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THE HONOURABLE ROSE-MARIE LOSIER-COOL
SPEAKER *PRO TEMPORE*

CONTENTS

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

OFFICIAL REPORT

CORRECTION

Hon. Lowell Murray: With the indulgence of honourable senators, I wish to draw attention to a paragraph on page 306 in yesterday's *Debates of the Senate*. A paragraph is wrongly attributed to me and should be attributed to Senator Moore. This took place after my speech opening second reading on Bill S-221. There was an exchange of questions and opinions, and Senator Moore spoke. The paragraph that reads:

Senator Segal spoke about quarterly reporting, but that does not address the issue because the money is spent by then. The point is the access to the funds that Parliament does not have purview over. The accounting is one function but it is the laying of hands on the cash that we no longer have a look at.

That paragraph is attributed to me but should be attributed to Senator Moore. The paragraph that ought to be attributed to me begins: "I supported Senator Segal's bill. . . ."

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THE SENATE

Wednesday, March 4, 2009

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

Prayers.

AFGHANISTAN—FALLEN SOLDIERS

SILENT TRIBUTE

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Honourable senators, before we proceed, I would ask senators to rise and observe one minute of silence in memory of Warrant Officer Dennis Raymond Brown, Corporal Dany Olivier Fortin and Corporal Kenneth Chad O'Quinn, whose tragic deaths occurred yesterday while serving their country in Afghanistan.

Honourable senators then stood in silent tribute.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S WEEK

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government and Minister of State (Seniors)): Honourable senators, I rise today in recognition of International Women's Week. Each year this special week, culminating with International Women's Day on Sunday, March 8, reminds us all of the tremendous contribution women have made and continue to make in all aspects of our society.

The theme of this year's celebration is "Strong Leadership. Strong Women. Strong World: Equality." When women of all backgrounds contribute alongside men, we build a society that is strong, inclusive and full of opportunity for everyone. No matter what corner of the world we live in, our future success depends on empowering women at all levels of society to participate in the decision-making process and to be leaders and role models to others.

• (1335)

Conservatives have a strong track record throughout our country's history when it comes to the advancement of women. Sir Robert Borden's government extended the voting franchise to Canadian women in 1918. It was a Conservative prime minister, the Right Honourable John George Diefenbaker, who named Canada's first female cabinet minister, the Right Honourable Ellen Fairclough.

Throughout our history, there have been countless exemplary women who have represented Canadians in federal, provincial and municipal governments. Conservative governments have placed women in major government positions and often in untraditional roles. Flora MacDonald became Canada's first woman Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1979. Before she became

Canada's first female prime minister, Kim Campbell, served as Canada's first female Minister of Justice and Attorney General and as our first female Minister of National Defence.

Conservative governments initiated the recognition of the Persons Case, in 1929. Also, in 1979, the first female students were enrolled in Canadian military colleges. In 1987, under a Conservative government, after a lengthy debate on the role of women in the Canadian Forces, the Minister of National Defence announced that all Armed Forces combat roles were open to women, including flying fighter aircraft such as the CF-18 and tactical helicopters. Of course, today, women intercept Russian planes and pilot both the CF-18 and tactical helicopters in Afghanistan.

Sheila Hellstrom was the first woman to reach the rank of general in the Canadian Forces. She was a brigadier-general. In 1992, Dr. Roberta Bondar became Canada's first female astronaut to travel into space aboard the space shuttle *Discovery*.

Honourable senators, I am proud to follow in Ellen Fairclough's footsteps as part of a Conservative government that has the highest proportion of women cabinet ministers in our country's history.

Honourable senators, the government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper is also providing more support to programs that have a direct impact on women and girls in their local communities. We have increased the budget of the Women's Program of Status of Women Canada by 42 per cent, bringing it to the highest level ever. As a result of this increased funding in 2007-08, the number of groups receiving funding increased by 69 per cent, with 41 per cent of those groups receiving funding for the very first time. A total of 181 new projects were funded in 2007-08.

I ask all honourable senators to join with me in celebrating International Women's Week and the participation of women all over our great country.

COAL BOWL CLASSIC

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: Honourable senators, during the first week of February, in the small coal mining town of New Waterford, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, the twenty-eighth annual Coal Bowl Classic was held. This national high school basketball tournament is held every year at Breton Education Centre, a junior-senior high school with a student population of over 1,000 students.

The Coal Bowl offered over 200 participants from across the country true Cape Breton hospitality for this premier sporting event. Accordingly, the tournament is supported by over 500 students, staff and community volunteers.

Honourable senators, this year, 12 teams from Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Quebec and Saskatchewan participated. Team members participated in tours and school activities related to the island's historic mining industry. As in

previous years, all team members were billeted in the Grade 7 wing of the school where students decorated the rooms to welcome all participants. The school cafeteria is also charged with feeding the teams three meals a day.

Wade Hackl, head coach of the Michael A. Riffel High School Royals, from Regina, Saskatchewan, convinced his team to travel almost 5,000 kilometres to participate in the Coal Bowl after he had played more than a decade ago as a player for the Cape Breton University team and had experienced watching Coal Bowl games firsthand. He was quoted in the *Cape Breton Post* as saying: "The thing that sticks out the most is the community involvement — how the community comes together, not just the school." I think that statement in itself represents how influential this annual tournament is.

Honourable senators, please join me in congratulating the home team, the Breton Education Centre Bears, who won the Coal Bowl tournament for the first time in its 28-year history. As well, I am sure honourable senators will join me in congratulating the co-chairs, Lorraine Sheppard and Wendy King, under whose direction their dedicated team of volunteers make the Coal Bowl Classic the best basketball tournament in the country.

• (1340)

THE LATE RIGHT HONOURABLE R.B. BENNETT, P.C., K.C.

Hon. Hugh Segal: Honourable senators, the late Right Honourable R.B. Bennett had one of the most complex careers of any Canadian or Conservative Prime Minister. Bennett became Prime Minister in July 1930. Prior to that, he had been a lawyer and a member of the Assembly of the Northwest Territories. After Alberta became a province in 1905, Bennett was elected both leader of the Alberta Conservative Party and a member of the provincial legislature.

By 1911, Bennett had been elected to the House of Commons. In 1913, he returned to Alberta politics to lead the provincial Tory party. He then served for a short time under Prime Minister Meighen as finance minister. After the King-Byng manoeuvre and the defeat of the Meighen government, Bennett was chosen national leader of the Conservative Party at the 1927 general convention in Winnipeg.

Bennett used his broad political experience, strong presence, personality and compelling capacity for hard work and detail to out-campaign, outmanoeuvre and out-policy Mackenzie King in the 1930 election, whose date King characteristically chose with the help of a Kingston fortune teller.

During the Depression, Bennett proposed explicit measures to address the challenge head-on. He was very much a traditional Conservative — hard work, family, thrift, faith and community. His ramrod-straight clarity connected with the public in 1930 at a time when frightened Canadians wanted the strength and clarity of a clear head, a precise direction and strength of purpose.

The new Conservative-led Parliament moved on protective tariffs, historically large amounts for social relief, unemployment and infrastructure. Bennett took these measures in the

Sir John A. Macdonald "national policy" mode. In 1935, influenced by the Roosevelt New Deal, Bennett introduced a series of then radical measures for Canada, including a minimum wage, health and unemployment insurance, tighter regulation of banking and trade and other vital measures.

As a former prime minister who served with determination and intense loyalty to the public interest, he deserves a statue on Parliament Hill to stand beside others so memorialized. I know I can count on the goodwill and sound judgment of honourable senators on both sides of the aisle for this important curatorial initiative.

HEART TRUTH

Hon. Vivienne Poy: Honourable senators, February was Heart Month in Canada. This February, the Heart and Stroke Foundation focused on outreach to women through the Heart Truth campaign.

The campaign's aim is to reach women with the prevention message because heart disease and stroke are the leading causes of death for women. That fact is surprising, is it not? The media has tended to portray heart disease as a "middle-aged man's disease." As women, we have tended to ignore our own risk factors. Only one in eight women is aware that heart disease and stroke are our biggest health concerns.

On February 24, I had the honour of hosting a press conference in Toronto for the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada to reach out to Canadian women of Chinese heritage with the Heart Truth message.

According to the organizers, the press conference was "an overwhelming success." All the major national Chinese-Canadian media were present and a Chinese language public service announcement will continue to run on national Chinese-Canadian media throughout 2009.

Heart Truth's message is that much of the risk of heart disease and stroke for women is preventable and is caused by our lifestyles. Many of us work outside our homes and we are responsible for our children, our households and sometimes our elderly parents. It is difficult to find enough time to exercise and eat well, even though we know we should. If we are feeling discomfort and fatigue, as busy women, we may dismiss the symptoms and fail to seek medical advice.

The Canadian population is aging and more women are suffering from heart disease. Unfortunately, women seniors are not always taken seriously by the medical profession. Even if women are diagnosed, we are often less likely to receive prompt and intensive medical treatment.

Honourable senators, we need to take charge of our own health and warn the women in our lives to do the same. The foundation has provided all women senators with the Heart Truth message and a red dress pin, the symbol of Heart Truth, to remind honourable senators to take care of themselves and their families throughout the year.

• (1345)

RECREATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Hon. John D. Wallace: Honourable senators, I think all of you understand the importance of hockey to our country's national identity. Hockey is Canada's official winter sport. It provides hours of exciting entertainment for Canadians of all ages, and it also provides much more than excitement.

We encourage our children to play hockey and other sports in order to learn teamwork and discipline, and to put down the video games for a few hours each week for some exercise. For that reason, our government brought in the Children's Fitness Tax Credit. It helps parents to raise healthy, active children and it allows working families to keep more of their hard-earned money. The trouble is that many of our hockey arenas and other recreational facilities were built to celebrate our 1967 centennial, and they remain in use to this day. Some of them could use a fix-up.

I am pleased to tell honourable senators that our government has allocated \$500 million over the next two years to the Recreational Infrastructure Canada program. That is RInC, for short, but do not let the name fool you; swimming pools, soccer fields and basketball and tennis courts will also be eligible for upgrades and construction funding. Under the RInC program, municipalities, First Nations, counties, municipal organizations, and other not-for-profit groups will be invited to apply for renewal funding. The money can be dedicated either to upgrading existing sites or to the construction of new facilities. At a time when the global recession is affecting Canadians, RInC will provide both jobs and economic stimulus in communities across our great country.

Honourable senators, by investing in better recreational facilities, we create jobs for Canadians and help to ensure that working families can continue to count on their local fields, arenas and swimming pools for decades to come. New jobs and healthy families are a win-win situation for everyone.

ANTI-SEMITISM

Hon. Yoine Goldstein: Honourable senators, we are witnessing a distressing series of events in Canada that are reminiscent of darker chapters in world history. The first event is the passage of a resolution on February 22 by the Ontario division of the Canadian Union of Public Employees calling on its members to support a boycott of Israeli academic institutions and, by definition, Israeli academics.

This resolution is a stain on the fabric of the Canadian labour movement as a whole, and on CUPE, in particular. Fortunately, Paul Moist, President of CUPE, has dissociated himself from that resolution. At a time when labour in this country faces disastrous economic situations, it appears entirely inappropriate for CUPE not to spend time on that economic situation and, instead, to spend time purporting to criticize academic institutions 3,000 miles away.

The second event is the supposed Israeli Apartheid Week, an anti-Semitic frenzy that is taking place as we speak at dozens of university campuses across Canada. Protesters at these rallies cry, "the Jews are our dogs." At York University, Jewish women

students are called bitches and all Jewish students are so physically threatened that security guards are required to rescue them from the activities of mini-mobs. Caricatures of Jews that would put those published in the Nazi newspaper *Der Stürmer* to shame are posted on campuses with little, if any, activity or protest from the university authorities. Jewish students and Jewish academics are intimidated merely because they are Jews.

We are witnessing a significantly increased rate of anti-Semitism in this country time and again. Over 1,000 anti-Semitic incidents were reported in 2007, and 2008 has a worse record.

• (1350)

Honourable senators will recall that during the Liberal leadership race after the 2006 election, the President of the Canadian Arab Federation actively solicited Liberal candidates not to vote for Bob Rae, not because he disagreed with Bob Rae's political position but solely and only because Bob Rae's wife is Jewish.

A Jewish day school in Montreal has been fire bombed. Explosive devices, which fortunately sputtered out and did not cause much damage, were placed at the entrance of a Montreal Jewish community centre.

Some are saying that this is simply a reaction to activities undertaken by the Government of Israel. That assertion is false and dangerous. This anti-Semitism is the new anti-Semitism.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: The time for Senators' Statements has expired.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

REPORT PURSUANT TO RULE 104(2) TABLED

Hon. Bill Rompkey: Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 104(2) of *the Rules of the Senate*, I have the honour to table the first report of the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, which deals with the expenses incurred by the committee during the Second Session of the Thirty-ninth Parliament.

(For text of report, see today's Journals of the Senate, p. 213.)

RULES, PROCEDURES AND THE RIGHTS OF PARLIAMENT

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY SENATE COMMITTEE SYSTEM

Hon. Donald H. Oliver: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament be authorized to examine and report on the Senate committee system as established

under Rule 86, taking into consideration the size, mandate, and quorum of each committee; the total number of committees; and available human and financial resources; and

That the Committee submit its final report no later than June 30, 2009.

FISHERIES ACT

NOTICE OF MOTION TO PLACE BILL S-229 ON THE ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Mac Harb: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That Bill S-229, An Act to amend the Fisheries Act (commercial seal fishing), be placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading on the second day following the adoption of this motion.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

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

Hon. Consiglio Di Nino: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade have the power to sit at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 10, 2009, even though the Senate may then be sitting, and that Rule 95(4) be suspended in relation thereto.

QUESTION PERIOD

HUMAN RESOURCES AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

CHILD CARE

Hon. James S. Cowan (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. On February 10, the leader stated that her government had created 60,000 new child care spaces since taking power in February 2006. According to the Childcare Resource and Research Unit, an average of 50,831 new child care spaces were created each year between 2001 and 2004. By contrast, if the leader's numbers are correct, her government has only averaged 19,459 new child care spaces this year. Does the minister's government even care that it has created 30,000 fewer spaces per year than the previous government did?

• (1355)

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government and Minister of State (Seniors)): As honourable senators know, the federal government has transferred significant sums to the provinces

specifically for child care. In the next fiscal year, 2009-10, the provinces and territories will receive an increase in funding due to the 3 per cent escalator clause in the Canada Social Transfer announced in Budget 2007.

The provinces and territories receive \$250 million a year to support the creation of child care spaces. This is in addition to the \$850 million for childhood development and early learning and child care, for a total of \$1.1 billion this year. This will increase to almost \$1.3 billion by 2013-14.

As I said in answer to the question to which the honourable senator referred, this figure of 60,000 new child care spaces was provided by the provinces and territories. As I stated at the beginning of my answer, the provinces and territories are receiving significant sums of money from the federal government to provide child care spaces and early childhood development.

Senator Cowan: Honourable senators, during the election campaign of 2006, the Conservative Party promised to create 125,000 new child care spaces within five years. However, one of the first things that the government did after taking power was to cancel the early learning and child care agreements signed with all the provincial and territorial governments. This government cut \$5 billion of federal funding to families who desperately needed it.

This government now claims that it has created 60,000 new child care spaces, yet the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada says, "The few spaces that were created across the country can be attributed to the provinces using their own investment dollars; Quebec is the best example of this."

Can the Leader of the Government in the Senate explain to this chamber exactly how many spaces were created in each province and how many of them were the direct result of federal funding?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, with regard to the preamble to the question, the honourable senator continues to refer to a program that did not exist. Not one child care space was provided by that program. As Tom Axworthy said, it was a "deathbed repentance" announced in the last few weeks of the government of Paul Martin.

The honourable senator is incorrect when he quotes from the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada and states that these spaces were provided with the injection of provincial money. As I stated in my answer to the earlier question, they are receiving \$250 million a year for child care spaces. The child care spaces being provided by the provinces and territories with federal government money would not, obviously, be created if they did not have this money.

With regard to this specific question, different provinces and territories use different methods of calculation. If it is at all possible to break down the numbers to determine how many spaces have been provided in each of the provinces and territories, I will do so. The figure of 60,000 spaces came from the provinces and territories, but I will seek further clarification.

Hon. Hugh Segal: Honourable senators, when the government leader looks into those matters as suggested by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, could she also ask whether there has been any tabulation of the informal child care arrangements made

possible by virtue of the decision of the Crown to actually provide money to parents so they can make decisions about their own children and not necessarily invest all the money in the institutional structure, where various middlemen have to take their piece before the money actually gets to the kids? That is important to put on the record. Canadians have the right to know how many people who work on ships, how many people who do not live in big cities and who have child care needs have been aided by this program — people for whom there would be no program if it was not for that decision by our government.

• (1400)

Senator LeBreton: That is an excellent question. As we said during the election campaign, the best child care advocates and providers in the country are parents. In smaller centres and rural communities, this money has provided for child care in a host of ways. We have had significant evidence of that child care in rural communities as well as with immigrant families.

Direct payments to families have provided parents who work shift work with the ability to provide assistance to their parents in return for looking after the children. The children benefit doubly; they benefit from their parents working, as well as from their grandparents being actively involved in their upbringing.

Hon. Art Eggleton: Honourable senators, I hear the statistics, but I also hear from many individuals, organizations and leaders across the country that people have a hard time obtaining quality early learning and child care; that they cannot access these facilities for their children because of long waiting lists. Others to whom the government is trying to give a choice with the Universal Child Care Benefit program say that the costs far exceed the support provided. One hundred dollars a month does not access quality child care. The government does not give these parents a choice.

Many people have said that investing in quality early childhood education and child care is good economics and good social policy. Economists, bankers and early childhood development commentators such as Dr. Fraser Mustard and the Honourable Margaret McCain have said that early childhood education and child care are key for Canada's path to prosperity and the development of our most precious asset in this country, our children.

A Canadian cost benefit study furthers this view by showing that high quality early learning childhood education and care produces \$2 in social and economic return to our society for every dollar invested.

Why did the government not invest meaningfully in early childhood education and care in the recent budget, rather than making only small modifications?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, there is always some difficulty in accessing any service, but that does not take away from the fact that the federal government has transferred \$250 million per year to support the creation of child care spaces. As I pointed out to Senator Cowan, this money is in addition to the \$850 million for childhood development, early learning and child care, for a total of \$1.1 billion this year. This is money transferred to the provinces and territories. The 3 per cent escalator clause in the next fiscal year will increase that amount even more.

Senator Eggleton lives in the province of Ontario. Ontario is well equipped, and has a government that is committed to child care and early learning. I believe that it is up to the Government of Ontario to establish the priorities for the money that is transferred. I believe that the Province of Ontario and others are using this money properly.

• (1405)

As I indicated to Senator Cowan, if there is a way to get a breakdown from our provincial partners, I would be happy to do so, although I must caution that different provinces may have different ways of reporting it. In any event, I will do my best.

Senator Eggleton: I appreciate that undertaking.

Honourable senators, this issue is so important to so many people. In the 1970s, only about one third of the families in this country had two parents working. Nowadays, the figure is over 70 per cent. This issue has become more crucial given these tough economic times.

I want to mention one other organization, and I would like the minister's response. UNICEF, which has considerable interest in children, has placed this country last in its report with respect to support for early learning and child care. Why is that? What does the government have to say?

Senator LeBreton: I have not seen the UNICEF report. If the report is just dealing with the federal government specifically, UNICEF is not properly taking into account the significant sums of money that the federal government is transferring to the provinces and territories. I hope that UNICEF and other organizations consider the whole-of-Canada picture and take into account the child care services being provided by the provinces and territories.

Hon. Jim Munson: Honourable senators, this question is to the Leader of the Government in the Senate on a similar subject. The world is watching when it comes to child care and, frankly, it is embarrassing. From the United Nations to the OECD, Canada has been repeatedly criticized for its failed child care policies and their impact on healthy child development.

Despite paying the highest child care fees in the world, Canada tied dead last among 25 countries in December 2008. As Senator Eggleton said, this ranking appeared in UNICEF's report card on child care.

The honourable senator talked about the 60,000 spaces, but then there is the report card. When will this government see that child care is an investment and not an expense? How do we improve on the numbers?

Senator LeBreton: I do not share the honourable senator's pessimistic view of the state of child care in this country or his pessimistic view that this country is selling its families and children short. I do not buy that at all. I have no knowledge of how UNICEF bases its findings. I would have to see how UNICEF calculated its findings, but it surely did not take into account the \$1.1 billion that the federal government transfers to the provinces and territories for early learning and child care and early childhood development.

If honourable senators look around the country, as Canadians, we should be very proud of our child care, our education and our health care systems. Clearly, on many indexes, when compared to the rest of the world, we are in very good shape. However, I would have to read the report and figure out how they came to this calculation. I would then be in a better position to defend our country.

• (1410)

Senator Munson: Does the government have any plans to sit down with its provincial counterparts in the near future?

The honourable senator talked about different provinces having different statistics and how they are spending money in their provincial jurisdictions. In a vast country like ours, 60,000 spaces do not seem like many. In the environment in which we are living — younger Canadians with children where both parents must work — these families are spending a lot of money on child care. That takes a great deal out of their paycheques.

I do not suggest a national child care plan, but does the government have something along the lines where it has its own report cards and works in tandem with provinces to obtain better results for what is spent?

Senator LeBreton: Let me clarify something. The 60,000 child care spaces I spoke of were in addition to those that already exist. They are a result of the \$250 million funding the government provided for in Budget 2007, an additional 60,000 child care spaces over what was there before we came into government. The number of child care spaces is not 60,000 in total.

With regard to the honourable senator's suggestion that the ministers sit down with their provincial counterparts, the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and the Minister of Health work with their provincial counterparts constantly and continuously on these matters. I do not have any hesitation in saying that this matter is not something that arises once in a while. It is something that is worked on constantly by the ministers, and they will continue to do so. An additional 60,000 child care spaces have been created as a result of the policies of our government.

Senator Munson: Since we are talking about statistics, I accept the honourable senator's argument. For the record, in terms of statistics, according to the Childcare Resource and Research Unit, an average of 50,831 new child care spaces were created each year between 2001 and 2004.

[Translation]

Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, to encourage businesses to create child care facilities at the workplace, the government is offering a tax credit of up to 25 per cent of eligible expenses for each space created. Can the Leader of the Government in the Senate tell us how many spaces have been created thanks to that tax credit since it was introduced in Budget 2007?

[English]

Senator LeBreton: I thought I answered that question. An additional 60,000 child care spaces were created, but as I indicated to the Honourable Senator Cowan and the Honourable Senator

Eggleton, I will try to identify these numbers for each province. The number of 60,000 to additional child care spaces was provided collectively to the provinces and territories. I do not know the numbers for each province, but I will try to find out for the honourable senator.

[Translation]

Senator Tardif: I will rephrase my question. I am talking about the spaces created by businesses as a result of the tax credit they receive for up to 25 per cent of eligible expenses. I will answer my own question: not one space has been created by businesses. Most employers consulted in 2006 preferred to act in partnership with local child care service providers, instead of creating child care spaces themselves.

Why did the government not explore other options rather than promoting this program, which employers do not support?

[English]

Senator LeBreton: My apologies to the honourable senator. My earpiece did not pick up the translation for the first part of her question.

• (1415)

With regard to the private sector creating child care spaces, the honourable senator claims that the sector has not provided any child care spaces. I know of several companies that have onsite child care facilities. I do not think the honourable senator's number of zero is credible.

The fact is that the care of our children is obviously administered by the provinces and territories, but there are many industries in this country working in partnership with the communities. There is a host of delivery systems. To suggest that our corporate or business communities do not take any responsibility for providing child care facilities is quite unfair to them, frankly.

Senator Comeau: A bunch of socialists.

Hon. Hugh Segal: When the minister is looking into the various matters raised in good faith by our colleagues on the other side, could I ask that she produce an analysis of the contracts signed between the previous federal government and the provinces? I ask the leader to produce such an analysis to see if any of those contracts, in any way, shape or form, compelled the provinces to spend a single dollar on daycare. I ask to know whether the contracts were enforceable, and whether the purport of that entire program was to spend money without actually creating a single daycare space in Canada during the period of that administration.

Senator LeBreton: What Senator Segal suggests appears to be the case, but I would be happy to confirm those facts for the honourable senator.

Hon. Lorna Milne: Honourable senators, this Conservative government obviously does not care. The 2006 census counted 268,575 children between the ages of zero and nine years living in Toronto. That is 11 per cent of the population of that city. However, licensed child care serves only 21 per cent of Toronto's children under the age of 10. Since the most recent Conservative

[Senator LeBreton]

Party election platform remains completely silent on commitments to improve access to child care spaces in Canada, can we assume the Leader of the Government in the Senate is satisfied that only one in five children in Toronto has access to licensed child care?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I am aware of the new slogan “The Conservative government does not care.”

Senator Tkachuk: We care. We love kids.

Senator LeBreton: That is correct. No one would believe that our government, which represents a broad base of Canadians living all over the country from every community, every walk of life, somehow or other, does not care about our families, our children and our society. No one would believe that other than perhaps senators on the other side.

With regard to the issue of child care, I remind the honourable senator of what Tom Axworthy said when the honourable senator’s party brought in their child care platform prior to the 2005-06 election: It was a “deathbed repentance.” The fact is, the opposition party did absolutely nothing on the child care front from 1993 to 2005.

As I have said before, we transferred \$250 million a year to the provinces and territories to support child care, on top of \$850 million, which we provided for early learning and child care, for a total of \$1.1 billion. This will now be subject to the 3 per cent escalator.

I doubt that any province, in particular Ontario — in which the honourable senator resides — and especially Premier McGuinty and his government, would want it to be said of them that they did not use this money for its stated purpose, because they did; or that they do not care, because they do.

• (1420)

Senator Milne: Honourable senators, I believe if Senator LeBreton takes a good, hard look at the Budget 2009 figures, she will find that they reveal that children’s benefits in total are only scheduled to rise \$41 million from this year to next. That sounds like a significant amount of money, but when one realizes there are an estimated 5.6 million children in Canada and we are dealing with a budget of close to \$12 billion annually, \$41 million does not even account for the effect of inflation, even at today’s rate of inflation.

Honourable senators, can the Leader of the Government in the Senate explain why her government is committed to lowering the status quo regarding child care funding in Canada when it is clear that the current state of affairs is not in the best interests of Canadian families, who I know, as does the honourable senator, all care for their children and want them to receive available and licensed child care spaces? Are the ABCs of Conservative child care policy “absent, backward and counterproductive”?

Senator LeBreton: Senator Milne uses the term “licensed.” There are many forms of delivering child care. There is not one cookie-cutter model that can be applied.

Senator Milne: Most of the grandparents do not live next door, either.

Senator LeBreton: The fact is that the government takes many measures, such as lowering taxes, establishing job retraining programs and providing services to Canadians for the whole of the country. If families are working and are able to pay lower taxes, families are happy. We have taken many people off the tax rolls. All of this helps families. We realize that we are experiencing difficult economic times because of the global economic downturn, but to suggest that we as a government, or all of us as Canadians, do not take into account the importance of family and child care is quite wrong.

As I stated previously, \$1.1 billion is a lot of money. I have every confidence that the provinces and the territories are properly administering this money and doing everything they can to provide child care in these difficult times. Senator Milne has narrowed the issue down to a specific type of child care, but there are many forms of child care.

The government takes this question seriously. We trust the provinces. We actually do believe that the provinces and the various governments that are running the provinces, whether they are Liberal, Conservative or NDP, are responsible governments that care about their children and families. They are using the money transferred from the federal government in a judicious way. I would say that Senator Milne should have more faith in our provincial counterparts because big brother in Ottawa is not necessarily the attitude that this government takes with the provinces and territories.

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Honourable senators, yesterday and today the Leader of the Government mentioned that there was trouble with the interpretation devices. The officers at the table have assured me they will check into that matter.

• (1425)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUDGET 2009

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Comeau calling the attention of the Senate to the budget entitled *Canada’s Economic Action Plan*, tabled in the House of Commons on January 27, 2009 by the Minister of Finance, the Honourable James M. Flaherty, P.C., M.P., and in the Senate on January 28, 2009.

Hon. Norman K. Atkins: Honourable senators, let me begin by congratulating the government and all the organizing participants for the outstanding planning that was evident throughout the historic first visit by President Obama. I must admit that I was proud to be a Canadian observer of what I hope will be the beginning of a successful relationship between our two countries.

It is with a sense of responsibility that I respond to the government's inquiry calling the attention of the Senate to the budget entitled, *Budget 2009: Canada's Economic Action Plan*, or "stimulus" budget, if you will.

While I recognize that these economic times are unprecedented, I feel it is opportune to make some of my thoughts and concerns known. I am not a believer that there cannot be a deficit situation. I have never supported the idea or any legislation that would propose to deny government the right to incur a deficit. In fact, I think it is inappropriate to handcuff a government when it is dealing with fiscal responsibility.

It is hard to know where the Harper government is coming from, and far less predictable where it may go. Some of this government's more ardent supporters have criticized this government for presenting last month a budget that departs from their conservative principles. They are confused, and with good reason.

This Prime Minister now presides over a government that has not only resurrected deficit spending but has asked us to live with it for several years. In the short span of a few weeks, the Prime Minister, seeking re-election, dismissed and was contemptuous of deficits. He was re-elected and then proceeded to reverse himself on a lifetime of policy principles.

This reversal has caused chagrin for many of Mr. Harper's former colleagues. Professor Tom Flanagan, a University of Calgary political scientist and former adviser to this Prime Minister, is quoted as saying, "You can find some things in the budget that are consistent with the Conservative philosophy, but the weight is like 90 to 10 against it."

• (1430)

Former Reform Party Leader Preston Manning now says the government needs "an ironclad plan" to eliminate these new Conservative deficits.

Economist Frank Atkins — no relation, honourable senators — who has served as Stephen Harper's thesis supervisor at the University of Calgary is even more offside. Atkins claims the big-spending budget will not solve the country's economic woes and could create bigger problems down the road, such as inflation, higher taxes and higher interest rates. He said:

This is not an economic budget in my mind. It is a political budget, much more so than any other budget has been a political budget.

From those who were elected to Parliament on the no-deficit mantra, there is even more disdain. It is almost as if Prime Minister Harper's partisans have come full circle since the days when they angrily denounced former Prime Minister Mulroney's philosophical credentials, accusing him of being more like a Liberal than a real Conservative.

History is proving this government's basic instincts are somewhat offside. Large deficits confuse Conservative voters. However, it is not this government's only about-face. They have recognized Quebec as a nation, which they said they would never do; they violated the commitments they made to Parliament and

the people of Canada with regard to fixed election dates; and, surprise, surprise, they appointed senators, which they said would never happen. That said, I congratulate the new senators on their appointments.

What is a Canadian to think, I ask you?

For me, this budget represents a turning point in politics. It is one thing for regional populist movements to question basic assumptions about Ottawa's way of doing business and to push for radical change. It is quite another, as I have said for many years, to successfully govern a country as large and diverse as Canada.

We can now all agree that dogma must give way to compromise and that pragmatism need be the order of the day.

As I have said, I have particular concerns about this budget. I will briefly outline some of the things I think this government would have been well advised to consider.

Honourable senators, I think it is a mistake that the government did not extend the period of time during which seniors are not obliged to withdraw money from their Registered Retirement Investment Funds, the RRIF. Ultimately, the government will get the money from these tax shelters, but by allowing an extension for a couple of years — not just for 2008 — it would alleviate the burden of loss and take the pressure off the seniors in these difficult economic circumstances.

While the infrastructure announcements sound good in the budget, what do they really mean? Rather than a shotgun approach, Canada would be better served with a more focused view of national projects. The government's approach tries to please everyone but ends up potentially pleasing no one. It seems there is no plan or vision.

The infrastructure programs, while well intended, are cause for concern because of their demand for funding from all levels of government. These other levels of government have, in many cases, already designated their limited infrastructure funds, leaving little money to be found for new projects under the funding programs proposed by the Harper government.

The reality is some provinces and municipalities will be able to avail themselves immediately and some will not. There is a large amount of federal money that might not be spent because some of the parties are not in a position to take advantage of them.

There is nothing in this budget that addresses post-secondary student debt. I have previously suggested the elimination of the tax on books for students and suggested extending the grace period on student loans from six months to at least one year, and preferably two, to allow students to find gainful employment and get on their feet.

The unwieldy debt load being experienced by our students is a deterrent for some who are considering further education but do not have available funding. One incentive that could be considered, which would be an enormous benefit to students and promote a deeper understanding of the country, would be a tax break on expenses related to travel to a university outside of a student's home region or province. It also would help smaller universities with lesser enrolments, who provide excellent post-secondary programs.

While the government has focused on research funding in Canada, there is no doubt that more is needed. It is too easy to lose sight of how valuable research in our universities now will impact the economic picture in the future. This is particularly so in the health care field.

Any research breakthroughs that help eliminate costly care and treatment programs in areas such as diabetes, cancer and the ever-more evident problem of autism cannot but help to alleviate the financial strain presently being felt in this country. The recent new breakthroughs in stem cell research only demonstrate the importance of this issue.

The real danger with a lack of significant research funding in the right places is that it can exacerbate the migration of academics to other countries for better funded research opportunities.

In light of the recent criticism of research funding being too infrastructure-directed, Dr. Mel Silverman, Vice-President of Research at the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research, made one comment: "Human research infrastructure can melt away very quickly."

Honourable senators, unemployment is rising rapidly in Canada. Employment Insurance improvements, while welcome, do not go far enough. The government should have extended the number of eligible weeks by more than five when we are facing, at the minimum, a number of years of fiscal restraint and cutbacks. We also bear in mind that where one lives in the country already impacts one's eligibility.

The government has offered incentives and programs to help our banks, attempting to improve the availability of credit, but there is no direct relief for Canadian consumers. The interest rates being charged on some credit cards are at a record high, combined with the high banking charges that Canadians are forced to pay. There clearly needs to be some regulation imposed on this type of consumer gouging.

• (1440)

In addition, credit card charges for businesses across this country are often a disincentive to small businesses. Some businesses are charged higher rates than others, and that rate depends on which business the bank wants to encourage.

As our banks are looking to the government for understanding and support, perhaps we need to take a hard look at banking practices in this country and demand more accountability, transparency and fairness for Canadians.

I have highlighted only a couple of areas. No doubt there are others that could withstand some scrutiny. I raise this issue because I believe this was a missed opportunity for the government to take the early initiative to protect Canadian consumers.

I give credit to Senator Ringuette for her work on the issue of credit cards. The Senate Banking Committee has a mandate to examine this issue, and we look forward to the work that they do and hope that they examine the issue extensively.

While this budget is most concerned with the current fiscal crisis, we should not lose sight of the issues that have long been on the agenda. In the past, this government has infused money into the military and taken steps to ensure that our military has better equipment. However, it is still evident that the military is stretched to its capacity. Our military needs an infusion of troops and, in the current economic climate, their recruitment numbers could conceivably grow. This should be considered in the increased funding for our military over the next few years for incentives, advertising and promotion, if for nothing else.

We also need to focus on other longstanding issues that Canadians are concerned about, such as funding for the arts and, in particular, funding and research on the environment.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: The Honourable Senator Atkins' time has expired. Is he asking for more time?

Senator Atkins: May I have five minutes more?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Munson: Keep it up, friend.

Senator Atkins: Clearly, based on President Obama's message, we are not alone in trying to address our concerns about the environment. We should work as quickly as possible and work with other countries where possible and when it makes sense.

Honourable senators, the most disappointing thing was the missed opportunity. If Canada is to plunge itself into debt to get through these uncertain economic times, let it be for a national vision or a common purpose — some project or endeavour that can inspire and motivate Canadians and be a legacy.

While the government has a piecemeal strategy of sorts, it does not appear to have a clear and concise plan that will deal with any eventuality that we might face in the immediate future. This has become more evident with the recent request from the government for vast sums of money with no accountability until after it has been spent, in the words of one critic, "a blank cheque."

My greatest fear is that the money will not be dispersed in a timely fashion or reach the businesses and people who most need it on "main street Canada," because the government insists on carte blanche access without, at the very least, an outline of where the money will be spent.

This kind of unaccountable spending raises the danger of a repeat sponsorship-type situation, albeit for a different reason. In Ontario, in Canada and across North America, the recession has affected and will continue to affect people in all walks of life in various ways. Only by working together will we be able to meet the challenges that are before us and find our way back to more prosperous times.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Continuing debate?

Hon. Percy Mockler: I have a question for the honourable senator.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Would the Honourable Senator Atkins accept a question?

Senator Atkins: Yes.

Senator Mockler: Honourable senators, I will read into the record an article from *The Globe and Mail*, March 4, on Larry Kudlow's interview with the Prime Minister on CNBC in New York last week, which states:

Harper takes the straight talk express to the U.S.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper went on CNBC's *The Kudlow Report* in New York last week and left economist Larry Kudlow, the show's exuberant host, dazzled out of his mind. Rightly so. In its own way, it was one of the finest seven-minute performances by a Canadian prime minister in the entire television era.

Mr. Harper was assertive without hint of the aggressor, confident without hint of the braggart, critical of the United States (and, implicitly, of President Barack Obama) without hint of the anti-American.

In his subsequent blog on this interview, Mr. Kudlow called Mr. Harper "an impressive statesman." Canada, he said, was "lucky to have him at the helm."

Does the honourable senator have any comments on that interview?

Senator Atkins: I am sure the Prime Minister's visit to the United States was excellent. I am always proud of him when he has an outstanding performance.

Hon. Joan Fraser: Honourable senators, the economic plan that the government presented to Parliament is rather like the curate's egg — it has some good parts and some bad parts. Lord knows we need the good parts or even the semi-good parts, namely the stimulus package. Canadians, like residents of too many countries, are facing terrible economic times and need economic stimulus. This package is not perfect, as Senator Atkins has ably demonstrated for us, and I would commend to your attention his remarks about the Employment Insurance system. Nonetheless, this stimulus package is the one on offer and it is important. Canadians need it, and that is the good or the pretty good part of the budget.

However, tucked into the budget implementation bill we find all these other things, very few of which are good and many of which are not good — everything from national securities regulators to navigable waters. There is a long list of areas that should not be in a budget implementation bill and legislative proposals that should not see the light of day in this bill or in any other bill, in my view.

• (1450)

However, perhaps the worst of these items is the iniquitous proposal on pay equity for women employees of the federal government. I think it is the worst of the lot because this proposal undermines women's rights; that is to say, it undermines human rights, because, honourable senators, women's rights are human rights. That matter has been settled; it is not open for argument. It

has been affirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada; it has been affirmed under international law; and it is no longer a subject for debate. That is why, until now, pay equity in the Canadian federal service has come under the Canadian Human Rights Act.

I am not arguing that the present system is perfect; no one could. It has grave flaws and, as has often been observed, it has tended to bog down many legitimate complaints in more than decade-long procedural wrangling before the courts. For example, there have been endless arguments over whether airline pilots and airline flight attendants work in the same establishment. One would think that subject ought not to be worth a ten-year court battle, but it was.

I do not suggest that the present system is perfect, but rather than improving a structure that was damaged, the government's proposal beats the whole pay equity system into rubble. There will be precious little left of it.

The portion of the budget implementation bill beginning on page 362 entitled, wrongly, "Public Sector Equitable Compensation Act," removes pay equity from the Canadian Human Rights Act and gives jurisdiction over it to the Public Service Labour Relations Board and makes pay equity a matter of collective bargaining. Collective bargaining is not an appropriate vehicle for pay equity disputes.

I quote, for example, from a letter written to Prime Minister Harper by a long list of eminent Canadians: 10 recipients of the Governor General's Persons award, 42 law professors and 25 other lawyers, professors, scholars and eminent Canadians. They said:

The effect of this restructuring of the process for obtaining pay equity is to make pay equity no longer a human right of women, but a benefit or privilege which may be bargained successfully, or not.

It makes pay equity subject to collective bargaining in the same way that, as somebody said, tea breaks are. This is not an appropriate way to handle matters of human rights.

I draw the attention of honourable senators to the fact that it is under existing collective agreements that pay equity discrepancies, apparent gaps, have so often occurred, and this situation occurs because collective agreements are the product of the people who negotiate them, and they tend to reflect traditional gender biases and stereotypes about what different jobs are worth. Therefore, it is a highly perilous enterprise to turn this subject over to the collective bargaining process. In addition, this proposed legislation changes the criteria to be applied in assessing the value of work done by employees. It now says that those criteria shall include:

(b) the employer's recruitment and retention needs . . . taking into account the qualifications required to perform the work and the market forces operating in respect of employees with those qualifications;

In other words, criteria shall take into account market forces that have already decided that a given class of work performed by women is not worth as much as a different class of work performed by men. Those market forces will now be included in

the criteria to determine whether there is a pay equity case to be resolved. This proposed change is, at best, circular reasoning and a circular approach.

I will quote again from the letter of the experts I referred to earlier:

This permits any evaluation to take into account that male-dominated jobs are valued more highly in the market, requiring the employer to pay more to attract new employees or retain current ones, even if the value of the work when it is assessed based on skill, effort and responsibility is no greater than that of female-dominated jobs.

Of course, women will retain the right to complain. A woman who wants to complain can go and complain, all by herself, to the Public Service Labour Relations Board, but she will be all by herself. Her union will be prohibited, by law, from assisting her. Her union will be subject to a \$50,000 fine if it assists her in preparing her complaint to the Public Service Labour Relations Board.

Under the present system, imperfect as it may be, if a person complains to the Canadian Human Rights Commission, it will then do the necessary investigation for that person. The woman who makes the complaint does not have to carry the immense administrative and financial burden of trying to ascertain the fine points of her employer's administrative policies. That will no longer be the case, either; she will be on her own.

I could go on. So many elements in this bill are scandalous. For example, because the proportion of employees who must be of a given sex to qualify under the pay equity rules is bumped up to 70 per cent, thousands of women will now be excluded from the ability to seek pay equity restitution. That is just wrong. It is absolutely scandalous. It is a scandalous suppression of human rights, and it is not, despite the best efforts of the government to portray it as such, proactive within any meaning of that phrase. Proactive pay equity legislation does exist in this country. It exists, as the government reminds us, in Ontario, Manitoba and Quebec. However, we do not have that kind of proactive legislation here.

The federal task force on pay equity recommended a few years ago that we follow the model of Ontario and Manitoba, which would include, among other things, the establishment of a new specialized pay equity commission and tribunal to handle pay equity questions. A commission and tribunal would be a good thing in order to simplify the difficulties of the Canadian Human Rights Commission. However, we are not getting that. We are getting the Public Service Labour Relations Board, which has no expertise, no jurisprudence, as I was reminded today, and already has too much to do, I am sure.

Neither are we getting what exists in Quebec, which is a specific legal regime obliging employers to follow certain steps, to adopt pay equity, to have pay equity committees, and to have pay equity systems in place. That regime has been extremely successful, and employers are happy with it because they have found that, among other things, it has improved productivity in the workplace. We are not getting any of that. The government likes the word "proactive" but it does not want to do anything that might be proactive.

Now comes the real dilemma. We return to the fact that this iniquitous piece of legislation is contained within a broader bill that provides desperately needed economic stimulus for the citizens of this country, and it is women who, as a class, are the most vulnerable in the economic crisis in which we are now living. Women are the ones most likely to be working part-time, to be working in service industries, and to be working in low-paying and marginal jobs. Women are the ones who are most likely to be let go as an economic crisis bites.

• (1500)

Therefore, although thousands of Canadians need this bill, arguably, women are the ones who need it more than anyone else and stand to benefit most from it.

An analysis provided by the economic consulting firm Informetrica noted that the direct effect of this bill, which is to boost spending on construction and similar things, is to increase the employment of men more than women because more men are construction workers. However, the indirect effect is different. Informetrica states:

... if one includes indirect and induced effects, and recognizes that there is a notably significant spending and tax effect on consumer service industries ... there is both a proportionately and absolutely larger impact on female employment than on males. Our results do suggest that there will be a disproportionately large positive effect on those aged 54 and older for both sexes.

I note that older women often tend to be in worse economic straits than older men. Women need this package.

What this bill has done, what this government has done, is pit two classes of women against each other. It has pitted human rights against immediate, severe economic need. It is an appalling choice of policies.

Why are they doing this? I find it hard to believe they are doing it in order to be proactive. I think it is more significant to look at the actual book of Canada's Economic Action Plan where, on page 211, they say that they will be giving us this new pay equity regime. In what section of the plan is this announcement made?

Senator Corbin: They are not listening.

Senator Fraser: Of course they are not listening, but the people will.

The statement comes in the section of the economic plan headed "Strong Expenditure Management." They are doing it to save money. What an ignoble policy. What a scandalous, embarrassing policy for this government and this country to be saddled with. As I say, the women of Canada need the economic stimulus package, but Stephen Harper and his colleagues will carry this shame for a long time.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Is the honourable senator willing to accept a question?

Senator Fraser: Yes.

Hon. Lowell Murray: Honourable senators, I am trying to put my thoughts into some logical order. The honourable senator seems to suggest that the Senate would have no alternative if we want to get on with the economic stimulus package than to pass the rest of Bill C-10. I say that we are getting a bit ahead of ourselves here since the bill has not passed the House of Commons yet.

However, since she raised it, I will tell the honourable senator that I, for one, would gladly support an initiative, presumably by the committee to which this bill would be sent, to sever the proposed new public sector equitable compensation act from the bill. In addition, other sections of the bill dealing with the Competition Act, the Investment Canada Act and the Navigable Waters Protection Act also do not belong there.

I remind the honourable senator that doing this is within the power of her colleagues and herself, who have a majority in this place and on its committees. I am sure that, as an experienced senator, she knows that that option is open to us. I invite her to assure us that she will want to take advantage of that option.

[Translation]

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Honourable senators, Senator Fraser's time has expired. Is Senator Fraser requesting an extension?

Some Hon. Senators: Five minutes.

[English]

Senator Fraser: The Honourable Senator Murray, as he so often does, goes straight to the heart of difficult questions.

In an ideal world, I would vote in a heartbeat to sever all those elements from the bill, as well as the foreign investment review provisions and the many others we have not mentioned. We do not live in an ideal world and we do not face an ideal adversary in that ideal world. It is incumbent upon all of us here to weigh carefully the consequences for those Canadians to whom I referred who have already been waiting for signs of help. There are consequences for them of actions that could result in a further prolonged delay.

This bill — the bill we await, as Senator Murray indicated — is a public document and many of us have had a chance to consult it. If the bill passes, it will take effect on April 1. If it does not pass, it will not. That is something we all have to reflect carefully upon. The government has presented us with no good choices — none. I meant it when I said that the government will bear the shame of this iniquitous procedure for a long time.

Senator Murray: I appreciate what the honourable senator has said. We can make our own choices. We will get to that when the bill arrives, so I will not pursue it now.

One of the reasons I would want to sever that particular section — the one dealing with the proposed public sector equitable compensation act — is that I think it is rather more complex than even she suggests in her speech. I do not know if she read the debates in the House of Commons on this matter. I have done so and some of those debates were quite interesting. In particular, I would direct her attention to the speech given by the

Honourable Bob Rae. I would not suggest for a moment that he supports what the government is doing on this matter, but I think it is fair to say that he acknowledges quite openly the problems that this measure is intended to address.

Further, in answer to an intervention made, I think, by one of the New Democratic Party members from Manitoba on the matter, he drew the attention of the House of Commons to the fact that the preamble to the government bill mentions equal pay for work of equal value. There had been some suggestion that the government was abandoning that concept for some more ambiguous or vague concept.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Senator Fraser has two minutes remaining.

Senator Fraser: I was careful not to suggest that the government was making this change for ideological reasons. I do not like to pretend to read the minds of other people.

• (1510)

All we have are statements that they are making this change to be proactive, as well as the evidence within the budget plan itself that they are doing it to save money. In my view, those grounds are not sufficient. Nor did I suggest they were trying to abandon the concept of pay equity. What I do suggest is they are redefining the terms and structures so as to define it almost out of existence, which is serious enough.

I have infinite admiration for our colleagues in the House of Commons, and I consulted their debates, but only preliminarily. I base my remarks on my thoughts and my reading, not theirs.

(On motion of Senator Comeau, debate adjourned.)

[Translation]

THE SENATE

MOTION TO EXTEND WEDNESDAY SITTING AND AUTHORIZE COMMITTEES TO MEET DURING THE SITTING OF THE SENATE ADOPTED

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government), pursuant to notice of March 3, 2009, moved:

That, on Wednesday, March 4, 2009, at the end of the Orders of the Day, Inquiries and Motions, but no later than 4 p.m., the sitting be suspended to reassemble at the call of the Chair, with a fifteen minute bell;

That, when the sitting resumes, it be either for the purpose of adjournment or to receive a Message from the House of Commons with Bill C-10, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on January 27, 2009 and related fiscal measures;

That, after dealing with any such Message from the House of Commons, the Senate stand adjourned;

That the order adopted by the Senate on February 10, 2009, respecting automatic adjournment at 4 p.m. be suspended on Wednesday, March 4, 2009;

That committees scheduled to meet on that day be authorized to sit after 4 p.m., and the application of Rule 95(4) be suspended in relation thereto.

(Motion agreed to.)

[English]

INCOME TAX ACT EXCISE TAX ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING— DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Charlie Watt moved second reading of Bill S-227, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act and the Excise Tax Act (tax relief for Nunavik).

He said: Honourable senators, I am honoured to speak on this bill, which is essentially the same as Bill S-214, which I introduced in the last Parliament. The purpose of this bill is to provide tax relief for the people of Nunavik.

As most of you may already know, the people of Nunavik — the people who I represent in this chamber, although not legally yet — live on a territory that is geographically, economically and politically isolated from the rest of Canada.

Located north of the 55th parallel, Nunavik is defined by the Quebec Boundary Extension Act, 1912. Prior to 1912, this land was known as the Ungava District of the Northwest Territories. More than 10,000 Inuit live in the 14 small, widely dispersed communities scattered along Quebec's northern coastline, up to 2,500 kilometres from Montreal.

The high cost of living, which is compounded by isolation and distance, brings in a critical economic disadvantage to the people of Nunavik. We must address this serious problem urgently. My people are struggling on a daily basis to gain their rightful place in this country.

The high costs related to transportation in Nunavik are directly transferred to goods and services and that has a major impact on the purchasing power of its population. As a result, a Nunavik dollar is worth less than one in southern Canada.

Honourable senators, did you know that on a tax-percentage basis per capita, Inuit are the biggest taxpayers in this country? In fact, not only is the cost of living very high, but the taxes in Nunavik devalue the savings of individuals, and a small business can hardly make any profit. Moreover, the value of a dollar in Nunavik is worth only about 38 cents when we factor in the high cost of living. That is high.

The absence of a road network explains the high cost of food and other goods, and is a barrier to economic development. Communities are virtually inaccessible, other than by air or sea. In this context, honourable senators, I ask you, why does the Inuit population of Nunavik pay taxes for highways that do not exist?

According to studies, the inequities faced by the people of Nunavik can often be compared to situations in some Third World countries. Honourable senators, I could go into details and

enumerate a full range of price differences for gasoline, housing, food baskets, municipal services, hunting and fishing gear, and even bottled water. Instead, I will give you the names of a few reports that are sure to enlighten you on the subject.

The first one is *The Economic Disadvantage in Nunavik*; the second is entitled *Economic Disadvantage in Nunavik — Key Challenges and Proposed Remedies: The Case of Elders, Harvesters and Low Income Earners*. Both of these reports, which I sent to honourable senators in February of last year, were written by the Library of Parliament.

The third report, from Laval University, is entitled *Nunavik Comparative Price Index 2006*.

Honourable senators, these reports paint a gloomy picture of the economic situation facing the people of Nunavik, a situation, in my view, which is best summed up by the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services', 2004-2005 annual report. In that document, the board underlines that about 43 per cent of Nunavik families live in poverty, while the figure for the province of Quebec is 17 per cent. This condition is not only a cry for attention; it calls on us to take immediate, urgent action.

Most government programs dedicated to Nunavik are established without taking into account the high cost of living facing the population. In practice, most agreements and programs target the development of community instead of individuals. Results are quite catastrophic for the everyday life of Inuit families. In fact, a large part of subsidies and programs supporting higher professional, well-remunerated jobs, are being held by non-Inuit contractors. While most programs and subsidies were created and are still essential to help economic development in Nunavik, the truth is that money is going back south when the contractors are done with their work. This situation also prevails for permanent jobs.

Even on their own land, the Inuit of Nunavik cannot fully benefit from the support programs and subsidies created in the South. Besides not being able to harvest because of the high cost of hunting and fishing gear, my people are constantly confronted with government regulations that do not make any sense to them. The Conservative government did nothing to help the situation in their last two budgets.

• (1520)

Honourable senators, did you know that unlike farmers and fishermen in the south, who get subsidies for their harvests, the Inuit get nothing? Things are so bad that a study confirmed a majority of Inuit see hunting and fishing as an unaffordable luxury. It is time for us, as legislators, to take note and adopt measures to help those people. Hunting and fishing are not recreational pursuits, they are essential for Nunavik Inuit, since hunting and fishing provide the Inuit with their main source of food. Individuals should be allowed to claim equipment they use for sustenance purposes as expenses, in order for them to reduce their taxable allowable income.

Honourable senators, for the people of Nunavik to benefit from a more just society, I have taken the liberty of introducing the bill that is before you. This proposed legislation recognizes that tax breaks are needed to help individuals and to stimulate economic prosperity in Nunavik.

The first part of Bill S-227 is aimed at increasing the Northern Residents Tax Deduction. Twenty years ago, in 1987, the Northern Residents Tax Deduction was introduced to help northern working families deal with the high cost of living. Unfortunately, governments have not kept this tax deduction in line with inflation. I believe it is absurd that this deduction has not changed in 22 years, when we all know how inflation has increased dramatically during this time. Increasing the Northern Residents Tax Deduction will put more money in the pockets of Nunavik's population, which will in turn speed the economic development of our land. This small measure will cost little to the federal government while doing a great deal of good to countless Nunavik families.

The second part of Bill S-227 will amend the Excise Tax Act; to eliminate the GST on all goods and services. It will also eliminate taxes on fuel, oil, natural gas, diesel and other additives for generating heat and electricity, as well as on transportation other than aviation. This will help the Nunavik population deal with the high cost of living. When you think that taxes are based on the product purchased once it has reached Nunavik, you soon figure out that, not only have you paid three to five times the price of those goods in the south because of transportation, but you have to pay taxes on that new price as well.

Again, the Inuit population of Nunavik does not benefit from any transportation subsidies. This situation angers me because I see the suffering and anxiety this has created in my community. It is totally unfair to treat a part of the Canadian population this way. It is high time that my people be relieved of this endless pain and the everyday stress that the Inuit must face be dealt with rapidly.

I look forward to working with honourable senators as we lay the groundwork to ensure that Nunavik's population begins to take its destiny into its own hands.

Nakurmik.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Will the Honourable Senator Watt accept a question?

Senator Watt: Yes.

Hon. Tommy Banks: Honourable senators, I thank Senator Watt for his introductory speech. Is that tax deduction a flat amount of money or is it a percentage that is deducted?

Senator Watt: Honourable senators, I am not quite sure whether I understand Senator Banks' question when he asks whether it is a flat amount of money or a percentage. What does he mean by that?

Senator Banks: The honourable senator talks about a tax relief for northern residents. Is that a flat amount of money that is deducted from taxable income or is it a percentage?

Senator Watt: I apologize; it took me a while to understand the honourable senator's question. It is a flat amount.

Senator Banks: Senator Watt referred several times to subsidies, which I assume are federal subsidies, and said at the same time that they do not get to the people. Where do they go?

[Senator Watt]

Senator Watt: Honourable senators, that is a good question because the money goes into the transportation network. If an item was transported by sea, I imagine it would go to the shipping companies, which is supposed to help reduce the retail cost of goods to a merchant. However, the fact is the high cost is so high that individuals hardly feel any benefit even though those goods are supposed to be indirectly subsidized.

(On motion of Senator Comeau, debate adjourned.)

[Translation]

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BANK OF CANADA ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING— DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Grafstein, seconded by the Honourable Senator Fairbairn, P.C., for the second reading of Bill S-203, An Act to amend the Business Development Bank of Canada Act (municipal infrastructure bonds) and to make consequential amendments to another Act.

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, there is no name on this motion because the Speaker had to render a decision on the question. I move adjournment of the debate in my name.

(On motion of Senator Comeau, debate adjourned.)

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES OF CANADA ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING— DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Grafstein, seconded by the Honourable Senator P  pin, for the second reading of Bill S-201, An Act to amend the Library and Archives of Canada Act (National Portrait Gallery).

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, this bill is like the previous one. The Speaker is considering it. I move adjournment of the debate in my name.

Hon. Eymard G. Corbin: Honourable senators, I can very clearly recall that, after the parties presented their views on a point of order, the Speaker moved adjournment of the debate. Must we adjourn twice? I distinctly heard the Speaker say it.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Honourable senators, the Speaker moved the adjournment. After making his ruling, he said that the debate could continue. Senator Comeau wants to continue the debate and move the adjournment, so we have a motion to adjourn the debate to the next sitting of the Senate.

(On motion of Senator Comeau, debate adjourned.)

NATIONAL CAPITAL ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING— DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Spivak, seconded by the Honourable Senator Wallace, for the second reading of Bill S-204, An Act to amend the National Capital Act (establishment and protection of Gatineau Park).

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, there was no name on this one either. I move adjournment of the debate in my name.

(On motion of Senator Comeau, debate adjourned.)

• (1530)

[English]

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING— DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Jeremiah S. Grafstein moved second reading of Bill S-208, An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (clean drinking water).

He said: Honourable senators are familiar with the subject matter of this bill and have heard the story before. However, let me briefly summarize it for those who do not recall it and for the new senators. This bill is essentially about equality and the equal treatment of Canadians across Canada regarding clean drinking water.

Honourable senators, it is appropriate for me to outline the legislative history in a nutshell. This bill was first introduced in the Thirty-seventh Parliament on February 20, 2001. It then went through all the various committees. Ultimately, it was reintroduced in the Thirty-eighth Parliament and the First Session of the Thirty-ninth Parliament. It was reintroduced again in the Second Session of the Thirty-ninth Parliament. It was then reintroduced in the Fortieth Parliament and yet again in this Parliament. The bill has not changed and the situation has not changed; as a matter of fact, the situation of the subject matter of the bill has grown worse.

This bill has been approved by committee twice, including constitutional issues and other issues, and it has been sent over to the other side where it died on prorogation. Therefore, this bill is not new and has been approved at third reading, not once, but twice by the Senate. In addition, it has now faced over 200 days of consideration by the Senate, a figure researched by my secretary. This is not a new subject matter and the situation is deteriorating.

The companion bill, Bill S-211, deals with the upstream protection of our drinking water. This bill deals with the water at its source, and I will deal later with the other bill. The two bills are quite independent; one is not dependent on the other. This bill has been on the Order Papers of various Parliaments since February 2001.

The bill did not originate with me. It originated with Aboriginal colleagues who brought to our attention the shocking situation of the Aboriginal communities as it applies to drinking water. Therefore, this was not my idea. This idea came from our colleagues on this side from the Aboriginal community. It was a remedial measure arising out of the tragic situation that occurred in Walkerton, Ontario — my province — and later on in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, and in other towns and cities across Canada. As recently as last summer, a tragic event took place with respect to water in Montreal, and we continue to have episodes of bad drinking water and boil advisories in the 21st century in every region of Canada. To my mind, that is a major disgrace.

Honourable senators, this is a simple bill; it is not complicated. It will amend the Food and Drugs Act to add clean drinking water as an explicit objective of a federal agency already organized to regulate and supervise food and liquids.

As I mentioned before, the food and drug agency regulates soda pop, ice and bottled water. The federal government regulates drinking water in all of its federal aspects across the country. It regulates drinking water in bottles but not drinking water at the source.

A bottle of drinking water from Fiji costs between \$4 and \$5. That is rain water transported from Fiji to Canada. Last night or the night before, at my own home, my wife put on the table a bottle of Fiji water, which I refused to drink. However, people are not able to get drinking water out of their taps in many towns and cities across the country on which they can rely.

Honourable senators, I will not repeat the speech that I gave back in 2006 in the Senate, but at that time I convinced honourable senators opposite who objected to the bill from a constitutional perspective, and it was referred to committee. The committee had excellent hearings, led by the Honourable Senator Banks, and all aspects of the bill were examined.

I direct my next comment to the new senators. Finally, we heard from Health Canada for the very first time. After five years of hearings, we heard that the bill, indeed, was constitutional; that there was no longer a question about its constitutionality. However, it took five years. I see Senator Banks, who chaired those hearings, agrees that it was a means of speeding the passage of the bill along in this place.

Senator Bryden presented the problem we have in this chamber compared to the other place, about how we restore a motion that we passed but later died on the Order Paper. We have to go through the mechanics of first, second and third reading and referring the bill again to committee. I hope we will expedite this bill if it is approved at second reading.

Again, the bill was passed twice at third reading without amendment in committee or by this chamber.

In order for this proposed legislation to get to the other side, it needs to be sent there within 60 days. Already, I believe 45 days have expired. Time is running out. Otherwise, we have to repeat all the steps.

Essentially, if we talk to the house leaders on both sides and if they consent to get this bill over to the other side, there is a means to do so. I would hope with the consent of all senators that, if they agree after second reading, they might do that.

However, let us look at the subject matter. I turn to those who have medical experience on the other side and those who are close to the Aboriginal communities. The situation with clean drinking water in Canada is worse today than it was five years ago, despite all the promises and all the commitments by successive governments for the last decade.

The greatest scandal, of course, is the Aboriginal community. This comment I direct to Aboriginal senators and, specifically, our new senator, Senator Brazeau. I am delighted to hear that he might be interested in this topic.

If passed, Bill S-208 will force the federal government to expedite what it should have done before, which is to renovate drinking water infrastructure and supervision, particularly for First Nations.

Honourable senators, I will not take much more time on this matter because you have heard it before. However, I will say again for those new senators: At least two thirds of the Aboriginal communities that have been totally under federal jurisdiction since Confederation have bad drinking water — two-thirds — and still there is no movement on this front.

One incident that upset me most deeply occurred five years ago when we — Dennis Mills, then a member of Parliament, and I — convened a meeting with an Aboriginal community north of Toronto. An Aboriginal woman from Grassy Narrows told us that in order for her to have a healthy baby in the 21st century, she had to leave her reservation and go to a place where there was clean drinking water. Why did she do that; why did she have to leave her place of residence, the place she loved? She said that was the only way she could cleanse her womb for two or three years in order to ensure that the impurities in her system caused by bad drinking water were removed so she could have a healthy baby.

Honourable senators, once I heard that story, I was in a rage. Unfortunately, my rage is limited to some on this side of the house. I once again want to thank Senators Watt and Adams for their tremendous support. Senator Watt brought this situation to my attention and made me become, in effect, his advocate for this measure. I hope that Senator Brazeau will dig deeply into his own Aboriginal community and find out if the facts that I presented are correct and speak to this matter. If I am wrong, so be it. I hope that Senator St. Germain, who has talked about water matters, will be equally outraged and might do something.

To my colleague Senator Smith, I mentioned the study conducted by the Gordon Water Group of Concerned Scientists and Citizens published a year or so ago entitled *Changing the Flow: A Blueprint for Federal Action on Fresh Water*. This group is composed of concerned scientists and citizens in every region across Canada, including all environmental groups and Aboriginal groups. It has been practically supported by every advocate and environmental group. By the way, Walter Gordon was a great icon to many of us in the Liberal Party, particularly for Senator Smith, who was his executive assistant.

In that excellent study started by his family and by a foundation funded by his family, they said this under Chapter 4, Priority 3: Securing Safe Drinking Water for All Canadians:

The Canadian government estimates that contaminated drinking water causes 90 deaths and 90,000 cases of illness annually and independent health experts suggest a much

higher number of Canadians suffer from gastrointestinal illnesses related to their drinking water.

When I sought to obtain these statistics from Health Canada, they were unavailable.

• (1540)

I believe the reason Health Canada did not make the statistics available, or failed to keep them up to date, is because if they discerned that drinking water was a public health problem, they would be obliged under the act, as a public health measure, to do something about it. In my view, there has been a whitewash of this kind of statistical information, and we continue to try to keep track of it.

When I was preparing my original papers on this, I asked Dr. Schindler, an independent expert — one of Canada's greatest experts — if he and I could put together a model to estimate the savings to the health system if we could clean up the drinking water situation in Canada. We estimated no less than \$2 billion a year could be saved by people not becoming sick because of bad drinking water; so there is a cost benefit to this bill as well.

We heard as well in testimony at one of our hearings about a logarithm that was established by some officials. I asked them how many cases of bad drinking water hit the health system. They did not have statistics, but they put together a public health logarithm. They indicated that 37 million Canadians each year suffer from a gastrointestinal disease or problem that could be directly attributed to drinking water — sorry, that is 37 million cases.

Even the estimate by Dr. Schindler and myself was woefully small. There is, at least, a negligent omission, honourable senators.

The report continues:

... inconsistencies and inequities exist. As the water contamination events in Walkerton, North Battleford and Kashechewan illustrate, problems are most severe in communities that rely on small drinking water systems and on First Nation reserves.

When I heard the Newfoundland story, this upset me even more. What is the Newfoundland story? In many outposts of Newfoundland, there are large families of six, seven or eight children. To this day, they must boil all their water for food, drinking water and washing needs.

Senators from Newfoundland and Labrador, this is in the 21st century. There is not drinking water available to every citizen in Newfoundland and Labrador despite its new-found riches. Newfoundland and Labrador is an oil-rich province and yet it has not been able to provide clean drinking water to all of its own inhabitants.

The Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador raves about how important it is to receive revenue from the federal government in connection with the resources of his province. I do not disagree

with that; but I have not heard anybody rave or rant about the hundreds of housewives or mothers who, to this day, every day, must boil their water in Newfoundland in the 21st century.

I do not know, honourable senators, how inert we must become before we can respond, at least emotionally, to some of these details.

What is the action plan? The action plan, on page 33 of the study, states: "Why the federal government?"

The answer is because under the Constitution, the criminal power gives the federal government power to legislate and protect the health and safety of all Canadians. Clean and accessible drinking water is essential for the health and safety of every Canadian.

Every day, the Department of Health is directed to say that if one wants to be healthy, one must drink eight glasses of water a day. That is the mandate from the Department of Health. How inconsistent is that? We demand that we have good health by drinking water but we do not provide good clean drinking water so the children and families across Canada can drink it.

On that point, Senator Nolin slowed me down a little bit because he has been a critic of most of my legislation. He and I are interested in constitutional matters and we discussed this matter, but even Quebec agrees.

It is interesting to note, and I put this back on the record, that last year the Minister of Finance of Quebec said — and I have made this point countless times in this chamber — that the federal criminal power is unquestioned by Quebec. Even Quebec agrees that there is no question whatsoever about the federal criminal power, which is the essence of this bill. That is the power upon which the Food and Drugs Act is based.

Honourable senators, the Department of Health is responsible for enhancing and protecting the health of Canadians. The Gordon report continues:

The federal government has established legislative standards for food, drugs and bottled water through the *Food and Drugs Act*, (1985).

The federal government has a clear mandate and . . .

— I note and they note —

. . . fiduciary responsibility to ensure safe drinking water for Aboriginal Canadians (First Nations, Metis and Inuit) whose communities are located on federal land.

There is no question about that, and still the situation deteriorates or continues to simmer and fall back.

I hope that at least all the senators on this side and on that side who are of Aboriginal origin, or are close to Aboriginal communities, will give this bill a good look and become advocates for it, as they should.

Again, the Gordon report concludes by saying "Standards vs. Guidelines," because we heard the argument from the federal government that they have guidelines but not standards. The

guidelines are not enforceable. They are woefully behind. We have heard that. The testimony is unequivocal about that. This would give a political jolt to the federal government to take a fresh look at their responsibilities.

The reason for that is the federal government does not have enforceable guidelines. Even the Auditor General's report said that was out of date. That was the unequivocal evidence produced by Senator Banks in his astute committee.

We have guidelines established that are voluntary. They are out of date, as Senator Banks' committee discovered when he had the Auditor General report to his committee; all that information is on the record.

The concluding statement of this paragraph on "Standards vs. Guidelines" is as follows:

Standards are expected to provide a superior level of protection for human health compared to guidelines because they are legally binding and enforceable and failure to comply results in punishment.

Guidelines, on the other hand, are essentially voluntary targets that water providers may strive toward but are not required to achieve.

Honourable senators, the situation is not getting better, it is getting worse. Whether one agrees with the Gordon commission or not, there is not a province or region in Canada that does not have bad drinking water today. It is my contention that the reason for this situation is that the criminal power has not been utilized with municipalities or those involved with the public health of our citizens to ensure it is protected.

I began this rant, this repeated rant, with a question of equality, which is close to my heart. Why is it, I ask myself, that in Toronto I should be able to obtain clean drinking water for me and my family, and somebody in Newfoundland should not? Why is it that in Toronto, my city, I should have clean drinking water for my family, and Senator Watt's or Senator Adams' families in their communities should not? It is not fair; it is not right; and it is contrary to the spirit of the Constitution, the Charter.

By the way, one institution is supported in this country — and this one institution, new senators, I tell you about because I have studied it carefully for the last 20 years — by 80 per cent of the public in every region of this country. That institution is not the flag. It is not the Queen. It is not the Governor General. It is not even our Speaker. The one institution that is respected by every region in the country, by 88 per cent, is the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; and the essence of that institution is one word — one word and one word only — "equality."

We believe in equality. All senators believe in equality.

Let me conclude, honourable senators, by referring to a new book called *Bottlemania* by Elizabeth Royte. I suggest honourable senators buy this book. They can buy it out of their Senate budget. In it, she details the toxic conditions of drinking water overlooked by regulators, and says that toxicity is becoming worse. Health standards, health hazards, birth defects,

reproductive disorders, even cancer, issues affecting stomach, kidneys and other human organs, she points out, are becoming worse, not better.

There is another study within the book by Dr. Robert D. Morris, an environmental epistemologist, entitled *Blue Death: Disease, Disaster and the Water We Drink*.

What I find most fascinating in this book is that it also indicates the number of scientists who are engaged daily in New York City to test the water. They have well over 35 scientists for New York City alone whose single job is to test the water. Every day, all the watersheds around New York are tested, and then every corner in every region of the city is tested, not at its source, but in the locations, in the neighbourhoods, once a week, over and over and over again. New York City has more scientists testing water than all of Canada — more scientists in one city than for all of Canada.

Another study in this book is also interesting, and that is that there are 141 new contaminants in the water — because only 114 have been seriously scrutinized under certain regulatory regimes.

• (1550)

We, in Canada, are woefully behind. We do not even know the number of contaminants in our water. Honourable senators, you have the ball on this issue. I have worked hard on this. The Senate on this side has worked hard. Our committees have worked hard. This criticism is not just of this government; I was equally critical of the previous three governments. I have been equal in my treatment of all governments. The Senate can move on this sharply and bring it to the attention of the other place. Let us ram it through. I urge the cooperation and assistance of honourable senators on this.

It is in the record. If honourable senators are interested in this subject matter, do not believe me or us but believe the record and believe the experts. Read *Bottlemania: How Water Went on Sale and Why We Bought It*; and the studies and reports, and come to the conclusion that I came to that it is the scandal of the 21st century and the Senate can stop this scandal if it moves quickly.

(On motion of Senator Cochrane, debate adjourned.)

HUMAN RIGHTS

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY ISSUES
OF DISCRIMINATION IN HIRING AND PROMOTION
PRACTICES OF FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE AND
LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES FOR MINORITY
GROUPS IN PRIVATE SECTOR AND REFER
PAPERS AND EVIDENCE SINCE FIRST SESSION
OF THIRTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

Hon. A. Raynell Andreychuk, pursuant to notice of March 3, 2009, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights be authorized to examine issues of discrimination in the hiring and promotion practices of the Federal Public Service, to study the extent to which targets to achieve employment equity are being met, and to examine labour market outcomes for minority groups in the private sector;

That the papers and evidence received and taken and work accomplished by the committee on this subject since the beginning of the First session of the Thirty-eighth Parliament be referred to the committee; and

That the Committee submit its final report to the Senate no later than March 31, 2010.

(Motion agreed to.)

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY ISSUES
RELATED TO NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL
HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS AND REFER
PAPERS AND EVIDENCE SINCE FIRST SESSION
OF THIRTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

Hon. A. Raynell Andreychuk, pursuant to notice of March 3, 2009, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights be authorized to examine and monitor issues relating to human rights and, inter alia, to review the machinery of government dealing with Canada's international and national human rights obligations;

That the papers and evidence received and taken and work accomplished by the committee on this subject since the beginning of the first session of the thirty-seventh Parliament be referred to the committee; and

That the Committee submit its final report to the Senate no later than March 31, 2010.

(Motion agreed to.)

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY
INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS REGARDING
CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS AND REFER
PAPERS AND EVIDENCE SINCE FIRST SESSION
OF THIRTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

Hon. A. Raynell Andreychuk, pursuant to notice of March 3, 2009, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights be authorized to monitor the implementation of recommendations contained in the Committee's report entitled *Children: The Silenced Citizens: Effective Implementation of Canada's International Obligations with Respect to the Rights of Children*, tabled in the Senate on April 25, 2007;

That the papers and evidence received and taken and work accomplished by the committee on this subject since the beginning of the first session of the thirty-eighth Parliament be referred to the committee; and

That the Committee submit its final report to the Senate no later than March 31, 2010.

(Motion agreed to.)

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY ON-RESERVE
MATRIMONIAL REAL PROPERTY ON BREAKDOWN
OF MARRIAGE OR COMMON LAW RELATIONSHIP
AND REFER PAPERS AND EVIDENCE SINCE SECOND
SESSION OF THIRTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

Hon. A. Raynell Andreychuk, pursuant to notice of March 3, 2009, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights be authorized to invite the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to appear with his officials before the Committee for the purpose of updating the members of the Committee on actions taken concerning the recommendations contained in the Committee's report entitled *A Hard Bed to lie in: Matrimonial Real Property on Reserve*, tabled in the Senate November 4, 2003;

That the papers and evidence received and taken and work accomplished by the committee on this subject since the beginning of the second session of the thirty-seventh Parliament be referred to the committee; and

That the Committee continue to monitor developments on the subject and submit a final report to the Senate no later than March 31, 2010.

(Motion agreed to.)

NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY
NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY AND REFER
PAPERS AND EVIDENCE SINCE FIRST SESSION
OF THIRTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT—
DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Tommy Banks, for Senator Kenny, pursuant to notice of March 3, 2009, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence be authorized to examine and report on the national security policy of Canada. In particular, the committee shall be authorized to examine:

- (a) the capability of National Defence to defend and protect the interests, people and territory of Canada and its ability to respond to and prevent a national emergency or attack, and the capability of Public Safety Canada to carry out its mandate;
- (b) the working relationships between the various agencies involved in intelligence gathering, and how they collect, coordinate, analyze and disseminate information and how these functions might be enhanced;
- (c) the mechanisms to review the performance and activities of the various agencies involved in intelligence gathering; and
- (d) the security of our borders and critical infrastructure.

That the papers and evidence received and taken and work accomplished by the committee on this subject since the beginning of the First session of the Thirty-seventh Parliament be referred to the committee; and

That the committee report to the Senate no later than June 15, 2010 and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings until 90 days after the tabling of the final report.

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

Hon. David Tkachuk: I have a question. I believe that it would be normal procedure for the deputy chair of the committee to move the motion in the absence of the chair. Is there a reason that was not done?

Senator Banks: There was no reason except to say that I noticed that the deputy chair did not rise when the item was called so I stood and moved the motion.

Senator Tkachuk: In that case, when the chair of the committee sees fit to move his own motion, I will move the adjournment of the debate and ask him tomorrow.

(On motion of Senator Tkachuk, debate adjourned.)

BANKING, TRADE AND COMMERCE

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY PRESENT
STATE OF DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL
FINANCIAL SYSTEM AND REFER PAPERS AND
EVIDENCE SINCE THE FIRST SESSION OF THE THIRTY-
NINTH PARLIAMENT

Leave having been given to revert to Motions, Item No. 26:

Hon. Michael A. Meighen, pursuant to notice of February 26, 2009, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce be authorized to examine and report upon the present state of the domestic and international financial system; and

That the papers and evidence received and taken and work accomplished by the Committee on this subject since the beginning of the First Session of the Thirty-ninth Parliament be referred to the Committee; and

That the Committee submit its final report no later than December 31, 2010, and that the Committee retain until March 31, 2011 all powers necessary to publicize its findings.

Hon. Jeremiah S. Grafstein: When will the honourable senator respond to the questions I raised yesterday about the subject matter before the committee dealing with these previous unfinished reports?

Senator Meighen: I responded to the honourable senator's question yesterday. As I indicated, the steering committee is meeting today and subsequent to that meeting I will be in a better position to offer any further explanations if they are appropriate.

Senator Grafstein: I had assumed the steering committee had met earlier. I will await breathlessly his responses.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(The sitting of the Senate was suspended.)

• (1820)

(The sitting was resumed.)

[*Translation*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION BILL, 2009

FIRST READING

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore* informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with

Bill C-10, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on January 27, 2009 and related fiscal measures.

(Bill read first time.)

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

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate, at the next sitting.

(On motion of Senator Comeau, notwithstanding rule 57(1)(f), bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading at the next sitting of the Senate.)

(The Senate adjourned until Thursday, March 5, 2009 at 1:30 p.m.)

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