honourable senators to bring corrections to the record if there are errors. However, honourable senators, the Honourable Senator LaPierre said that he did not say “Screw the Americans,” but rather “So did the Americans.” I believe that is the correction to the record that he is seeking.

I went back and read the context of the remarks. “So did the Americans” would not make sense in the context of the statement that Senator Buchanan was making or of what Senator Buchanan said subsequently.

The French Hansard does not say “Aussi les Américains”; it says “Que le diable emporte les Américains!”

• (1440)

Honourable senators, in terms of truth, the record demonstrates that what was said, unfortunately, was said. That is all I have to say.

Hon. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, the Honourable Senator Kinsella indicates that “So did the Americans” would not fit into the body of what was said yesterday. I must dispute that in most uncertain terms.

I did not hear the honourable senator. There are others here who I am sure did. The record reads.

However, we do not have the wherewithal to defend ourselves, and we all know that. Who will protect us? Will France, Germany, or Russia, who has provided weapons to Saddam Hussein —

The honourable senator replied, “So did the Americans.” It is a well-known historical fact that the Americans provided weapons over the years to Saddam Hussein. They provided them prior to war with Iran. It would be an entirely appropriate thing historically for the honourable senator to have said, “So did Americans.”

Therefore, I do not think that is the basis upon which the debate can proceed.

Honourable senators, there is, however, an issue upon which I totally agree with the honourable senator opposite and which I will put in the clearest possible terms. It is important for every single Canadian to be very conscious of the lives being lost in the war that is taking place in Iraq. It does none of us any justice or value to be less than temperate in our comments about anyone at this particular point in time.

I would urge all of us, at all times, to use only positive language when we are in discussions on this particular issue.

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre-Claude Nolin: Honourable senators, first, the reason you are asking our consent to change the text in the *Debates of the Senate* — and correct me if I am wrong — is that senators may always ask that what they believe they said be reflected faithfully. When a senator notices that what is written does not correspond at all to what he said, he asks for the permission of the Senate to correct the text.

It is up to the Chair to ask senators if they agree. Some senators may have heard what is on the record. Someone may reflect on his comments with hindsight and wish to make corrections, or wish that he had never said those comments. That is what the Government Leader in the Senate is trying to explain. Nevertheless, the *Debates of the Senate* should reflect word for word what was said in the chamber.

Second, the exchange took place in English and the French version does not correspond to the original version. They do not say the same thing at all. There is a degree of rejection in the original English version that does not exist in the French. His Honour the Speaker will have to decide. I submit that the French version is less intense than the English version.

[English]

Hon. Gerry St. Germain: Honourable senators, I do not know what the honourable senator said. I only read that which is in Hansard. However, it would be a very dangerous precedent if we could change what we said on the basis of a situation. Therefore, I would caution all senators in what they say in this place.

I take offence to the lecture from the government side asking us to refrain from any statements that are derogatory in regard to this particular situation. Government supporters are responsible for this discussion. If anything, we on this side have been extremely cautious with what we have said and how we have conducted ourselves. I would urge the government to look within its own house rather than at the entire house.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Bill Rompkey: Honourable senators, Senator St. Germain says it would be unfortunate if people could change what they said in Hansard. It would be worse if other people could change what you said in Hansard.

What you say is up to you. This is a chamber of honour. These are honourable senators. Senator LaPierre has said what he said. It is up to us, as honourable senators, to accept that and to reflect that.

We have all been through this procedure. I have never had challenged a sentence in Hansard when I wanted to correct it. Over the years, I have corrected Hansard many times. I have never had a challenge. I submit that the honourable senator should not be challenged today.

There is an old saying: “There is so much good in the worst of us and so much bad in the best of us, that it does not behoove any of us to talk about the rest of us.”

Honourable senators should accept that which Senator LaPierre has said.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Anne C. Cools: Honourable senators, I have been listening with some care. I must admit that I am somewhat confused as to the proceeding before us. Are we on a point of order or are we having a debate on a request for leave of unanimous consent? If we are having a debate on a request for leave for unanimous consent, it is surely unprecedented. I have never heard of such a debate.

On the other hand, perhaps we are debating a point of order as to whether the Speaker of the Senate can unilaterally overrule the decision made a few minutes ago, which was to deny leave. I heard the Speaker repeat that leave was denied. I do not understand the process of a point of order to overcome two clear indications made by this chamber to deny leave. Something is odd here.

It is equally interesting to see the leadership on the government side jumping in to rescue a senator. That is something that is even more rare in this place. Therefore, I am very curious as to why that is happening.

I wonder, if I had made a similar mistake, whether the leaders on the government side would be on their feet to defend me. I am very curious.

The substance of the issue is the question of correcting a mistake versus the phenomenon of altering the record. It seems to me that if a senator has made a mistake, or the reporter genuinely made a mistake as they took the record and transcribed it, it should be corrected without any fuss. A genuine correction usually is done without any fuss. Records and reporters make mistakes from time to time. To my mind, a senator should be able to correct that mistake without fuss.

The real question before us is not whether a mistake is being corrected or not. At issue is whether Senator LaPierre actually made that statement. The issue has become not an issue of error. It has become an issue of what was said and, unfortunately, of Senator LaPierre's credibility. No senator should have his or her integrity questioned in this way.

• (1450)

Let me say that no one should believe for a moment that I am defending Senator LaPierre, because I have often found myself the butt of many of his brutal attacks. We need to pause for a few minutes. Perhaps some of us, myself included, could make it our business to go and listen to the recording of the record yesterday to see exactly what was said. I will tell you, if the situation is as Senator LaPierre right now is articulating and that it is not what he actually said, I will be the first to get up and say we should correct that record. If we listen to the record and we can hear that Senator LaPierre said what is reported here, I would not agree to granting him such a correction. There is a difference between correcting the record and altering the record.

Senator LeBreton: That is right.

Senator Cools: Unfortunately, that has become the substantive issue. Perhaps Senator LaPierre could clarify for us again, because his introductory statement of a few minutes ago has now grown thin in people's memories. Perhaps we can clarify what he actually did say.

[Translation]

Hon. Marcel Prud'homme: Honourable senators, I have been in Parliament for 40 years now: 30 years in the House of Commons

[Senator Cools]

and 10 years in the Senate. We have traditions in parliament. If these words were spoken yesterday, I do not understand why those who heard them did not object to them yesterday.

[English]

I find it bizarre that today it is in print. Today, I had a very long exchange with Mr. Aubry from the *Ottawa Citizen* or some other newspaper on this issue.

First, I did not hear anything here. However, my difficulty is that even if Senator LaPierre said yesterday what he is supposed to have said, according to the record, I am surprised that no one immediately stood up on a point of order. They let it go. It is today, now, that we see the fuss.

I do not understand. I would have wished that those honourable senators would have rose yesterday and not make the point today. Now he is perceived as a gentleman who wants to change words that he may or not have pronounced. I do not think he did it. He may have done it away from this side and we did not hear the exchange. If he had done it in my presence yesterday, I would have objected right away. It is on the first occasion you have that you object. There is a longer tradition also that this chamber, more than the other house, is a chamber of ladies and gentlemen. Regardless of how many times some people may have said things in the past, when any gentleman or lady gets up in the house and says, "here is what I said yesterday," it is a long-time British tradition to take the word of that lady or gentleman of this chamber. I think we should accept that, until further notice. Senator Cools says she will go to check the record, but I will not.

According to the record, on page 1024, I said "cacophony." I could not have said that, but there is a word missing. I have a bad habit. I talk much like my dear friend Senator Buchanan, but I do not rush to correct my blues all the time. It is painful enough to pronounce speeches without having to correct the blues. I did correct them and it looked funny, when I read it a moment ago, what I am perceived to have said yesterday. I will not ask for correction. I will live with a stupid statement, if you take what I said, yesterday, at face value.

Honourable senators, we have to take the word of a gentleman or a lady in this chamber. Also, it is at the first moment that you should object, not when you see it.

If it would not have been reported, that means some gentlemen and ladies here who may have heard Senator LaPierre say something would accept that kind of language. If they heard it, I would have liked them to get up right away. I have no one in mind. I am not hinting at any of my colleagues on that side. We are too far away here.

I find it strange that we are having this long a debate. When the honourable gentleman got up, he said I want this to be corrected, meaning he did not say that. We should leave it there.

[Translation]

Hon. Eymard G. Corbin: Honourable senators, I did not read *Hansard* for March 25. I go by what goes on in this chamber. I would like to rise on a point of order and at that same time call upon Senator LaPierre. He could facilitate a solution if he said he regretted his excessive language. I do not know if his language was excessive. If he seeks to correct *Hansard*, that is something else. Either it was wrong, or it was not. I am not a judge of these things. There are tapes that can be checked. If the honourable senator repents the use of excessive language, there is an easy way to express regret. It is a matter of rising and saying: "Honourable senators, I regret that I got carried away yesterday, and ought not to have said what I did." His apologies would be accepted and that would be the end of it.

Hon. Jean Lapointe: Honourable senators, yesterday I was in Senator Setlakwe's seat when the others were speaking. At no time did I hear the words Senator LaPierre is accused of saying. I did not read *Hansard*. The only correction I do wish to see is that Senator Prud'homme called me Senator LaPierre. If that is in *Hansard* tomorrow, I shall ask that it be corrected.

I was sitting beside Senator LaPierre and we often spoke to each other. I do not always agree with Senator LaPierre. However, our discussions are always marked by mutual respect. I never heard the words he is accused of saying.

[English]

The Hon. the Speaker: I will conclude the interventions on this point of order with an offer to Senator LaPierre.

[Translation]

Senator LaPierre: I have taken careful note of what everyone has said. I thank you for your well-expressed opinions.

[English]

I have spent 50 years in public life and I have used excessive language often, but I have always apologized when I went beyond the board, which is more than people have done for me in 50 years of public life.

I would like to inform you that I have a son who lives in the United States, a granddaughter who is a Jewish American and a daughter-in-law and I certainly would not say that they be screwed. It is not a word in my vocabulary. I use other kinds of language, but not this one.

In the context in which I made the remark, it had to do with France and other countries arming the Iraqis, and I said, "So did the Americans." I did say that and we would have corrected it, had the blues come to us.

• (1500)

I am told that, generally, when there is something controversial in the blues, even though it is short, it is sent to the member to verify whether he or she said it. The blues were not sent to my office.

An Honourable Senator: Oh, oh.

Senator LaPierre: Honourable senators, I did not interrupt anyone but I am sometimes accused of interrupting people. Perhaps the honourable senator should have the good grace to keep quiet, since I am not interrupting her now.

Senator LeBreton: That is not to say that you have not in the past.

Senator LaPierre: Honourable senators, I have nothing to say since, obviously, I have no honour. I will have to speak to the Prime Minister to determine whether or not I should resign.

The Hon. the Speaker: This point of order touches on important matters: The integrity of our *Hansard*, and the right of a member to be properly quoted in *Hansard*. There are authorities. I have heard a great deal from senators. I believe that the proper course of action is for me to take this matter under consideration and to bring back a ruling on the point of order as soon as possible.

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

COMMITTEES AUTHORIZED TO MEET DURING SITTING OF THE SENATE

Hon. Fernand Robichaud (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, before proceeding to Orders of the Day, I would like to make the following proposal.

With leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 58(1)(a), I move:

That all Senate Committees scheduled to sit after 3:30 p.m. today have power to sit while the Senate is sitting, and that rule 95(4) be suspended in relation thereto.

Hon. Noël A. Kinsella (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, the opposition is in complete agreement.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

Senator Robichaud: Honourable senators, in the Orders of the Day, Government Business, under Bills, I would like us first to proceed with Item No. 4, next move on to Item No. 5 and then go back to the order listed on the Order Paper.

[English]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

APPROPRIATION BILL NO. 4, 2002-03

SECOND READING—DEBATE SUSPENDED

Hon. Joseph A. Day moved the second reading of Bill C-29, for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of Canada, for the financial year ending March 31, 2003.

He said: Before beginning the formal part of my remarks, I wish to remind honourable senators of the special procedure with respect to supply bills. I am about to speak on second reading of Bill C-29, which relates to Supplementary Estimates (B), the final Supplementary Estimates for this fiscal year that ends on Monday next. We will proceed to third reading of the bill on the day following second reading. We will not ask that the bill be referred to committee.

Honourable senators will recall yesterday that Senator Murray filed various committee reports. I would draw your attention to two of those reports. The first is the Third Report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, dealing with Supplementary Estimates (B), for 2002-03, and the second is the final report on the Estimates for the fiscal year, 2002-03. Those two reports from the National Finance Committee follow upon our study of the Supplementary Estimates and our conclusion of the study of the Estimates for the entire year, 2002-03.

In referring to the reports, I compliment all of the members of the National Finance Committee for their able participation in and attendance at committee meetings. I would also commend the able chairmanship of the Honourable Senator Murray.

Honourable senators, in my remarks, I will refer to statutory expenditures and non-statutory expenditures. Statutory expenditures are those expenditures provided for in other statutes. The remarks made respecting those items today will be for information purposes only.

The non-statutory expenditures require approval. That is the purpose of the last appropriation for 2002-03.

[Translation]

Honourable senators, the legislation before you today, Appropriation Bill No. 4, 2002-03, provides for the expenditure of \$1.9 billion, the full amount mentioned in the 2002-03 Supplementary Estimates (B).

Supplementary Estimates (B) were tabled in the Senate on February 26, 2003 and referred to the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance for consideration. This was the last Supplementary Estimates for the current fiscal year, which ends on March 31, 2003.

[English]

The 2002-03 Supplementary Estimates (B) seek parliamentary approval to spend \$1.9 billion on expenditures for 2002-03 that were provided for within the \$175.8 billion in overall planned spending for fiscal year 2002-03, as set out in the Minister of Finance's budget of February 2003. These Supplementary Estimates were not included a year ago in the 2002-03 Main Estimates; hence, the necessity for these Supplementary Estimates.

Hon. Anne C. Cools: Honourable senators, I rise on a point of order. Is it possible for us to have copies of Bill C-29? Senator Day is on his feet. He has moved second reading and is speaking to Bill C-29. It would be helpful and useful for senators to have copies of Bill C-29.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, it is not out of order to proceed with consideration of a bill if the bill was properly presented to the Table. I believe that was done in this instance. I would ask the Table if we have copies for distribution.

Senator Cools: I told Senator Day that I would be standing by to help him if he needed help.

The Hon. the Speaker: I understand your point of order, Senator Cools.

Senator Cools: It is not a full point of order; I am just trying to let you know that we should have the bills before us.

The Hon. the Speaker: I thought you rose on a point of order — which is in order — to interrupt Senator Day to point out that honourable senators do not have copies of Bill C-29. I understand the pages are in the process of distributing the bill.

Senator Day: If it is the pleasure of honourable senators, I am prepared to withhold my comments until the distribution of Bill C-29 has been completed.

Senator Stratton: Proceed.

Senator Day: Thank you.

• (1510)

These Estimates were discussed in some detail with Treasury Board Secretariat officials in their appearance before the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance on March 18. The report presented by Senator Murray yesterday is the result of those deliberations.

[Translation]

You will remember that these Supplementary Estimates were discussed in detail with Treasury Board Secretariat representatives when they appeared before the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance on March 18.

Some of the major departments need appropriations. The Department of National Defence requires \$297 million for increased repair and maintenance costs and increased contributions to NATO.

[English]

Among the most important items for which approval is required is \$270 million to the Department of National Defence for costs associated with Operation Apollo, that is, the Canadian Forces deployment to Afghanistan, and the Arabian Sea. It includes health care costs for the Department of National Defence, maintenance and repair costs, and the costs of additional air operations in support of NORAD, North American air defence.

[Translation]

The \$191.5 million to the Canadian International Development Agency will increase funding for international assistance.

[English]

The \$140 million to the Department of Finance will allow the Minister of Finance to pay a one-time settlement of up to \$140 million to the Province of Manitoba regarding federal-provincial transfer payments.

[Translation]

The \$113 million to the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food will provide funding to improve infrastructure and to purchase equipment to maintain the professional accreditation for Canadian veterinary colleges, which is critical to ensure Canada's food supply.

[English]

There is an allocation of \$96.9 million in additional capital resources for Public Works and Government Services to acquire buildings located at the corner of Merivale and Baseline Roads in Ottawa, known as Skyline Campus.

Senator Cools: Honourable senators, again, I would raise a point of order.

Might we be told when Bill C-29 will be distributed to all members of the Senate? I understand that no one here, not even Senator Day, has a copy of Bill C-29. This is not proper. Perhaps His Honour could let honourable senators know when we will get copies, because it is not in order to proceed this way.

The Hon. the Speaker: The best advice I have, honourable senators, is that, while we have the bill at the Table, the printed copy of the bill has not been distributed as I thought it had been. We are in the process of photocopying the bill that we do have for distribution to honourable senators. It is not fatal to the debate that it was not distributed. However, honourable senators may wish to delay the debate until copies are in their hands. The bill is a technical one, so I understand Senator Cools' point. I am in your hands.

Senator Day, do you have a suggestion? Do you wish to suspend? I believe Senator Day offered to defer his comments

until we did have the bill. Would the honourable senator repeat his position?

Senator Day: I am in the hands of the Leader of the Government in relation to this.

[Translation]

Hon. Fernand Robichaud (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, if I could miraculously produce the required documents, I would. The current situation is somewhat unusual, because normally we should have a copy of Bill C-29 in our possession.

If honourable senators asked for copies of the bill to be placed before them, I would fulfill their wish. Otherwise, I understand that it will be difficult, for those who will be talking, to do so without the document in hand.

I believe that this is a privilege that must be respected, so that everyone receives the necessary documents.

[English]

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I believe there is a general understanding that it would be better to proceed when the bill is in front of us. I take it that we can revert to this item when we have the bill. That would be a solution to the problem senators face at this time. I would put that forward as a suggestion.

Is it agreed, honourable senators?

Hon. Noël A. Kinsella (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, is the bill lost in a metaphorical sense or in a real sense? Where is the certified bill? I would hope that the certified bill is on the Table. The bill did form the substance of a message from the other place. If it is simply a question of making copies of the bill, perhaps it would be best if the opposition were to agree to suspend this item in the absence of the bill and move on to another item so that we can best use our time this afternoon.

The Hon. the Speaker: Is it agreed, honourable senators?

[Translation]

Senator Robichaud: I am sure the bill was tabled during yesterday's sitting and that it is currently on the Table. The usual procedure is that the bill is copied and distributed. This has to be done quickly to continue the debate. I agree with the Deputy Leader that we could move on to another item on the Order Paper and come back to this item as soon as the copies are distributed.

[English]

Senator Kinsella: I would suggest to my honourable colleague that we proceed to Reports of Committees since those three reports are before the chamber. This debate has commenced. One of the reports relates to both Bill C-29 and Bill C-30.

Debate suspended.

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Fernand Robichaud (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, with your permission, I would like to call for consideration Item No. 1 under Committee Reports, so that the pages can distribute Bill C-29, which we had started to debate.

[English]

THE ESTIMATES, 2002-03

REPORT OF NATIONAL FINANCE COMMITTEE ON SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (B) ADOPTED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Murray, P.C., seconded by the Honourable Senator Oliver, for the adoption of the third report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance (Supplementary Estimates "B" 2002-2003) presented in the Senate on March 25, 2003.

• (1520)

Hon. Anne C. Cools: Honourable senators, it seems to me that calling the reports first would have been a better way to have proceeded in the first place. In any event, I wish to speak to the motion for the adoption of the third report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, being the committee's report on Supplementary Estimates (B) for 2002-03, the fiscal year ending next week.

I wish to direct my remarks to Minister of Justice Martin Cauchon's request for a supplementary appropriation of \$59.4 million. This \$59.4 million is a total of two votes, being vote 1 for \$50,589,000, and vote 5 for \$8,858,000. These two items totalling \$59.4 million are found at page 82 of the Supplementary Estimates (B), 2002-03, under the Department of Justice.

Honourable senators, for the last few months, the extravagant cost overruns of the Firearms Program have been the focus of media, public and parliamentary attention. Since 1995, this Senate committee has diligently inquired into these costs. Committee report after report recorded this, yet neither Minister Cauchon nor the Leader of the Government Senator Carstairs has responded to the committee's concerns.

On November 21, 2001, Treasury Board Secretariat officials told the committee that the Firearms Program costs would reach \$689 million by March 31, 2002 — that is, by a year ago. In November 2002, while studying Supplementary Estimates (A), 2002-03, the same Treasury Board Secretariat officials told the committee that the costs would reach \$810 million by March 2003 — that is, by now — and would soon thereafter be \$1 billion. In fact, Mr. Richard Neville, the deputy comptroller general, told the committee that they were very worried about this file.

On November 26, 2002, Chairman Senator Murray questioned Mr. Neville at committee, saying:

Is it fair to ask whether, at the official level, you are concerned about the growth of spending in that area?

Mr. Neville responded:

Honourable senators, that is a valid question. From the Treasury Board Secretariat perspective, we are very concerned about this file. I do believe that if we were to discuss this in a few months, we probably would have additional information to provide. I will say that we are extremely concerned about this file.

Honourable senators, these costs and the reasons for them are still a mystery. Today I shall chronicle then Minister of Justice Allan Rock's 1995 assurances to us about his proposed cost of \$85 million for the Firearms Program. On February 16, 1995, Minister Rock, in the Commons at second reading of the Firearms Act, Bill C-68, said:

We have provided our estimate of the cost of implementing universal registration over the next five years. We say that it will cost \$85 million. We have also said that we will put before the parliamentary committee, on which all parties sit, details of those calculations showing our assumptions and how we arrived at those figures. We encourage the members opposite to examine our estimates. We are confident we will demonstrate that the figures are realistic and accurate.

In the same speech, Minister Rock repeated his assurance of his costs, saying:

It is crucially important, in my judgment, that as we debate this question of registration, in respect of which there are strongly held views on both sides, that we do so on the real facts. Let us confine ourselves to the reality of the situation. Let us not hear that the registration system will cost \$100 per firearm.... Let us not contend that it will cost \$1.5 billion to put in place.

That is the way to distort the discussion. That is the way to frighten people. Surely this debate must be carried out on the real facts.

Did you hear that, honourable senators? That is what we were getting from Mr. Rock — the real facts.

On April 24, 1995, before the Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs, again responding to questions about the credibility, reliability and accuracy of his projected costs, Minister Rock said:

I maintain that the figures I've put before the committee are our best estimate, based on reasonable assumptions, calculated responsibly, and reflecting all of the costs of establishing the registration system. That is to establish the registration system.

Honourable senators, in the Senate on June 28, 1995, before our Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Minister Rock again dismissed questions about his projected costs and condemned his critics, saying:

There is a man on the west coast who purports to have done some research. That research was funded in part by the National Rifle Association, the American gun lobby group. He published a piece of work about the cost of the registration, in which he concluded that it would cost \$1.5 billion. He arrived at that number by taking the \$82, which is the average cost for registering a handgun under the present system — a cost that is determined as a result of the individual checks done by police on applicants for handgun registration, the highly paper-intensive registration system — and he multiplied it by the 6 million or 7 million long arms in the country... Then he took what he assessed to be the administration costs into account and came to the conclusion that it would be closer to \$1 billion or \$1.5 billion. He was throwing around numbers of that magnitude based on his assumptions.

That man was Dr. Gary Mauser, a professor at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. It turns out he was right; Mr. Rock was wrong.

Honourable senators, a few minutes later, at the very same committee meeting, Minister Rock again insisted that:

It will cost nothing like \$82 for the long arm registration, but that is not what this researcher concludes. People who you would think of as credible sources are using and repeating that information. You see it in some newspapers that have generally high standards and you wonder to yourself: "How are we ever going to sort this out?" I believe that ten years from now we will look back and wonder what all the fuss was about.

Well, honourable senators, we are now in the eighth of ten years later, and the fuss is even greater than it was then. Mr. Rock will wonder what the fuss was about. Certainly, the fuss was about his forecast and what he told Parliament this program would cost.

Honourable senators, on November 16, 1995, Minister Rock appeared again before the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. He persisted yet again in his projected \$85 million. He said:

As you well know, Mr. Chairman, a great deal has been said about the costs associated with implementing the universal registration system. Some people have suggested, either to this committee or in other forums, that the system would cost between \$500 million and 1.5 billion. There is no basis whatsoever for these claims. In April, our government tabled to the House of Commons committee a detailed breakdown of the approximate cost of implementing the registration system. I feel that it is important to point out that to date, there has been no credible attack made on the figures that we submitted over six months ago.

Only Mr. Rock was credible, remember? Everyone else was simply not credible. I wanted to put that on the record to show the persistence of his assurance of that magical number, \$85 million, and how so many senators were actually taken in and believed the minister.

Honourable senators, I recall Minister Rock's adamant and haughty defence of his forecast amounts. Credibility was his and his alone. Most members of Parliament accepted his forecast and voted accordingly. Those who questioned him, like myself, were brutalized. Clearly Parliament was misled. I wonder if Bill C-68 would have passed had the true costs ever been placed before Parliament.

Honourable senators, I return now to December last. Shortly after Mr. Neville's testimony, Auditor General Sheila Fraser's report was introduced in the House of Commons. The Auditor General dedicated a whole chapter of her report to the now well-known problems of the Firearms Program. Her chapter 10 was entitled "Department of Justice — Costs of Implementing the Canadian Firearms Program." The Auditor General revealed how the Firearms Program costs has escalated from the original forecast to the massive amount of \$1 billion and described the magnitude of the program's problems. Further, the Auditor General informed Parliament that the financial information of the Department of Justice did not fairly present the program's costs. She also informed that she stopped her audit. At chapter 10.48, she stated:

In our view, the financial information provided for audit by the Department does not fairly present the cost of the Program to the government. Our initial review found significant shortcomings in the information the Department provided. Consequently, we stopped our audit of this information...

• (1530)

Honourable senators, the Auditor General stopped her audit, which is an unprecedented and serious step. The action of stopping the audit is a serious matter. The continuation of her audit and its findings are already being anticipated.

Honourable senators, from the beginning, the Firearms Program and its development have been plagued by erroneous assumptions, wrong forecasts and numerous other problems. As a result, the government has set out to restructure the program and, in April 2002, it engaged contractors to do just that. The Auditor General's report, chapter 10 found that the eventual cost of this solution is still undetermined and unknown. At paragraph 10.76, the Auditor General said:

The government approved outsourcing the Canadian Firearms Registration System as part of the Restructuring Program Plan. Outsourcing involved freezing its development, looking for a more cost-effective replacement, and trying to make it more flexible to user needs. A contractor started work in April 2002 to develop a solution. The contractor's proposal involves replacing the System's computer software with existing private sector approaches. The eventual cost of the solution is still to be determined by the Department.

I repeat: The eventual cost is still undetermined by the Department of Justice and is unknown to Parliament and the Senate. Honourable senators, we are being asked to vote today or tomorrow or in the next few days even though the amount is still undetermined. It is a reasonable assumption to say that if it costs \$1 billion to get from 1995 to 2003, then it will cost another \$1 billion to move it forward. I wish that the Minister of Justice would tell us how much but he will not tell us.

Honourable senators, it would seem that, given the history and persistence of these huge problems and given that the eventual cost is still unknown, Parliament would express deep concern, particularly when our intelligence informs us that of that \$1 billion, at least \$500 million is a write-off and a total waste. Yet the minister has not told us and will not tell us what happened to that money. Honourable senators, that is a great deal of money.

In December 2002, the Auditor General's Report coincided with the House of Commons consideration of supply. On December 5, 2002 the House of Commons voted to reduce the Department of Justice estimates by \$72 million. The minister did not withdraw anything. The House had voted to reduce it. The House of Commons Debates, at page 2337, reports as follows:

Mr. Peter MacKay...seconded by the member for Yorkton-Melville, moved:

That the Supplementary Estimates (A) be amended by reducing vote 1a under Justice by the amount of \$62,872,916 and vote 5a under Justice by \$9,109,670 and that the supply motions and the bill to be based thereon altered accordingly.

The Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some honourable members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

That was the record of the House of Commons on December 5, 2002. The *Journals of the House of Commons*, December 5, 2002, recorded the same motion to reduce the Estimates. On page 263, the proceedings read as follows:

...it was ordered, - That the Supplementary Estimates (A) be amended by reducing vote 1a under Justice by the amount of \$62,872,916 and vote 5a under Justice by \$9,109,670..."

Minister Cauchon's disregard for the will of Parliament, for the principles of responsibility and for Parliament's control of the public purse is jolting to our sensibilities.

Honourable senators, the government's spin on this Commons vote has asserted that the government itself withdrew the \$72 million, thereby not conceding the government's defeat. This spin was successful for a time but, like much of the pretence around this Firearms Program, that pretence soon collapsed and was seen to be what it really was, yet another distortion. It should be understood that unanimous consent could not adopt a motion because unanimous consent means with leave of the House, as for example, to put the motion without notice. Peter MacKay's motion to reduce the Estimates was adopted and became an Order of the House to bring the supply bill in accordance with the terms of the reducing motion. Minister

Lucienne Robillard, before introducing the supply bill, reprinted it so she could introduce a bill that would reflect the reduced amount in accordance with the reduction motion as ordered.

Honourable senators, when a motion is agreed to, it becomes an order of the House. The House voted and ordered Minister Cauchon's Supplementary Estimates reduced. A vote and order of the House to reduce a minister's Estimates is a serious matter. A reduction by such a substantive amount is momentous, not merely symbolic —

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I regret to inform Senator Cools that her time has expired.

Senator Cools: Honourable senators, I ask leave of the Senate to continue.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Agreed.

[Translation]

Hon. Fernand Robichaud (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I am prepared to give Senator Cools a few minutes so that she may finish her speech, as she has advised me that she has only half a page left.

[English]

Senator Cools: Honourable senators, a reduction by such a substantive amount is momentous, not merely symbolic, and is usually followed by the minister's resignation. I note that the quantum of reduction roughly equals Minister Rock's original 1995 \$85-million forecast as the cost of the Firearms Program. The Estimates are the financial expression of a government's policy. In parliamentary terms, a reduction in the Estimates is an expression of non-confidence in a minister's policy that commands the minister to stop and reconsider the said policy and to proceed cautiously with attention to Parliament's needs and the public's needs. This has not happened. In the Supplementary Estimates (B), 2002-2003, the minister is commanding Parliament to vote \$59.4 million — not requesting but commanding. The government's command is attended by the punitive threat that Liberal members who vote against it will face reprisals from the government.

This is unprecedented, honourable senators; it is unheard of. I believe that granting the minister more money for this program has now become a moral question that is reaching a moral crisis, perhaps even reaching a constitutional crisis. Voting to grant the minister more money, I believe, would be an immoral act. Similarly, I believe that the minister's asking us to vote more money is unconscionable and hostile to the principles of parliamentary government and to the interests of Canadian taxpayers. To vote more money would demonstrate the failure of the Liberal Caucus, the principles of responsible government and Parliament's control of the public purse.

Honourable senators, these are merely my opinions, spoken by a person who has studied a reasonable amount on these issues and as a person who has a reasonable knowledge of the parliamentary system.

I also say these words as a great believer in the grand principles of liberalism because, after all, one of the great achievements of British liberalism was the establishment of strict and sound rules for the control of the public purse. It is always said that, when any great initiative or any great proposal moves forward, it should move forward anchored and connected to the greatness of the past. I anchor myself to the notions of the grand liberal — called the great commoner — whose name was William Ewart Gladstone, a Liberal prime minister of the U.K., and the principles he laid down in his reforms, strategies, standards and principles on the notion of liberal control of the public purse.

• (1540)

Hon. Noël A. Kinsella (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I rise to participate in this debate on the third report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance. I would like to focus my remarks, in particular, on section “B” of report, dealing with the Canadian Firearms Program.

Honourable senators, we will have an opportunity, if they ever find Bill C-29, to talk about the supplementary amount that is being sought, which is \$54.9 million. I have yet to hear questions asked, beyond the money scandal, about this program. According to the Minister of Justice, when the long arm registration bill was brought in, it would cost some \$80 million; now we are at \$1 billion.

People are involved in managing that money, and I am concerned with the poor management, the poor public administration that has been associated with this file, as well, obviously, as with the \$1-billion price tag.

Honourable senators, I am hopeful that at some time either our National Finance Committee or some other body will examine the public administration model that was applied to the operation of the long arm registration program.

As a former deputy minister myself, I recall during the debate on the original bill years ago that I had grave concerns about the government's ability to administer that program. Therefore, I have great sympathy for the public servants who are given the charge and the money to implement this long arm registration program. Frankly, I think that my concern at the time has been borne out by the experience over these last few years in that they have failed. They not only have failed in terms of the cost, but also in terms of the results. The numbers of long arms that have actually been registered, compared to what ought to have been the case, certainly does not justify the cost. Therefore, it seems to me that there is something equally serious about the failure of system, and it speaks to the inability to administer the program.

Many in this chamber have significant experience in the private sector. I am wondering what your experience tells you. If an organization or company or industry had a program plan that was to achieve a certain objective, and a budget of \$80 million was

set forth, what would happen if, a few years later, the managers came and told you, “We have not achieved the operating objective, and the cost is no longer \$80 million; it is \$1 billion”? Heads would roll. In the public sector, there seems to be no accountability.

Honourable senators, the report that we are debating contains these words. It says that the Department of Justice is seeking \$59.4 million “to continue a minimum level of service for 2002-2003.” I repeat: a minimum level of service. Since when has minimalism become the Canadian standard? We know that there is a certain aristocracy for mediocrity, but minimalism should have no place in our public administration.

Honourable senators, it is important for us to look not only at the failure in terms of the budget cost, but at the failure of the public administration system. I think that, with those two considerations, we will be led to the inevitable conclusion that the whole model underlying that legislation was wrong, wrong, wrong.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Cools: On division.

Motion agreed to and report adopted, on division.

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Fernand Robichaud (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, we agreed earlier that once we had a copy of Bill C-29, debate on this legislation could resume. The copies of the bill having now been distributed, I call Item No. 4 on the Orders of the Day, under Bills.

[English]

Hon. Noël A. Kinsella (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I hope I will be able to persuade my honourable colleague to allow us to debate the next two reports on the Order Paper. I do not think it will take that long. It would give us an opportunity to read the bill. There are three pages. Now that the bill has been found, maybe some of us could read the bill while this debate continues on the two reports. However, I will not insist.

[Translation]

Senator Robichaud: Honourable senators, we are considering many things this afternoon, but it is all in good faith. We could, actually, give the honourable senators the time to become familiar with this bill. I thank the Honourable Senator Kinsella for having brought this to my attention. We could therefore move on to Item No. 2 under Committee Reports, which is the motion introduced by Senator Murray for adoption of the fourth report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance.

[English]

THE ESTIMATES, 2002-03

REPORT OF NATIONAL FINANCE COMMITTEE ADOPTED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Murray, P.C., seconded by the Honourable Senator Buchanan, P.C., for the adoption of the fourth report (final) of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance (2002-2003 Estimates) presented in the Senate on March 25, 2003.

• (1550)

Hon. Anne C. Cools: Honourable senators, I think we can proceed directly to the question.

Hon. Noël A. Kinsella (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Does the honourable senator wish to speak?

Senator Cools: The interim reports were interesting as were some of the questions contained in the final report. However, I am also of the opinion that time is moving along. My understanding was that we did want to proceed with second reading of the supply bills, so in the interests of time I will be happy to pass.

Senator Kinsella: Honourable senators, I do wish to make a few comments about the fourth report. I listened carefully to the remarks of my colleague Senator Murray yesterday.

I will limit myself to one aspect of the fourth report. I would refer to page 2 of the report where the committee advises the house of its discussion and deliberations concerning the National Capital Commission. Reference is also made to the Honourable Minister of Canadian Heritage having appeared before the committee to comment on three recommendations that the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance had made to this house previously concerning the business practices of the National Capital Commission.

Honourable senators might recall that citizens in the national capital community brought to the attention of this house a serious problem, in their view, with the manner in which the National Capital Commission was proposing to dispose of open space land. The particular land was the property on Prince of Wales Drive, Highway 16, which is Moffatt Farm. Several honourable senators, including our former colleague who is with us this afternoon, Senator Taylor, went to the farm to see exactly what we were dealing with.

It was because of that interest shown by members of this house that the committee made the recommendation that there ought to be meaningful consultation with the community when there is a proposition to divest properties held in trust by the National Capital Commission.

At the time, there was a misunderstanding as to the very mandate of the National Capital Commission with respect to lands that it holds. As a Canadian from the Province of New Brunswick, it is my view that the National Capital Commission holds lands in the National Capital Region in trust for New Brunswickers. It is not holding these lands as a real estate developer in the National Capital Region. Future generations of New Brunswickers who would come to our national capital ought to have the opportunity of enjoying the heritage of the open spaces that we have. This was a real national interest issue that it seemed to me, at least, that the business practice of the National Capital Commission was missing completely.

The committee discovered that there was a strange practice in place as the result of a Treasury Board decision a number of years ago, when money was a little tighter, perhaps, whereby operating agencies were able to divest themselves of capital properties and use that money on projects that the given agency wanted to undertake.

Given the situation of holding properties, in this case in the public interest of all Canadians, and wanting to undertake projects but lacking cash, there was a tremendous pressure on the operating agency, in this instance the National Capital Commission, to sell a piece of land to gain money to undertake a given project that they had in mind within their operating plans.

The Senate committee did a great service in identifying that as a problem. I was pleased to see in this report that the committee had a discussion with the minister regarding those recommendations. I would have preferred that the minister had taken a stronger stance in keeping with the spirit of the recommendation of the committee.

I take notice of that recommendation and of the work done by our committee. It was important work. I support the adoption of this report.

Senator Cools: Honourable senators, Senator Kinsella's comments have been of such interest that I find myself compelled to join in the debate.

Honourable senators have a copy of the report before them. One will see in the narrative of the report an account of the Minister Cripps's testimony before the committee, particularly in respect of her belief that there is a strict arm's length relationship between herself and the Crown corporations that report to Parliament through her.

At the committee meeting, there was some concern expressed as to whether the National Capital Commission is a Crown corporation in the sense that the term "Crown corporation" is being used here. The NCC is, as its name suggests, is a commission, which means that it is a body corporate of land commissioners holding land in a public trust, as Senator Kinsella said.

It became clear that both the minister and the NCC chairman do not fully comprehend the proper constitutional role of a commission. A commission is a peculiar constitutional entity charged with a public interest role.

At various committee meetings on the subject, a concern was expressed that, by adopting the language of Crown corporations rather than that of commissions and body corporates of commissioners, the NCC has been attempting to recast or remould its constitutional purpose from that of a commission with a duty of public interest to that of a commercial entity involved in the business of driving up land prices through land speculation.

This is a very important matter because distorting land prices can only have a commercial purpose, which is not one properly befitting a commission.

It is an interesting matter, and I thank Senator Kinsella for raising it today. It became crystal clear that these issues were deserving of study.

I would also take this opportunity to thank Minister Copps for appearing before our committee.

Having said that, honourable senators, the issue is now before us. This is a matter about which the Senate has expressed some concern.

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

Motion agreed to and report adopted.

• (1600)

THE ESTIMATES, 2003-04

FIRST INTERIM REPORT OF NATIONAL FINANCE COMMITTEE ADOPTED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Murray, P.C., seconded by the Honourable Senator Bolduc, for the adoption of the fifth report (first interim) of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance (2003-2004 Estimates) presented in the Senate on March 25, 2003.

Hon. Anne C. Cools: Honourable senators, we are now on the interim report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, which means it is the report that supports the interim supply bill.

If one were to look at page 3 of the report, one will see that the following prose is found. It says a total of \$113.1 million is requested for the Canadian Firearms Centre, of which \$74 million is for the Department of Justice.

I simply want to make the point again about the continuing concern about giving yet more money to this already voluptuous money sink and the concerns that it has caused Parliament.

Honourable senators, it is most interesting that one particular point has not been raised as yet in the debate. I suppose it will

come forward when we move on to the bill itself. When one considers that request after request for appropriations have come before this committee, one cannot help but notice that not a single one of those requests has ever been accompanied by a visit or an appearance by the minister. In the debates in committees, I frequently say that we should have a minister come and talk to us to tell us what this money is for and give us a fuller explanation of where all this money is going.

At the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee meeting some weeks ago, I encountered the Deputy Minister of Justice, Mr. Morris Rosenberg. He was able to tell me at the time that he had been reading the Senate committee debates. I thought at the time that we had arrived at last, since someone was reading our proceedings. He told me that he had noted that I frequently say, "The minister should appear before us." However, I do sincerely believe that this issue is so stupendous and gargantuan that I hope the committee and this chamber, perhaps the government leader in the Senate, would communicate to the Minister of Justice the high importance that should be given to scheduling an appearance before the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance.

I must tell you, honourable senators, that we really are blessed on that committee. We have an excellent chairman, Senator Murray, and deputy chairman, Senator Day. On behalf of all the members of the committee, I think we should communicate to the minister an invitation to come before the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance to explain these items and sums. The minister should come soon.

Senator Kinsella: Question!

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Cools: On division.

Motion agreed to and report adopted, on division.

APPROPRIATION BILL NO. 4, 2002-03

SECOND READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Day, seconded by the Honourable Senator Biron, for the second reading of Bill C-29, for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the Public Service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 2003.

Hon. Joseph A. Day: Honourable senators may recall where I was prior to the suspension of the debate. I was dealing with some of the interesting items that make up part of the \$1.9 billion for the Supplementary Estimates (B) that the government is asking for under Appropriation Act No. 4. We are on second reading.

I think it not necessary to elaborate much more on some of the items. I will go over them quickly. Some I happened to mention to the honourable senators. One of these has already been mentioned to you on several occasions, which is \$59 million for the Gun Control Program. There is \$54.3 million for Human Resources Development, for three new grants to governments: one for the Government of Quebec for \$53.7 million, one for the Government of the Northwest Territories for \$336,000, and one for the Government of Nunavut for \$261,000. Each of these grants is to ensure appropriate support to their provincial or territorial student assistance programs. I think that is an important initiative that honourable senators should be aware of.

Fifty-two million and one hundred thousand dollars would go to Fisheries and Oceans to address core operational requirements for the department to continue to deliver its core services to Canadian citizens for the remainder of this fiscal year. Finally, honourable senators —

[Translation]

— an amount of \$50.7 million for Citizenship and Immigration Canada, \$29 million of which is for increasing the grant to Quebec for 2001-02 and 2002-03 under the terms of the Canada-Quebec Accord on Immigration; an amount of \$21.7 million to take into account the new federal grant presentation standards for Quebec.

[English]

The above items represent \$1.4 billion of the \$1.9 billion for which parliamentary approval is being sought. The balance of \$428 million is spread among a number of departments and agencies. The specific details are included in the Supplementary Estimates, which I know were circulated to all honourable senators. We will not have to delay to make copies for honourable senators.

[Translation]

As for the changes to forecast statutory expenditures, there is a decrease of \$439.5 million in the statutory items already forecast and authorized by Parliament. The updates in the Supplementary Estimates are there for information only.

[English]

The major statutory items are provided for information purposes only, and honourable senators will recall that the expenditure for those statutory items is provided for in other statutes — I am telling honourable senators about them for information purposes only — to which changes are projected in the spending amounts. Our Department of Finance statutory public debt charges are forecast to increase by \$800 million, due to an increase in interest on retirement and post-employment liabilities and decreases in interest on public sector pensions and federal debt. This is consistent with the forecast for public debt charges that were included in the Minister of Finance's budget presented in February of this year. There is \$323 million in payments to the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority for operating and capital expenditures. This was also included as a statutory expenditure in the 2002 federal budget, Bill C-49 passed by Parliament. It is also indicated that \$108 million will go to Natural Resources Canada for Newfoundland fiscal equalization offset payments; that \$50 million would go to the Minister of Agriculture for aid to agriculture in the province of Quebec.

[Senator Day]

• (1610)

[Translation]

There has been a net decrease of \$550 million in the forecasts by Human Resources Development with respect to the statutory expenditures for the Income Security Program for the year 2002-03, which brings the revised total to \$25.8 million.

[English]

There has been a decrease of \$295 million to Human Resources Development for loans disbursed under the statutory Canada Student Loans Program resulting from improvements in the accuracy of forecasting used to estimate the growth in the student loan portfolio and from the inclusion of repayments. We specifically asked that question because we did not want to see a reduction in student loans. It was indicated to us that the amount was reduced because of better forecasting of requirements.

[Translation]

There has been a net decrease of \$242.8 million for Human Resources Development as statutory payments under the Canada Student Loans Program to reflect the decrease in replacement payments to non-participating provinces as well as reduced costs relating to the student debt reduction provisions, of Canada Study Grants and of the cost of the service bureau.

[English]

Finally, honourable senators, there has been a decrease of \$129 million to the Department of Finance for statutory transfer payments to provincial governments.

[Translation]

This, honourable senators, concludes my comments on Supplementary Estimates (B) for 2002-03.

[English]

Honourable senators, this Appropriation Bill No. 4, which we now have at second reading, is for the release of \$1.9 billion to end this fiscal year. This amount was included in the Minister of Finance's February 2002 budget for planned spending ending in fiscal year 2003. I ask honourable senators for their support of this bill.

Hon. Noël A. Kinsella (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Would the honourable senator take a question for clarification?

Senator Day: I would be pleased to take a question. However, I cannot guarantee that I will provide a helpful answer.

Senator Kinsella: Would Senator Day be able to show us in Bill C-29, which we are now debating, where the \$59.4 million is provided for, for the Canadian Firearms Program? On what page of the bill do we find that item?

Senator Day: I thank the honourable senator for his question. While I am looking through this new document that I have just received, I would refer him to the Department of Justice votes 1 and 5 found at page 82 of the Supplementary Estimates. Those should be in Bill C-29. Perhaps my friend will find that before me. I have people helping me look for it in the bill.

Senator Kinsella: Maybe I could assist the honourable senator. I would refer to page 17 of the bill, Schedule 1, Department of Justice, votes 1(b) and 5(b). Is the figure found under vote 1(b), \$68,004,029, where the \$59.4 million for the firearms program is embedded?

Senator Day: It is my understanding that that is where that item is found. We specifically asked why that would not be more clearly displayed. In the Supplementary Estimates (B), at page 82, due to the interest, there is a breakout for the Canadian Firearms Program.

Senator Kinsella: We are dealing with the bill now.

Senator Day: Yes, I understand that. The explanation given to us was that the detail would be found in Part III of the Estimates that would come forward. We pointed out that that would not be before us until after we had voted on the bill and that this was a procedure that we wanted to review. That is where the item is found.

Senator Kinsella: Honourable senators, the debate right now is on the principle of Bill C-29. Would an amendment to have vote 1(b) stricken address the concerns of those of us who are opposed in principle to the inclusion of \$59.4 million in these Supplementary Estimates for the long arm registration program? Is vote 1(b) where we would find the \$59.4 million item?

We need to know where that item is in the bill if we are to move an amendment to the bill, which the honourable senator may or may not support.

Senator Day: I thank the honourable senator for his question. I hesitate to offer the honourable senator guidance on bringing forward an amendment. I am hopeful that my comments would persuade him not to introduce an amendment to the bill. However, he is correct in that, to the best of the committee's information, that figure is located in the Department of Justice votes 1 and 5.

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau: Honourable senators, I enjoyed watching the honourable senator squirm in response to the previous question. That is one of the questions that I have been raising in committee for some time. As sponsor of the bill, I assume that the senator will now be an active supporter of some of the issues that I have raised on this specific subject. If we are to deal with figures and numbers, we should be able to find them quickly and readily and be able to identify them without having to assume that the numbers are incorporated in other figures.

My question to the honourable senator is: Does this further reinforce the need for us to have more clarity in and consistency

between reports so that we do not have to refer to the Supplementary Estimates? I hope the honourable senator will agree with me that we ought to work together to achieve that goal.

Senator Day: I thank the honourable senator for his question. The National Finance Committee has agreed with the honourable senator on that point in several of its reports. We continue to work on the requirement for further clarity. We are of one voice and thought in that regard. We will continue encourage improvements. I look forward to the continued good participation of the honourable senator in that committee and to working with him.

Hon. Terry Stratton: Honourable senators, I rise to speak on second reading of Bill C-29, which authorizes \$1.9 billion in additional spending for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2003.

Honourable senators will know that additional money for the Canadian Firearms Program, or CFP, as it is known, is contained in this supply bill. An additional \$59,447,000 is requested to keep the program going until the end of March 2003.

Treasury Board officials told the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance just last week that Justice Canada is seeking these resources for the CFP to continue a minimum level of service for 2002-03. Next year, the program will require another \$113 million, despite the fact that a year ago the Department of Justice said that it expected the CFP would cost \$95 million in the fiscal year beginning April 1, 2003.

• (1620)

Honourable senators will recall that when this program began, we were told that the gun registry would have a net cost of only \$2 million. Then last fall, at a meeting of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, officials from the Treasury Board conceded that the running total will hit at least \$1 billion by the 2004-05 fiscal year. That is 500 times the original estimate. I repeat: 500 times the original estimate.

A couple of weeks later this same billion-dollar figure was confirmed by the Auditor General in her review of the gun registry. A few days later, faced with a backbench revolt in the House of Commons, the government agreed to remove \$72 million in proposed gun registry funding from the Supplementary Estimates (A). They told us at the time that they would cash manage the shortfall and then seek funding through Supplementary Estimates (B) instead. In other words, they just juggled the bills in the hope that the storm would blow over.

More than half the money voted to this program since its creation in 1995 has come from Supplementary Estimates, as the people in charge cannot seem to figure out from one day to the next how much money they need to run the program. Parliament gives them money for the year in the spring, and then after a few months they find that they do not have enough. They were caught playing a game that has gone on for far too long; ask for a small amount in the spring, then get a lot more money later on through the Supplementary Estimates.

There are two problems when departments seek to use Supplementary Estimates for most of their operating budget. First, it plays havoc with Parliament's ability to control spending. In her December 2002 report on the gun registry, the Auditor General said:

Departments obtain funding through the main annual appropriations from Parliament. If they need additional funds during a given year they request these through further appropriations called "supplementary estimates." Between 1995-96 and 2001-02, the Department obtained only about 30 per cent of the \$750 million in funds for the Program through the main appropriations method; in comparison, it obtained 90 per cent of funding for all of its other programs through the main appropriations.

Smells a little fishy.

Little additional information was given to explain the need for major supplementary estimates for the Program other than the required brief one-line statement that identified the funds were for the Program.

To enable Parliament to maintain control over the public purse, departments ask for approval of supplementary estimates only for unanticipated expenditures not approved by the Treasury Board in the normal business cycle or for those that cannot be estimated in advance. We note that it has been clear for some time that fees collected have not covered Program costs and that the Department should have told Parliament that this was the case rather than maintaining that cost recovery was feasible and continuing to use supplementary estimates.

Three and a half months typically elapse between the date of the Main Estimates and the date that Parliament votes the money. There is plenty of time for proper examination. Supplementary Estimates are another matter. Most of the time, less than a month elapses between the time they are tabled and the time that they are deemed to be reported out of committee in the Commons, regardless of whether or not they have actually been examined.

Typically, a couple of weeks go by, Parliament recesses for a week or two, and then, poof, the window for scrutiny has come and gone. These Supplementary Estimates illustrate this point clearly. They were introduced in Parliament exactly one month ago. Since then, Parliament was recessed for a two-week break. In the House of Commons, there were nine sitting days to request the additional \$1.9 billion in appropriations. In the Senate, we had five sitting days.

In spite of the rather limited time available, the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance has been vigilant in reviewing the Supplementary Estimates, including those for the gun registry. Year after year, committee members from both sides have held the government's feet to the fire as it asked for more and more money for the registry. This year was no different.

Even some members on the government's side are uneasy about the excessive use of Supplementary Estimates to fund government programs. *The Hill Times* of March 10, 2003, reported the

following interview with Reg Alcock, Liberal Chair of the Government Operations Committee in the House of Commons:

"We need to establish a new set of principles for the use of supplementaries, because we have migrated from the supps being a mechanism dealing with extraordinary events to become a part of the normal budgeting process. And I want to deal with that," he said.

Mr. Alcock said the new spending is supposed to be used for unanticipated expenditures — to pay for deploying Canadian troops overseas, for example — or for new programs adopted after the budget is tabled.

Instead, the government uses them as part of its regular budgetary process, he lamented.

Mr. Alcock can't figure out why nearly all departments and agencies come back to Parliament with hat in hand for more money after the main estimates are approved in the spring.

Parliament normally handles up to two rounds of supplementary estimates which amount to \$2-billion in extra spending each on average.

To compound things, the Manitoba MP said the additional funds are rarely, if ever, scrutinized by Parliament which passes them on the nod.

"The problem is that people..."

The Hill Times then puts the word "Parliamentarians" in brackets and continues:

"...pay minor attention to the mains...but no attention to the supps...and there is far too much spending going on in the supps," he said.

It is unfortunate that Mr. Alcock did not give recognition to the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, for this is often the only place where questions are asked about some of the items in the Supplementary Estimates, including the gun registry. The Auditor General has a similar concern, telling the Commons Public Accounts Committee of March 17, 2003: "I do think that, yes, supplementary estimates receive less attention."

The Auditor General and the President of the Treasury Board have both given recognition to the work of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance. Year after year the Liberals on the House of Commons Justice Committee have not been able to find the time to examine Supplementary Estimate requests for money from the gun registry, and the Supplementary Estimates contained in this bill are no exception.

The latest request for \$59.4 million was not examined by the Commons Justice Committee, nor was last December's request for \$72 million. That is how this government has used the Supplementary Estimates to fund the gun registry.

In the 1995-96 fiscal year, \$5 million was approved in Supplementary Estimates (B) for "preparation for implementation of the Firearms Act." This was the first money authorized for the gun registry.

A table in the front of the Blue Book outlining 1995-96 Supplementary Estimates (B) tells us that \$4 million of this came from the Treasury Board contingency vote. This program was not even off the ground, yet from day one they were cutting cheques before Parliament had voted the money.

If this department can cash manage \$72 million for three months, then surely it could have cash managed \$4 million until Parliament approved the Supplementary Estimates; or is Parliament too much of an inconvenience?

In 1996-97, Supplementary Estimates (A) brought another \$16 million for the gun registry, and the list of Treasury Board contingency vote items clearly told us that all of it was advanced for "preparation for the implementation of the Firearms Act."

Are we to believe that the government did not have the vaguest idea, when it pulled together the Main Estimates in February of 1996, of what it was going to spend on the firearms registry that year? Either they were utterly clueless as to the costs so that they could not even plan their spending in February, or the Minister of Justice was playing games. Either could be the case.

• (1630)

A few months later, Parliament was asked to vote another \$2.8 million for the gun registry in the 1996-97 Supplementary Estimates (B). In 1997-98, the gun registry was given \$41 million in Supplementary Estimates (B), and of this, \$16 million was specifically identified as having been advanced from the contingency vote.

In 1998-99, the gun registry received a whopping \$87 million from Supplementary Estimates (A), and then a few months later another \$14 million. That is \$101 million through the Supplementary Estimates process in that year alone.

In 1999-2000, the gun registry received \$35 million through Supplementary Estimates (A). We know that \$40 million was advanced to the Department of Justice from the Treasury Board's contingencies vote prior to Parliament voting funds through Supplementary Estimates (A). Unfortunately, the supporting documents do not tell us which particular program at the Department of Justice this helped to fund. Although it is very likely that some of it went to the gun registry, only the Treasury Board and the Justice Department know for sure.

A few months later, another \$46 million was voted for the gun registry in Supplementary Estimates (B) for 1999-2000. This time, we were told that \$40 million was advanced from Treasury Board contingencies.

Turning the page to fiscal 2000-01, Supplementary Estimates (A) approved another \$50 million for the firearms program, of which \$30 million had already been advanced through the Treasury Board contingency vote.

With fiscal year 2001-02, the story line is the same. Supplementary Estimates (A) granted the gun registry no less than \$114 million, of which \$40 million had already been advanced from Treasury Board contingencies. Think about it. The fiscal year was nearly three quarters done before Parliament voted the \$114 million.

This year, fiscal 2002-03, the Liberal government blithely continued with the same game plan. Supplementary Estimates (A) were supposed to give the gun registry another \$72 million, the bulk of its annual spending, in December. However, this time a backbencher vote upset the apple cart, and we got instead a vote for \$59.4 million in the Supplementary Estimates (B).

From day one, this Liberal government has misled Parliament about the gun registry and provided as little information as possible. As the Auditor General noted in last December's report:

The Department of Justice did not provide Parliament with sufficient information to allow it to effectively scrutinize the Canadian Firearms Program and ensure accountability. It provided insufficient financial information and explanations for the dramatic increase in the cost of the Program.

We now have the spectacle of the government blaming MPs for not asking the right questions. This is not a matter of MPs and senators not asking the right questions, assuming we would have been given the right answers. Parliamentarians should not have to guess about what information may or may not be in the binders of those sitting in the witness chairs. For far too long, the government has given far too little information about the gun registry.

Honourable senators, thanks to the work of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance and the Auditor General, information about the money pit of the Canadian Firearms Program is now known to the Canadian public. How many Canadians would grant additional money to someone who has blown their budget by that staggering sum of 500 times? They are 500 times over budget, or 50,000 per cent.

Senator Kinsella: Incompetent.

Senator Stratton: Remember, this program was only to cost \$2 million. The running total will hit at least \$1 billion by 2004-05.

At some point, honourable senators, someone has to say that enough is enough. No one is debating the merits of gun control. What is in question are the escalating, out-of-control costs of this particular firearms registry. There comes a time when one must say that we cannot continue to throw good money after bad on a program that has still not met its original goal of registering every firearm in Canada.

Honourable senators, it has been seven years and three-quarters of a billion dollars already, climbing to a \$1 billion in two years. I ask my honourable colleagues to think hard about whether we ought to continue this practice of sliding more and more money into this bottomless pit through the back door of the Supplementary Estimates process.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

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

Some Hon. Senators: Yes.

Some Hon. Senators: No.

Senator Cools: On division.

Motion agreed to and bill read second time, on division.

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

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

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I draw to your attention the presence in our gallery of our former colleague, the Honourable Erminie Cohen.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

APPROPRIATION BILL NO. 1, 2003-04

SECOND READING

Hon. Joseph A. Day moved the second reading of Bill C-30, for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 2004.

He said: Honourable senators will have in front of them a copy of Bill C-30. Appropriation Bill No. 1 for the fiscal year 2003-04, the fiscal year beginning next Tuesday, April 1, deals with interim supply. I point out to honourable senators that the Main Estimates for the upcoming fiscal year 2003-04 have been circulated. The Standing Senate Committee on National Finance will stay seized of this particular issue and continue to study the Main Estimates throughout the year.

The government is asking in this particular appropriation bill for interim funding to the month of June, and then it will be back with another bill at that time. The interim financing requested flows out of the Main Estimates, and the amount is \$17.8 billion. The Main Estimates were tabled in the Senate on February 26, totalling \$180.7 billion.

As senators are no doubt aware, the February 2003 budget introduced new spending priorities that will cost the government an additional \$5 billion in the coming fiscal year. That is \$5 billion over the expenditures for this fiscal year.

• (1640)

The government also announced a reallocation initiative aimed at redirecting \$1 billion per year from existing spending to fund

higher government priorities. This reallocation will be permanent and is expected to fund close to 15 per cent of the costs of new initiatives that will be announced in budgets over the next two years.

The net impact of this announcement is included in the planned budgetary expenditures of \$180.7 billion laid out by the Minister of Finance in his budget and referred to in Part I of these Estimates. Of this, \$173.1 billion in budgetary spending for 2003-04 — both voted and statutory — is reflected in these Main Estimates and represents close to 96 per cent of the expenditure plan.

The balance of \$7.6 billion includes provisions for further adjustments in spending under statutory programs or for authorities that will be sought through Supplementary Estimates. This includes the new spending initiatives as well as the planned expenditure reallocations of the \$1 billion to which I just referred.

The government submits the Estimates to Parliament in support of its request for authority to spend public funds. They include information on budgetary and non-budgetary spending authorities. Parliament will subsequently consider appropriation bills to authorize that spending.

Budgetary expenditures include the cost of servicing the public debt; operations in capital expenditures; transfer payments to other levels of government, organizations or individuals; and payments to Crown corporations. They are budgetary expenditures.

Non-budgetary expenditures are outlays that result in the change in the composition of the fiscal assets of the government. In 2002-03, these non-budgetary expenditures are represented primarily by payments to various financial institutions; loan disbursements under the Canada student financial assistance program; and loan disbursements and repayments under the Canada Account Loan Agreements.

Both budgetary and non-budgetary expenditures may be authorized through appropriations or statute. Accordingly, \$175.9 billion can be split between appropriated — voted — items for which spending authority is sought through the Estimates and through appropriation bills.

For 2002-03, these voted items amount to approximately \$58.9 billion, or 33.5 per cent of the published Main Estimates. Statutory items, for which spending is authorized under other pieces of legislation, and this includes employment insurance benefits, elderly benefits and transfers to the provinces and territories. Statutory items in the Main Estimates total \$117 billion, or 66.5 per cent of the total Main Estimates.

[Translation]

The government submits the Estimates to Parliament in support of its request for authority to spend public funds. Budgetary expenditures include the cost of servicing the public debt; operating and capital expenditures; transfer payments to other levels of government, organizations or individuals; and payments to Crown corporations.

Non-budgetary expenditures are outlays that result in the change in the composition of the fiscal assets of the government. Both budgetary and non-budgetary expenditures may be authorized through appropriations or statute. Accordingly, \$175.9 billion has been set aside for appropriated — voted — items, for which spending authority is sought through the Estimates.

In 2003-04, these expenditures amount to \$58.9 billion, or 33.5 per cent of the published Main Estimates. Statutory items make up approximately 66.5 per cent of the total.

[English]

These estimates were discussed in some detail with Treasury Board officials in their appearance before the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance on March 19, 2003.

The following are some of the items used in the comparison between the previous fiscal year and the current fiscal year. I selected some items that may be of interest to honourable senators to demonstrate where there are increases and where decreases occur.

The first item is \$1.3 billion due to a forecast increase in public debt interest and servicing costs; \$700 million for the Canada health and social transfer.

[Translation]

Then there is \$774 million for salary increases, including remuneration for judges and members of the RCMP, as well as salary adjustments for members and House Leaders.

[English]

Another item is \$480 million to Transport Canada.

[Translation]

As well, there is \$402 million for the Department of National Defence. This is an increase for the approved readjustment for pay and benefits for military and civilian personnel.

Then there is \$450 million for direct payments to individuals due to increases in old age security and guaranteed income supplement payments.

[English]

This includes \$247 million to the Treasury Board Secretariat for employer contributions to insurance plans. We also have \$204 million which relates to the creation of the Canadian Institute for Health Research; to grants for research projects; and to an increase in the Canada Chairs for the Research Excellence Program. There is \$190 million for payments to various international financial institutions relating to commitments made by Canada under multi-lateral debt reduction agreements.

[Translation]

We also have \$187 million for increasing Canada's international aid envelope.

[English]

Also included is: \$173 million to Indian Affairs and Northern Development; \$168 million to support various Health Canada programs, such as First Nations and Inuit health, including the early childhood development for First Nations and other Aboriginal children initiative; and the health infrastructure and Primary Care Transition Fund initiatives.

[Translation]

Some \$164 million is needed for veterans disability pensions, mainly because of annual adjustments based on the consumer price index, on the anticipated increased volume of grants for attendance allowances, and on the seriousness of the growing number of types of disabilities as the beneficiaries get older.

[English]

Also included is \$150 million for increased payments to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation; \$142 million to Public Works; and \$139 million for the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency. That would be related to workload requirements identified under the resource and management review, and for the implementation of tax measures announced in the federal budget of two years ago.

• (1650)

These increases, honourable senators, are offset by budgetary decreases, which is always nice to see. There is a decrease of \$542 million due to the termination of the Canadian Farm Income and Agricultural Risk Management Program. We are told that that program is being terminated, but another program will be implemented. There is also a decrease of \$245 million in the payments made by Human Resources Development Canada under the Canada Student Loan Program due to legislative changes and a decrease in the old loan portfolio.

[Translation]

The other main budgetary reductions are the following: a \$229 million reduction in forecast employment insurance contributions; a \$175 million reduction at the Department of Finance for replacement payments for the ongoing programs under the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act; a \$17 million reduction in the National Homeless Initiative; a \$100 million reduction at the Department of Canadian Heritage for spending related to the Canadian Television Fund.

[English]

On the non-budgetary side, there is a net change of \$800 million from the fiscal year just ending. The increase is largely attributable to a \$1.2-billion increase in an anticipated loan disbursement and loan repayment under the Canada Account Loan Agreements, Export Development Corporation. This is offset by an expected decrease of \$274 million relating to loans disbursed under the Canada Student Loan Financial Assistance Act and \$43 million in payments to various international financial institutions.

[Translation]

Honourable senators, the bill before us today, Appropriation Act No. 1, for 2003-2004, is for the release of interim supply of \$17.783 billion for the coming fiscal year 2003-04, the Main Estimates for which were tabled in the Senate in February.

[English]

Honourable senators, Appropriation Act No. 1 is for the release of interim supply for the coming fiscal year, beginning April 1, 2003. The Standing Senate Committee on National Finance will continue to study the Main Estimates. I expect that in June of this year another appropriation bill will be submitted for release of further funds under the Main Estimates.

Honourable senators, your support for the interim release of \$17.8 billion is respectfully requested.

Hon. Terry Stratton: Honourable senators, I am pleased to rise today to make a few remarks about Bill C-30, for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the Public Service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 2004.

This is the first appropriation bill of the new fiscal year, and it is advanced at this time to provide interim funding for the first three months, pending approval of the balance of the Main Estimates in a subsequent appropriation bill.

While many departments, in fact, request and receive 25 per cent of their funding, a number of departments and programs find that their activities are heavily weighted toward the beginning of the fiscal year and which, accordingly, require that more than 25 per cent be provided. I note, for example, that the Office of Indian Residential Schools Resolution of Canada is seeking to obtain eleven-twelfths or nearly its full funding for the year through this bill.

The Department of Justice is scheduled to receive five months of funding with respect to its operating expenditures during the first three months, based on the fact that it provides legal services to other government departments, which will not be recovered until the second quarter of the fiscal year.

With regard to the Department of Justice, I note for the record that it appears this may be the first year since its inception that the forecast expenditures in the Main Estimates for the Canadian Firearms Program may be even close to the mark. We shall see. This is unusual for this particular program in light of the fact that fully 70 per cent of the funding for the CFP has been granted through Supplementary Estimates over the last seven years. This is an appalling record. Put another way, the Minister of Justice has been consistent throughout the life of the firearms program in understating the annual cost of the program in the Main Estimates by, on average, somewhat more than 200 per cent annually.

The total request in the Main Estimates this fiscal year for the Canadian Firearms Program is \$113 million. Last year, the Minister of Justice asked for roughly about \$35 million through

the Main Estimates and later sought another \$72 million through the first round of Supplementary Estimates, a request that Parliament refused, as we all know.

The minister then came back in the second round of Supplementary Estimates to obtain \$59.4 million. The total that the firearms program actually hoped to receive in the last fiscal year was \$107 million. A request for \$113 million in the Main Estimates for the coming fiscal year is something we can hope will be close to the total amount required to run this money pit for another year.

Honourable senators should keep in mind the prediction of the Minister of Justice, Allan Rock, when he informed Parliament in 1995 that the Canadian Firearms Program would cost taxpayers a net total of \$2 million over five years, and then it would be run thereafter on a break-even basis. In fact, it will cost the taxpayers of Canada 56 times that total for the coming fiscal year alone. The total projected cost to Canadian taxpayers exceeds the original \$2 million predicted by roughly — and this is a staggering figure — 50,000 per cent. Imagine running your household budget and going over by 50,000 per cent. It does not reflect well on the accuracy of the minister's forecast or his ability to accurately project costs or to accurately inform Parliament as to the projected cost during the succeeding fiscal years.

Cost overruns of this magnitude are, fortunately, uncommon. There are those who would say that it is regrettable that Parliament did not intervene earlier to reign in these runaway expenditures through effective utilization of the lever of the public purse. Perhaps the most important controlling mechanism in the hands of this chamber is the power to decide whether or not the government will be voted supply through appropriation bills like the one before us today.

These bills are passed, almost invariably, with little in the way of substantive debate, partly because the Main Estimates are open to examination by each of the committees of the Senate, but mainly because government cannot operate without these funds.

However, it is through the power to say no to the executive that the Senate and the House of Commons are able to hold the government accountable to the people of Canada. This power to say no is rarely used, but the executive is taking a risk if it takes for granted that this chamber will always accede to requests for approval of every part of the government's spending plans.

• (1700)

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Some Hon. Senators: On division.

Motion agreed to and bill read second time, on division.

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

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

[Senator Day]

VIMY RIDGE DAY BILL

SECOND READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Poulin, seconded by the Honourable Senator Poy, for the second reading of Bill C-227, respecting a national day of remembrance of the Battle of Vimy Ridge.
—(*Honourable Senator Atkins*).

Hon. Norman K. Atkins: Honourable senators, I rise today to take part in the debate on Bill C-227, the short title of which is the Vimy Ridge Day Act. I am delighted to support this bill and hope that other honourable senators will support it as well.

Bills such as this one and the one introduced by Senator Lynch-Staunton which passed through the last session setting a day to commemorate the birth of the former Prime Ministers Macdonald and Laurier, all work together to help Canadians remember their history.

How many times have we heard in the last few years that Canadians, especially school children, do not know Canadian history? I believe that we can do our part as legislators by setting aside national historic days for remembrance of significant Canadian historical events.

If this bill becomes law, as I hope it will, April 9 of each year will be known as Vimy Ridge Day. On this day every year, the Canadian flag on the Peace Tower will fly at half-mast. It is my hope, honourable senators, that flags across this country will fly at half-mast, especially at our schools and on all federal, provincial and municipal buildings. I believe this will eventually be the case, but we have to start somewhere, so let us start with the flag on the Peace Tower.

I believe it is wise that this not be considered a legal holiday. This commemoration will cost us nothing, yet we will be together in our workplaces and schools so that individually and together we can remember and celebrate the sacrifices made so long ago and so far away that began to form us into the nation we are today.

I wish to congratulate the sponsors of this bill in the other place and to mention the support given to this bill by my party's national defence critic, the member for the constituency of Saint John, New Brunswick, Elsie Wayne.

This bill sets out that the battle and subsequent victory at Vimy Ridge is considered by many to be a turning point for our country and the beginning of Canada's march toward nationhood. I agree with this sentiment and believe it to be an accurate portrayal of the place of this battle in the history of our country.

One need only read a little of the history of our contribution to this part of the First World War to realize its significance to the nation-building exercise in Canada. We also should not forget that the bravery, courage and sacrifice of our troops at the Battle

of Vimy Ridge galvanized the opinion of our country in the eyes of our allies, most notably Great Britain. We were to be considered as a serious nation of the world, willing to sacrifice our young people on foreign soil to ensure the course of freedom.

Accounts written at the time described Vimy Ridge as a cherished victory. Colonel G.W.L. Nicholson, official historian of the Canadian army in the First World War, wrote of Vimy:

No other operation of the First World War was to be remembered by Canadians with such pride — the pride of achievement through united and dedicated effort. Those who returned brought with them a pride of nationhood they had not known before. It was our victory, the Canadian victory.

Honourable senators, I am proud that my father, George Spicer Atkins, took part in the Battle of Vimy Ridge. He was a member of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, the 46th Queen's Battery. I have extracted the April 9 entry from the diary he kept throughout his service during the war. He wrote:

Put over a barrage this morning at 5 o'clock. The Canadians took Vimy Ridge. Took a lot of prisoners, et cetera.

That was all he wrote, as though it was just another day in battle, but it turned out to be a great day for Canada.

As we all know, the battlefield has become a shrine for Canadian war dead. A huge concrete and marble memorial sits atop the ridge, its two spires rising some 70 metres over the low farmland that now surrounds it. Around the towers are 20 larger-than-life figures representing peace, truth, justice, courage and other enviable qualities possessed by those who fought to secure the ridge. On the marble walls of the monument are engraved the names of 11,285 Canadian soldiers who were lost in the First World War and who have no known graves. The main inscription reads:

To the valour of their countrymen in the Great War and in memory of their sixty thousand dead this monument is raised by the people of Canada.

It is time now for us to do something about Vimy here at home. I urge all senators to support this bill so that it may be in place on April 9 of this year.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Laurier L. LaPierre: Honourable senators, I would like to continue along the same lines as Senator Atkins and thank all the honourable senators who took part in the debate on Bill C-227.

[*English*]

I would thank everyone who participated in this debate and for realizing that this is a most important bill that needs to be passed quickly in order that, by April 9, we shall honour forever the Vimy dead.

I should like to mark this occasion by reading the words of Pierre Berton in his magnificent book, *Vimy*, published by McLellan and Stewart. Before doing so, I would like to say something about a group of Canadians we tend to forget when we speak about the First World War.

• (1710)

It is well to remember, honourable senators, that the Battle of the Somme was the training ground for Vimy, at a cost of 24,000 Canadian casualties. On the first day of the Battle of the Somme, the day that was supposed to blast a gap in the German line that would stop the troops, almost 60,000 men were killed and wounded.

The blood bath continued all that summer. The Newfoundland Regiment, in one single tragic day, lost 710 of its 801 officers and men. It is one of the most incredible losses of human life in the story of Canada. Sometimes we tend to forget that, and in honour of my friend, Senator Rompkey and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, I wanted to mention that enormous sacrifice.

Honourable senators, I would like now to tell you about the pimple. The pimple was the last little hill that had to be conquered on that fateful day. Burton tells us that it was a small wooden knoll at the northern end of the ridge. It was another German stronghold, strengthened with concrete pillow boxes, bristling with machine guns, most of them still undamaged.

It was a maze of tunnels, dugouts, holes, trenches and entanglements all carefully camouflaged and protected by mines, barbed wire and booby traps. In the pits and the craters of the slopes, the German snipers and gunners waited for the inevitable assault.

The original plan called for a British brigade on the left to attack this objective, but four days before the battle the task had been assigned to the 10th Canadian Infantry Battalion.

Parts of the 10th battalion had already been bloodied two days before in the battle to secure the eastern slope of the ridge below hill 145. On Thursday, April 12, other companies of the same two battalions, the 50th and 44th, from Calgary and Winnipeg, together with the 46th from Regina and Moose Jaw, were assigned to complete the job.

Once again, at dawn, the westerners left their trenches to toil up the hill behind the furor of the creeping barrage and in the teeth of a raging snowstorm. It was still dark. The blizzard had wiped out the dawn's first light, but this time the snow was the soldiers' friend. The men on both sides broke blindly into the blizzard, but it was the German machine gunners who suffered most because they were unable to see the Canadians coming forward. With the wind, the whirling snow was as much a shield as a curtain of shells.

The postponement of the battle had given the Germans time to bring up fresh troops — the elite Prussians of the 5th Guard, six-footers all who sneered at the Canadians as the untrained

colonial levies. In spite of that, the despised colonials captured the pimple in less than two hours.

Burton finishes this chapter with this very beautiful and moving story.

The snow was so heavy that some men lost their sense of direction. When Allen Hawk, a private with the Winnipeggers, reached the top of the ridge, he did not know which way to go. To him the battle had taken on an unearthly aspect. Encased in a cocoon of sound and in the white mantle of the blizzard, he could see in the gun flashes the ghostly shapes of men falling around him. It did not occur to him that these men were hit. He simply thought they had fallen into a shell hole or lost their bearings as he had. Like so many others during these days of battle he had no clear picture of what was going on.

Later that same morning he found himself on the far side of the ridge, all alone, with no idea of how he got there. Over to his left he spotted some troops. These were Japanese Canadians from the reserve battalion, the 47th from British Columbia. It added to the weirdness of the occasion, the Orientals squatting on their hunches grinning because the fight was over and they were still alive and the soft snow still falling mercifully concealing the ghastly carnage of war.

Honourable senators, it has become commonplace to say that Canada came of age at Vimy Ridge. It is a historical fact that Canada entered the war as a junior partner of Great Britain and emerged an equal. That status was confirmed when Canada, with other dominions was given a vote at the League of Nations.

Did this really spring from the victory at Vimy, asked Burton, or was Vimy simply used as a convenient symbol, a piece of short land to stand for a more complicated historical process, that in the end was probably inevitable?

Does it matter? What counts is that in the minds of Canadians, Vimy took on a mythic quality in the post-war years, and Canada was, and is, short of myths. There is something a little desperate, a little wistful in the commentaries of the 1920s and 1930's, and even later, in which Canadians assured one another over and over again that at Canada, at Vimy Ridge, had at last found its maturity.

No overall hero emerged from the Canadian corps — no Wellington, no Cromwell, no Washington. Bing, who might have been one, was British. Currie, who should have been, was undermined by rumours. The real heroes were the masses of ordinary soldiers, who fought and died in the belief they were making the world a better place, and their inventive leaders who stubbornly refused to follow the old rules of war.

The single word "Vimy" stood for them and helped to soften in Canada the bitterness of the post-war years. Canadians could grumble that Ypres, Somme and Passchendaele were bungled by the British army, but Vimy was Canada's, and nobody could take that victory away. In the years between the two world wars every school child, every veteran's son, every immigrant was made aware of it. Now the time has come to make it for all Canadians and all the world to see.

I had planned to read and enter into the record the list of the 27 battalions and the four rifle corps companies who participated in the Battle of Vimy Ridge, but it would take time to do that. Perhaps I could be permitted to give these pages to the clerks so that they could be entered into the record of the Senate without my entering them.

An Hon. Senator: They can be tabled.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Is leave granted to table these documents, honourable senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator LaPierre: Therefore, the record of the Senate will list the battalions and rifle corps companies that were there. Thank you very much.

Hon. Bill Rompkey: Honourable senators, I would ask to adjourn the debate in the name of Senator Prud'homme.

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Lapointe: If leave is given, I would ask that the debate be adjourned.

Hon. Fernand Robichaud (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, there cannot be two motions for adjournment before the House. Senator Rompkey called for adjournment for Senator Prud'homme, who would like to address this matter. This would allow Senator Lapointe the opportunity to do so later.

[English]

Hon. Noël A. Kinsella (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, it seems to this side that this is a date-sensitive issue, as our colleague Senator LaPierre has just pointed out. There is an opportunity at third reading for honourable senators who have yet to participate in the debate to do so.

The scenario, as I understand it, is that this bill would be referred to the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, which, in turn, would submit it to the Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs with the expectation that it would deal with this matter on Monday of next week so that it could report it back for third reading on Tuesday. It could then be adopted and come into force and effect for April 9, 2003.

• (1720)

I would encourage those who wish to participate in the debate to seize the opportunity at third reading so that the question can be put.

Senator Rompkey: Honourable senators, the objective is to move the bill to committee now and have those who have not spoken speak at third reading. I would be happy to withdraw. I gave an undertaking to Senator Prud'homme, because he is not well; however, he knows it is a time-sensitive issue and that we have to conclude the debate before April 9.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Is the house ready for the question?

Hon. Senators: Question!

[Translation]

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: It has been moved by the Honourable Senator Poulin, seconded by the Honourable Senator Poy, that the bill be read the second time. Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Senator Robichaud: Honourable senators, I would like to be sure that everyone is aware that the motion we have just adopted concerns the second reading of this bill.

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

[English]

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Is it agreed, honourable senators?

Motion agreed to and bill read second time.

[Translation]

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: When shall this bill be read the third time?

Hon. Marie-P. Poulin: I move that the bill be referred to the Committee on National Security and Defence.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: It has been moved by the Honourable Senator Poulin, seconded —

Hon. Marcel Prud'homme: Honourable senators, I am sorry, but if what is being referred to the committee is Bill C-227, An Act respecting a national day of remembrance of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, I have asked to speak on it.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: The honourable senators are in the midst of a motion. I am sorry; the Chair does not believe we can debate it.

Senator Prud'homme: I wish to raise a point of order.

[English]

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Is leave granted to hear Senator Prud'homme on a point of privilege?

Senator Prud'homme: I ran as fast as I could. I informed the whip that I am not feeling well. I asked him to kindly adjourn the debate. When I heard on the television in my office the word "Vimy," I came right away. I was given the assurance that debate would be adjourned in my name, so I went back to my office. Now I hear that some senators want to send this bill to committee. I want to speak to the bill at second reading. I am not trying to kill the bill, but I want to speak here. I was given the assurance that the debate would be adjourned under my name today.

Senator Kinsella: When would you speak?

[Translation]

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Honourable senators, the Chair regrets it, but the motion has been moved and adopted. We have discussed it and it was agreed that the honourable senator could comment at third reading.

Senator Prud'homme: I know.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Honourable senators, it was moved by Senator Poulin, and seconded by Senator Rompkey, that this bill be referred to the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence. Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Prud'homme: No.

On motion of Senator Poulin, seconded by Senator Rompkey, bill referred to the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, on division.

[English]

Senator Prud'homme: That is exactly what I object to in this Senate. When you give your word, you keep your word!

Some Hon. Senators: Order!

Senator Prud'homme: I was given the promise to adjourn in my name. Now you pass it. I regret, but that is not the way to act. However, we will get even. Do not worry.

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Fernand Robichaud (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, it is 5:25 p.m., committees are sitting and other activities are currently underway. Would you give leave to stand the remaining items on the Order Paper to the next sitting in the order in which they appear on the Order Paper.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

The Senate adjourned until Thursday, March 27, 2003 at 1:30 p.m.

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