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THE HONOURABLE PIERRE CLAUDE NOLIN
ACTING SPEAKER

CONTENTS

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THE SENATE

Tuesday, April 27, 2010

The Senate met at 2 p.m., the Honourable Pierre Claude Nolin, Acting Speaker, in the chair.

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DAY

Hon. Joseph A. Day: Honourable senators, I rise today to discuss intellectual property, including patents, trademarks and copyrights.

[Translation]

Today we celebrate World Intellectual Property Day. Intellectual property rights apply to intangible goods, such as patents, trademarks and copyrights. This day is officially celebrated on April 26, but since it fell on a Monday this year, we decided to mark the occasion on Parliament Hill today.

World Intellectual Property Day was established by the World Intellectual Property Organization, based in Geneva. This United Nations agency is focused on the understanding of and respect for intellectual property rights worldwide.

[English]

This afternoon we will host members of the Intellectual Property Institute of Canada. The Institute, founded in 1926, is the professional association of patent agents, trademark agents, artists, engineers, lawyers and science graduates practising in the area of copyright and technology and the law. There are over 1,300 members of the Intellectual Property Institute of Canada practising within and outside Canada, including some of us who are no longer engaged in active practice but who continue to be interested in the good work of the Institute.

The term "intellectual property" may be contrasted with real or personal property. Real or personal property is tangible, like a house or a car. Intellectual property is non-physical. It is a legal right that can be enforced in the courts and arises by virtue of creativity, such as composing music, writing a poem or designing a new widget. The creator of that work does not own each note or word, nor the material, but the creator does have a right to the particular arrangement of those words, notes or material.

We may all have the opportunity to delve into the world of intellectual property if the long-promised revision to the Copyright Act reaches this chamber. One of the main issues we will have to consider is balancing the rights of creators with the rights of citizens to access and use such works made readily available by reason of the digital revolution in electronics.

This year, 2010, marks the tenth anniversary of World Intellectual Property Day. This year's World Intellectual Property Day focuses on innovation. In support of World

Intellectual Property Day on the Hill, it is my hope that honourable senators will visit room 256-S this afternoon between five o'clock and seven o'clock for the opportunity to greet and thank those members of the IPIC who do so much to help Canada's competitive position in the world.

[Translation]

TERRORIST ACTIVITY

Hon. Michel Rivard: Honourable senators, the Conservatives want Canada to be a safe and secure country. We do not want to live in fear of walking down our streets, using public transit, becoming fully involved in our community and making our own choices. Some parts of the world are threatened, but we will not have to be afraid for our national security here in Canada.

Last week, Minister of Justice Rob Nicholson and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice Daniel Petit introduced the Combating Terrorism Act.

• (1410)

[English]

This provision will enable Canada to do its job to fight the threat of terrorism and provide more tools for both police and prosecutors to prevent and investigate terrorist activities. This measure will let Canadians live their lives without fear.

[Translation]

As honourable senators know, the 2001 Anti-terrorism Act improved security in Canada, however with time, amendments are needed to improve and update the measures that are in place.

A government resolution to extend the investigative hearing and recognizance with conditions provisions expired on March 1, 2007. This bill gives us an opportunity to improve the legislation to continue providing a safe, secure environment for all Canadians.

The proposed legislation would add safeguards to those already included in the original legislation to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals who may be subject to these provisions.

In particular, the investigative hearing provisions of the bill would amend the Criminal Code to allow the courts to compel a witness who may have information regarding a terrorism offence to appear in court and provide that information.

Moreover, the proposed provisions on recognizance with conditions would require a person to enter into an agreement before a judge to abide by certain conditions in order to prevent a terrorist activity. These provisions are designed to aid in the disruption of the preparatory phase of terrorist activity.

I wholeheartedly subscribe to the statement made by Mr. Petit, which I will quote by way of conclusion:

The first duty of every government is to protect the safety and security of its citizens, while also ensuring the protection of their fundamental rights.

Honourable senators, the new provisions announced by the government will help protect Canada and make it stronger.

[English]

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS TREATMENT

Hon. W. David Angus: Honourable senators, I wish to highlight and call attention to the anxiety that afflicts thousands of Canadians who suffer from multiple sclerosis, MS.

This is an urgent call for action by Canada's medical authorities to conduct the appropriate clinical trials without further delay to either validate or disprove a procedure now known as the "miracle cure," which is giving great hope to MS sufferers around the world.

Some 75,000 Canadians have been diagnosed with and suffer from this debilitating disease. Furthermore, Canada has the highest rate of MS cases in the world, at 240 cases per 100,000 Canadians. The Department of Health tells me that a rate of 30 cases per 100,000 is considered to be high.

Honourable senators, MS most often affects individuals between the ages of 20 and 40. It strikes the nervous system and produces a range of symptoms, including chronic fatigue, vision impairment, numbness, diminishing mobility and coordination, and loss of balance. It is a slow, debilitating and tragic condition.

Dr. Paolo Zamboni, director of the Vascular Diseases Center at the University of Ferrara in Italy, developed this miracle cure. His procedure was formally disclosed to the international medical community last November.

Dr. Zamboni discovered that a significant percentage of MS patients have Chronic Cerebrospinal Venous Insufficiency, CCSVI. My information is that this means that blood does not efficiently drain from the brain or spinal cord due to a narrowing of the veins in the neck and along the spine. By remedying this condition through a procedure similar to angioplasty, Dr. Zamboni found that close to 80 per cent of his MS patients experienced much improvement and, in most cases, the progression of their MS symptoms halted.

Honourable senators, Dr. Zamboni's procedure is not yet recognized as an approved treatment for people with MS in Canada. It appears to be controversial and is the subject of debate among medical scientists — neuroscientists and the pharmaceutical industry on the one hand, and vascular surgeons and interventionist radiologists on the other. There does, however, seem to be agreement that the treatment of CCSVI can at least provide temporary relief and stop the progression of MS symptoms.

Honourable senators, Canada spends a total of \$140 million a year in direct costs and another \$811 million a year in indirect costs because of MS. Each patient requires some \$40,000 worth of

prescription drugs annually. I am informed that pharmaceutical companies in North America have annual revenues of \$6.3 billion from MS medication. MS patients also require physiotherapy and medical long-term care, and a high percentage of them are unable to work.

Some doctors in Canada are performing the procedure in special cases. One respected surgeon, who spent time observing Dr. Zamboni's techniques in Italy, told me last week that he has performed the procedure on six patients, in each case with full success — under the radar, I may suggest.

This surgeon deplores the fact that MS sufferers have no access to the procedure in Canada. He deplores that MS sufferers are spending up to \$4,000 a month on drugs that do not make them any better. He deplores that in many cases, when they can afford it, MS sufferers, in desperation, are going to countries such as Poland, India, Israel and Kuwait and paying up to \$50,000 for the CCSVI procedure, which takes less than an hour to perform. To make matters worse, apparently due to the widespread publicity and apparent success of Dr. Zamboni's procedure —

CANADIAN BILL OF RIGHTS

Hon. Nicole Eaton: Honourable senators, many Canadians misunderstand the life and legacy of the Right Honourable John Diefenbaker. John Diefenbaker was the foremost proponent of the fundamental rights of Canadians and the purest expression of his commitment to safeguard those rights occurred 52 years ago last Sunday.

On April 25, 1958, in a speech to the Canadian Congress of Labour, Prime Minister Diefenbaker vowed to champion a bill to define and enshrine the rights of Canadians in the law of the land. Mr. Diefenbaker fulfilled that promise two years later when Parliament proclaimed the Canadian Bill of Rights.

The essence of the Bill of Rights is captured in this pledge Mr. Diefenbaker made to all Canadians:

I am a Canadian, a free Canadian, free to speak without fear, free to worship God in my own way, free to stand for what I think right, free to oppose what I believe wrong, free to choose those who shall govern my country. This heritage of freedom I pledge to uphold for myself and all mankind.

It sounds self-evident today, yet in 1950s Canada, the Bill of Rights was a remarkably farsighted achievement of a government to protect the vulnerable, embrace the excluded and expand opportunity for all. Mr. Diefenbaker performed such momentous actions as appointing the first Aboriginal person to the Senate, appointing the first woman to cabinet, ending discriminatory immigration quotas, granting the vote to status Indians and standing firm against institutionalized racism in South Africa.

The roots of Mr. Diefenbaker's commitment to justice can be traced to his days as a defence counsel in Saskatchewan. Many of his clients were victims of the abuses of authority.

This inclination toward recognizing and respecting universal rights heightened in the early months of the Cold War, when 14 Canadians were detained for secret interrogation. Imagine, a

Star Chamber in Canada. That incident would spur John Diefenbaker to challenge Parliament to pass legislation to safeguard our fundamental freedoms, a challenge that Mr. Diefenbaker would one day meet with the Canadian Bill of Rights.

EARTHQUAKE IN TIBET

Hon. Consiglio Di Nino: Honourable senators, it seems Mother Nature is once again angry at its people. Two weeks ago, another devastating earthquake took the lives of more than 2,000 men, women and children, and injured a reported 15,000.

• (1420)

This time, a quake struck a remote Tibetan region in Yushu County, leaving a trail of devastation which will severely affect the lives of those who were spared. I extend my sincere condolences to the families of the deceased and their communities, both in Tibet and abroad. As they mourn, Tibetans can take some comfort in the sympathy and support extended to them from all their friends around the world.

The Chinese authorities have sent aid to the region and appear to be concerned and helpful, but they seem to be reluctant to accept outside help. I hope they will allow aid organizations to come to their assistance to help alleviate the suffering of the people of the region.

Of noted concern is the reported refusal of the Chinese authorities to allow thousands of monks, who poured into the region to help, to remain in the area to assist those in need. Apparently, they were ordered to leave. Sadly, the Chinese authorities have once again missed an opportunity to reach out and build bridges with those communities that feel left out of the mainstream and are striving to achieve full, dignified participation with equal and fundamental rights and freedoms.

As the world deals with yet another human catastrophe, the words of His Holiness the Dalai Lama may bring some comfort to those affected:

... I also call on the survivors of this catastrophe to recognise what has happened as the workings of karma and to transform this adversity into something positive, keeping their hopes up and meeting setbacks with courage as they struggle to restore what they have lost.

[Translation]

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Her Excellency Nouzha Chekrouni, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco to Canada. Ms. Chekrouni is accompanied by her husband, Elmenouar Bentefrit. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Cools.

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

[English]

Honourable senators, I also wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of the participants of the Parliamentary Officers' Study Program.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[Translation]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

BUDGET AND AUTHORIZATION TO ENGAGE SERVICES AND TRAVEL—STUDY ON PROVISIONS AND OPERATION OF DNA IDENTIFICATION ACT—THIRD REPORT OF COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Joan Fraser, Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, presented the following report:

Tuesday, April 27, 2010

The Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs has the honour to present its

THIRD REPORT

Your committee, which was authorized by the Senate on Tuesday, March 16, 2010 to examine and report on the provisions and operation of the *DNA Identification Act* (S.C. 1998, c. 37), respectfully requests funds for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2011 and it 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 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,

JOAN FRASER
Chair

(For text of budget, see today's Journals of the Senate, Appendix A, p. 286.)

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

[English]

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

[English]

RULES, PROCEDURES AND THE RIGHTS OF PARLIAMENT

SECOND REPORT OF COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. David P. Smith: Honourable senators, I have the honour to present the second report of the Standing Senate Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament, which deals with the notice provisions for questions of privilege.

(For text of report, see today's Journals of the Senate, Appendix B, p. 294.)

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

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

[Translation]

SENATORIAL SELECTION BILL

FIRST READING

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government) presented Bill S-8, An Act respecting the selection of senators.

(Bill read first time.)

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: 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.)

SENATE ONLINE

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

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

I will call the attention of the Senate to the online presence and website of the Senate.

ENVIRONMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

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

I will call the attention of the Senate to the relationship between the environment and human rights.

WOMEN'S CHOICES

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Vivienne Poy: Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to the choices women have in all aspects of our lives.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Jeff Clarke and Miles Ritchie, Burnaby firefighters who were responsible for bringing the 2009 World Police and Firefighters Games to Canada. They are guests of the Honourable Senator Martin.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[Translation]

UNDERSTANDING OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

PRESENTATION OF PETITION

Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I have the honour to present a petition signed by 78 students of common law, members of the Regroupement des étudiants de common law en français of the University of Ottawa, who come from various provinces of Canada, calling on the Senate to support Bill C-232, An Act to amend the Supreme Court Act (understanding the official languages).

• (1430)

[English]

QUESTION PERIOD

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH INITIATIVE AT G8 CONFERENCE

Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Over the past two decades, Canada's position on maternal health, including safe and legal access to abortion, was well respected nationally and internationally. American Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated on her last visit to Canada that, "We cannot have maternal health without reproductive health, which includes contraception, family planning and access to legal, safe abortions."

Can the Leader of the Government in the Senate tell us why her government refuses to fund abortion services in poor countries and goes against the policies of other G8 countries?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, at the G8 leaders' summit, Canada will champion an initiative to promote maternal and child health. This includes training and support for frontline health workers; better nutrition, treatment and prevention of diseases such as pneumonia, diarrhea and malaria; screening and treatment for sexually-transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS; proper medication; family planning; immunization; clean water; and sanitation.

Senator Tardif: Honourable senators, comprehensive family planning includes not only education and contraception, but also safe and legal abortion services. The World Health Organization states that a woman dies every eight minutes somewhere in a developing country due to complications arising from unsafe abortions.

Illegal and botched abortions performed by butchers put at risk women's health, their lives and the lives of their families. When legal and safe abortion services could save millions of women and children in developing countries every year, why does the government refuse to fund services that could save and improve the health and lives of these women and their children?

Senator LeBreton: Within the scope of the G8 initiative, countries will be able to identify their own priorities. Canada's contribution to maternal and child health may involve various interventions, including family planning, which includes the use of contraception. The details remain to be determined. However, Canada's contribution does not include abortion, unlike what the United States may decide.

I point out to the honourable senator that this issue was submitted to the House of Commons by her own party. The Liberal Party was divided on this issue and the motion was defeated. This government is working to better the lives of women and children in the interests of their good health; it is not engaged in a cultural war.

I will read a few quotes into the record. Paul Szabo said that Mr. Ignatieff's efforts to use something as important as maternal health as a political tool was "opportunistic."

Sharon Marshall, Senior Adviser for World Vision, said in an email to the media on Monday:

World Vision is outraged that the abortion debate is being raised in order to distract from the real issue on the table . . . 8.8 million children dying every year from causes that we could easily prevent with interventions that cost pennies. The fact that the abortion debate has been re-opened in parliament and media means that the voices for those children are being over shouted.

Teresa Chiesa of Care Canada said in the *Edmonton Sun* on February 22, 2010:

I would hate to see it become a political fight. It has the potential to destroy it all if it becomes politicized.

Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization, said:

WHO policy on abortion, and similarly controversial issues, has always respected the national context, which includes cultural and religious dimensions as well as national legislation that embodies these dimensions. Decisions about abortion services are entirely within the jurisdiction of authorities in each individual country. . . .

The upcoming G8-summit, hosted by Canada, will, among other things, provide an opportunity to seek international consensus on ways to improve maternal health.

[Translation]

Hon. Rose-Marie Losier-Cool: Honourable senators, if the government refuses to fund abortions for women in developing countries, should we conclude that the lives of those women are worth less than those of Canadian women?

[English]

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, that statement is absolutely irresponsible.

As has been explained and supported by world organizations, each country can bring to the table the policies they wish to bring. Canada is hosting the G8. We will come to the table with a definite plan to save the lives of millions of children and their mothers. That is a laudable goal. Canada has been clear. I believe, as the host of the G8 summit, this is an initiative we should all celebrate.

Other countries may pursue other policy initiatives. They are entitled to bring them to the table. That does not undermine the importance of the overall issue of maternal health and the health of children.

Hon. James S. Cowan (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, why does the government suddenly believe that Canadian women should have access to safe abortions in Canada and that women in Third World countries should not?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, we have stated many times that we are not reopening the abortion debate in this country.

Senator Cowan: That is exactly what the government is doing.

Senator LeBreton: No, it was Mr. Ignatieff and the Liberal Party, acting on Frank Graves' advice, that chose to start a cultural war.

On the important issue of children's and maternal health, the government will work hard on this issue with our partners. The issue addresses a serious problem. All honourable senators could take a lesson from the words of various organizations that the issue is maternal and children's health, clean water, nutrition and access to health care. Canada brings its perspective; other

countries can bring their perspectives. Some countries where these services are seriously needed have their own conditions that they will put on this issue. We must respect those conditions as well.

Senator Cowan: With respect, this is not a question of perspective; this is a question of resources. The Honourable Senator Tardif cited the appalling statistics about the number of women who die in childbirth and from botched abortions. This is a question of the unwillingness of the Canadian government to support initiatives of successive Canadian governments for more than 20 years to ensure that resources available to Canadian women are also available to women in developing countries around the world.

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I believe that as we go into Third World countries to assist, it is absolutely a question of respecting others' beliefs and traditions.

• (1440)

Again, I will emphasize that, within the scope of the initiative of the G8, which Canada is hosting, countries will be able to identify their own priorities. If other countries want to fund particular programs, that is their right. Canada's contribution to maternal and child health may involve various interventions including family planning, which of course includes the use of contraceptive methods in family planning so that the parents and their children may have a better health outcome.

The details are being worked on. As we speak, Minister Oda is hosting a conference of the G8 on this very matter in Halifax. Canada is making a large contribution on the whole aspect of family planning, contraception, medicine, hygiene and nutrition. Other countries have made other decisions but Canada has decided that our contribution will not include funding abortion.

[Translation]

Hon. Maria Chaput: Honourable senators, I would like the Leader of the Government in the Senate to tell me what she is doing on a humanitarian level for these women who do not have access to abortions in their own country, these women who cannot use family planning, because their pregnancies are often the result of rape. Women who become pregnant following a rape may have several children already, and they cannot afford to feed another.

What about the women who have to sell their bodies to buy a little food for their children? We have seen proof of that. They sell their bodies and become pregnant, but they cannot afford another child. When that happens, they may attempt an abortion themselves. If they die as a result, their children will be orphaned, and if they do not die, they may be disabled for the rest of their lives. Once again, my question is this: On a humanitarian level, what are we doing about this problem?

[English]

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, the senator has outlined some horrific scenarios, but she has missed the point that Canada is part of a collective G8 effort. Canada is making a significant contribution in areas where we have decided to contribute. We are leading the discussions. The countries are not there on their own. We are part of the collective G8. Collectively, we are contributing significant resources to an

important part of the initiative. Other countries will contribute significantly to what they believe are their priorities, and all of the various needs will be met by the G8 collective.

The honourable senator well knows there are countries where some of the most serious problems exist — and the United States has run into this situation — that do not support abortion as one of these methods. In contributing to the collective effort of the G8, we have laid out clearly what we will do. Other countries will decide what they will do, and collectively we will achieve the result that I am sure we all want to achieve: better maternal health and better health for the millions of children in Third World countries.

Hon. Roméo Antonius Dallaire: Honourable senators, I found it interesting that earlier the leader was quoting many different NGOs who have been writing articles in the newspapers. I cannot remember the number of times that the Leader of the Government has told senators on this side that we should stop reading the newspapers and to not believe everything in them. She has used that as a fundamental argument.

It is indeed true that each country will participate in this group to meet the requirements. However, it reminds me of Afghanistan, where Canadian troops are out fighting and conducting themselves according to the mandate NATO has given us, while other countries are sitting in their garrisons and have not gone out — they have accomplished nothing and are leaving. They are also doing their part, but we are not happy about carrying the weight when they are not.

This brings me to the era of conflict in which we find ourselves. In this era of conflict, the civilian population is a target. It is an instrument of war. One moves people massively by horror and one creates horror through acts like rape to deliberately instill fear. Rape has become a weapon of war. It is one of the tools of war. In Rwanda they used prisoners with HIV/AIDS to infect women and young children so that they would become infected and have children who would also be infected. It was a means of contributing to the destruction of those people.

In Darfur, the Arab-based militia are raping African women in order to create another race that is more amenable to them to reduce, in an indirect genocide, the African-based Darfurians. In the Congo they use child soldiers, raping girls and using them as instrument of war, another form of rape as an instrument.

Though we have decided that medical interventions are between a doctor and a woman, ultimate decision rests with the woman. However, the woman faces the traumas of not only having been raped but also trying to survive, and trying to sustain children who are sick.

Is the Leader of the Government telling the Senate that in the policy the government is pursuing we would not fund NGOs that are in conflict areas that would be called upon to conduct abortions in order to stop the pregnancies that have been created under the absolute adverse, perverse conditions I have described?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I often say to Senator Dallaire that I do not believe he should quote from newspapers. I am not talking about direct quotes of officials of international bodies; I am referring to quoting people such as Lawrence Martin as if they are experts.

[Senator LeBreton]

Obviously, Senator Dallaire has had personal experience and knowledge of this subject. The situation that he describes is absolutely dire. These are horrific circumstances faced by many people, most particularly in the Third World, but we are talking about an initiative of the G8 to promote maternal and child health. Again, this includes training and support for family health workers. All of these people that Senator Dallaire describes would benefit from better nutritional treatment; prevention of diseases such as pneumonia, diarrhea and malaria; screening and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS; proper medication; family planning; immunization; clean water; and sanitation. The government agrees with the World Health Organization that family planning, defined as a woman's ability to space and limit her pregnancies, has a direct impact on her health and well-being, as well as on the results of each pregnancy. This is the initiative of the G8. We are talking about maternal health and the health and well-being of young children, millions of whom die due to lack of proper nutrition and health.

All of these other horrific circumstances are clearly troubling, but we are talking about an effort to improve the lives of women and children and perhaps raise the level of knowledge to a point where they will know where to go for help. Although we will never completely eliminate circumstances such as those Senator Dallaire has outlined, this is a laudable project supported by the G8 and, as I have said, many organizations in the world. Why would we all not applaud the government and the other G8 countries for participating together in this effort to assist mothers and young children?

• (1450)

Senator Dallaire: Honourable senators, I agree with the methods that are being presented, such as contraception. In fact, I remember an NGO representative saying, "We spend six days a week trying to cover this country in rubber and on Sundays they go to church and the whole situation is changed."

Of course, other circumstances will affect the ability of those programs to be effective. However, when we look at conflict and countries in development we see that there are more people in refugee and internally displaced camps who are being abused and deprived of their human rights. They are not getting the care they need; they are frequently subject to rape. There are no less than 500,000 orphans of the Rwandan war, of which a large proportion were made orphans due to the rape of their mothers. These are not marginal numbers; these numbers are from the conflict zones. We engage in conflict resolution because we want peace and security in our own country and in these other countries. These numbers are in the millions.

I ask the leader directly: Please tell me whether NGOs that are involved in conflict zones where women are being raped and seeking abortions will receive, if requested, funding from the Canadian government to conduct medical interventions called abortions?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I will not comment on Senator Dallaire's opening statement about the policies of any particular religion. There are many horrific circumstances, but we are talking about an initiative of the G8. Canada is hosting the G8. We are talking about an initiative where significant resources will be expended by the G8 to better the lives of women and children.

Obviously, the Secretary of State of the United States has a different opinion and that is fine. When participating in its part of this G8 initiative, the United States can bring its policies to bear. The minister from Great Britain will have the same opportunity to express Great Britain's policy.

There is a collective effort on the part of G8 nations to improve the lives of children and mothers. Surely, collectively, and taking into consideration all the policies of all the governments and the policies of the recipient nations, among the eight countries in the G8 the needs of these mothers and children can and will be met.

Senator Dallaire: We are talking about a policy decision that is worthy of this chamber, because the government has taken a specific decision in regard to an international effort that it wants to conduct in our name. It is a worthy debate for us to query why the government has moved in that direction, as it is foreign to our own national policies and values. In fact, we have a law that permits abortion, but we do not want to apply it internationally.

Is that because of the amount of resources we are committing to this effort that we do not feel that we should be committing any of those resources to NGOs that will possibly conduct abortions? If that is the answer, it is an answer that one could accept — may not agree with but could accept — but not having an answer begs the question of "why not," which is my question.

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, Senator Dallaire has the answer. He obviously does not agree with the answer but, when we look at the public opinion in the country, it is clear that the government has made a decision and there is significant support for it. I do not think Canada or any of the G8 members can go into a country and tell them that a particular policy they have is illegal. We are trying to provide, through this G8 initiative, a situation whereby we can improve the health of mothers and their children.

Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer: Honourable senators, before I ask my question, I have a supplementary question on what the leader just said.

I have to respect what the leader says because I believe she believes in what she is saying. However, I will put a scenario to the leader.

Each summer, I work in villages in Africa, where every 30 seconds a person dies of malaria. If an expectant woman contracts malaria while pregnant, she must have an abortion, because she can die due to the damage a mosquito does to her blood supply. Will we say we will not provide an abortion to this woman because we do not believe in abortion?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, the government, in entering into this initiative as the host of the G8, strives to champion initiatives to promote maternal and children's health, including better nutrition, treatment and prevention of diseases such as pneumonia, diarrhea and malaria; screening and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS; proper medication; family planning; immunization; clean water; and sanitation.

The senator cites a specific case. We could carry this debate on until the end of the earth. The fact is that we have clearly stated our contribution to this G8 initiative does not include funding abortions.

Senator Jaffer: Honourable senators, each year, approximately 529,000 women die from complications during childbirth. The vast majority of these deaths occur in developing countries. As an example, a woman in sub-Saharan Africa has a 1 in 16 chance of dying during pregnancy or childbirth compared to a 1 in 4,000 risk in developed countries.

In September 2001, 147 heads of state collectively endorsed Millennium Development Goal 4 and Goal 5 to reduce the child mortality rate by two thirds and maternal mortality ratio by three quarters between 1990 and 2015.

The leader set out some of the programs earlier, but what specific programs will Canada offer at the G8 summit in order to keep its commitment to reducing the threat to the health of mothers and children? What programs will honour the commitment as outlined in the UN Millennium Development Goals?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I already said Minister Oda is attending a meeting in Halifax and putting together the various programs and the details, so we will have to await those decisions.

Senator Jaffer talked about the number of children who die each year. I agree with Sharon Marshall of World Vision; 8.8 million children die each year from causes that could easily be prevented with pennies. Surely, that is where we should put our focus. I hope that is what the various G8 ministers are deciding right now. I hope they are finding a way to channel all of this effort and to ensure that the collective expertise and the collective dollars of the G8 are being put to the best possible use to improve the health of mothers and save the lives of children.

• (1500)

[Translation]

DELAYED ANSWERS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have the honour to present delayed answers to two oral questions: the first was raised by the Honourable Senator Carstairs on March 11, 2010, concerning seniors, the strategy for aging, and the second was raised by the Honourable Senator Cordy on March 11, 2010, concerning seniors, the strategy for aging.

SENIORS

STRATEGY FOR AGING—BUDGET 2010

(Response to question raised by Hon. Sharon Carstairs on March 11, 2010)

A) In the March 3, 2010, Speech from the Throne, the Government of Canada stated:

[Senator LeBreton]

“Canadians believe sacrifice and hard work should be recognized. As we strive to create an even better future for our families and communities, our Government will stand up for those who built and defended our country. Superior health care and quality of life mean that Canadians now enjoy one of the longest life expectancies in the world. As more and more Canadians enter their golden years, our Government will seek to enhance their well-being during the retirement that they have earned. This demographic shift poses a challenge to the sustainability of our social programs and our economy. Our Government will meet the demands of the aging population.”

In addition to this clear statement of support, the Speech from the Throne and Budget 2010 also signalled the Government of Canada’s continued commitment to seniors through the establishment of a Seniors Day, increased funding to the New Horizons for Seniors Program, and maintaining a strong and efficient retirement income system.

- **Enhanced Support for Seniors.** Increased funding of \$10 million for the next two years is provided for the New Horizons for Seniors program to support projects that focus on volunteering among seniors, ensuring that today’s seniors can mentor the next generation of volunteers, and raising awareness of financial abuse of seniors.
- **A Strong and Efficient Retirement Income System.** Budget 2010 reinforces the Government’s commitment to maintaining a strong and efficient retirement income system to ensure that Canadians have the best available opportunities to save adequately and effectively for their retirement. The Government has taken numerous actions to strengthen the retirement income system:
- Increased Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) benefits and the GIS earnings exemption from \$500 to \$3,500;
- Introduced a new savings vehicle, the Tax-Free Savings Account, which allows seniors to grow their savings tax free and without affecting GIS benefits;
- Completed the Canada Pension Plan Triennial Review in May 2009 with proposed changes to provide greater flexibility for older workers to combine pension and work income if they so wish, and to improve actuarial fairness in the Plan’s flexible retirement provisions;
- In June 2009, launched Canada’s Task Force on Financial Literacy to provide advice and recommendations on a national strategy to strengthen the financial literacy of Canadians.

In preparation for the next meeting of Finance Ministers in May 2010, the Government will undertake consultations with the public on the government-supported retirement income system. This process has recently been launched.

- B)** The Government of Canada incorporates ageing-related considerations into core program and policy development.

This enables us to better address the scope of population ageing, which affects all aspects of our society, as well as its significant and varied impacts.

The Government Response to the Special Senate Committee's Report on Aging, tabled on October 1, 2009, highlights the Government's strong record of action since 2006 to improve the well-being of seniors and address the challenges of an ageing society.

For example,

- Canada's Economic Action Plan (EAP) 2009 includes measures of particular relevance for seniors:
- **Housing for Low-Income Seniors.** \$400 million over two years in targeted funding for the construction of housing units for low-income seniors, delivered through the Affordable Housing Initiative and cost-shared with the provinces and territories.
- **Targeted Tax Relief for Seniors.** A \$1,000 increase in the Age Credit amount for 2009 and subsequent taxation years, providing tax savings to approximately 2.2 million seniors in 2009. This tax builds on the significant tax relief provided since 2006 for seniors and pensioners.
- In addition, Canada's seniors benefit from the **personal income tax reductions** introduced through the EAP. This includes increases in the basic personal amount and the top of the two lowest personal income tax brackets of 7.5 per cent above their 2008 levels.
- Budget 2010 delivers the second year of the EAP and in addition reaffirmed the government's commitment to maintaining a strong and efficient retirement income system.

Other recent measures include:

- \$1.9 billion annually in additional tax relief for pension income splitting, enhancement in the age credit amount and pension income credit etc.;
- \$13 million investment in the Federal Elder Abuse Initiative through 2010-11;
- An increase to the GIS and the earnings exemption for low-income pensioners; and,
- Seniors also benefit from the GST reduction and other income tax measures that have been introduced.

(Response to question raised by Hon. Jane Cordy on March 11, 2010)

Canadian caregivers will likely be pleased to know that changes to the CPP will offer more pension protection for workers from certain times when contributions to the Plan decrease or stop altogether. Through Bill C-51, which received Royal Assent on December 15, 2009, the CPP general drop-out provision would increase from 15% to 16% in 2012 and to 17% in 2014. Once fully implemented, this expanded provision would allow a maximum of 8 years of low or no earnings to be dropped from the calculation of future CPP benefits, thereby enhancing benefits. To come into effect, this CPP amendment must be agreed to by the legislatures of two-thirds of the provinces with two-thirds of the national population.

As joint stewards of the CPP, the federal government cannot change the Plan unilaterally. There is no consensus that a CPP caregiver drop-out is the best way to support caregivers even among stakeholders. It would assist a very small subset of caregivers, as many who provide care do not leave work or are seniors who do not contribute to the CPP and would provide marginal support at a much later time in the future.

The Government of Canada recognizes the important contributions of family caregivers. This is why the federal government provides a range of supports, including tax measures, paid employment leave for those caring for individuals at significant risk of death, and programs that include supportive elements for caregivers of Veterans and residents of First Nations and Inuit communities.

This government will continue to examine how best to support family caregivers.

ANSWERS TO ORDER PAPER QUESTIONS TABLED

VETERANS AFFAIRS—NEW VETERANS CHARTER

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government) tabled the answer to Question No. 1 on the Order Paper—by Senator Downe.

VETERANS AFFAIRS—SUPPORT FOR VETERANS

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government) tabled the answer to Question No. 3 on the Order Paper—by Senator Downe.

VETERANS AFFAIRS—NEW VETERANS CHARTER

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government) tabled the answer to Question No. 18 on the Order Paper—by Senator Downe.

[English]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

FEDERAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACT AND AUDITOR GENERAL ACT

BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING

Hon. Tommy Banks moved third reading of Bill S-210, An Act to amend the Federal Sustainable Development Act and the Auditor General Act (involvement of Parliament).

He said: Honourable senators, I need add nothing further than what the honourable chair of the committee said in his report. Senator Angus told us about this bill last week. To remind honourable senators slightly, it has to do with amendments to the Federal Sustainable Development Act and the Auditor General Act to, first, bring the Senate into its proper position with respect to receiving reports, debating reports and dealing with matters having to do with sustainable development reports from various government departments. Second, it is to amend the Auditor General Act so that the Commissioner of the Environment can report with fewer time constraints within a parliamentary session.

Unless there are questions, which I would be delighted to answer, I invite honourable senators to join me in sending this bill back to the House of Commons where, according to standing order 81(6) of that place, it will be restored to the position it held immediately before the last prorogation, which is to say it had passed second reading and was in committee in that place.

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

Hon. Senators: Question.

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

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

NATIONAL PHILANTHROPY DAY BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Mercer, seconded by the Honourable Senator Chaput, for the second reading of Bill S-203, An Act respecting a National Philanthropy Day.

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: Honourable senators, it is a pleasure to be the sponsor of Bill S-203, An Act respecting a National Philanthropy Day.

As the sponsor, I must say that this is not the first time honourable senators have seen it. Previous versions included Bill S-217, Bill S-210, Bill S-204 and Bill S-46, all introduced in the Senate since October of 2004 by our good friend and former

colleague, Senator Jerry Grafstein. He and I have worked on this file for many years, and so it is an honour for me to continue that great effort. It is a worthwhile effort.

National Philanthropy Day occurs annually on November 15. It is a special day that pays tribute to the thousands of volunteers across Canada who contribute to our way of life. More than 50,000 people at over 125 events across North America participate in celebrations each year. In Canada, National Philanthropy Day events are held in every province.

The philanthropic sector in Canada draws on over 2 billion volunteer hours, which is the equivalent of over 1 million full-time jobs. That is a huge constituency. In fact, it is not surprising that quite a few honourable senators here in this place have done tremendous work on behalf of charities and community foundations across Canada:

Senator Angus has been involved in the St. Andrew's Presbyterian Homes Foundation. Senator Boivenu is the founding president of the Murdered or Missing Persons' Families' Association. Senator Callbeck founded Camp Abby and the PEI Business Women's Association. Senator Campbell is involved in Cycle for Spirit. Senator Carignan is involved with the Fondation Élite Saint-Eustache. Senator Carstairs is involved with the Kinsmen, UNICEF and help for the mentally handicapped and, of course, her crusade on behalf of palliative care. Senator Champagne is involved with l'Institut québécois du cinéma and l'Union des artistes. Senator Cools is involved with organizations helping battered women and families troubled by domestic violence. Senator Cordy is involved with Phoenix House in Halifax. Senator Cowan is on the board of Dalhousie University in Halifax. Senator Dallaire is involved in the Search for Common Ground, the Displaced Children and Orphan's Fund and UNICEF. Senator Di Nino is involved with the Distress Centre of Toronto and Crime Stoppers. These are all very good efforts.

Senator Demers is involved in literacy and the Fondation de l'alphabétisation and the Fondation québécoise pour les enfants malades du cœur. Senator Fairbairn is involved with "Friends of the Paralympics," an organization she helped create, and she is legendary for her support of literacy programs across the country. Senator Fortin-Duplessis is involved with Laval University, the Alzheimer's Society and Laval and Saint-Sacrement Hospital foundations. Senator Fox is involved with the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and Tennis Canada. Senator Furey is involved with Boy Scouts of Canada. Those are just a few examples.

Honourable senators, we as parliamentarians can have a tremendous impact on public behaviour. The creation of a government-recognized day would be a testament that charitable giving and volunteering is critical to our well-being.

This bill went through the Senate legislative process last year. We all worked together on both sides to present a good bill to the House of Commons. It is that type of cooperation that is at the heart of this bill. The bill ended up in the House of Commons at committee stage and unfortunately died on the Order Paper.

Simply put, recognizing National Philanthropy Day by enacting a law shows just how much all parliamentarians from all parties support philanthropy and volunteers that drive the sector in Canada. It is the least we can do to celebrate the tremendous work of volunteers.

I would like to point out more good work that some honourable senators have done: Senator Gerstein is the honorary director of the Mount Sinai Hospital Foundation and director of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research. Senator Jaffer is past president of the YWCA. Senator Johnson is heavily involved with the Gimli Film Festival. Speaker Kinsella is well known for his work on human rights and justice issues around the world. Senator Lapointe is involved in the Jean Lapointe Foundation that fights alcoholism and other addictions. Senator LeBreton has been heavily involved in health and mental health issues and is a champion of Mothers Against Drunk Driving. Senator MacDonald has been a hockey coach, baseball coach and has been active in helping with cystic fibrosis research and promoting Nova Scotia heritage and the Gaelic language.

• (1510)

Senator Merchant has been involved with Canadian Parents for French and immigrant women's organizations, and working with Greek and other immigrant communities. Senator Oliver has been involved with the Children's Aid Society of Halifax, the National Youth Orchestra and Junior Achievement of Nova Scotia. My good friend Senator Plett has been involved with Red River College. He has coached hockey, basketball and golf, and was president of the Landmark Minor Hockey Association.

Senator Nancy Greene Raine, of course, has been involved in sport for all of her life, as well as Thompson River University. Senator Nancy Ruth is legendary for her involvement in the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund. My good friend Senator Munson has been involved with Child and Youth Friendly Ottawa, and Special Olympics Canada. As we know here, he is also a champion of the fight to help people with autism. Senator Wallace has been involved with the University of New Brunswick, the Saint John Imperial Theatre and Symphony New Brunswick.

As honourable senators can see, charities help Canada grow in a variety of ways: health care, youth, literacy, the arts, sciences and human rights. The list is endless.

Honourable senators, recognition of National Philanthropy Day only adds to the strong support that already exists among the public. As well, I saw in the recent Speech from the Throne and in Budget 2010 some other good works that I would like to mention.

The Speech from the Throne promised the creation of a Prime Minister's award for volunteers. I like that idea.

The budget included a proposal to eliminate the disbursement quota for charitable organizations, a decision supported broadly in the charitable sector, especially by the Association of Fundraising Professionals and other organizations.

As a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals for many years, I applaud these efforts. I know the government has removed the disbursement quota, but I know they will come back with other things that will help protect the Canadian public.

Let us not stop there. I applaud all honourable senators for the work they do in the charitable sector in Canada and implore them to continue on this road of recognizing the great work of charities and community groups. Let us get this bill to committee, pass it at

third reading, and get it back to the other place as quickly as possible.

(On motion of Senator Comeau, for Senator Champagne, debate adjourned.)

CRIMINAL CODE

BILL TO AMEND—ORDER RESET

On the Order:

Second reading of Bill S-204, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (protection of children).

Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Senator Hervieux-Payette, who introduced the bill, is unexpectedly and unavoidably absent this afternoon. The bill is now at day 15. She has asked me to ask for unanimous consent to keep the bill on the Order Paper for one more day so that she may move second reading tomorrow.

(Order reset.)

GOVERNANCE OF CANADIAN BUSINESSES EMERGENCY BILL

ORDER STANDS

On the Order:

Second reading of Bill S-205, An Act to provide the means to rationalize the governance of Canadian businesses during the period of national emergency resulting from the global financial crisis that is undermining Canada's economic stability.

Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, for the same reason previously mentioned, I ask for unanimous consent that Bill S-205 be kept on the Order Paper for one more day so that Senator Hervieux-Payette may move second reading tomorrow.

(Order stands.)

CONFLICT OF INTEREST ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING— DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Joseph A. Day moved second reading of Bill S-208, An Act to amend the Conflict of Interest Act (gifts).

He said: Honourable senators will see that this bill is entitled An Act to amend the Conflict of Interest Act (gifts). This bill flows from the Conflict of Interest Act, which was one of about 10 or 15 acts created under Bill C-2, the Accountability Act, in 2006.

During the time that this bill was before this chamber, the Conflict of Interest Act, in particular, was of some concern to us. We proposed a number of amendments. Those amendments were based on the advice of previous conflict of interest commissioners

who had dealt with the codes of conflict of interest of the prime ministers. Traditionally, each prime minister had a code of conflict for senior public servants and cabinet ministers.

The commissioners who administered those codes recommended the wording in the codes. However, when the wording found itself into the legislation that we dealt with, it provided in section 23, *inter alia*, an exception. The exception is that it was not necessary to report any gift from a friend, and honourable senators were concerned about this at the time. Relatives we could understand, but “friend” is in the eye of the beholder. I was not particularly happy with the earlier wording, but jurisprudence had developed around “close personal friend,” so it would not be just any friend.

That is an exception, honourable senators, to accepting gifts and an exception to reporting to the Senate Ethics Officer. Gifts over \$200 must be reported, unless they are from a relative. As the bill stands now, there is no “or.” This amendment would add “or from a close personal friend.”

Having said that, honourable senators, there has been some discussion between myself and the minister’s office to try to reach an accommodation in relation to this particular matter. We all recognize this is not something that should continue in this manner. It is such a large loophole that we feel there should be some change, and the question now is, what should the change be?

Honourable senators, in the interest of exploring the possibility of reaching an accommodation on this that would satisfy parliamentarians, I ask for this matter to be adjourned in my name for the balance of my time.

(On motion of Senator Day, debate adjourned.)

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY WATERS TREATY ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING— DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Lowell Murray moved second reading of Bill S-213, An Act to amend the International Boundary Waters Treaty Act (bulk water removal).

He said: Honourable senators, I move second reading and rise only for the purpose of keeping the bill on the Order Paper. I note that it is now at its tenth day. I will not be here on Thursday. While I expect to be here the following week, I do not want to run the risk that, by some inadvertence or temporary absence from my seat on my part, the bill fall off the Order Paper.

• (1520)

I will say that the Speech from the Throne of 2008 indicated that the government has a bill of its own, rather broader than the bill which I have on the Order Paper and which I inherited from our former colleague, the Honourable Pat Carney. I have been led to believe that the government bill may well cover the subject matter of our bill and may meet the purposes of our bill.

[Senator Day]

I say that the officials, elected and appointed, in the Department of Foreign Affairs have kept in touch with me, which I very much appreciate. While I have not seen their bill, I have been led to believe it will be coming imminently, whatever that means. Until that happens, I will leave my bill on the Order Paper. If the government’s bill does solve the problems that Bill S-213 seeks to solve, then I would rise and seek leave to withdraw my private member’s bill.

Meanwhile, I move the adjournment of the debate for the remainder of my time.

(On motion of Senator Murray, debate adjourned.)

[Translation]

SUPREME COURT ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING— DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Tardif, seconded by the Honourable Senator Rivest, for the second reading of Bill C-232, An Act to amend the Supreme Court Act (understanding the official languages).

Hon. Maria Chaput: Honourable senators, I rise today to express my unreserved support for Bill C-232, An Act to amend the Supreme Court Act (understanding the official languages).

First of all, I must congratulate Mr. Godin, Member of Parliament for Acadie—Bathurst, for all the hard work that he has put into getting his bill passed, finally, in the other place.

[English]

After listening to Senator Tardif’s eloquent remarks on the subject, I am more convinced than ever that passage of this bill is a necessity. It fits so easily and naturally into our country’s history, as our honourable colleague has so ably demonstrated.

Bill C-232 is simple and straightforward. If it is passed, it will guarantee that justices appointed to our country’s highest court understand French and English without the assistance of an interpreter. This is a major step toward full recognition of the equality of status of our two official languages.

[Translation]

It is scarcely necessary to remind my honourable colleagues, assembled here in this noble chamber, that our Constitution says clearly and unequivocally states that French and English “have equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all institutions of the Parliament and government of Canada.”

Our Constitution also provides that real equality between English and French must be advanced, and that Parliament has the powers necessary to do so. We are still far from the laudable goal of true equality. The passage of Bill C-232 would constitute a giant step toward this ideal that we have set for ourselves.

The justices on Canada's Supreme Court are called upon to hear cases in both official languages and to apply the principles of law arising from our two great and separate legal traditions. The court's decisions are final and without appeal, and their consequences are often of the utmost importance.

[English]

How would one explain to a francophone appearing before the court that his or her case was going to be heard by justices who did not understand his or her chosen official language? What if an English-speaking Canadian were required to plead before justices who spoke nothing but French? It seems obvious to me that the second situation would be just as unacceptable as the first one.

[Translation]

Bill C-232 is designed to keep us heading in the right direction. It is based upon the principles of natural justice. The right to be heard constitutes the cornerstone of our justice system. How can someone really be heard if they cannot really be understood?

The Department of Justice explains in one of its publications that:

Because of the official bilingualism within the federal jurisdiction and the coexistence of two legal systems in the country, there are four audiences for the law in Canada . . . Anglophones and Francophones subject to the civil law, on the one hand, and Anglophones and Francophones subject to the common law, on the other hand.

The nine justices who sit on our country's highest court should at least be able to understand, without an interpreter, counsel from all of these four audiences. In my view, that is a bare minimum.

[English]

Let us be very clear: The bill we are discussing does not aim to impose on our future Supreme Court justices a requirement that they speak both official languages fluently. Perfect bilingualism is not the criteria. What is demanded is the ability to understand the other language without an interpreter. This is a distinction worth making.

[Translation]

In a decision by the Manitoba Court of Appeal in 1984, quoted by the Supreme Court of Canada and dealing with the language skills required of a judge to hear a case, Chief Justice Monnin explained that knowledge of a language has four levels: understanding of the written language, understanding of the spoken language, ability to speak the language, and ability to write the language.

According to Chief Justice Monnin, it is not necessary for judges to achieve the third or fourth levels, but it is indispensable that they understand the language, and I quote:

No burden must be put upon those who ask for a trial in French nor should the evidence of witnesses using one or the other of the two constitutionally recognized languages have to be sifted for the trier of facts through the mind and mouth of an interpreter.

This reasoning applies even more strongly when a matter is before the court of last resort, the highest court in the land.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms provides that the English and French versions of Canada's statutes "are equally authoritative." This means that there is not one version that takes precedence over the other; there is not an original and a translation but rather there is just one law, drafted in English and in French, which must be interpreted on the basis of Canadian bilingualism and bijuralism.

Both versions of Canadian statutes "are equally authoritative." In order to fully understand the significance of certain provisions, a diligent judge will thus have to read both the French and the English versions, because the two form a single whole.

The two versions of a law may complement each other or clash with each other; in a way, the two versions are a dialogue. An understanding of both of Canada's official languages is therefore a *sine qua non* for a full understanding of the country's laws.

This "equal authenticity rule" applicable to federal legislative texts was formulated by the Supreme Court for the first time in 1891, in *C.P.R. v. Robinson*, and I quote:

In the case of ambiguity, where there is any possibility to reconcile the two, one must be interpreted by the other. The English version cannot be read out of the law. It was submitted to the legislature, enacted and sanctioned simultaneously with the French one, and is law just as much as the French one is.

It was confirmed by the Quebec Court of Appeal that "Canadian courts have not only the right but also the obligation to take into account both official texts and use them to interpret each other." The same obligation is incumbent upon our court of final instance, and with still more reason.

Graham Fraser, the Commissioner of Official Languages, said recently:

. . . when someone comes forward and says . . . about a candidate [for the Supreme Court], that he is very competent, that he has all of this experience, but he doesn't have the ability to hear a case that's presented before the Supreme Court in the language in which that case is presented, then he is missing a critical competence.

• (1530)

Honourable senators, today's edition, that of Tuesday, April 27, 2010, of *Le Devoir*, contains an article bearing the headline: "Supreme Court — Judges must be bilingual, says Claire L'Heureux-Dubé." The article states, and I quote:

Former Supreme Court of Canada Justice Claire L'Heureux-Dubé believes that it is time for bilingualism to become part of the selection criteria when appointing judges to the country's highest court. In other words, the retired judge fully supports the NDP bill currently before the Senate.

"I believe that Supreme Court judges should definitely be bilingual," Madam Justice L'Heureux-Dubé explained to *Le Devoir*. According to her, "the bilingualism legislation that allows an exemption for Supreme Court judges is an anomaly in 2010, one that must be eliminated sooner or later."

In response to the argument made by Minister Christian Paradis, who explained to *Le Devoir* that he opposes Bill C-232 in the name of protecting unilingual francophones who should also be able to aspire to sit on the Supreme Court, Madam Justice L'Heureux-Dubé replied, and I quote:

I do not understand how a unilingual francophone judge could sit on the Supreme Court of Canada where 90 per cent of the work is in English. And I cannot recall a unilingual francophone judge ever sitting on the Supreme Court. On the other hand, many unilingual anglophone judges have been appointed to the Supreme Court . . . Is this not a double standard?

[English]

As Senator Tardif put it so well, the Supreme Court was not established to meet the needs of judges but to serve the citizens of this country. Canadians have the right to expect to receive services of equal quality in the official language of their choice when they appeal to the highest court in Canada. That is the bare minimum we should aim for.

[Translation]

I urge you, honourable senators, to support Bill C-232.

(On motion of Senator Comeau, debate adjourned.)

[English]

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

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

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the second report of the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples (*budget—study on the federal government's constitutional and legal responsibilities to Aboriginal Peoples—power to hire staff*), presented in the Senate on April 22, 2010.

Hon. Gerry St. Germain moved the adoption of the report.

He said: Honourable senators, the committee has finished its study on First Nations elections and will soon table its report. This small budget that has been presented to the Senate is to provide funding for the promotion of our report.

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

[Senator Chaput]

INTERNAL ECONOMY, BUDGETS AND ADMINISTRATION

SECOND REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the second report of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration (*committee budgets—legislation*), presented in the Senate on April 22, 2010.

Hon. David Tkachuk moved the adoption of the report.

Hon. Joseph A. Day: Honourable senators, could Senator Tkachuk help me with this item? I am reading from the Order Paper, and it says "committee budgets — legislation." Does that imply that legislation is being sent to the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration?

Senator Tkachuk: No. It was a small committee budget for the purposes of a bill that is before a particular committee.

Senator Day: Thank you.

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

Hon. Senators: Question.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

MOTION TO PLACE THIRTEENTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE TABLED DURING SECOND SESSION OF FORTIETH PARLIAMENT ON THE ORDERS OF THE DAY ADOPTED

Hon. Art Eggleton, pursuant to notice of March 11, 2010, moved:

That the Thirteenth Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology tabled in the Senate on Tuesday, December 8, 2009 during the Second Session of the Fortieth Parliament, entitled: *In from the Margins: A Call to Action on Poverty, Housing and Homelessness*, be placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting.

He said: Honourable senators, I move, seconded by Senator Segal, the motion standing in my name.

Honourable senators, this is a procedural motion to restore to the agenda the Thirteenth Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. The report deals with a two-year study that was done with respect to poverty, housing and homelessness. The report was presented to the Senate on

December 8, but shortly thereafter we entered into the Christmas holiday break and then subsequently there was a prorogation. This procedural motion would put that report back on the Order Paper for debate.

I might add that during the organizational meeting of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology last month, we discussed the procedure. There are some new members on the committee who were not involved with the study for any great length of time, and the committee's preference, therefore, was not to have the report go back to the committee but to bring the report directly here, hence this procedural motion to do exactly that. I would appreciate the support of honourable senators.

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Indeed, honourable senators, we on this side will support the report being debated. However, I will advise the Senate that some time in the future we will review this procedure, although it is perfectly in order. However, if one looks into reports from previous sessions, or previous parliaments, at what point do we say they are no longer relevant?

• (1540)

A couple of years ago, His Honour indicated that it would be preferable for honourable senators to refer this question to the Rules Committee. I do not have a motion before me today, so it will be for another day. However, this procedure, as outlined by Senator Eggleton, is the right way to proceed today. I support his motion.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Question.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

NATIONAL DRUG PLAN

INQUIRY—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Leave having been given to revert to Inquiries, Item No. 6:

Hon. Catherine S. Callbeck rose pursuant to notice of March 10, 2010:

That she will call the attention of the Senate to the overwhelming need for federal leadership on a national catastrophic drug plan to assist Canadians cover the costs of expensive medications.

She said: Honourable senators, once again, I rise to bring your attention to the lack of a universal catastrophic drug coverage program in this country. I remind honourable senators that a catastrophic drug coverage program ensures that individuals do

not suffer undue financial hardship from prescribed medications. Given the importance of this issue and for the benefit of newly appointed senators, a bit of background is in order.

Why is a catastrophic drug plan important for Canadians? The Canada Health Act, which sets out the expenditure framework for our health care system, covers prescription drugs used while a patient is in hospital. Yet, Canadians are receiving more new drug therapies than ever before thanks, in part, to advances in technology. As a result, spending on prescription drugs is taking up an increasingly large share of what Canadians spend on health care.

Ten years ago more than 100,000 Canadians experienced annual drug expenses over \$5,000. That number is much higher today: Nearly one in 10 households is spending 3 per cent of net income on prescriptions. A recent study by the Institute for Research in Public Policy noted that per capita expenditures on prescription drugs increased by 338 per cent from 1975 to 2006, which is well in excess of economic growth in this country.

Many Canadians receive some help with their drug costs through a patchwork of public and private insurance plans. The Health Council of Canada estimates that there are 19 publicly funded drug plans in Canada — 10 provincial, three territorial and six federal — as well as more than 1,000 private drug insurance programs, which are usually part of employee benefit packages.

There are serious problems with this current level of coverage. First, some Canadians are falling through the cracks. An estimated 2 per cent of our population — more than 640,000 people — have no coverage at all. In fact, more than one quarter of Atlantic Canadians have no drug coverage. Studies show that people who work at part-time or low-wage jobs are most likely to be under-insured or without a drug plan. They simply try to get by on their modest incomes and are least likely to have extra money for prescriptions.

I am certain that all honourable senators have firsthand knowledge of family members, friends or neighbours who must ration their prescription drugs or do without necessary medications entirely because they cannot afford to pay for them. We have all heard stories of Canadians having to decide whether to buy food or buy their medication.

The absence of a universal catastrophic drug plan in Canada has long been recognized as a serious problem. The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, of which I was a member, issued a report in 2002 that called for the expansion of drug coverage to include protection against catastrophic prescription drug costs. The committee's report stated:

No Canadian should suffer undue financial hardship having to pay for necessary medical treatment. It is essential that this principle be applied to prescription drugs expenses.

The first concrete steps were taken at the 2003 First Ministers Accord on Health Care Renewal. This agreement committed governments to a number of goals, including that Canadians, wherever they live, have reasonable access to catastrophic drug coverage by the end of 2005-06.

The second major step forward came in 2004 with the First Ministers Meeting on the Future of Health Care and a 10-year plan to strengthen health care. Once again, first ministers agreed:

No Canadian should suffer undue financial hardship in accessing needed drug therapies and that affordable access to drugs is fundamental to equitable health outcomes for all our citizens.

The first ministers established a task force to develop and implement the National Pharmaceuticals Strategy, which, among other tasks, would design and calculate the cost of the options for catastrophic pharmaceutical coverage.

The first progress report of the National Pharmaceuticals Strategy was issued in September 2006. It listed four significant accomplishments. First, federal-provincial-territorial representatives agreed on principles to guide the development of a catastrophic drug coverage plan. These principles called for a plan that is universal, equitable, transparent, evidence-based, integrated and sustainable. Second, the task force developed and calculated the costs for two plan designs based on either a fixed or variable percentage of family income. Third, they agreed to expand the federal Common Drug Review as the basis for a national formulary. Fourth, the task force agreed to establish a national framework for a program that would cover expensive drugs for very rare diseases.

September 2006 was the last time that the federal government was involved actively in any work on a catastrophic drug plan. The provincial and territorial health ministers continued without federal representation at their meeting in September 2008. They reached an agreement on the basic outline of a catastrophic drug coverage plan. This plan would ensure that prescription drug costs would not exceed 5 per cent of family income and that the costs of drugs above that level would be equally shared between the provinces, territories and the federal government. However, with the federal government unwilling to engage, the provincial-territorial proposal could not be completed. To my knowledge, there has been no further public information on the status of a catastrophic drug coverage plan.

I would like to quote from the January 2009 Health Council of Canada report entitled *The National Pharmaceuticals Strategy: A Prescription Unfilled*. It states:

The first few years of the National Pharmaceuticals Strategy involved “unprecedented” collaboration between federal and provincial/territorial governments. But then governments changed, and progress slowed.

The early cooperation and collective action of a national effort had been lost.

In recent months, when I have raised this issue of a lack of progress on a catastrophic drug plan, I have been told that the Government of Canada already transfers billions of dollars to the provinces through the Canada Health Transfer. That is all well and good, but the remark does not provide any information about what the federal government proposes to do about a national catastrophic drug plan.

• (1550)

I have been told, and again I quote:

... the federal government respects the provinces’ unique role in the delivery of health services.

While provincial and territorial responsibilities in health care are well recognized, this does not prevent federal participation with the provinces and territories in developing and funding a catastrophic drug coverage plan. There is no reason why the Government of Canada cannot continue its historic role of providing leadership and collaborate with provinces to design and implement a catastrophic drug plan like it was doing until September 2006.

Finally, I have been told that progress can be made toward a catastrophic drug plan through federal-provincial collaboration and that “this government continues to welcome opportunities to work with provinces and territories on pharmaceutical issues.”

If this is true, why have we not heard from the federal government about the agreement for a basic catastrophic drug plan that was reached by the provinces and territories in September 2008?

Canadians need to know what specific steps the Government of Canada is taking to ensure this collaboration in developing a plan and calling for meaningful action on a catastrophic drug coverage plan.

In calling for meaningful action on a catastrophic drug coverage plan, I do not intend to minimize the challenges we face. Governments across this country are struggling to manage deficits. There are many worthwhile competitors for our tax dollar — education, child development and income security programs.

Honourable senators, a long-recognized Canadian value is that we provide a minimum level of health care coverage for our citizens. The time has come to ensure the protection of catastrophic drug costs as part of that coverage.

In 2008, provincial and territorial governments agreed on a broad outline of a drug coverage plan, and now the Government of Canada must resume its leadership role. I urge the federal government to step up and continue work on the catastrophic drug plan so that no Canadian suffers financial hardship because they need expensive medications.

(On motion of Senator Tardif, debate adjourned.)

THE SENATE

MOTION TO EXTEND WISHES OF APPRECIATION TO CANADIAN NAVY—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Hugh Segal, pursuant to notice of March 17, 2010, moved:

That the Senate of Canada offers to the Canadian Forces Maritime Command, known today as the Canadian Navy and formerly known as the Royal Canadian Navy, on the occasion of its 100th anniversary, the Senate’s best wishes

and its most sincere expression of gratitude, appreciation and respect, and pays special tribute to the courage, competence, loyalty and determination of the men and women who served, serve and will serve under the White Ensign, the Canadian Forces Naval Jack and the Maple Leaf, always in the cause of freedom, humanity, peace and stability and always in the name of the people of Canada.

He said: Honourable senators, a century ago two of our greatest prime ministers, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, a Liberal, and Sir Robert Borden, a Conservative, over the objections of quarters in both their parties, came together and provided by statute the founding course of the Royal Canadian Navy.

Our navy was created through bipartisan leadership as an instrument of sovereignty and responsibility to do our share worldwide.

In a letter to a fellow Tory who feared a new Canadian navy would become a tool of British interests, Borden thundered:

Unless we are to relegate ourselves to the status of a Crown colony, or assume the position of vassals of the United States, we shall be obliged in the early future to do something in the line of defence not only on shore, but on our coast and in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. We claim the freedom of self-government as a right, not of grace, but the exercise of that right implies some corresponding responsibility.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier, in his championing and advancing of the navy bill itself, deserves immense praise in the navy's launch.

I would like to put forward a few little known interesting facts regarding the navy whose centennial we celebrate.

First, the Canadian navy came into existence on May 4, 1910, when the Naval Services Act became law. Permission to add the prefix "royal" was granted by King George V in 1911. In 1968, the Canadian navy was merged with Canada's army and air force to form the Canadian Armed Forces, later the Canadian Forces. The maritime component was named Maritime Command, replacing the title Royal Canadian Navy.

Second, when the Second World War broke out, Canada had just 13 vessels: 6 destroyers — *Saguenay*, *Skeena*, *Fraser*, *Ottawa*, *Restigouche* and *St-Laurent*; 4 minesweepers — *Comox*, *Fundy*, *Gaspé* and *Nootka/Nanoose*; and 3 auxiliaries — *Armentieres*, *Skidegate* and *Venture*.

Third, by the end of the Second World War, the Royal Canadian Navy had grown to become one of the largest Allied navies, with 434 commissioned vessels, including cruisers, destroyers, frigates, corvettes and auxiliaries.

Fourth, at one minute past midnight on May 28, 1945, all Canadian ships at sea turned on their running lights, signalling the end of the Battle of the Atlantic.

Fifth, the anti-aircraft cruiser HMCS *Prince Robert* represented Canada at the Japanese surrender, Second World War. Her commanding officer was Captain Wallace Bouchier Creery.

Sixth, when the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, or the RCNVR, was established in 1923, ratings — today we would call them non-commissioned members — were paid 25 cents per evening of training, while officers received no pay at all.

Today, Canada's fleet of 33 warships, submarines and coastal defence vessels, the latter being referred to as the Kingston class for good and substantial reason, Kingston having been the first capital of Canada — I throw that in for edification — continues the mission that began 100 years ago. Canadian naval crews can be found in any of our world's oceans, on our coasts, above and below the sea, working with others and alone in defence of the values and freedoms vital to Canada and Canadians, just as naval forces have, as individual specialists and reservists, been part of our land force in Afghanistan as part of that NATO- and UN-authorized effort.

The navy is an integral part of the search and rescue, Olympic security and important relief efforts in places like Haiti and hurricane-ravaged gulf regions in the U.S. A combination of high technology, coherent design and focused form and function, Canada's navy and naval reserve are attracting new recruits every year.

Like any modern combat force, there are challenges with retention of talent, upgrading and refurbishing fleet capacity and standing down the forces of darkness in the civil service, who see defence as the first place to cut at any opportunity. These are not unique to Canada, but the role of our navy in a three-ocean country, with ocean trade routes around the globe and clear and pressing national interests on every continent, combined with environmental fishery and security threats, is real and focused on a 24/7 basis and has never been more important.

This 2010 naval centennial year should be about serious commemoration of the many who built, served, led, sacrificed and died so that we could enjoy the freedom of the seas, be able to project our values and protect our freedom worldwide for a century. However, 2010 should also be about a multi-year naval plan that protects, modernizes and enhances present capacity.

As we mark this special centennial throughout the year, it is important to recall that we will be celebrating much more than history and tradition in 2010. Canadian sovereignty, global citizenship and serious, technically adept deployability have never mattered more. The responsibility to protect, embraced by so many — the soft power crowd — is of no meaning without the capacity to deploy.

Through thick and thin, Canada's navy has given prime ministers, Parliaments and governments of different affiliations the ability to do that.

• (1600)

There are dozens of events across Canada celebrating the 100 years of our navy, including an open house at HMCS *Cataraqui* in Kingston on June 21, to which I invite you all. There are balls, presentations, fleet reviews, sail pasts and barbecues.

I urge all colleagues to attend one or more events in their own area of representation to celebrate the 100 years of achievement of our women and men in the Canadian Navy.

Across the decades and up to the present day, our sailors have been at the forefront, projecting Canada's values and protecting our interests on the seas around the globe. In doing so, our men and women in naval uniform have done and are doing Borden and Laurier, and those who stood with them 100 years ago, proud.

Hon. Bill Rompkey: I want to congratulate Senator Segal for bringing this motion forward and I want to support him in the remarks that he made. To that end, I now ask to adjourn the debate.

(On motion of Senator Rompkey, debate adjourned.)

NATIONAL FINANCE

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY COSTS AND BENEFITS OF ONE-CENT COIN

Hon. Irving Gerstein, pursuant to notice of April 22, 2010, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance be authorized to examine and report on the costs and benefits of Canada's one-cent coin to Canadian taxpayers and the overall Canadian economy;

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

- (a) The recent cost-saving changes to Canada's currency system announced by the Royal Canadian Mint;
- (b) The direct cost to taxpayers of producing and distributing one-cent coins in relation to their actual value;
- (c) The costs and productivity implications for Canadian businesses in light of the counting, handling and redistribution requirements of the coin; and
- (d) International experiences with eliminating low-denomination coins; and

That the committee submit its final report to the Senate no later than December 31, 2010, and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings for 180 days after the tabling of the final report.

He said: Honourable senators, this motion would allow the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance to undertake a study of the costs and benefits associated with the production and use of the penny. This proposal has support of the steering committee. I understand that our chair, Senator Day, will also comment favourably on this motion.

Why do we need to study the penny? Many would argue that the penny has simply outlived its purpose. It is a piece of currency that lacks currency. In fact, a penny cannot even buy a penny anymore.

This is the heart of the issue: It costs far more than a cent to produce and distribute each penny. On those occasions when pennies are used in retail transactions, it costs the retailer because employees must be paid more than a penny for the extra time it takes to handle each penny. Honourable senators, this is a no "penny ante" issue.

By some estimates, the production and use of the penny represents hundreds of millions of dollars every year in direct cost to taxpayers and lost productivity. However, please do not think I have prejudged the outcome of the study I am proposing.

There will be costs associated with eliminating the penny, as well. Retailers would have to recalibrate their cash registers, after-tax prices would have to be rounded off to a multiple of five cents, and the overall effect on price levels must be considered. There might also be some effect on charity fundraising campaigns that collect coins. It is essential that the committee consider the views of all stakeholders on this issue.

In recent years, economists from the Desjardins Group and Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, amongst others, have studied this issue. The Department of Finance and the Royal Canadian Mint commissioned a market study on the matter in 2007, and a private member's bill, Bill C-252, to eliminate the penny has been introduced in the other place.

Other jurisdictions around the world have already eliminated their lowest denomination coins, including the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Israel, Sweden, Norway and Denmark. The Netherlands, France, Spain and Finland had done the same before adopting the Euro. There are internationally accepted economic models for determining the ideal denomination structure of a country's currency.

Honourable senators, there is a great deal to consider in relation to the future of the penny and I submit that the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance is ideally suited to study this issue. The cost of the penny to taxpayers fits well with the committee's mandate to scrutinize government spending. Moreover, Bill C-82, the legislation that created the two-dollar coin, the toonie, was studied in the First Session of the Thirty-fifth Parliament by the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance. Therefore, there is a clear precedent for the study I am proposing.

I want to reassure all honourable senators that this study will be quite focused. The committee will not stop honourable senators from earning or spending a pretty penny; honourable senators will still be able to wear penny loafers; and, each time it rains, it will still rain pennies from heaven. Unfortunately, you can no longer trade them for a package of sunshine and flowers because, under the Currency Act, no florist or party to any transaction is obliged to accept the payment of more than 25 cents in pennies.

In closing, honourable senators, this is an area in which the National Finance Committee can make a direct and measurable impact, as the government has signalled a strong interest in this area and will pay close attention to the committee's recommendations.

Thank you, honourable senators.

Hon. Joseph A. Day: Honourable senators, I thank the Deputy Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance for his initiative on this particular matter. I can assure honourable senators that this matter was discussed at the National Finance Committee and was then referred to steering, although there was some concern expressed by some honourable senators about any discussion concerned with abolishing anything in this particular chamber. However, apart from that, we were prepared to go as far as the penny, at the very least.

If honourable senators believe this would be a worthwhile matter for our committee to look into, the members of the committee are prepared to do so at this chamber's direction.

Senator Comeau: Question.

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

(Motion agreed to.)

(The Senate adjourned until Wednesday, April 28, 2010, at 1:30 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Tuesday, April 27, 2010

	PAGE		PAGE
SENATORS' STATEMENTS		Hon. James S. Cowan	383
World Intellectual Property Day		Hon. Maria Chaput	384
Hon. Joseph A. Day	379	Hon. Roméo Antonius Dallaire	384
Terrorist Activity		Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer	385
Hon. Michel Rivard	379	Delayed Answers to Oral Questions	
Multiple Sclerosis Treatment		Hon. Gerald J. Comeau	386
Hon. W. David Angus	380	Seniors	
Canadian Bill of Rights		Strategy for Aging—Budget 2010.	
Hon. Nicole Eaton	380	Questions by Senator Carstairs and Senator Cordy.	
Earthquake in Tibet		Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Delayed Answer)	386
Hon. Consiglio Di Nino	381	Answers to Order Paper Questions Tabled	
Visitors in the Gallery		Veterans Affairs—New Veterans Charter.	
The Hon. the Acting Speaker	381	Hon. Gerald J. Comeau	387
		Veterans Affairs—Support for Veterans.	
		Hon. Gerald J. Comeau	387
		Veterans Affairs—New Veterans Charter.	
		Hon. Gerald J. Comeau	387
<hr/>			
ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS		ORDERS OF THE DAY	
Legal and Constitutional Affairs		Federal Sustainable Development Act and Auditor General Act (Bill S-210)	
Budget and Authorization to Engage Services and Travel—		Bill to Amend—Third Reading.	
Study on Provisions and Operation of DNA Identification Act—		Hon. Tommy Banks	388
Third Report of Committee Presented.		National Philanthropy Day Bill (Bill S-203)	
Hon. Joan Fraser	381	Second Reading—Debate Continued.	
Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament		Hon. Terry M. Mercer	388
Second Report of Committee Presented.		Criminal Code (Bill S-204)	
Hon. David P. Smith	382	Bill to Amend—Order Reset.	
Senatorial Selection Bill (Bill S-8)		Hon. Claudette Tardif	389
First Reading.		Governance of Canadian Businesses Emergency Bill (Bill S-205)	
Hon. Gerald J. Comeau	382	Order Stands.	
Senate Online		Hon. Claudette Tardif	389
Notice of Inquiry.		Conflict of Interest Act (Bill S-208)	
Hon. Grant Mitchell	382	Bill to Amend—Second Reading—Debate Adjourned.	
Environment and Human Rights		Hon. Joseph A. Day	389
Notice of Inquiry.		International Boundary Waters Treaty Act (Bill S-213)	
Hon. Grant Mitchell	382	Bill to Amend—Second Reading—Debate Adjourned.	
Women's Choices		Hon. Lowell Murray	390
Notice of Inquiry.		Supreme Court Act (Bill C-232)	
Hon. Vivienne Poy	382	Bill to Amend—Second Reading—Debate Continued.	
Visitors in the Gallery		Hon. Maria Chaput	390
The Hon. the Acting Speaker	382	Aboriginal Peoples	
Understanding of Official Languages		Budget and Authorization to Engage Services—Study	
Presentation of Petition.		on Federal Government's Responsibilities to First Nations,	
Hon. Claudette Tardif	382	Inuit and Metis Peoples—Second Report of Committee Adopted.	
		Hon. Gerry St. Germain	392
<hr/>			
QUESTION PERIOD		Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration	
International Cooperation		Second Report of Committee Adopted.	
Maternal and Infant Health Initiative at G8 Conference.		Hon. David Tkachuk	392
Hon. Claudette Tardif	382	Hon. Joseph A. Day	392
Hon. Marjory LeBreton	383		
Hon. Rose-Marie Losier-Cool	383		

	PAGE
Social Affairs, Science and Technology	
Motion to Place Thirteenth Report of Committee Tabled during Second Session of Fortieth Parliament on the Orders of the Day Adopted.	
Hon. Art Eggleton	392
Hon. Gerald J. Comeau	393
National Drug Plan	
Inquiry—Debate Adjourned.	
Hon. Catherine S. Callbeck	393

	PAGE
The Senate	
Motion to Extend Wishes of Appreciation to Canadian Navy—Debate Adjourned.	
Hon. Hugh Segal	394
Hon. Bill Rompkey	396
National Finance	
Committee Authorized to Study Costs and Benefits of One-cent Coin.	
Hon. Irving Gerstein	396
Hon. Joseph A. Day	397



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