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

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THE SENATE

Tuesday, April 28, 2009

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

Prayers.

AFGHANISTAN—FALLEN SOLDIER

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 Major Michelle Mendes, whose tragic death occurred recently while serving her country in Afghanistan.

Honourable senators then stood in silent tribute.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

CONSTABLE RON PAUZÉ

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have the pleasant duty today to pay tribute to a fine gentleman who has spent the last 30 years serving the Senate as a member of our Protective Service.

Ron Pauzé began his career as a constable in the Senate Protective Service in February 1979. Some members who are currently in the Protective Service had not even been born when Ron started as a Senate constable. In fact, some of the senators serving in the Senate had hardly been born.

Throughout his service to the Senate and to all honourable senators, Ron has always carried out his duties in a courteous, respectful and pleasant manner. He has witnessed the visits of many heads of state, many distinguished people, as well as many different heads of government, including our own.

• (1405)

The most accurate way to describe Ron is that he is friendly and engaging. He has had, and continues to have, a vast knowledge of the Senate and its many personalities. He could probably find most of the skeletons, but I can assure you he will not say where they lie.

Although there have been some changes to the Senate during Ron's tenure and the focus of the Senate Protective Service has shifted from a more ceremonial to a genuine security role, Ron continued to carry out his required duties in an easygoing yet professional manner.

It is rare these days that one sees a person who has dedicated more than half of their life to a career, such as Ron has in our Protective Service. For his commitment to duty, Ron has truly endured, yet his personality has not been stifled.

Honourable senators, please join me in wishing Constable Ron Pauzé, who retires from the Senate Protective Service tomorrow, the very best that retirement can bring. May he be blessed with robust health and many years of well-earned rest and enjoyment in his retirement.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

JOURNALISTS LOST IN THE LINE OF DUTY

Hon. Joan Fraser: Honourable senators, again this year I rise to read a list of the names of journalists who were killed in the line of duty in the preceding calendar year. I stress that these are people who are known to have died because they were journalists, not journalists who happened to be killed for some coincidental reason.

We cannot bring them back. We cannot resolve the pain of their families and colleagues, but we can bear witness to their sacrifice.

In 2008, in Afghanistan, Carsten Thomassen died in a suicide bomb attack; Abdul Samad Rohani was shot.

In Argentina, Juan Carlos Zambrano died of causes unknown, but for reasons that are known.

In Bolivia, Carlos Quispe Quispe was beaten to death.

In Brazil, Walter Lessa de Oliveira died of causes unknown.

In Cambodia, Khem Sambo was shot.

In Croatia, Ivo Pukanic died when a car bomb exploded.

In the Gaza Strip, Fadel Shana was wounded and killed.

In Georgia, Alexander Klimchuk was killed by militia; Grigol Chikhladze was killed by militia; and Stan Storimans died as a result of a cluster bomb.

In Honduras, José Fernando Gonzáles was killed.

In India, Mohammed Muslimuddin was stabbed; Ashok Sodhi died in crossfire; Javed Ahmed Mir was shot; Konsom Rishikanta died of unknown causes; Vikas Ranjan was shot; and Sabina Sehgal died of unknown causes.

In Iraq, Alaa Abdul-Karim al-Fartoosi died in a roadside bomb explosion; Shihab al-Tamimi died as the result of a stroke after injuries from a shooting; Jassim al-Batat was shot; Sarwa Abdul-Wahab was shot; Wissam Ali Ouda was shot; Haidar al-Hussein was abducted, tortured and shot; Mohieldin al-Naqeeb died in a drive-by shooting; Soran Mama Hama was shot; Musab Mahmood al-Ezawi was kidnapped and killed; Ahmed Salim

was kidnapped and killed; Ihab Mu'd was kidnapped and killed; Qaydar Sulaiman was kidnapped and killed; and Dyar Abas Ahmed died of causes unknown.

In Mexico, Alejandro Zenon Fonseca Estrada was kidnapped, beaten and shot.

In Niger, Abdou Mahamane was killed.

In Pakistan, Chishti Mujahid died in a targeted attack; Siraj Uddin died in a suicide bombing; Mohammed Ibrahim was shot; Abdul Aziz Shaheen died in an air strike; and Abdul Razzak Johra was kidnapped and shot.

In the Philippines, Martin Roxas died in a drive-by shooting; and Dennis Cuesta was shot.

In Russia, Magomed Yevloyev was killed in police custody; and Telman Alishayev was assassinated.

In Somalia, Hassan Kafi Hared was killed by a landmine; and Nasteh Dahir Farah was shot.

In Sri Lanka, Paranirupasingham Devakumar was stabbed; and Rashmi Mohamed died as a suicide bomb victim.

In Thailand, Athiwat Chaiyanurat was murdered; Chalee Boonsawat died in an explosion; and Jaruek Rangcharoen was shot.

Bear homage to them, honourable senators.

• (1410)

[Translation]

NEW BRUNSWICK

FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

Hon. Percy Mockler: Honourable senators, as a New Brunswick senator and strong proponent of linguistic duality, I am proud to have this opportunity to speak in honour of the fortieth anniversary of the Official Languages Act.

When the act was passed in April 1969, New Brunswick became Canada's only officially bilingual province. French and English were declared the province's official languages with equal status and equal rights and privileges with respect to their use.

Liberal Premier Louis J. Robichaud, who went on to serve in this august chamber, had the courage of his convictions to undertake such a monumental project to make our province a better place.

His successor and friend, Conservative Richard Hatfield, who also sat in this chamber, took further action to strengthen the act. In 1981, the government introduced Bill C-88, which officially recognized the equality of linguistic communities and their right to distinct cultural, educational and social institutions.

[English]

In 1982, New Brunswick's official language rights were entrenched in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Additional amendments were made in 1993 and again in 2002 that further recognized New Brunswick's unique status as a bilingual, bicultural province.

[Translation]

In 2002, Bernard Lord built on the work of his predecessors by modernizing the act in New Brunswick's Legislative Assembly. On April 1, 2003, he created the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages for New Brunswick and appointed the province's first commissioner.

[English]

New Brunswick is often referred to as a microcosm of Canada. I am proud of the achievements of my province within Canada on linguistic duality.

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees that New Brunswick's anglophones and francophones have the right to distinct institutions and the right to receive government and judicial services in either French or English.

Honourable senators, this celebration goes well beyond what is simply stated in law, the Official Languages Act. The steps that have been taken to enhance it over the years speak to the heart and soul of New Brunswick and also of our country, Canada.

[Translation]

We are all proud of our province and our country.

[English]

SIXTY-FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

Hon. Yoine Goldstein: Honourable senators, sundown this evening will mark the beginning of the celebrations of the sixty-first anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel according to the Jewish calendar.

In 1948, the United Nations determined that what was then Palestine should be divided into two parts, a Jewish state and a Palestinian state. The Jews agreed to that partition, but the Arabs did not. The Palestinians really had nothing to say about the matter because the surrounding Arab states did not permit them to express any preference.

Immediately upon the declaration of state, seven Arab countries attacked the fledgling Israel with massive and well-equipped armies, while Israel had no army, no equipment to speak of and virtually no ability to obtain any equipment since supply of equipment had been embargoed.

Nevertheless, Israel survived its birth pangs — some say miraculously — and became what it now still is: the only full and functioning democracy in the Middle East.

Honourable senators, Canada has a special affinity to Israel. Canadians and Israelis share a number of significant democratic and human rights values. Both enjoy a free press. Both enjoy gender equality. Both enjoy an independent judiciary. Both enjoy a democratically elected Parliament.

If sessions of the Israeli Parliament are raucous, somewhat reminiscent of a full day of Question Period in the other place, it is because of the robust and perhaps too democratic process that Israel enjoys.

• (1415)

Unfortunately, this little state, two thirds of the size of Vancouver Island and barely 40 per cent of the size of Nova Scotia, has not enjoyed a moment of peace since its creation. Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, Hamas and others are bent on its destruction.

The uninitiated observer would think that if Israelis were to relinquish the land captured by it during the 1967 War, all would be forgiven and forgotten and the Israelis and Arabs would live happily ever after. Unfortunately, that is not the case. A quick read of the Hamas charter and of the Hezbollah charter reveals that those organizations, sponsored by Syria and Iran, are not interested in the pre-1967 borders. They are interested in completely destroying the State of Israel. Hamas and Hezbollah are strongly supported by the lunatic who currently rules Iran and who continues to call for the genocidal destruction of Israel.

Canada's strong and courageous stand against Durban II, the outrageous Ahmadinejad lunacy, and Canada's ongoing support for an Israel living securely and in peace with a Palestinian democratic state continues to be a source of great pride to all thinking Canadians. It is certainly a source of great encouragement to the Israeli people who feel a special affinity and bond to the people of their sister democracy, Canada. I ask honourable senators to join with me in wishing Israel a happy birthday.

HOMELESS CANADIANS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

Hon. Wilbert J. Keon: Honourable senators, I rise today to highlight an important way that our Conservative government is working to help homeless Canadians who have mental illness. You will recall that in 2007 we created the Mental Health Commission of Canada under the leadership of the Honourable Michael Kirby, who is well-known to, and respected by, the members of this chamber. Last year the government provided the commission with \$110 million to establish demonstration projects in five cities across Canada — Montreal, Moncton, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver — to help to establish best practices in addressing the needs of those who are homeless and have mental illness.

Work has begun on these projects, each one of which will focus on a distinct group of people who are mentally ill and homeless. For example, Moncton is one of our nation's fastest growing cities, but there is a shortage of services for both anglophones and francophones who are mentally ill. In Montreal, the project will take into account the different mental health services provided to homeless people and might look as well at French-speaking immigrants from Africa, Vietnam and the Caribbean.

[Senator Goldstein]

In Toronto, the project will reflect the city's ethnocultural diversity and the needs of new immigrants, many of whom do not speak English. The Winnipeg project will focus on the city's urban Aboriginal people. In Vancouver, the project will be directed to meet the difficulties faced by mentally ill people who struggle against substance abuse and addictions.

The commission will work closely with provincial and municipal governments, service providers, researchers and homeless individuals to establish the best ways to proceed with the projects.

The information gathered through this research will provide us with the knowledge we need to best help homeless people who are living with mental illness. What is more, it will establish Canada as a leader in this field.

Honourable senators, I draw this to your attention because it is an initiative that is frequently overlooked when we speak about overall research expenditures in Canada.

[Translation]

WORLD HEALTH DAY

Hon. Lucie Pépin: Honourable senators, I would like to take a moment to talk about World Health Day, which was celebrated on April 7, 2009. That day fell during our parliamentary break, and since there is a long waiting list for Senators' Statements, I have not had the opportunity until today to pay tribute to all those who work within our health care system.

This day serves to commemorate the founding of the World Health Organization and highlights the multiple realities facing the health care community.

We are all well aware of the important contributions made by doctors and nurses. Although their role is essential, it is not enough on its own to make our health care system work. We often forget the crucial role of other health care employees.

Try to imagine for a moment a hospital or health care centre with no one to answer the phone, greet people at reception or update files and maintain an appropriate archiving system.

• (1420)

Imagine a hospital with no technicians to work in the labs or operate x-ray equipment. Imagine a health care facility that was not adequately maintained, where there were no special measures to reduce the spread of infectious disease, or where no one did the laundry or fixed the meals.

These examples are taken from a brochure put out by the Canadian Women's Health Network, entitled *Hidden Health Care Work and Women*, on which my speech today is based.

Naturally, the focus tends to be on doctors and nurses, whose work is the most visible in all areas of the health care system. But without the support of other health care workers, Canadians

would not receive the care they need. Receptionists, technologists, orderlies, records managers, cooks and janitors — all these hidden health care workers do work that is central to the provision of health care and to the health care system.

These workers are very often labelled as “ancillary,” which gives them secondary status. As a result, the issues facing these workers, who are primarily women, are sometimes relegated to the background. New Canadians and visible minorities are overrepresented in hidden health care positions, compared to their representation in the labour force.

Many hidden health care workers are poorly paid, and many are not unionized and therefore do not have any benefits. Cleaners are exposed to harsh chemicals and sharp objects.

Honourable senators, teamwork within health care requires the participation of all workers, regardless of their occupation. Keeping things organized, cleaning and cooking are all roles that deserve to be recognized as essential, not only to promoting health and healing, but to the success of the health care system.

I invite you to learn about hidden health care work by consulting the brochure on this subject published by the Canadian Women’s Health Network, available on its website at www.cwhn.ca.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INDIAN AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

YUKON LAND CLAIMS AND SELF-GOVERNMENT AGREEMENTS—2003-04 ANNUAL REPORT TABLED

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 2003-04 annual report on the Yukon Land Claims and Self-Government Agreements.

ABORIGINAL HEALING FOUNDATION—2008 ANNUAL REPORT TABLED

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 2008 annual report of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR SENATORS

BUDGET AND AUTHORIZATION TO ENGAGE SERVICES—SECOND REPORT OF COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Serge Joyal, Chair of the Standing Committee on Conflict of Interest for Senators, presented the following report:

Tuesday, April 28, 2009

The Standing Committee on Conflict of Interest for Senators has the honour to present its

SECOND REPORT

Your committee, which is authorized on its own initiative, pursuant to rule 86(1)(t), (i) to exercise general direction over the Senate Ethics Officer; and (ii) to be responsible for all matters relating to the *Conflict of Interest Code for Senators*, including all forms involving senators that are used in its administration, subject to the general jurisdiction of the Senate, respectfully requests that it be empowered to engage the services of such counsel and technical, clerical and other personnel as may be necessary for the purpose of its examination and consideration of such matters as are referred to it by the Senate, or which come before it as per the *Conflict of Interest Code for Senators*.

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

Respectfully submitted,

SERGE JOYAL
Chair

(For text of budget, see today’s Journals of the Senate, Appendix A, p. 526.)

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

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

[English]

STUDY ON STATE OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE

FIFTH REPORT OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE TABLED

Hon. Art Eggleton: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table the fifth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology entitled: *Early Childhood Education and Care: Next Steps*.

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

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

BUDGET AND AUTHORIZATION TO ENGAGE SERVICES AND TRAVEL—STUDY ON FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES TO FIRST NATIONS, INUIT AND METIS PEOPLES— THIRD REPORT OF COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Elizabeth Hubley, for Senator St. Germain, Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, presented the following report:

Tuesday, April 28, 2009

The Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples has the honour to present its

THIRD REPORT

Your committee, which was authorized by the Senate on Wednesday, February 25, 2009 to examine and report on the federal government's constitutional, treaty, political and legal responsibilities to First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples and on other matters generally relating to the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada, respectfully requests funds for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010 and requests, for the purpose of such study, that it be empowered:

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

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

Respectfully submitted,

ELIZABETH HUBLEY
For the Honourable Gerry St. Germain, P.C.,
Chair of the Committee

(For text of budget, see today's Journals of the Senate, Appendix B, p. 531.)

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

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

• (1425)

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT

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

That when the Senate adjourns on Wednesday, April 29, 2009, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, May 5, 2009, at 2 p.m.

CRIMINAL CODE

BILL TO AMEND—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-14, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (organized crime and protection of justice system participants).

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government) introduced Bill S-6, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act (accountability with respect to political loans).

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

[English]

STATE IMMUNITY ACT CRIMINAL CODE

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. David Tkachuk presented Bill S-233, An Act to amend the State Immunity Act and the Criminal Code (detering terrorism by providing a civil right of action against perpetrators and sponsors of terrorism).

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

[Translation]

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO URGE MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR 2010 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES TO BROADCAST EVENTS

Hon. Andrée Champagne: Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence, I will move:

That the Senate unanimously urge the two Ministers responsible for the Olympic and Paralympic Games to do everything in their power to make VANOC and the Broadcasting Consortium quickly reach an agreement that will ensure the broadcasting of the 2010 Paralympic Games in Vancouver and Whistler.

• (1430)

[English]

NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY SERVICES AND BENEFITS FOR MEMBERS AND VETERANS OF ARMED FORCES AND CURRENT AND FORMER MEMBERS OF THE RCMP, COMMEMORATIVE ACTIVITIES AND CHARTER

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

That the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence be authorized to study:

- (a) services and benefits provided to members of the Canadian Forces; to veterans who have served honourably in Her Majesty's Canadian Armed Forces in the past; to members and former members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and its antecedents; and all of their families;
- (b) commemorative activities undertaken by the Department of Veterans Affairs Canada, to keep alive for all Canadians, the memory of Canadian veterans' achievements and sacrifices;
- (c) continuing implementation of the New Veterans Charter; 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.

[Translation]

BOTTLED WATER WITHIN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

ENVIRONMENTAL AND FINANCIAL COSTS— NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Grant Mitchell: Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I shall call the attention of the Senate to the high environmental and financial costs of providing bottled water within the parliamentary precinct and federal government buildings.

[English]

NOVA SCOTIA

ECONOMIC STIMULUS PLAN—NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Fred J. Dickson: Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I shall call the attention of the Senate to the current economic situation in Nova Scotia and Canada as well as the Conservative government's stimulus strategies.

QUESTION PERIOD

SENIORS

TRIENNIAL COMMISSION—CANADA PENSION PLAN

Hon. Sharon Carstairs: Honourable senators, my question is directed to the Leader of the Government in the Senate in her role of minister responsible for seniors.

In our report on aging tabled in this chamber last Thursday, we asked the triennial commission reviewing the Canada Pension Plan to examine a number of troubling areas, including a provision that would allow Canadians to pay into CPP while caring for another adult, similar to a provision available now for those caring for children.

Will the minister write to the triennial commission and lend her support for this request made in our report?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government and Minister of State (Seniors)): Honourable senators, I thank Senator Carstairs for the question and I thank Senator Carstairs and the members of the Special Senate Committee on Aging for tabling their excellent report.

While I welcome the recommendations as the Minister of State for Seniors, I am not yet in a position to respond to the recommendations. Once I have finished reading the report, I will be happy to let the honourable senator know when I am prepared to lend my support to the recommendations.

Senator Carstairs: I thank the honourable minister for that, but in this case, we ask only for a review by the triennial commission. We lack expertise in the mechanics of the Canada Pension Plan and we realized that the commission has the opportunity to examine the broad aspects of CPP.

We are only asking the minister to lend her support for that review and not for any conclusions or absolute changes to CPP. We ask the Minister of State for Seniors to lend her support by undertaking to write to the commission to encourage the review.

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I have to understand all the complexities of this issue before I encourage such a review. I cannot commit to the request, but I will look at that part of the committee's report and decide on my next course of action.

• (1435)

CANADIAN INSTITUTES OF HEALTH RESEARCH

Hon. Sharon Carstairs: Honourable senators, in addition to identifying those kinds of problems, we identified that far too little research is being done in Canada on the concept of mental capacity and mental capability. Our report recommends that the Canadian Institutes of Health Research conduct research in this area.

Would the minister responsible for seniors write to the president of the CIHR to encourage that research be undertaken in the field of mental competency and mental capacity?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government and Minister of State (Seniors)): It would be prudent for me, as the Minister of State for Seniors, to have an opportunity to study the report in its entirety. There are a great many recommendations. There is a lot of material there to deal with, some of which falls directly within the purview of the federal government, while other areas are a little more complicated in that they involve provincial and territorial work.

The government has done and is doing many things with regard to seniors. We have established the National Seniors Council, which has studied the issue of elder abuse and made recommendations that the government will be acting on in a few months. This year, the council has been tasked with studying volunteerism and healthy aging and coming up with recommendations on those issues.

With regard to the honourable senator's specific question about mental capacity, I will simply take that as notice.

As I have said to the honourable senator, I do not want to treat this report with anything other than the respect it deserves. While I did try to follow as much as possible the deliberations of the committee, in all fairness, to prepare a proper response, I should be able to respond to the report in its entirety and not specific portions of it, so that the entire report receives attention, not just some of it. It is in the interests of all of us that the report be properly studied and given the careful response that it requires.

Senator Carstairs: I am a little disappointed because in these areas I am not asking for anything other than letters to be written by the person who is supposed to be the principal advocate for seniors in this country, but I will move on to another issue.

[Senator Carstairs]

HUMAN RESOURCES AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Hon. Sharon Carstairs: Honourable senators, a number of reports have been conducted for this government and the previous one with respect to the compassionate leave care benefit under Employment Insurance. All of the reports have recommended a longer benefit period. All have recommended broader definitions to include the gravely ill and not just dying Canadians. Our Aging Committee report also supported such initiatives.

Will the minister work with the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development to ensure that these changes are made?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government and Minister of State (Seniors)): The honourable senator says that I am "supposed to be" the minister responsible for seniors. I take my responsibility for the seniors portfolio seriously. I do not consider my role in the government in that particular capacity as "supposed to be."

There are many recommendations. This area is complex, and I believe that the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and I have worked very well together to provide many services and to improve benefits for seniors. Many senators from both sides participated in developing the excellent recommendations contained in the committee's report.

• (1440)

I think it would be appropriate if the honourable senator would allow me and my officials who are working on a response to the report to have the time to properly study and factor in all of the recommendations as they relate to each other, and not expect me, as the Minister of State for Seniors, to be writing specific letters to specific groups based on one specific part of the report. That is not the approach that I would be wise to follow and it is not the approach that I will follow.

[Translation]

SENIORS

DELIVERY OF SERVICES

Hon. Maria Chaput: Honourable senators, my question is for the minister and relates to the report of the Special Senate Committee on Aging. Madam Minister, as I am sure you are aware, Canadian seniors must be allowed to age in their place of choice, which means they need adequate housing and help with their everyday routines. The committee's report on Canada's aging population recommends a pan-Canadian approach to health human resources that must include home care and personal support services in communities.

Does the minister believe that a national initiative for integrated care is really possible and, when contemplating this kind of initiative, would it be possible to include a clause on linguistic duality, in order to ensure that community services can be provided in both official languages?

[English]

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government and Minister of State (Seniors)): Honourable senators, we have an Official Languages Act. As with everything we do as a government to deliver services to our citizens — and in this case to seniors — the Official Languages Act is paramount and respected.

It is also clear, honourable senators, that many services provided by the government to seniors are specifically federal in their scope, and therefore the Official Languages Act applies. There are many areas where delivery of these services falls completely under the provinces, and there are some areas where there is shared responsibility, as is the case with social housing.

At meetings of provincial and territorial ministers responsible for seniors — another such meeting is coming up in September in Alberta — all of the ministers work together on a host of matters. We get together in advance to identify areas where we can work cooperatively and where we are not treading on each other's jurisdictions. That is exactly how we developed the strategy in dealing with elder abuse. It happens to be a matter that all provinces and territories place high on their lists of priorities.

With regard to the honourable senator's specific question, the structure of the country is such that some programs are clearly within the realm of provincial or territorial jurisdiction, while others are federal in nature and still others are shared. Funds are often transferred from the federal government to the provinces and territories to implement certain programs. I would be happy to take a close look at the senator's question, but I would not want to mislead her into thinking this would be an easy thing to do.

[Translation]

Senator Chaput: I thank the minister for her response. I think it would be an excellent initiative on the part of the government to cooperate and help the provinces adopt a more efficient model for the integration of these services. If that were the case, the federal government would thereby recognize its role and its obligations under the Official Languages Act. Is this not a perfect example of a positive measure: including a clause on linguistic duality and services in both official languages?

• (1445)

[English]

Senator LeBreton: The Honourable Senator Chaput knows that some provinces would resist that suggestion vigorously, were I to suggest it. All I can commit to the honourable senator is that any program that is strictly under the purview of the federal government must adhere, obviously, to the official languages policy of the government and the country.

I know that every program we offer at a federal level is provided in both official languages.

Hon. Jane Cordy: Honourable senators, during the study by the Special Senate Committee on Aging, we heard from witnesses time and again — as we heard in this chamber from Senator Callbeck — that some Canadian seniors do not receive benefits

provided by the federal government for which they are entitled. These benefits range from Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement to even the home retrofit programs administered by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation. We know there are a number of reasons.

Will the Minister of State for Seniors commit to raising this issue with her cabinet colleagues, and work to develop a national outreach initiative to help inform Canada's seniors of the benefits available to them from across all federal departments? Will the minister also direct department staff to educate seniors about all their benefits, even if benefits are not the purpose of the senior's visit or phone call?

Senator LeBreton: As Minister of State for Seniors, I travel throughout the country and meet with seniors' organizations. I am always impressed at the level of knowledge of most seniors as to what services are available. As a group, they are in tune, not only with what is available to them, but also with what is happening in the country at all levels.

Having said that, and regardless of where I go, there are always people who are not aware of certain government programs, although much effort has been made to inform them.

A few months ago, I was at a public meeting in Cambridge with the Honourable Gary Goodyear. Representatives of the Canada Revenue Agency and also Service Canada were there to provide information to a group of people who attended this public meeting. A great deal of information was given that many seniors did not have, even as up-to-date on information as they are.

Through Service Canada, we do not have the perfect system yet, although we have made large steps in providing seniors with information as to what benefits they are eligible to receive. I have mentioned this point in the chamber before. Often when seniors call about a specific program they believe they are entitled to and find out they are not, the Service Canada person will direct them to a program to which they may be entitled.

We have not reached perfection — far from it — but there has been a concerted effort on the part of the government through the various departments. It is something we have discussed on many occasions, but particularly through Service Canada. As I travel around the country and speak to seniors, I hear fewer and fewer examples of people who feel they have missed out or have not had proper access to the system.

Undoubtedly, there will always be some people and we will do what we can to catch those people in the system. Through the efforts of Service Canada and the public servants who work there, we have made great strides in this area, and I am grateful to our officials at Service Canada for their efforts in this area.

Senator Cordy: Honourable senators, we have seen in the work we have done in the Aging Committee — and I am sure the Leader of the Government in the Senate is aware — that the seniors who belong to groups and organizations are the ones who are aware of the programs that are in place. They have the social network. They have people they can talk to and they belong to organizations that have speakers, such as the honourable minister, who present information.

• (1450)

However, we know there are a number of seniors who are isolated. They are living by themselves. We know loneliness is a major factor with seniors. These are the seniors to whom we must reach out, not necessarily only by speaking to groups and organizations.

We had the privilege when we were in the Niagara region of listening to a seniors' group. As volunteers, they visited seniors to discuss programs and made telephone calls to explain programs to them. We have to look outside the box and not only do the types of things that work for those involved in groups. We have to reach people who do not have access.

Seniors who do not receive their entitled OAS, GIS or CPP benefits because they did not apply for them or because they were refused benefits as a result of administrative errors are entitled to only 11 months of retroactive benefits. This compares to the Quebec Pension Plan that allows up to 60 months of retroactivity. Therefore, we have two classes of Canadians.

It is truly unfortunate that the federal government policy denies Canadian seniors the full benefits to which they are entitled. Will the honourable senator, as minister responsible for seniors, commit to ensuring that seniors receive the full benefits to which they are entitled by making full retroactive payments, with interest, to eligible recipients who did not apply for OAS, GIS or CPP, including survivor benefits, or who were denied benefits due to administrative errors?

Senator LeBreton: When a person has a case that is the result of an obvious mistake on the part of the department or the government, they can go back beyond 11 months. Again, they can do this if it is clearly a case where they did not receive benefits through no fault of their own.

With regard to the 11 months of retroactivity, this has been a long-standing policy of the government. There are many reasons for it, including actuarial ones and others that we do not have time to get into here. The honourable senator probably has the details. It has been the case for a number of years. I will be happy to provide a written answer to the honourable senator with the explanation for that policy.

With regard to seniors in remote areas, the honourable senator is quite right. Advocacy groups and people who work with seniors have a capacity to share information. However, I believe that people in remote areas are being reached through mobile Service Canada facilities that go into remote communities to provide services to seniors.

There are seniors in remote areas who have been neglected. Neglect is a form of elder abuse. On the recommendation of the National Seniors Council, the program to be launched within the next couple months on public awareness for elder abuse lists neglect and isolation as forms of elder abuse.

Senator Cordy: When I was referring to seniors living in isolation, I was not referring to seniors living in remote areas, although that would be one instance. We all know that seniors can be lonely and isolated living in large cities as well.

[Senator Cordy]

VOLUNTEERISM

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: Honourable senators, I hope you will join me in thanking Senator Carstairs for her leadership in the preparation of the report of the Special Senate Committee on Aging.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Mercer: For those honourable senators who have not read the report, I commend it to you. This is really about Canada's aging population seizing the opportunity. My question concerns volunteerism.

• (1455)

Volunteers provide essential services to Canadians, in particular to seniors through programs such as Meals On Wheels. Volunteer work allows society to tap into the skills and knowledge of older Canadians. Indeed, the report of the committee encourages the federal government to show leadership by promoting volunteerism, in particular among and for seniors.

Will the minister tell us how her ministry encourages seniors to volunteer during these hard economic times when volunteers are most needed?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government and Minister of State (Seniors)): Honourable senators, I alluded to the answer in my first response to Senator Carstairs. As the honourable senator knows, we established the National Seniors Council, which is representative of seniors groups across the country. These people work in seniors organizations or are advocates for seniors in their communities.

The beauty of the National Seniors Council is that members are hard-working Canadians committed to the well-being of seniors in their communities. Twelve members comprise the National Seniors Council. They come together each year to conduct round tables and meetings across the country and to work with people in the regions to address seniors-specific issues.

Precisely because of the economic downturn and the value of volunteerism, at the March meeting to launch the next round of work for the National Seniors Council, it was determined that the focus will be on volunteerism, which goes hand in hand with the additional subject of healthy aging. The group will conduct round table meetings in the various communities across Canada. I will provide the schedule to the honourable senator.

The council always invites various interested groups to attend, including those from Nova Scotia. Interested parties who want to come to the table and make recommendations to the government on how to make improvements are always welcome. The National Seniors Council will begin their series of round table meetings within the next few weeks.

Senator Mercer: I am encouraged by the news of the round tables. I urge the honourable leader to communicate the importance of participation in those meetings and to reach out to volunteers in the communities. As the honourable leader is aware, I spent most of my career working with volunteers.

During the work of the committee, it was learned that 12 million Canadians contribute almost 2 billion hours of their time in volunteering each year. However, over three quarters of the time given by volunteers is attributable to only 11 per cent of Canadians. The pool is small. Many of these people are older Canadians. Just as our population is aging, so too are our volunteers. The committee report recommends further study on volunteerism in Canada. I encourage the minister to take a look at chapter 7, which says that the needs of the voluntary sector should be the subject of a further study by a Senate committee or by an expert panel in order to examine the emerging challenges of recruiting and training volunteers, options to promote volunteers, and the role of the federal government in promoting the capacity of the volunteer sector.

Will the Leader of the Government in the Senate indicate whether she will support the creation of such a committee in this place?

• (1500)

Senator LeBreton: The National Seniors Council is made up of these 12 Canadians who do this in a volunteer capacity — the only cost is their expenses — and they are already working across the country. I make the argument that the National Seniors Council fulfils that role.

There is no question about the importance of volunteerism. I think I have used the example in this chamber before, that I was at a seniors' facility in British Columbia that happened to be part of a community network group. This is a seniors group, but next door was a child care facility; and the seniors, who were retired teachers and nurses, were volunteering at the child care facility. There are many interesting and creative ideas.

There is no question that volunteerism is a serious issue. There is a generation of people, more or less people in the baby boom generation, who are not as committed to volunteerism as perhaps their parents were. The National Seniors Council feels that they have to move the issue of volunteerism up to a prominent level.

After the council has conducted these round tables, they will submit a report to the government for action. I expect the report in October or November, which is their normal cycle.

The council tabled a report on low-income seniors, a copy of which I provided to Senator Mitchell a month or so ago. I would be happy to provide the honourable senator with the names of everyone who serves on the National Seniors Council.

Of course, they have their own web page, but I will provide the honourable senator with all of that information so that he can access the town hall meetings. We have encouraged the National Seniors Council to reach widely and broadly to include everyone who wants to participate in these meetings as often as possible. I will be happy to provide that information; and if they are in Nova Scotia, I hope the honourable senator's schedule permits his attendance.

[Translation]

ANSWER TO ORDER PAPER QUESTION TABLED

OFFICES OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE PRIVY COUNCIL—STATISTICS ON PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government) tabled the answer to Question No. 7 on the Order Paper—by Senator Downe.

[English]

PAGES EXCHANGE PROGRAM WITH HOUSE OF COMMONS

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Honourable senators, I am pleased to introduce two House of Commons pages, who are participating in the pages exchange program this week.

[Translation]

Christine Bérubé is from Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. She is a student at the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ottawa. Christine is majoring in international development and globalization.

[English]

Tatyana Loeffler-Vulpe of Gatineau, Quebec, is pursuing her studies at Carleton University's College of the Humanities.

Welcome to the Senate of Canada.

VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Honourable senators, before proceeding to Orders of the Day, I wish to draw the attention of honourable senators to the presence in the gallery of Her Excellency Sigríður Anna Thórdardóttir, the Icelandic Ambassador to Canada.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CANADA-EFTA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION BILL

THIRD READING

Hon. A. Raynell Andreychuk moved third reading of Bill C-2, An Act to implement the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the States of the European Free Trade Association (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland), the Agreement on Agriculture between Canada and the Republic of Iceland, the Agreement on Agriculture between Canada and the Kingdom of Norway and the Agreement on Agriculture between Canada and the Swiss Confederation.

She said: Honourable senators, I think we are in agreement on both sides of this chamber that protectionism will not help Canada, and that every step toward agreements with other countries facilitates our trade, our welfare and our economy.

I was reminded by Senator Corbin that we began to look at the EFTA issues in 1997 and 1998. At that time, it was said it would take political will to forge such an agreement. A number of factors came into play and the agreement did not proceed as quickly as it could have.

One of the issues was shipbuilding. I think this bill addresses a very real concern in Canada, and has made provisions for it. Some people might say that they are too generous, and we heard that in the committee. However, we believe that we have taken all points of view into account in the bill and that it is the best possible agreement with the EFTA countries. It will help facilitate the up-and-coming negotiations with the European Union.

I want to thank the bill's critic, Senator Grafstein, for his knowledge and understanding of the trade issues, his support for trade agreements and his very facilitating manner in addressing the real concerns that we have on any agreement. I believe those concerns were satisfied by both the minister and the representatives.

I am pleased with the approach that the committee took with respect to Bill C-2. I would like to thank the chair and the committee for their knowledge on this subject matter. We did not come to this issue without prior knowledge as we had been studying trade issues in the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

For many years, we have studied possible trade arrangements, whether at the World Trade Organization, on a regional basis or a bilateral trade arrangement. The committee was well informed on all of the issues and items that should be found within a trade agreement, and this agreement was not found wanting. In fact, the dispute resolution mechanism has time frames that are more helpful than other agreements. These mechanisms can be used as a template for future agreements. We are slowly improving, agreement by agreement.

In these economic times, we believe the sooner we can move on this legislation, because certain tariff barriers will be lifted immediately, the sooner Canadian businesses will profit, along with the Canadian economy and the Canadian people.

I thank the committee for its work and I look forward to speedy passage of this bill.

Hon. Lowell Murray: Honourable senators, I wonder if I could put a question to the sponsor of Bill C-2. I apologize for not having been able to follow the progress of this bill since we had a brief exchange about it when the honourable senator brought it forward for second reading.

Can the honourable senator tell me how many meetings of the committee were devoted to this bill? Is the honourable senator able to recall from memory the witnesses who attended the committee meetings?

Senator Andreychuk: We had one meeting with the officials from the government and the minister. In addition, as I have acknowledged — and Senator Grafstein can speak for himself — we received extensive briefing notes and were given the opportunity to meet with any of the officials.

As I indicated to you, we did not, as I understand — and I am looking to my chair — receive requests for others to appear. The stakeholders have been consulted throughout rather extensively, and the issues were known. As neither senators nor others raised any new issues, we did not pursue further study. With the combination of our earlier work and the helpful body of material that we received, the committee felt well prepared to indicate its support for the bill.

• (1510)

Senator Murray: I seem to recall a provision, perhaps in the preamble to the bill, indicating that the intent of this agreement was to provide a framework for further agreement on services and investment. Did the government witnesses give any indication of the timelines to achieve this objective?

Senator Andreychuk: Yes, they started with goods, and I think it was Senator Grafstein who asked why only goods and not services and other issues. The response was that we came to an agreement on goods. It was the start, and there is every indication they will move on other issues.

As to a framework, they are moving expeditiously. The other countries have passed all the enabling legislation necessary, so the last part will deal with goods, and they are already looking to future negotiations. Time frames were not definitively given.

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: Perhaps the sponsor of the bill will answer another question. This bill has drawn attention at home in Nova Scotia because of the concern that Norwegians, in particular, give preferential treatment, and some would say subsidies, to the shipbuilding industry.

I am concerned that the committee had only one day of hearings and heard only from department officials. Was there no discussion about this issue of shipbuilding? Our shipbuilding industry in this country is at a critical point. It could tip one way or the other, and I hope this legislation is not the straw that breaks the camel's back.

Senator Andreychuk: In fairness to all governments that have worked on this issue, that issue was one of the reasons for such a long delay. From the initiation of negotiations, all governments put forward that shipbuilding was important in Canada and needed to be addressed cautiously. While the officials said that some parts of the industry were more supportive than others, they all came to the conclusion that the long time delays in the implementation of full tariff removals was for the benefit of the shipbuilding industry.

This agreement does not touch subsidies but rather the issue of tariff removals. I was assured that issue was taken into account. Excluding the removal of tariffs on some of the shipbuilding for 10 and 15 years is so that everyone can adjust. Also, if you look back, the negotiations started in the mid-1990s. Discussions have been ongoing. Of course, how we deal with industries is in another department, which is actively engaged here.

I was satisfied, from what I understood from testimony in the other place, that all these issues had been canvassed. Those directly affected had opportunities to meet with the government and to make representations to Parliament if they so wished.

I think we have the best deal. I asked the minister if other industries, groups or regions will suffer as a result of that cautious approach to shipbuilding. I was assured that the balance struck was the best for all of Canada.

As honourable senators know, negotiations are negotiations, and I think everyone has concluded that this deal is the best that could be struck for the countries of the European Free Trade Association and for Canada, and we will continue to work on it.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Is there continuing debate?

Hon. Jeremiah S. Grafstein: Since I was the critic on this bill, I want to comment briefly on the question that Senator Murray raised.

We received assurances from the government and from the officials that services, which I felt were lacking in the bill, were an immediate priority. They have done preparatory work with respect to services. They hope to conclude that work as quickly as possible. They do not see a problem with that area, but the reason they wanted to move forward on the main corpus of this act was to proceed as quickly as possible to implement this measure.

Having said that, the committee was satisfied that active effort had been made on behalf of the government to pursue the services of provisions because, in my view, one direction we should go with free trade agreements is essentially with value-added services. That is the way forward, and it is important to note that the government gave us their commitment to pursue this direction with vigour. They did not give us a time frame, but we expect to receive an amendment shortly to this particular bill dealing with services.

An important element here that should be raised is the question of the European Union. As the honourable senator knows, as well as our committee, the EU has been parsimonious in opening up trade relations with Canada and the United States. The predecessor to the current European Commissioner for Trade, Pascal Lamy, was essentially protectionist when it came to trade with North America. Happily, he is now at the World Trade Organization and has learned his lesson. He has become a free trader at the WTO, but the real issue here is a step forward into the EU. I was delighted to learn in the newspapers yesterday that a meeting is taking place between Canada and the EU officials to enter into a scope agreement to move forward on that particular track.

There is no question at all in my mind that this agreement with EFTA will facilitate and press the EU to move forward as well. In that respect, I support the bill and I support the passage of this bill.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

An Hon. Senator: On division.

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

TRANSPORTATION OF DANGEROUS GOODS ACT, 1992

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Wallace, seconded by the Honourable Senator Rivard, for the second reading of Bill C-9, An Act to amend the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act, 1992.

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: Honourable senators, I rise today to offer my comments on Bill C-9, An Act to amend the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act, 1992. We are all aware that it is important to constantly monitor transportation of dangerous and potentially life-threatening materials in Canada, whether by air, sea or highway. No one is better aware of such an importance than the citizens of Halifax. I will give a brief history lesson.

On December 6, 1917, the world's largest man-made accidental explosion occurred in Halifax Harbour; what has become known as the Halifax Explosion. It occurred when the *SS Mont-Blanc*, fully loaded with explosives for the war effort, accidentally collided with the *SS Imo*, killing and injuring thousands of Haligonians and nearly wiping out all of Northend Halifax, the part of the city in which I grew up and of which I am proud to have taken as the name of my senatorial district.

Those of us who grew up in Halifax, or who are around my age, perhaps a little older, remember many things. My grandmother on my father's side, on the day of the explosion, was home with her two eldest sons. She was bathing them in the morning. As you would with a couple of boys about the same age, she had them both in the bathtub together. She was home alone and normally would not have closed the bathroom door. She would have it open because, as a busy homemaker, she would have a couple of things on the go. For some reason that morning, she went in to bathe my two uncles and closed the door behind her. She has no idea why.

• (1520)

The explosion happened and, of course, windows were shattered all over the city. When my grandmother got up from the floor — she was knocked down by the explosion — she opened the door of that bathroom, and there were sheets of glass sticking into the door. If she had left that door opened — my father was not yet born — I might not be here today. It is a remarkable story.

After the explosion, my great-grandfather on my mother's side was charged with the responsibility of taking his horse and wagon around the city to pick up the dead bodies. The school that I went to in the north end of Halifax, St. Joseph's-Alexander McKay

School, served as the morgue; it was a stone building and with the heat off, it could be cooled down fairly quickly. It was December, and the day after the explosion we were hit with a blizzard.

In addition, many of us who grew up in Nova Scotia will remember — I certainly do — many elderly people coming to visit my grandmother when she lived with us. I was always amazed at the number of people who were blind or who had one eye missing. I did not connect it until years later when I realized that all of those people lost their sight on the day of the explosion; they did not have their doors closed and glass got into their eyes and blinded them. It was a huge issue, right up until indeed the 1970s and early 1980s, when the Halifax Relief Commission administered a fund that took care of some of these people.

I believe this shows just how important it is to know what type of goods are being delivered, who they are being transported by and what action plans are in place to either prevent or deal with accidents that may occur.

Honourable senators, the objective of this bill is to enhance the safety and security of the transportation of dangerous goods in Canada through various amendments to the 1992 act. One of these amendments requires increased training for personnel handling the goods and increased security screening for personnel transporting the goods.

We often forget that it is the people working in this industry that must handle and deliver these dangerous items. Better initiatives for protecting them, indeed protecting all Canadians from possible security threats, are of the utmost benefit to us all.

However, honourable senators, I must reiterate some concern I have over privacy matters when it comes to security clearances. We must ensure that workers are treated fairly when they go through these processes, but we also must ensure that the processes themselves take into account the protection of Canadians' safety. It is a fine line but one I believe we must take care to observe.

Indeed, witnesses in the other place, such as Teamsters Canada, expressed similar concerns and proposed an amendment that was accepted by the committee in the other place. It was passed unanimously by all political parties, and I commend the committee for that and for its work on this bill.

Another item this bill addresses is proper tracking procedures for goods being transported and proper reporting procedures in the event of an unwanted loss or theft of these types of goods. This is also part of a larger scheme, and we need to see proper and sufficient emergency response assistance plans. These plans are part of this bill and, indeed, should be.

Further witnesses, such as the Canadian Trucking Alliance, had concerns about the costs associated with ensuring adequate security plans, security clearances and training, and rightly so. I agree with them.

Honourable senators, we must ensure that this bill does not unnecessarily download costs onto the already taxed trucking industry. However, as I said previously, we must also ensure that we properly protect all Canadians from any threat when it comes to the transportation of these goods and the people involved in carrying it out.

I caution the government to keep these issues in mind when they are drafting the regulations that will stem from this legislation. As I said in the meeting this morning of the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications, the devil is in the details, and we need to watch this carefully.

I ask the government to remember what they heard in the other place and, indeed, what they will probably hear in this place once the legislation is referred to committee. With the Senate in mind, I advise everyone here that I will propose an amendment to the bill when it comes to committee. The other place amended the bill to add a review clause. However, those of us who have been for a number of years will not be surprised that they did not include the Senate in proposed subsection 30(3). They again forgot about us.

I will propose the amendment in order to ensure we here in this honourable chamber, as active members of Parliament, also have a say in any review that takes place. I assure honourable senators opposite that when this was reviewed with the officials from the department and the representatives of the minister's office, it was agreed that this would be an easy amendment to make and, indeed, would not hold up the bill any longer than necessary.

Honourable senators, I basically see that this legislation was properly considered and amended, but the regulations are where it is at, and we will be monitoring what government does when drafting and enacting them.

The Liberal Party is very committed to improving the safety and security of Canadians. I believe we have shown that by supporting the bill in the other place. Indeed, I think we will see the same support here. We shall see what happens when we hear from witnesses in our committee.

Honourable senators, it is a simple fact of life that even Canada is not immune from exposure to dangerous goods, either by accident or even by terrorism. With the millions of goods being shipped each year, we need to remain vigilant.

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

Hon. Senators: Question!

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

(Motion agreed to and bill read second time.)

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

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

(On motion of Senator Wallace, bill referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications.)

[Translation]

THE SENATE

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

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government), pursuant to notice of April 23, 2009, moved:

That, notwithstanding the order adopted by the Senate on February 10, 2009, when the Senate sits on Wednesday, April 29, 2009, it continue its proceedings beyond 4 p.m. and follow the normal adjournment procedure according to rule 6(1); and

That committees of the Senate scheduled to meet on Wednesday, April 29, 2009 be authorized to sit even though the Senate may then be sitting, and that rule 95(4) be suspended in relation thereto.

He said: Honourable senators, I wish to inform the Senate that I am withdrawing Government Motion No. 22 on the Order Paper.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion withdrawn.)

[English]

PATENT ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING— ORDER STANDS

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Goldstein, seconded by the Honourable Senator Cordy, for the second reading of Bill S-232, An Act to amend the Patent Act (drugs for international humanitarian purposes) and to make a consequential amendment to another Act.

Hon. Yoine Goldstein: Can Senator Comeau please tell me when the government expects to be able to address this bill?

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): My understanding was this bill was introduced recently. It is a brand new bill, as Senator Goldstein will acknowledge, and it has been a recent introduction. We have not had an opportunity yet to have a full review of the bill and its impact on Canadian taxpayers, but

I take his comments as suggesting to me that we should proceed with due consideration. I will have to get back to the honourable senator as to when we might proceed with it.

(Order stands.)

INVESTMENT CANADA ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING— ORDER STANDS

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Goldstein, seconded by the Honourable Senator Lovelace Nicholas, for the second reading of Bill S-231, An Act to amend the Investment Canada Act (human rights violations).

Hon. Yoine Goldstein: Honourable senators, may I ask the same question of the Honourable Senator Comeau with respect to Bill S-231?

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): I provide exactly the same answer. This is a bill that had not been looked at in previous sittings. It has recently been introduced in the Senate. I will again take Senator Goldstein's request as an indication he would like to receive a response as soon as possible. I will undertake to do that.

Senator Goldstein: Thank you.

(Order stands.)

• (1530)

NATIONAL PHILANTHROPY DAY BILL

SECOND READING—ORDER STANDS

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Grafstein, seconded by the Honourable Senator Hubley, for the second reading of Bill S-217, An Act respecting a National Philanthropy Day.

Hon. Jeremiah S. Grafstein: Honourable senators, I would like to ask a question of the Deputy Leader of the Government. This bill has been outstanding for some four years. It is a two-line bill. The information that any honourable senator needs is available. Hopefully the government will respond in order that we can get on with the measure.

Earlier we heard an exchange between the Leader of the Government and Senator Mercer, who are in fulsome support of the volunteer sector. That is what this bill is all about. Let us get on with it.

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): We will deal with it one week from today.

(Order stands.)

DRINKING WATER SOURCES BILL**SECOND READING—ORDER STANDS**

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Grafstein, seconded by the Honourable Senator Baker, P.C., for the second reading of Bill S-211, An Act to require the Minister of the Environment to establish, in co-operation with the provinces, an agency with the power to identify and protect Canada's watersheds that will constitute sources of drinking water in the future.

Hon. Jeremiah S. Grafstein: Honourable senators, I intend to speak on this matter tomorrow.

(Order stands.)

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 Pépin, 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, I understand that Senator Hubley wishes to speak to this item. We would like to reserve the 45 minutes allotted to the second speaker, but we have no objection if Senator Hubley wishes to speak on the matter now.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Senator Hubley has 15 minutes.

Hon. Elizabeth Hubley: Honourable senators, I would like to thank Senator Grafstein for introducing this bill, and I would like to add my support for the bill and encourage its swift passage.

Bill S-201 would amend the Library and Archives of Canada Act to provide for the establishment of a permanent display in the city of Ottawa of portraits and works related to portraiture from the collection from the Library and Archives of Canada.

The permanent display is to be called the "National Portrait Gallery," and under the provisions of the bill would be located on the site of the former American embassy on Wellington Street.

Honourable senators, it has been eight years since former Prime Minister the Right Honourable Jean Chrétien acknowledged the need for a national portrait gallery and, to my dismay, it still has not been established. I encourage colleagues not to let partisan politics play a role in this issue and to support the establishment of the national portrait gallery.

Recently, in answer to a question in Question Period about the national portrait gallery posed by Senator Mahovlich, the Leader of the Government said:

Given the current economic situation, the uncertainty in the country, and the fact that people in this country are facing job losses and difficult economic conditions, I do not believe that it is prudent for the government to even consider proceeding with this proposal or project at this time.

I beg to differ with my honourable colleague. Perhaps given the work that has been previously done toward the preparation of the site of the former American embassy at the location for the national portrait gallery of Canada, it lends itself well to an infrastructure project that could be quickly started. This project would also help stimulate the economy by creating jobs and encouraging tourism.

The question I always have at these times is why Canadians need a reason to celebrate our culture and our heritage. The former American embassy building is a beautiful site with a prime location in the National Capital Region and, in my view, would be an excellent location to permanently house our national treasures. A permanent location would protect these treasures to ensure that they are preserved and made accessible for the enjoyment of all Canadians now and into the future.

Canadians deserve to have a national portrait gallery to present the wonderful diversity of individuals who have left and are leaving their mark on our culture and heritage. I encourage honourable senators to support this bill.

(On motion of Senator Comeau, debate adjourned.)

NATIONAL CAPITAL ACT**BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—
ORDER STANDS**

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. Mira Spivak: Honourable senators, will the Deputy Leader of the Government inform us as to when this bill will be proceeded with?

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I will break the tradition that we not identify senators who are not in the chamber. Senator Nolin is currently away on official public business. My understanding is that he is close to completing his preparations for speaking to this Order Paper item. He may be able to speak to it next week. I believe that he is returning from his parliamentary business this weekend.

(Order stands.)

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING— ORDER STANDS

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Grafstein, seconded by the Honourable Senator Joyal, P.C., for the second reading of Bill S-208, An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (clean drinking water).

Hon. Jeremiah S. Grafstein: Honourable senators, this bill has been on the Order Paper for lo these seven years. It has been to committee and approved at third reading. Senator Cochrane has been absent for some time. Perhaps someone else might take the critic's role on this bill. Let us get it to committee.

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): I believe Senator Wallace was considering speaking to this bill on behalf of Senator Cochrane.

Does Senator Wallace intend to speak today or tomorrow?

Hon. John D. Wallace: Honourable senators, my intention was to speak tomorrow, but I could do it now.

Senator Comeau: We will proceed with it tomorrow.

(Order stands.)

[Translation]

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

BUDGET AND AUTHORIZATION TO ENGAGE SERVICES AND TRAVEL—STUDY ON EMERGING ISSUES RELATED TO COMMUNICATIONS MANDATE—SECOND REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the second report of the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications (*budget—study on emerging issues related to its communication mandate and to report on the wireless sector — power to hire staff and travel*), presented in the Senate on April 23, 2009.

Hon. Lise Bacon moved the adoption of the report.

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

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

• (1540)

[English]

SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

BUDGET AND AUTHORIZATION TO ENGAGE SERVICES AND TRAVEL—STUDY ON CURRENT SOCIAL ISSUES OF LARGE CITIES— THIRD REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the third report of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology (*budget—study on current social issues pertaining to Canada's largest cities—power to hire staff and travel*) presented in the Senate on April 23, 2009.

Hon. Art Eggleton moved the adoption of the report.

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

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

BUDGET AND AUTHORIZATION TO ENGAGE SERVICES—STUDY ON IMPACT AND EFFECTS OF DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH— FOURTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the fourth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology (*budget—study on the impact of the multiple factors and conditions that contribute to the health of Canada's population — known collectively as the determinants of health—power to hire staff*) presented in the Senate on April 23, 2009.

Hon. Wilbert J. Keon moved the adoption of the report.

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

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

[Translation]

LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

BUDGET—STUDY ON PROVISIONS AND OPERATION OF DNA IDENTIFICATION ACT— FOURTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the fourth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs (*budget—study on the provisions and operation of the DNA Identification Act*), presented in the Senate on April 23, 2009.

Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition), for Senator Fraser, moved the adoption of the report.

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

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

[English]

ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

MOTION TO SUPPORT RESOLUTION ON EXPANDING TRADE BETWEEN NORTH AMERICA AND EUROPE—ORDER STANDS

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Grafstein, seconded by the Honourable Senator Fairbairn, P.C.:

That the Senate endorse the following Resolution, adopted by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly at its 17th Annual Session, held at Astana, Kazakhstan, from June 29 to July 3, 2008:

RESOLUTION ON EXPANDING TRADE BETWEEN NORTH AMERICA AND EUROPE

1. Reaffirming the importance of trade for economic growth, political stability and international peace,
2. Recalling the fundamental importance of the economic and environmental dimension in the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security,
3. Considering that expanded free trade between North American and European markets will benefit all OSCE participating States politically as well as economically,
4. Recalling the commitments made by the participating States at the Maastricht Ministerial Council in December 2003 regarding the liberalization of trade and the elimination of barriers limiting market access,
5. Recalling the recommendations of the 2006 OSCE *Best Practice Guide for a Positive Business and Investment Climate*, published by the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities, which advocate stronger international trade policies and conditions favourable to the circulation of international capital,
6. Concurring with the conclusions of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities that free trade agreements and the reduction of tariffs are vital to a strong trade policy,
7. Recalling the importance that the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly accords to the development of international trade as underlined by the Assembly's Fifth Economic Conference on the theme of "Strengthening Stability and Co-operation through International Trade" held in Andorra in May 2007,
8. Recalling the deep historical and cultural ties between the peoples and states of North America and Europe which shaped their common values, on which the OSCE is based, and which are reinforced by the strength of their economic links,
9. Recognizing the considerable impact that the economies of North America and Europe have on international trade,
10. Considering the increasingly interdependent nature of the economic links between North America and Europe,
11. Noting the scope and depth of trade between North America and Europe which benefits public accounts and the private sector in addition to generating opportunities for employment,
12. Welcoming recently signed agreements that promote greater and freer trade between a limited number of markets in North America and Europe, such as the January 2008 Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the European Free Trade Association,
13. Acknowledging the appeal of the emerging markets in Asia and South America, whose growth will generate new levels of competition and economic efficiencies for trade between North America and Europe,
14. Concerned with the persistence of trade barriers in the economic relations between North America and Europe which limit opportunities for greater economic growth and human development,
15. Concerned with the state of the Doha Round of negotiations at the World Trade Organization which is affecting inter-regional trade negotiations such as the Canada-European Union Trade and Investment Enhancement Agreement suspended since 2006,

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly:

16. Resolves that seminars and conferences to raise awareness of the opportunities and shared benefits of trade liberalization should be considered;
17. Calls on the parliaments of the OSCE participating States to vigorously support and accelerate all multilateral, inter-institutional and bilateral initiatives that promote the liberalization of trade between North America and Europe, including the harmonization of standards and the elimination of regulatory barriers;
18. Calls on the parliaments of the OSCE participating States to sustain the political will of their governments as members of existing economic agreements, including the North American Free Trade Agreement, the European Union, the European Free Trade Association and the Central European Free Trade Agreement, to develop transatlantic partnership agreements that expand and liberalise trade between and among them;

19. Recommends that current and future initiatives that target expanded trade between the economies of North America and Europe consider greater involvement where appropriate of regional and subregional governments and groupings;
20. Recommends that current and future initiatives that target expanded trade between the economies of North America and Europe reflect the principles and standards of the OSCE, particularly human rights, environmental protection, sustainable development and economic and social rights, including workers' rights, as agreed to in the 1990 Document of the Bonn Conference on *Economic Co-operation in Europe*, the 1990 Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the *Human Dimension of the CSCE* and the 1990 *Charter of Paris for a New Europe*.

Hon. Jeremiah S. Grafstein: Honourable senators, can I urge Senator Stratton to address this topic? His government is getting ahead of him today. The *Financial Times* has announced that the EU plans wider trade ties with Canada, and the article quotes Canadian officials as being enthusiastic about deepening trade relations with the EU, and a meeting is planned for May 6. Hopefully, before May, 6 Senator Stratton can catch up with his government and endorse this resolution.

(Order stands.)

THE SENATE

MOTION TO URGE GOVERNMENT TO ENGAGE IN CONSULTATIONS ON SENATE REFORM—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Hugh Segal, pursuant to notice of March 26, 2009, moved:

That the Senate embrace the need to consult widely with Canadians to democratize the process of determining the composition and future of the Upper Chamber by urging the Government to:

- (a) invite all provincial and territorial governments in writing to assist immediately in the selection of Senators for appointment by democratic means, whether by holding elections to fill Senate vacancies that might occur in their province or territory or through some other means chosen by them;
- (b) institute a separate and specific national referendum on the future of the Senate, affording voters the chance to choose abolition, status quo, or an elected Upper Chamber; and
- (c) pursue the above initiatives independently of any legislation that it may introduce in this Parliament for reforming the existing term and method of appointment of Senators.

He said: Honourable senators, I rise to speak to the motion I introduced on Senate reform that is now before you. The motion is similar to one I introduced in 2007, but based on advice

from colleagues on both sides of the house who said that that motion would have much broader appeal if it was not as stark; if it dealt with the referendum that addressed reform, the status quo and abolition, it might be more attractive to members than simply a referendum on abolition itself.

Many arguments I made in 2007 still stand today. I want to put on the record one more time the wonderful quote from Senator Joyal:

The Senate is likely the least admired and least well known of our national political institutions. Its work attracts neither the interest of the media, the respect of elected politicians, the sympathy of the public, nor even the curiosity of academia. How paradoxical that very few Canadians have an understanding of the history, role, and operations of the Senate, and yet everyone seems to have an opinion on the institution.

I agree with my honourable friend's comments regarding the outside view of the Senate. I believe that this motion, if successful, will go a long way in not only educating the public about our role here but also towards legitimizing an institution that has often come under attack without clear understanding of its constitutional function or its legislative and democratic merits.

In our democracy, specifically in the key working elements of responsible government, respect must be tied in some way to legitimacy. I submit that legitimacy for legislators comes ultimately from the ballot box, directly or indirectly. The passage of time does not, in and of itself, confer de facto legitimacy. It seems a particularly undemocratic way of moving forward. The purpose of my motion is to promote reform by putting the question directly to the Canadian people before heads of government confer and negotiate on constitutional change which, of course, is required for any substantive reform.

There are many differences among Canada, Iraq and Afghanistan, differences too numerous to mention here. One difference, as I pointed out in 2007, is that when Iraq and Afghanistan received new constitutions, the vast population was invited to vote, thumbs up or thumbs down, on those new constitutions. We all know that this did not happen in Canada in 1867, for good and substantial reason. We did not have universal suffrage; we did not even have a secret ballot. It was not part of the operating culture of governments in that post-colonial period. However, universal suffrage and secret ballot were part of the culture in 1949, absolutely. My colleague from Newfoundland and Labrador makes the point that Newfoundlanders had that opportunity, and how well they chose and how grateful we all are that they made that choice in a way that has enriched us all for decades.

It is fair to say that after 39 federal elections and 300 provincial and territorial elections since 1867, Canadian voters have legitimized the legislatures and Parliament created by the agreement between the Fathers of Confederation in a host of different ways. We can, therefore, conclude that there has been, in a sense, a post-factum legitimization by voters of the institutions. This Senate, of course, has never been the beneficiary of that same kind of instrument.

• (1550)

Honourable senators, while we may, from day-to-day, not be sure of what influence we may have on particular pieces of legislation, the United Kingdom conducted a study of all the second chambers around the world in preparation for their activities and those of the British government to try to reform the House of Lords. They reported that in the context of pure constitutional power no second chamber had as much power as this. If you think about it for a moment, even the United States Senate, which is elected and powerful and in control of vast amounts of money, can be vetoed by a signature in the White House. The British House of Lords may on occasion send things back, but because of the powers of the Parliament Act that took place in the early 1900s, the House of Commons has to win every single shoot-out that might take place within the constitutional structure of the United Kingdom. We have no provision of that nature in our system, and therefore the theoretical power of this particular chamber is much more intense and real than is the case in other places.

Except for the great province of Alberta, which elected Stan Waters in the 1980s and my colleague Senator Brown more recently — in his particular case more than once and by many more voters than the premier of the province would have received in his own constituency when he ran for office, I hasten to add — there has been no opportunity for Canadians to participate in a democratic context to legitimize our institution.

The present Government of Canada deserves credit for attempting to address some of these issues through some of the proposals that have been put before us and the other place, but we have to be frank that, for whatever reason — and there are arguments on both sides — none of those proposals have been successful, and neither have the 17 other proposals made since 1867 by Liberals and Conservatives to reform this place in any substantive way.

Surely, in a democracy, the fundamental question people should have the right to answer is: Do we need a second chamber as presently constructed? Is it necessary for the democratic governance of a modern state? Many democracies operate with only one chamber. Is it not appropriate that the Canadian people be consulted in the process? Their wise decision could result, based on this draft referendum, in the abolition of the upper house or a preference expressed for an elected upper house or a preference expressed for the status quo. If not a referendum, how are Canadians to indicate to their provincial or territorial leaders what their preferences might be for Senate reform? This motion offers all options and, after careful debate and eventual passage, would in the end, in my judgment, provide the legitimacy necessary for change, abolition or the status quo. It also calls on provinces to institute democratic selection processes, as Alberta has done and Saskatchewan now anticipates.

To make fundamental changes to our system of government, the place of the Crown, Parliament or the regular election cycle, the current amendment formula requires the consent of all provincial legislatures and the Parliament of Canada. It must be unanimous. In the design of any referendum on the abolition, reform or maintenance of the Senate, it would be of immense value if Ottawa and the provinces would simply agree that Ottawa

would sign on to an amendment if a 50-percent-plus-1 majority of Canadians voted for abolition, and any premier would sign on for amendment if a 50-percent-plus-1 majority of the people of his or her province also voted for abolition or any of the other options that lie before us. Should Canadians take a pass on change or abolition, the matter would be settled for some considerable time to come and the ability to question the Senate's legitimacy would be essentially diluted. The Senate would be open to other criticism, as legislative bodies are, but the legitimacy debate would be over.

As a member of this place, I share the view of many that the Senate as an institution and many who have served within it have done outstanding work for this country. Surely, without the legitimacy of a public and democratic expression relative to the Senate's existence itself, this work is, while interesting and compelling, a little bit beside the point. Doing good work does not in and of itself constitute de facto democratic legitimacy.

The Senate's existence by a constitutional agreement in the 1860s has forced prime ministers to fill it. Many of those people who have been appointed from partisan or other careers have served with distinction, but those historical facts in and of themselves do not equal legitimacy. They reflect constitutional reality, not particularly impacted by any legitimacy except the passage of time, surely a weak proxy for democratic legitimacy itself conveyed by the people through exercising their democratic franchise, a freedom we defend on battlefields near and far.

Should the decision of this chamber and the other place be to put the question directly to Canadians, we do not need to recreate the wheel. In 1992, the Conservative government presented to Parliament, and Parliament passed, the Referendum Act, which authorized the Governor-in-Council, in the public interest, to obtain by means of a referendum the opinion of electors on any question relating to the Constitution of Canada. With little fuss, a question could be presented to Parliament by the present administration, facilitating a referendum on reform or status quo.

The motion I propose will afford parliamentarians a broad opportunity to reflect on the issue and contribute their own perspectives. Should a similar motion be introduced in the house, the debate would be enjoined more broadly still. I would vote against abolition, as I have said before, for reasons that relate to both the need for a chamber that reflects regional and provincial interests and some careful assessment of how badly drafted federal laws are too often passed by the house, brought forward by governments of both affiliations. Without the Senate, there would be no place to correct, improve or refine them, so I think the Senate is vital. Nevertheless, my vote is simply one amongst many that our fellow citizens should have the right to exercise. My opposition to abolition and my preference for provincial and territorial democratic expression on which senators should actually arrive in this place does not weaken in any way my deeply held belief that Canadians themselves, through a secret ballot, should pronounce upon something they have never been allowed to decide before.

One of core premises of the development of responsible government has been the process of evolution in Canada. To be relevant and engaged, all aspects of our democratic institutions

must be open to reflection, public scrutiny and public sanction. The Canadian Senate, venerable, thoughtful, constructive and often non-partisan as it may be, cannot be outside the circle of democratic responsibility.

Think, honourable senators, of how powerful a message to Canadians this motion will be about our collective and constructive desire for reform. Think of how provinces that are considering local Senate elections would be confronted by the impact of our collective non-partisan expression of democratic engagement. Think about what this motion, if passed unanimously, would say to Canadians everywhere about who we all are, what we believe in and how much we want to have this chamber be democratically and legitimately at the service of all Canadians.

This would be, in my view, a substantial step ahead, not only on the road to reform but on the road of helping Canadians understand the work that we do here and the fact that no one in this place is opposed to responsible and thoughtful reform, and no one in this place is opposed to letting the people of Canada express their views on that reform because this institution absolutely belongs to all of them.

Honourable senators, I commend this resolution to your early, timely and constructive consideration, with all humility and due respect.

Hon. Bill Rompkey: I have a question, if the honourable senator would accept it. Earlier on in his comments, he referred to voting directly or indirectly. I wanted to put in front of him and get his reaction to a suggestion that Senator Gigantès made before he left the Senate with regard to appointments to the Senate. His suggestion was, as I recall, that the legislature of each province would put forward names to the Prime Minister to be appointed to the Senate. This is in line with the comments about voting directly or indirectly because the legislature, of course, is elected; therefore, the suggestion of elected persons is *de facto* a participation by the electors. I throw that out as a suggestion for reflection. It need not be one name. As a matter of fact, there could be tweaks to the system whereby one could choose from names of people who had received the Order of Canada, or more than one name could be put forward because one of the objects in this chamber surely should be equal representation.

• (1600)

In this country, I believe that we are now the chamber with more women than any other legislature in the country. I do not know where we stand in the world, but we are ahead of every other legislature in Canada in terms of female representation.

It could be more than one name because, perhaps, there might be an opening that needed to be filled by a woman, or a representative of some other group.

I put that idea to the honourable senator for reflection, just to see what he might think of that idea.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Honourable senators, before I allow the question to be answered, I advise Senator Segal that his time has expired. Is the honourable senator asking for more time?

Senator Segal: Yes, I am.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: The honourable senator is given five minutes.

Senator Segal: Let me respond to the honourable senator from Newfoundland and Labrador in this way: My primary hope is that, at the end of this process, first ministers would agree to have provinces hold elections by which senators might be chosen to come to this place. This trend has begun slowly with Alberta setting the example and Saskatchewan being very much down that road.

That being said, my respect for the duality of Canada. . . .

[Translation]

The principle of a partnership between Quebec and the other parts of Canada must highlight the fact that the National Assembly of Quebec has a very special role to play with respect to the language and cultural rights of the entire francophone population, an integral part of Canada.

[English]

I would not be troubled if the Province of Quebec, for example, held to its normative position that the Assemblée nationale nominate members to this place.

The honourable senator is suggesting to the Prime Minister. I think it depends on which route of constitutional change we chose to take. None of the government plans put before this place anticipate doing away with the role of the Prime Minister and giving an instrument of advice to Her Excellency relative to who comes to this place. I am not suggesting diluting that power. I am merely suggesting that a democratic process determines the list, which I think it is fair to say that the Prime Minister has been trying to do with the consultative referendum process presented to Parliament in a previous session.

I would not be troubled if various provinces decided that the means by which they would determine the contents of the list of nominees to fill their vacancies had to be determined by their particular provincial assembly. It would not be a violation of my "rule of democracy," but my principle is that people voting directly is the best choice.

However, in the tradition of how this country was put together, should the Assemblée nationale and their government take the view that they want to do it in another fashion, I would be very much in favour of respecting that difference and integrating it into a strengthened and more legitimate institution.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Do you have a question, Senator Brown?

Hon. Bert Brown: Yes, I have a question. Senator Segal, I would like to compliment you on the changes you made to your original motion, which was to abolish the Senate completely in a referendum. I also want to compliment the honourable senator on including elections and the status quo.

I would, however, ask a question. Why do we not just abolish the word “abolish,” because I think it is the one thing that Canadians would not do. I also think it is something the provinces would not do — all ten of them, plus the territories — though not the Senate, which has a 180-day suspensive veto. I do not think the House of Commons would agree, either.

I do not think it would be good for Canada for the simple reason that it would leave us with a parliamentary democracy that had as its head a prime minister whose powers are not defined. I do not know of any restrictions on the powers of a prime minister who holds a majority government. Rather than go on about 20 years of debates on this issue, I will quote a three-line quotation that sums up everything I have worked for and everything I do.

Politics has sometimes been described as a battle of ideas. But in democratic politics one non-partisan idea, above all others, is supposed to rule supreme: those who govern derive their moral authority to do so only with the consent of the governed, and that such consent comes through free and fair elections.

Senator Segal: I very much respect the legacy that Senator Brown reflects in his tremendous work. Honourable senators will recall the three Es that he ploughed into his grain fields. Perhaps some honourable senators will not remember the wonderful longer phrase he ploughed into his grain fields during the referendum in Quebec, which as I recall was “*meilleur ensemble*” — “better together.” The patriotism and nationalism of the honourable senator is something we can all celebrate.

I am not an iconoclast on this issue and if more established and thoughtful voices in this chamber with more wisdom and experience than I thought that we had a chance of moving this resolution forward by removing the proposition of abolition, I would be open to that discussion and I would be as constructive as is humanly possible. However, I leave that to honourable senators.

Hon. Grant Mitchell: Honourable senators, I rise to speak to this issue, of course. I am from Alberta and it is perhaps the epicentre of Senate reform. I certainly am not in any way, shape or form opposed to Senate reform, although I want to note that Senator Tkachuk said I was in a letter to the editor in the *Edmonton Journal*. However, he was wrong and I am sure that was the first time ever. I am actually not opposed to it at all.

However, I would like to state some caution about unintended consequences if we proceed to elect senators without first putting some other things in place.

That, of course, is the gist of the first option that Senator Segal’s motion would offer Canadians. That option seems to be simple, but it is not. It raises very complex possibilities for

complex, unintended consequences. First, as we all know, the Senate has power to veto everything the House of Commons passes including budgets and legislation. As we also know, because we are not elected, we are sensitive about doing that and we do not, in fact, exercise that power as rigorously, as forcefully and in as pointed a way as we might otherwise.

Let us say we became an elected body. We would begin to exercise that power because we would be driven by our electoral responsibilities — by constituents — to do so. If we had not changed those powers, we could literally hamstring and grind the mechanisms of government to a halt.

If we had a majority in the Senate that reflected a majority in the House of Commons, government-to-government, it would be less of a problem than if that was not the case. There are many times in our history where that has not been the case.

The argument that automatically electing senators will somehow make the process more democratic simply does not necessarily follow. It could make it far less democratic because that institution would not be able to respond to the democratic input and pressures from the constituents in this country, the Canadian people.

The second thing, which Senator Brown has often argued, is this: We need an elected Senator because that will be the way we can redress regional imbalances and tensions that have apparently existed over many years. We need to be careful because that is not a panacea by any means.

It is probably not widely known, but Alberta actually has a greater percentage of the seats in the House of Commons than we have in the Senate. We have over 9 per cent of the seats in the House of Commons and we have less than 6 per cent of the seats in the Senate. If we were to begin to exercise forcefully our powers because we were elected, what would that do to redress regional imbalance?

• (1610)

Exercising that power would not improve the situation already existing, given the representation we have in the House of Commons. It would exacerbate it. Look at the distribution of seats across this country: the West has 24 seats, Ontario has 24 seats, Quebec has 24 seats, and the Atlantic Provinces have 30. Alberta has 6 seats and British Columbia has 6 seats. Nova Scotia has 10 seats and New Brunswick has 10 seats.

I am not saying we should take away the advantages they have; they have great concerns with regional imbalance. If we begin to elect senators without having worked out a way to break impasses between the two houses and to redistribute seats, then we are not solving the problem, we are exacerbating it.

I believe — not to be too partisan — that the Prime Minister probably knows that an elected Senate cannot happen, but the issue is great divisive politics.

My next point is that there are significant consequences for the structure of power in our parliamentary system and our federal system if we begin to elect senators. For example, suddenly the Prime Minister’s power could be virtually gutted. As I indicated

earlier, what the Prime Minister wants to do in the other house could be stopped or ground to a halt in this house. We would have a great deal of change in the power held by the Prime Minister.

In addition, there would be a fundamental change in the power of members of Parliament. In Alberta, we have 28 members of Parliament. Each member represents one twenty eighth of the province, and their constituency is the same, give or take, as a result of distribution. Six senators in Alberta represent the whole province or, if we distil it down, each senator represents one sixth of the province. Honourable senators, who do you think would be the more powerful spokespersons? Clearly, it would be the senators.

Look at the situation in the United States. Which is the most powerful political body in the United States? Name four or five members of Congress. I ask people that and they cannot do it. However, most can name four, five, six or ten senators. Do honourable senators know why? The Senate is where the power resides.

That situation raises problems for the provinces. The provincial premiers, currently, are the spokespersons for regional interests. One of our responsibilities is to represent regional and minority interests.

If we exercised our power to represent regional interests more directly and forcefully, where do honourable senators think we would obtain that power? Power is a zero-sum game. We would take it from the premiers.

What would taking the power from the premiers do? No matter how hard senators try not to become "Ottawa-ized," that would inevitably shift the representation of regional interests from the regions or provinces to Ottawa and to this chamber. I am not saying that consideration is overwhelming, but it should be considered before we go ahead with piecemeal elections not having figured out the rest of these problems.

While I am on this issue, I want to mention the eight-year terms. I do not know whether the new members, in particular, realize this point, but it is much more likely that we will have eight-year terms than that we will have elections. Elections require 7 provinces with 50 per cent of the population to approve such a change and it may be — although I do not necessarily agree — that eight-year terms require approval only of the Parliament of Canada under the Constitution.

An Hon. Senator: Hear, hear.

Senator Mitchell: Thank you. Coming from a lawyer of that of quality, I am rather chuffed about coming to that conclusion.

That situation means we could end up with eight-year terms and no elections. The prime minister would have to appoint every one of the people in this house. All the prime minister would have to do is win two elections to have the opportunity to appoint the entire Senate.

I ask honourable senators to tell me how a Senate that is beholden to a single prime minister offsets the executive power of the House of Commons. Some honourable senators may think it

is okay as long as there is a Conservative Prime Minister — although I do not think there will be one for long. However, I am willing to bet those honourable senators will not be happy when Prime Minister Ignatieff is sitting over there and is making those appointments.

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

Senator Segal: My question is two-barrelled. First, in the relationship between the British House of Lords and the House of Commons, there is a protection saying that in any shootout between the two chambers, the House of Commons ultimately wins. There is a power of delay, but the broadly elected legislature wins. Would that give the honourable senator some sense of confidence and comfort about the relationship between the two chambers if one side was elected?

Second, as the honourable senator knows, the motion is about allowing Canadians to express their view. I have no sense of what Canadians will do, and I do not know what first ministers would do after the referendum took place. However, will the honourable senator agree that allowing Canadians to express their view is intrinsically a constructive thing to do in a democracy?

Senator Mitchell: If I can give the honourable senator a quick one-off, I absolutely agree with the honourable senator that Canadians should have a much greater chance to express their views. I know this statement is partisan, but does the honourable senator think the Prime Minister could do a few town hall meetings so Canadians could confront him directly?

Having said that, I agree that solutions to this impasse question are in practice around the world. However, I have a problem with the one Senator Segal mentions in Britain. Britain is not a regional country in the same way as Canada. It has three provinces, but it is not like Canada. Geographically, it is not spread out as much and I think one can argue that the cultural differences are not as spread out.

If the House of Commons in Britain can overrule the House of Lords, the regional implications are less severe and significant. If the House of Commons can overrule the Senate here, we are gutting one of the essential elements and qualities of the Senate, which is to represent regional interests.

Australia has an interesting technique for breaking impasses. If there are two impasses on the same issue, they have an election. I have been an elected representative and I know how elections focus attention. That approach definitely could be something worth thinking about.

We have to put that in order. The concern I have with this kind of referendum — the same as I had with the Canadian Wheat Board referendum — is that it does not clarify the issues adequately. It might create debate. I am not ruling out that possibility at all. It might give more opportunity for people to have input.

However, I think we want to put that process in place as well. There has not been a great dialogue between the honourable senator's government and the people of this country for the past three years.

Hon. Lorna Milne: I was intrigued when Senator Mitchell spoke about the present regional imbalances between the Senate and the House of Commons. Has the honourable senator considered that the real imbalance is for the people of Ontario? Ontario has approximately 33 per cent of the population of Canada and only 23 per cent of the seats here in the Senate.

Senator Mitchell: These kinds of issues arise in a debate like this one. It is probably why these kinds of reforms have not occurred over the history of this country.

I have not seen many questions answered so I am trying to figure out how to have an elected Senate. There is not much precedent on that side of the chamber.

Again, that is why we have to find this sensitive balance between breaking impasses, the relative powers of the two houses, and not losing the ability to equalize regional balances in this house. It is necessary that interests be expressed. They may reflect the interests of fewer people. However, interests have great power and necessity to be heard and expressed.

• (1620)

I will give senators another example of the regional imbalance between rural and urban found in most legislatures. Rural interests are far more significant to our country, culture and economy than are the number of people that hold them. That is why you can argue some legitimacy for having more rural ridings relative to population than urban ridings.

I love Ontario and would like to see Ontarians well represented. In fact, they are well represented: They have a Liberal premier.

Hon. Francis William Mahovlich: Does the honourable senator think that the present Senate is able to represent minorities?

Senator Mitchell: That is the other thing. It is not as though Canadians have not been well represented by the Senate and that they have not received value for money from the Senate. We do not directly exercise our powers as we might if we were elected. In Alberta, there is no elected representative in the caucus, which is a travesty.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: The honourable senator's time has expired. Is he asking for more time?

Senator Mitchell: Yes.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: The honourable senator may have five minutes.

Senator Mitchell: It then pays to have senators who can make the case in caucus and elsewhere on behalf of a province or region. It might be that some senators come from provinces where there are relatively few members of Parliament. For example, Newfoundland and Labrador presents a great case. There are excellent senators on both sides who hail from Newfoundland. They undoubtedly represent and sustain the representation of their province in caucus and in the process of policy-making.

I forget the question, but that would seem to be a pretty good answer.

Hon. Pierrette Ringuette: Honourable senators, minority and gender issues are important parts of the mandate of the Senate.

Does the honourable senator not find it bizarre that for the last three years a number of bills have been introduced to make changes to the Senate in relation to elections or length of term, and at no time has the Prime Minister brought together the provincial premiers and the territorial representatives to talk about the Senate? Does he not think that this is just lip service and that there is no seriousness with regard to making changes?

Senator Mitchell: I agree with the honourable senator. The Prime Minister said he was serious about electing senators and about never appointing them. However, two months later, he appointed senators — some great ones, there is no doubt.

Senator Tardif from Alberta has written on the issue of minorities and the ability to reflect minorities in appointments in this place. The percentage of women is not high enough, but it is much higher than it is in the House of Commons. The percentage of Aboriginals, for example, is higher. People of colour are represented better than they are generally in the House of Commons, and francophones as well. That has had an effect. Perhaps the Prime Minister has not found it necessary to meet with the premiers to discuss regional interests because they are so well reflected in the Senate today.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Senator Mitchell, your time has expired. Continuing debate?

Hon. David P. Smith: Honourable senators, when I came in a few minutes ago, I had not planned to speak to this item. I have been not provoked but stimulated into saying a few words. I will follow up on Senator Mitchell's first point.

Reality is such that two elected chambers, each with a mandate from the public, will take us to a U.S.-style government with its checks and balances. One chamber will say one thing and the other will say another, and we all know the ensuing problems. They might not be unsolvable, but we will have backed in, unwittingly, to embracing the U.S. system. The irony is that I suspect if a referendum asked Canadians whether they prefer the Westminster parliamentary system or the U.S. checks and balances system, they probably would say that they prefer the British system.

Senator Segal certainly has a way with words, but I find his motion a bit fuzzy. He has had a great deal to do with running elections, as have I. He knows that a federal election runs in excess of \$30 million and yet he is talking about a separate and national election. That adds up to a vast amount of money. He then offers three options: status quo, abolish or fill vacancies through other means within the provinces. What would happen if one third of the electorate were to vote for all three options and we ended up with a three-way tie? After spending who knows how much money, would we be any wiser?

There are certain priorities that Canadians want us to focus on at the moment, and I am not sure it is Senate reform. If one of these options does get through, then there will have to be constitutional amendments. We know that Ontario and Quebec said no to the last proposal brought forward by the Prime Minister. Other provinces had a range of positions. However, amending the Constitution requires the agreement of seven out of ten provinces representing over 50 per cent of the population, and Ontario and Quebec alone have well over 50 per cent of the population. I find it hard to believe that Senate reform is considered a priority at this time. To be a little more open-minded, I would prefer less fuzziness and a little more precision.

Senator Segal: Would Senator Smith take a question?

Senator Smith: Yes.

Senator Segal: There are two approaches to a referendum — the spectrum of the referendum and the democratic consultation process. The Canadian approach has been for politicians to gather and make a deal. They take the deal to the public to see how they feel about it, even though they have not been involved in any way in its elaboration. We know where that has taken us in the past.

At the other end of the spectrum, the Swiss approach is to lay a problem before the public because they trust the public, who think that the government belongs to them, and they believe that the public should be consulted. The public expresses a view, then the elected politicians sit down, as our first ministers would have to do, with the expression of the public, and they discuss and sort out the issue to reflect that view.

Would the honourable senator not agree that a public expression on this matter would be of value to our first ministers, to this place and to others, with respect to moving it forward? I do not question in any way your view that it requires constitutional change. In view of the fact that it costs Her Majesty and the taxpayers about \$50 million per year to operate, is the one-time expenditure of \$30 million excessive relative to capturing the public's view on how this place should function in the future? Based on my honourable friend's vast experience on Bay Street, he might be prepared to endorse such a solid principle upon reflection.

Senator Smith: I always try to keep an open mind, but given the way in which this one is worded, I do not think it would result in a clear answer. Would it be worth it? Probably not, but I will try to keep an open mind to see if a little massaging and refining will improve it.

• (1630)

For once, I agree with Senator Brown: Why not abolish the word "abolish"?

Senator Brown: I move the adjournment of the debate.

Hon. Marcel Prud'homme: I bow to my friend Senator Brown. I had indicated that I wanted to participate in the debate today and adjourn it in my own name. I would have put on record a few of the disappointments I feel about the reform of the Senate, for those who are proponents of it. I would have put just a few

disappointments on the record and asked to adjourn the debate under my name. Since Senator Brown rose and asked for the adjournment, I bow to Senator Brown to adjourn the debate.

(On motion of Senator Brown, debate adjourned.)

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

MOTION TO PLACE NINTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE TABLED DURING SECOND SESSION OF THIRTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT ON ORDERS OF THE DAY—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Leave having been given to revert to Motions Item No. 50:

Hon. Joyce Fairbairn, pursuant to notice of March 25, 2009, moved:

That the Ninth Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry tabled in the Senate on Monday, June 16, 2008 during the Second Session of the Thirty-ninth Parliament, entitled *Beyond Freefall: Halting Rural Poverty*, be placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting.

She said: Honourable senators, as many of you know, I had the privilege of chairing the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry during the committee's comprehensive two-year study of rural poverty and rural decline in our country.

The study is called *Beyond Freefall: Halting Rural Poverty*. Senator Segal was very much involved in the study as well.

Released early last summer, the study reflects the views of over 330 witnesses that the committee heard over the two-year life of the study. In our report, the committee examined the dimensions and the depth of rural poverty in Canada, and provided 68 recommendations to the federal government.

The committee felt that it was the right time for this kind of report. In fact, it was long overdue. It was the first time rural poverty had been examined so extensively by a Canadian parliamentary committee. However, the study is more than that. It represents a view that many people feel is all too common within federal policy circles, the view that the large urban centres are the sole hub of growth in our country and that there is no real need for a special federal rural policy. The committee respectfully disagreed with that view.

We are proud of this report. I am proud because it not only contains the views of rural policy experts, it documents the stories and the concerns of rural Canadians in every province and territory of this country. This is one of the reasons why I believe the report continues to generate a strong and positive response from rural Canadians.

The other reason why our report continues to generate interest in rural Canada is because it contains several hard-hitting recommendations that get to the heart of the problem of rural poverty and rural decline. These recommendations deserve a government response, and these citizens deserve your support and interest.

Early on, in December 2006, the committee released an interim report called *Understanding Freefall: The Challenge of the Rural Poor*, the purpose of which was to examine various definitions of poverty and what is rural, as well as themes brought up by witnesses during the fall of 2006. The interim report was used as a starting point for discussion during the committee's subsequent travels to rural communities. It was important for the committee to travel to every province and territory, to listen first-hand to the concerns of rural citizens in their own communities on their own land.

The latest census showed that rural Canada's share of the national population fell below 20 per cent for the first time in our nation's history. The census results prompted a columnist from *The Globe and Mail* to write that rural Canada has become "so irrelevant demographically that it increasingly exists only in myth." Those are fighting words.

With your indulgence, I will outline just a few of our recommendations so that you can understand how important it is for this chamber to come together and adopt the report.

If there was one overriding theme in our hearings, it was that rural Canada has a very small profile. Urban media pay little or no attention to it and when they do, caricatures and stereotypes abound. Many politicians similarly pay little attention to rural Canada, except perhaps at election time.

The committee was saddened to hear of several examples of this kind of neglect. The Canadian Tourism Commission, for example, has started targeting its marketing efforts at drawing tourists to a handful of large Canadian cities, fostering an image of Canada as a cosmopolitan urban tourist destination while downplaying Canada's vast rural areas. Urban Canada is very important and exciting, but we should equally be promoting Canada's rural endowments.

To take another example, the committee heard numerous complaints that the federal government's infrastructure programs have been overly focused on urban areas. Lately, there has been some improvement in this area; however, the federal government must ensure that its Building Canada program and other infrastructure funding does not overlook rural communities.

• (1640)

Finally, the committee heard repeated complaints about the lack of access, for instance, to high-speed Internet services in many rural areas. For any community that hopes to survive in the modern age, high-speed Internet services are nothing short of a necessity. Rural Canada also needs urgent federal attention to that matter, and I believe that is in place as I speak.

Of all of our recommendations, the one that gets the most attention is our call on the federal government to raise the profile of rural issues so that these kinds of problems do not reoccur. Specifically, the committee recommended that the federal government create a full department of rural affairs whose minister would sit at the cabinet table thereby ensuring that rural issues and concerns are always heard at the highest level of decision-making.

If the department cannot be created right away, the report recommends that all relevant cabinet documents containing the views of the rural secretariat get the response of the sponsoring department. This recommendation is key if rural realities are to be factored in if, and when, the government adopts the other cornerstone recommendations in our report, namely, our call on the federal government to work with the provinces to address Canada's tangled, confusing, punitive and outdated income support policies, which often impede rather than advance the cause of poverty reduction.

We need a safety net system that treats recipients with dignity. I believe all Canadians deserve this, rural and urban alike. Without going into detail, we think that the federal government — I believe this was very much in the mind of Senator Segal at the time — should launch a review process from the ground up and start a national discussion about the merits of a guaranteed annual income.

Part and parcel of a strategy that focuses on income support must also include policies that focus on education, a theme that reverberated throughout the committee's hearings. Education seemed to be one of those rare topics that received wide endorsement across the ideological spectrum. To improve educational outcomes in rural Canada, the committee recommended introducing a new early learning and child education program, additional funding for rural-based cooperative vocational schools for at-risk students and a loan program that is sensitive to rural students' needs.

Turning to some of the aspects of rural decline, the committee's report devotes a whole chapter to the devastating consequences of the decline in our largely rural-based forestry section. This is a big issue, one that is currently being studied by our committee under the guidance of our new and very enthusiastic chair, Senator Percy Mockler, and we are glad to get off to this start. Our recommendation was of a general nature, but it is still vitally important, and we will get to work on it. In agreement with the forestry sector and its unions, we urge the federal government to convene a national summit with the aim of developing a long-term national forestry strategy.

With respect to farming, the committee felt that addressing long-term systemic features of decline and poverty in agricultural parts of rural Canada meant exploring new ways of looking at farming and rural land use. This could include, for example, creating new programs that recognize the valuable ecological goods and services farmers and rural landowners provide to society.

In the end, a big part of the report was about revitalizing rural communities, and rural volunteers are vital to this process. They are responsible for a vast array of services that generate important economic and societal benefits. However, time and time again the committee heard stories of volunteers, mostly seniors, being overworked to the point where they must stop in fear for their own health. To help alleviate these problems, the committee calls on the federal government to contribute \$1 for each Canadian citizen to a national foundation dedicated to supporting community-related activities in rural Canada. That translates to about \$32 million. It is also a symbolic gesture to recognize the valuable work of rural volunteers.

Finally, the committee feels strongly that the programs that foster rural leadership can make a real difference. Rural Canada is more than just a place. It is, above all, people, and people make a difference. The degree of hope and optimism that persists in rural Canada is often measured in the hard work and vision of just a small handful of rural leaders — individuals who refuse to let economic decline and depopulation blind them to the tremendous local wealth and possibilities of their place in Canada.

Rural Canada is worth it. Why? There is a long list of reasons, but the ones that really matter are the ones that all of us know in our hearts from living or visiting rural regions. Quite simply, rural living is knowing who your neighbours are; it is living where your food grows and your trees take root; it is living close to and in harmony with nature; it is living without congestion. If we lose our rural communities, we lose a bit of ourselves, our heritage and the option for a different way of life.

Honourable senators, I stand here today representing my own views, but I believe I can speak on behalf of my esteemed colleague, former Senator Len Gustafson. For his entire Senate career, he played an extremely important role on the Agriculture and Forestry Committee, and this study was no exception. Rural issues are at the core of Senator Gustafson's life, and I am sure he would have loved to stand and speak here in the Senate to this excellent report.

Finally, I would encourage all of my colleagues who participated in the study to speak to the report over the coming weeks before the Senate adopts it and ensures that rural Canada does not get left behind. I have to say, as I look across the other way and across our way, it was an extraordinarily fine committee. We worked hard, we listened and we saw something that we will never forget, and that was people coming forward not to ask for help but to listen and hope that somewhere here, in this building, they will have an opening of doors to make life easier and to make Canadians understand the importance of our rural population.

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Will Senator Fairbairn accept a question?

My honourable friend noted that this report was placed on the Orders of the Day last summer, but do I understand correctly that it was done in the last Parliament, rather than the last session?

Senator Fairbairn: It was completed at the end of last fall.

Senator Comeau: It was the last Parliament. Could the honourable senator advise the chamber whether the report was adopted by the Senate as presented?

Senator Fairbairn: I believe it was, but the purpose of this debate is to get the support from the Senate itself. That is the motion.

Senator Comeau: To make sure I understand the motion, the honourable senator is asking this chamber to adopt a report from a previous Parliament, with new members, of course, in this new Parliament. We have a number of new senators in this chamber, and some of our 18 new members will probably ask: What is the report that we are being asked about?

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Senator Fairbairn's time has expired. Is the honourable senator requesting more time?

Senator Fairbairn: May I have five minutes?

As far as I am aware, when I put this report on the Order Paper, senators agreed that it was all right to support officially what that committee had given to the Senate of Canada.

Senator Comeau: With respect to the procedure being followed, my understanding is that the honourable senator has been advised that the rules permit the tabling of a report or a motion to bring back a report from a previous Parliament, whether it be last year or 25 years ago. Did the honourable senator receive an indication that this procedure did correspond to the rules of this chamber?

• (1650)

Senator Fairbairn: That is the advice that I received when I asked about this procedure. The report was before the Senate, and, certainly, I would not be standing here today if I did not believe that this was an appropriate thing to do.

Hon. Hugh Segal: May I move the adjournment of the debate?

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Senator Comeau, do you have another question?

Senator Comeau: I had intended to move the adjournment, but if Senator Segal wishes to do it, so be it.

(On motion of Senator Segal, debate adjourned.)

THE SENATE

MOTION TO RECOGNIZE APRIL 25 ANNUALLY AS WORLD MALARIA DAY—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Mobina S.B. Jaffer, pursuant to notice of April 2, 2009, moved:

That the Senate recognize and endorse April 25th annually as World Malaria Day.

She said: Honourable senators, today I rise to speak on my motion to proclaim April 25 as World Malaria Day. I believe this action will help to raise awareness and to educate. I believe it will help raise necessary funding to prevent this disease.

World Malaria Day has been formally acknowledged by Canadian municipalities and provinces across our nation. Every year, municipalities and provinces have taken a leadership role by acknowledging this day through proclamations and educational activities. In fact, I returned to Ottawa last week with a proclamation from the City of Vancouver acknowledging April 25 as World Malaria Day.

Malaria is a global health crisis that puts more than 40 per cent of the world's population at risk. Each year, there are over 500,000,000 cases. This illness will take the life of one in five African children before their fifth birthday. It is heartbreaking that the world has the ability to prevent this disease but people are still dying in such high numbers.

Malaria is a potentially deadly disease transmitted through mosquito bites and kills more than 2,000 children every day. Children make up 90 per cent of the nearly 1 million people who die from malaria every year, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia.

Honourable senators, World Malaria Day is an opportunity for malaria-free countries like Canada to learn about the devastating consequences of the disease and for new donors to join a global partnership against malaria. It is an opportunity for research and academic institutions to flag their scientific advances to both experts and the general public. It is a chance for countries in affected regions to learn from each other's experiences and support each other's efforts. It is an opportunity for international partners, companies and foundations to showcase their results and reflect together how to move forward in the fight against this disease.

In Canada, this day should also be a day of reflection. We should be asking ourselves what else we could be doing to combat this killer, which costs developing countries billions of dollars per year in lost economic output.

According to Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre of Norway:

The results will go beyond saving lives . . . By controlling malaria, we can improve school attendance and productivity, open new areas to business and tourism and reduce health costs.

Investing in malaria control is an excellent value for Canadian aid dollars. The disease is 100 per cent treatable with highly effective artemisinin-combination treatments and nearly 100 per cent preventable. Bed nets, for example, reduce all-cause child deaths — not malaria deaths only but all deaths by 20 per cent. Taken together with other tools, there is no scientific controversy: Everyone agrees malaria can be reduced and even eliminated in places. Honourable senators, one net at the cost of \$6 will save the lives of four people. That is a very sound investment of a Canadian aid dollar.

The drugs I mentioned have been difficult to obtain. The high cost of these drugs has made them out of reach for those afflicted with malaria, and, as a result, many were still purchasing the cheaper, less effective drugs. Currently, only one in five afflicted with malaria has access to these drugs.

I am pleased to report to you that as of April 17, these drugs have become easier and more affordable to obtain. Last week, a new initiative called the Affordable Medicines Facility — Malaria was announced. It originates with international partnerships from public and private institutions, which include the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the World Bank, the UN Children's Fund, the Dutch government, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Clinton Foundation. Once it gets going, it will put affordable, life-saving malaria drugs within the reach of millions of people, especially children in sub-Saharan Africa. The new program is expected to change the global malaria situation significantly.

The \$225 million partnership reduces the cost of artemisinin combination therapies, or ACTs, which have been 10 to 40 times more expensive than the old drugs. The drugs that were once used have lost their effectiveness because the malaria parasite has developed a resistance to them.

[Senator Jaffer]

Other global international initiatives to prevent malaria include the Roll Back Malaria Partnership, launched by the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank. Its aim is a coordinated international approach to combat malaria. This partnership brings together multiple players with a common goal of halving the global burden of malaria by 2010.

On a personal note, honourable senators, I have often gone to Uganda and other places to work on the issue of malaria. Today, I will take the opportunity to recognize the work of the Canadian NGO Buy-A-Net and its founder, Debra Lefebvre. They work in Uganda by providing nets and have been one of the greatest successes at creating malaria-free zones. I have been in Uganda where I observed Canadian nurse Gail Fones of Buy-A-Net. Gail first creates trust with villagers and then she educates and provides them with the nets. She and others go one step further by vaccinating the children in the village. They then continue to help create an atmosphere that prevents the spread of malaria.

Honourable senators, I want to recognize the Canadian Nurses Association, an association that has nurses from our country spend up to eight months in one village to help those villagers become malaria free.

Honourable senators, when I have visited these villages, I have been proud to say I am a Canadian because Canadian nurses are making the difference in the lives of African children.

I want to share my experience on a recent trip to Uganda. I visited a village. While there, I was befriended by a young girl who was about four years old. Her name was Margaret. Everywhere I went, she followed me like a shadow. I became quite taken with her, and in a short time we were inseparable. On my next visit to Uganda, I came back to the same village and I looked for my little friend, Margaret. I went to her home with a present — an anti-malarial for her and her family. I had a recollection of a house filled with laughter, but Margaret's home sounded eerily quiet. I entered the home and found Margaret's mother crying. Margaret had just been buried. She had died of malaria. I arrived too late.

• (1700)

Honourable senators, I ask for your support to have April 25 declared World Malaria Day. I further ask for your support to encourage our government to do more, so that we are not too late for the other Margarets of this world.

[Translation]

Hon. Yoine Goldstein: Honourable senators, I will be brief. My honourable colleague has already said just about everything there is to say about this subject. I do not wish to repeat her comments. However, some things are worth highlighting.

In 2006, the World Health Organization reported that malaria killed almost 1,000,000 people. There have been hundreds of millions of cases of malaria. Those who are infected but survive become lethargic and feverish and suffer debilitating headaches,

nausea and vomiting. Children are the most vulnerable. Their small bodies and immature immune systems cannot protect them against this disease. We have recently acquired the tools to prevent this disease, and, soon, we will also be able to provide inexpensive drugs to those who are infected.

[English]

Honourable senators, malaria-transmitting mosquitoes bite at night while people are asleep. Reliable research indicates that sleeping under an insecticide-treated bed net reduces malaria transmission from 50 per cent to 95 per cent, depending on the region and the proper usage of the bed net. From the perspective of prevention, the solution is simple: Provide bed nets at \$6 each, the price of a drink, and lives will be saved.

With regard to treatment, as Senator Jaffer has stated, a global partnership has been assembled to allow increased access to expensive artemisinin combination therapies. This partnership deserves much praise for its efforts in increasing access to life-saving medicine, but it could do more if these medicines were available at a lower cost. As I explained last week, that availability is exactly what Bill S-232 proposes to do: create the regulatory regime that will reduce significantly the price barrier that stands in the way of delivering life-saving medicines to those whose lives are threatened.

When examining the effects of malaria, one can focus easily and understandably on the deaths caused by this disease, but we should not forget the consequences of this infection for those who are blessed enough to survive. The severe fever and headaches, the constant nausea and vomiting, the lethargic state of malaria sufferers prevent them from being active participants in their family, in their community and in their jobs. Workers cannot work, children cannot study, and parents cannot care for their family.

Sound evidence shows that reducing the incidence of malaria will act also as an economic stimulus and will lift malaria-affected countries out of poverty.

Renowned University of Columbia professor-economist Jeffrey Sachs, a name that has become a household word, has studied the economic impact of malaria. He concludes that direct losses resulting from illness, treatment and premature death amount to over \$12 million annually in Africa alone. The effect on economic

growth is much larger. One per cent of gross national product of the world, accumulating to slightly over \$100 billion over a decade, has been the price of malaria to date. It is clear that in the case of malaria, investing in saving lives is also a substantial investment in the economic and social development of the communities of countries where malaria strikes.

Bed nets save children's lives and allow them to obtain an education. Bed nets save parents' lives and allow them to care for their children. They save workers' lives and enable them to work more, and more often.

As a result, the valuable resources of local governments are saved by eliminating the need to pay for the medicine to treat malaria infection. That saving translates into more money for other government priorities such as infrastructure development, education programs and other health care services.

Honourable senators, this year the Global Malaria Action Plan came into being. There is now a wide-ranging agreement on goals, strategies and activities. All partners in the fight against malaria have a guiding framework to work together in an efficient and coordinated manner to maximize their impact.

This path can bring an end to the unnecessary suffering caused by malaria, while helping Africans rise out of poverty.

April 25, 2009 was World Malaria Day. If we work together, we can bring help to people in need, and eradicate this disease. Let Canada be part of the group of states that makes this solution a reality. As policy-makers, honourable senators, we are tasked with tackling different issues with limited resources. The fight against malaria does not receive the attention it deserves. For the amount of suffering it causes, for the severity of its economic impact, and for the minute cost and large benefit that treatment will provide, surely honourable senators will agree that we must dedicate more resources to this cause. We must bring a recognition of April 25 as World Malaria Day as a symbol and as a metaphor for how we should help our fellow human beings.

(On motion of Senator Comeau, debate adjourned.)

(The Senate adjourned to Wednesday, April 29, 2009, at 1:30 p.m.)

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