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THE HONOURABLE NOËL A. KINSELLA
SPEAKER

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THE SENATE

Wednesday, November 3, 2010

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

[English]

Prayers.

[Translation]

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

CANADIAN BROADCASTING ACT

Hon. Marie-P. Poulin: Honourable senators, yesterday, Tuesday, November 2, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation started counting down to one year of activities to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of its establishment as a national public broadcaster.

When I heard that news, I immediately realized that I had had the honour and joy of being part of its development for one third of its existence. We cannot underestimate the importance of November 2, 1936, the day that Canada's Broadcasting Act came into force. That was just 69 years after Confederation, when Canada was born. At the time, a single radio station was launched. Thus began the work of creating a national communication network in our vast country.

Every single senator among us has access to one or more CBC or Société Radio-Canada stations in our own communities, from Newfoundland and Labrador to British Columbia.

Today, the CBC offers a wide range of services in both official languages, in eight Aboriginal languages and with closed captioning for the hearing impaired.

From these humble beginnings, one of the largest public broadcasters in the world was born. I am proud to have been a part of its unprecedented and spectacular growth.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation was, and still is, our greatest storyteller, as it broadcasts shows to all the regions of our vast country. It has united the country and bred our own cultural expression, whether through music, entertainment, literature, theatre, children's programming, information, news, public affairs or sports. It is very difficult to imagine Canada without the CBC, which has produced a rare breed of international celebrities, including singers, comedians, actors and highly respected news commentators.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all those who have worked for the CBC over the years on their many achievements.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

GREEN ECONOMY

Hon. Gerry St. Germain: Honourable senators, like so many other Western world countries, Canada's economy has become more knowledge-based. Particularly in light of the global economic recession, I believe that Canada needs to rebuild the part of our economy that, frankly, built this country in the first place. I am speaking about our natural resources economy. The time has come for Canada to take our knowledge-based economy and merge it with our traditional economic drivers to create the economy of the future — the green economy.

In my home province of British Columbia, the green industry contributes \$15.3 billion in gross domestic product to the economy, and it is growing.

Senator Mercer: B.C. bud.

Senator St. Germain: I am not asking about the honourable senator's personal life or habits.

In a report released by the Vancouver-based GLOBE Foundation, the green economy in B.C. could realize a contribution to gross domestic product of \$27.4 billion by 2020. However, this economic benchmark will not be achieved if the green labour shortage is not addressed. According to the report, the labour market within B.C.'s green economy will be short by 66,000 people if action is not taken over the next nine years. With Canada coming out of a tumultuous economic time, all levels of government must look at reports like this one.

A key element of Canada's future fiscal policy will be the green economy. Good governance means planning for the future by investing in it today. Renewed public policy on developing a green workforce is needed to ensure that Canada can reap the economic benefits of the green economy. The public money invested in green economy research and development is a prudent investment of public money. Proper development of the green economy has a potential to benefit all Canadians.

For our First Nations people, who are the original protectors of our country's environment, the green economy can act as a driver for new educational and economic development opportunities. Not only does the green economy have the potential to improve Canada's economic sector, it also has the potential to improve dramatically our health and social well-being.

I encourage all honourable senators to pay special attention to reports like this one from the GLOBE Foundation. There is no reason why Canada's green economy cannot be a leader in the world, for we only stand to benefit.

Senator Mercer, stay out of the bud.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

DIWALI

Hon. Vim Kochhar: Honourable senators, I rise today to draw your attention to the celebration of Diwali, the festival of lights, celebrated by over one billion people in India and around the world. Diwali is celebrated in India as Christmas is celebrated in Canada. Depending on the lunar calendar, this festival falls on the darkest day of the year. This year, it falls on November 5. The reason for celebrating this festival varies from region to region, and religion to religion. The main reason remains the same. It is to showcase the triumph of good over evil and overpowering our spiritual darkness. By observing it in this way, we bring in the New Year with great expectations and a bright, positive outlook ahead.

• (1340)

Many legends are associated with this festival, but mainly during this time, people pray to Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, life, prosperity and wisdom, and to the god Ganesha, the Remover of Obstacles and Lord of Beginnings.

It is also associated with the Ramayana, a book written some 5,000 years ago. It is the story of how to keep one's promise and how to love one's family and the people around one. It is a story explaining that devils temporarily succeed but they are destroyed in the end. It is a story that public opinion may mislead us sometimes, but that following one's conscience will always lead us to joy and happiness.

Diwali brings us a message of love, wealth and prosperity. This truly makes the world a better place to live in. May the lights of Diwali illuminate the year ahead for us all.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I would like to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Walter McLean, a member of Her Majesty's Privy Council, who is accompanying a distinguished delegation from Namibia.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

CAPITALISM IN NOVA SCOTIA

Hon. Stephen Greene: Honourable senators, I went down to my mailbox the other day and found a pamphlet from my Halifax MP, a member of the New Democratic Party. Normally, I pile these pamphlets in a bin conveniently located in my kitchen, so goodness knows why I decided to read this one. There on page 2 of the brochure was a picture of my MP at a Labour Day rally in Halifax, standing next to a sign that read "Capitalism is not working."

What an awful message to give to any young person willing to invest their time, cash and talents in starting up a business. What an awful message to give to anyone or any company considering investing in Nova Scotia. May I remind my MP that she

represents a city which is the economic engine for the whole province, if not the region? Where would Halifax be without private sector companies like Irving Shipbuilding, Nova Scotia Power, Bell Aliant, Clearwater Seafoods, Secunda Marine and Pete's Frootique? The list goes on and on — big, medium and small — from the restaurants that MP frequents to the shops, stores and boutiques she patronizes. Those are privately owned and managed, every one of them.

Does she dare stand up outside of their offices and places of business and declare that capitalism is not working? How can my MP truly represent and promote the people and city of Halifax if she has those views?

If capitalism is not working, as she says, then what does she prescribe? Socialism? I hardly think so. The NDP is not that naive. I would be amazed if they did not know that socialism was in the dustbin of history, but maybe they do not know that.

Perhaps my MP means the NDP version of capitalism is not working. I would certainly like to think she means that, because there is plenty of evidence for it in Nova Scotia. Under the NDP government, Nova Scotia has the highest HST/GST/PST in the country and the highest sales taxes in North America. Nova Scotia also has one of the highest provincial income tax rates in the country and Nova Scotia's business taxes will soon be double those of our neighbour, New Brunswick.

The NDP government is not making Nova Scotia an attractive place for investment, economic growth, jobs or families. Capitalists believe first and foremost in low taxes, small government and balanced budgets. It has been proven that this formula for economic growth actually works. Yet, these are all things the NDP government in Nova Scotia has not tried. Capitalism is not working? I might agree with that if the rest of the sign admitted the truth, that the NDP does not allow it to work in Nova Scotia.

What can turn things around in the Province of Nova Scotia? Only the Progressive Conservative Party under its new leader Jamie Baillie. It is important that the MP from Halifax and all those who support her understand that the market on which capitalism is based is not an invention of Wall Street, Adam Smith or the West, in general. Capitalism is the horse that pulls the cart of progress. Capitalism has existed for thousands of years and is an innate part of the human condition.

My MP spoke on Labour Day. The day before Labour Day should be called Capitalist Day, for without capitalists, there is no labour.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Hon. Nicole Eaton: Honourable senators, 93 years ago today on November 6, 1917, the Canadian Corps led by Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Currie took Passchendaele. After great success at Vimy Ridge and Hill 70, the Canadians were viewed as the best bet to secure the Belgian town. This would open up all of northern Belgium for the Allies, allowing them to gain momentum and capture German submarine bases.

Allied casualties had been extremely high, objectives had not been met, they had gained just a few miles and the battlefield was a pool of mud. Currie was hesitant to have Canadians participate and predicted 16,000 casualties. The Canadian Corps practised the attack. They would advance in increments, with the first goal being the red line, the second being the blue line and the third being the green line.

When the Allies' artillery barrage commenced at 0540 hours on October 26, it was reported as having been heard in London. Over the course of the 14-day battle, more than 1.4 million shells were fired by the Canadian Corps. Shortly after the barrage began, 20,000 Canadians began advancing toward the red line through the pouring rain. Major Robert Massie wrote:

I don't believe they had been going ten minutes before they were all soaked and covered with mud, head to foot.

The Canadians were able to achieve and hold the red line. On October 30, they began advancing towards the blue line. They quickly reached their objective, but for several days had to hold their gains against intense opposition. By the time reinforcements arrived, 80 per cent of the 3rd and 4th Divisions of the Canadian Corps were casualties.

At 0600 hours on November 6, the Canadian Corps began advancing toward the green line, which meant capturing Passchendaele. By the end of the day, what was left of Passchendaele was under the control of the Allies.

The victory came at a great cost. As Lieutenant-General Currie had predicted, Canadian casualties reached 15,654 — 1,000 of which were never recovered from the mud.

General Sir David Watson said:

It need hardly be a matter of surprise that the Canadians by this time had the reputation of being the best shock troops in the Allied Armies. . . . the Canadian superiority was proven beyond question.

Now, as then, Canadian men and women in our Armed Forces are the best in the world.

Please join me in remembering the great courage that took place 93 years ago and the great courage of our Armed Forces in Afghanistan today.

CANADIAN BATTLEFIELDS FOUNDATION

Hon. Michael Duffy: Honourable senators, I would like to follow up on the remarks of my colleague, the Honourable Senator Eaton. As we look forward to Remembrance Day, I want to draw attention to the remarkable work being done by the Canadian Battlefields Foundation. The foundation seeks to keep alive in the memory of Canadians the amazing sacrifices made in the Second World War by what has been called the Greatest Generation.

Through their efforts, there is a Canadian Memorial Garden in Caen, France. Every year a group of history students is taken on a tour of the battlefields in the month of June to see where Canadians fought and died.

Many of us have been privileged to see this sacred ground, but for those who have not, I thought honourable senators might be interested in hearing this report from Keith Spicer, a former senior public servant, who represented the foundation at the ceremonies in France this past June. He wrote the following: "I was close to overwhelmed by the intensity and sincerity of French support for" the work of the Foundation. "This was true of the officials, but also of the ordinary French citizens I met. The commitment of these people was profoundly touching." Mr. Spicer also reported that "they are all instilling their sense of gratitude to Canada in their children and grandchildren."

He went on to report that, in addition to the French, he met many Dutch citizens at the remembrance ceremonies. They, like the French, hold Canada in a special place because of the sacrifices made by our forefathers in liberating their country.

• (1350)

Tomorrow, at the National War Museum in Ottawa, the Ambassador of the Netherlands to Canada will join with Peter Mansbridge and other distinguished Canadians in a ceremony of remembrance. I urge all who can to attend this important event.

Finally, it is not just November 11 or the Second World War which prompts strong outpouring of thanks among our European friends; they have not forgotten Passchendaele or the rest of the First World War, either.

Many of you may know that every evening at eight o'clock in the city of Ypres, Belgium, traffic comes to a halt at the Menin Gate. Local volunteers conduct a ceremony of remembrance for the more than 15,000 Canadian and Commonwealth soldiers who gave their lives in the liberation of just that part of Belgium during the First World War.

For these and millions of other Europeans, every day is Remembrance Day. That is why I think it is important that here at home we do all we can to help the Canadian Battlefields Foundation in their important mission of keeping this vital part of our history alive.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

STUDY ON USER FEES PROPOSAL

INDUSTRY—FIFTH REPORT OF BANKING,
TRADE AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Michael A. Meighen, Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce, presented the following report:

Wednesday, November 3, 2010 [English]

The Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce has the honour to present its

FIFTH REPORT

Your Committee, to which was referred the document "User Fee Proposal for Services under the *Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act*" has in obedience to the order of reference of Monday, September 27, 2010, examined the User Fee Proposal and, in accordance with section 5 of the *User Fee Act*, recommends that it be approved.

Respectfully submitted,

MICHAEL A. MEIGHEN
Chair

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

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

[Translation]

SUSTAINING CANADA'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY BILL

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE NATIONAL FINANCE COMMITTEE TO STUDY SUBJECT MATTER

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 58(1)(e), I give notice that later this day, I will move:

That, in accordance with rule 74(1), the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance be authorized to examine the subject-matter of Bill C-47, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 4, 2010 and other measures, introduced in the House of Commons on September 30, 2010, in advance of the said bill coming before the Senate.

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

Some Hon. Senators: No.

Senator Comeau: If the honourable senators across the floor do not grant leave, I will move the motion at the next sitting of the Senate.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

[Senator Meighen]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS IN BRAZIL

Hon. A. Raynell Andreychuk: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade be authorized to examine and report on the political and economic developments in Brazil and the implications for Canadian policy and interests in the region, and other related matters.

That the committee submit its final report to the Senate no later than December 22, 2011 and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings until March 31, 2012.

[Translation]

QUESTION PERIOD

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

2009-10 ANNUAL REPORT OF COMMISSIONER

Hon. Maria Chaput: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Yesterday, the Commissioner of Official Languages presented Volume II of his 2009-10 annual report. In 2009-10, the commissioner deemed admissible 1,477 complaints relating to failure to comply with the Official Languages Act. Of those, 876 were against CBC/Radio-Canada regarding budget cutbacks in Windsor, Ontario.

With respect to service to the public, 451 complaints were deemed admissible in 2009-10, which was about the same number as in 2005-06.

With regard to the active offer in person, the commissioner's observations show that only two of the 16 institutions reviewed greeted the public in both English and French more than 60 per cent of the time. Only two institutions out of 16. Why is the active offer so rare in our federal institutions?

Why are Canadians still too often having a hard time accessing federal services in the official language of their choice?

Would strong leadership on the leader's part help federal institutions correct this problem? The Commissioner of Official Languages' report demonstrates the urgency of the situation. There is no excuse for not taking action.

My question is this: does the government intend to take action immediately to ensure full compliance with the Official Languages Act before our hard-won progress disappears?

[English]

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): I thank the honourable senator for the question. As she would know, the government is most appreciative of Mr. Graham Fraser, the Official Languages Commissioner, for his excellent report. We will review all of the commissioner's recommendations and will continue to work with his office.

Where there are issues — and as the honourable senator pointed out, there are some issues — we will set about to immediately work with the commissioner to address them. However, I would like to draw the attention of honourable senators to page 8 of the report, which shows that the number of complaints filed by Canadians in this area of official languages services to the public is lower than under the previous Liberal government.

We take our responsibility to Canada's Official Languages Act seriously. I wish to assure the honourable senator that, where there are concerns, the government will work extremely hard with the commissioner and with departmental officials to address them.

[Translation]

Senator Chaput: I would also like to draw the Leader of the Government in the Senate's attention to the fact that, although there are no more complaints now than there have been in the past, studies have shown that first, francophones in minority communities have been filing fewer complaints because they are sick and tired of filing complaints, and second, people are not aware of their rights and they do not know where they should be receiving service in English and French. When they do complain, they may be told that the service is not available because the office is not designated. Thus, there are issues with fatigue and with the burden of proof.

• (1400)

Does the leader not believe that this is something to think about and something the government might wish to look at?

[English]

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I take issue with the honourable senator's comment that the Canadian Armed Forces has given up. That is not the case. The Canadian Forces recognize the importance of supporting both official languages. As I have said before to the honourable senator on other questions, ensuring that French and English have equal status is not only the right thing to do but it also is the right thing to do from an operational point of view.

The Canadian Forces has accepted the 20 recommendations from the commissioner's June 2 report, and the commissioner has written that he is satisfied with the action plan of the Department of National Defence to implement the recommendations. The Department of National Defence has been working to implement the recommendations of the Official Languages Commissioner. The Official Languages Commissioner has said he is satisfied with

the work at the Department of National Defence. I think it is irresponsible to suggest that the Armed Forces have given up.

Senator Mitchell: She did not suggest that.

Senator Poulin: Bad translation.

[Translation]

Senator Chaput: Honourable senators, I apologize to the Leader of the Government, but I did not mention the Armed Forces. There must have been an error in the translation. I will check that.

Hon. Jean-Claude Rivest: Honourable senators, I would like to ask a supplementary question. Year after year, the Commissioner of Official Languages' reports are, unfortunately, quite similar and always highlight large gaps in the application of the law, as our colleague Senator Chaput pointed out.

It seems to me that it is time that the current government and, in particular, the Prime Minister, Mr. Harper, return to the tradition that began with the Right Honourable Pierre Elliot Trudeau and was continued by the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney. I would like to hear a firm, determined and resolute commitment from the Prime Minister of Canada to assume his leadership role, as Prime Minister of Canada, to ensure that the Official Languages Act is properly enforced.

[English]

Senator LeBreton: All I can say to the honourable senator is that he heard absolutely right. We see by the Prime Minister's actions and the actions of our government that the Prime Minister's commitment to our official languages is firm, it is demonstrable, and we see examples of it every single day.

Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer: In early 2010, Canada welcomed the whole world to the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games. British Columbia was proud to host this event. Unfortunately, we have one black mark. We hosted the world well but we let down Canadians. Our duality, French and English, was not reflected at the Games. The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages received 46 complaints regarding the Vancouver Games of which 38 were specifically about the lack of French during the opening ceremony. The office of the commissioner determined, after investigation, that these 38 complaints related to the violations of Part VII of the Official Languages Act, the law of our land.

Canadian Heritage had negotiated an agreement prior to the Games with the Vancouver Organizing Committee that contained an official languages clause. In his 2009-10 report, the commissioner deplored the fact that the clause was not more explicit regarding the reflection of Canada's linguistic duality.

Why was the language clause not more specific regarding the committee's responsibility on linguistic duality?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I remember addressing this issue many times prior to the Olympics and Paralympics taking place in Vancouver and also, I believe, just following the Olympics.

As honourable senators know, and as the Minister of Canadian Heritage stated, the opening ceremony was under the responsibility of VANOC and the Olympic organization. There was disappointment at the lack of both official languages in that ceremony.

Having said that, all facilities that were under the direct control of the federal government fully recognized and adhered to the Official Languages Act. Honourable senators will recall that the Commissioner of Official Languages, Mr. Graham Fraser, went to Vancouver specifically and spent the whole time during the Olympics assessing how well the Official Languages Act was being respected and implemented. Honourable senators will recall that he gave the federal government in all of its roles in the Olympics high marks and reported that the Government of Canada had met completely its obligations to the Official Languages Act.

Senator Jaffer: Moving forward, will the minister's government ensure that all future contribution agreements relating to Canada's linguistic duality will be more explicit regarding both the presence and proper representation of both our official languages?

Senator LeBreton: As I said in answer to all of the questions today, honourable senators, the government fully supports, implements and recognizes absolutely Canada's Official Languages Act.

With regard to the honourable senator's specific question, since there does not appear to be an Olympics or a major international event upcoming in the near future, I can only surmise that the experience of the Olympics in February would cause the government, if we were ever in such a situation again, to remind organizers of these committees that we have an Official Languages Act in this country and it is their duty to respect that act.

Senator Comeau: We hope we will still be government at that time.

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: Honourable senators, every federal institution has a duty to consult official language communities about their needs. In fact, this consultation is an obligation under the Official Languages Act. According to the recent report of the Commissioner of Official Languages, some institutions fail to consult these communities entirely while others hold consultations but, at the end of the day, do not take the opinions expressed into account.

The commissioner says that he truly believes that strong leadership will enable federal institutions to address these types of shortcomings.

Will the federal government ensure that all federal institutions falling under the act will take positive measures to establish effective consultation mechanisms, thus respecting their obligations?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I answered that question in reply to the Honourable Senator Chaput's question.

Obviously, the government takes the reports of the Official Languages Commissioner seriously. We will work hard with his office. From his report, we know there are certain departments that have issues that must be addressed, and the government is committed fully to working with the Official Languages Commissioner to address these concerns.

I point out to honourable senators that this government has a good record of adhering to all aspects of the Official Languages Act and, as I pointed out to the honourable senator's seatmate, page 8 of the report shows the number of complaints filed by Canadians in the area of official languages services to the public is lower under our government than under the previous Liberal government.

Senator Mockler: That is leadership.

Senator Mercer: Yesterday, I asked a witness from the Canadian Tourism Commission who appeared before the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications at hearings on the study about airlines and moving from Ottawa to Vancouver. You will recall that the tourism commission moved from Ottawa to Vancouver. I asked about the level of bilingualism of staff. I was informed that about 50 per cent or 60 per cent of the positions in Vancouver are bilingual. What is more interesting is that they sometimes struggle to find people in Vancouver who meet the bilingualism standards.

• (1410)

Will the leader assure this chamber that we will respect the Official Languages Act and ensure that we have mechanisms in place to achieve 100 per cent compliance?

Senator LeBreton: Again, honourable senators, the Official Languages Act is an act that is the law of the land to ensure that services are available in both official languages in federal institutions. Obviously, the government fully supports the Official Languages Act.

As I pointed out — now at least four times — where there are concerns, the government will work with the various departments and agencies to address them.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, before calling on Honourable Senator Pépin, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Mircea Geoana, President of the Senate of Romania.

He is accompanied by the distinguished Ambassador of Romania to Canada and a delegation.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

2009-10 REPORT OF COMMISSIONER

Hon. Lucie Pépin: Honourable senators, the Commissioner of Official Languages has pointed out that too many Canadians still have difficulty obtaining federal government services in French or in English. All too often, minority official language communities do not benefit from the support they need in order to flourish.

The Official Languages Act has been in place for more than 40 years. Why, then, can minority language communities not expect better treatment today and receive better federal services in the language of their choice?

[English]

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): As the honourable senator points out, the act has been in place for 40 years. This and previous governments respect and obey the law of the land, which is the Official Languages Act. That is why we have a Commissioner of Official Languages. He oversees the implementation of the act and ensures that the act is properly implemented and respected by all federal agencies and departments of the government.

When the honourable senator asks how it could be, obviously it is a situation where governments must be forever vigilant. The Commissioner of Official Languages is vigilant on behalf of Parliament because he is an officer of Parliament. That is the value of the work that the Commissioner of Official Languages provides. Obviously, this year, he pointed out areas that are not up to appropriate levels. That is why, when the Commissioner of Official Languages makes such a report, the government is appreciative. Otherwise, we probably would not know.

As I have said before, we thank the Commissioner of Official Languages. We appreciate the commissioner pointing out to the government where improvement is needed, and we will work carefully with the commissioner and with the departmental officials to ensure that the Official Languages Act is fully adhered to.

Honourable senators, this situation is not something unique to this government. In fact, this government's record, according to the Commissioner of Official Languages, on page 8, is better than the record of the previous one.

Hon. Grant Mitchell: Honourable senators, there is one feature of the language commissioner's report that I found to be particularly revealing and interesting, particularly in light of what the leader has said about the government's commitment and the priority the government places on official languages, and how hard they will work with the Commissioner of Official Languages to solve these problems.

The commissioner said:

... too many federal institutions have difficulty fulfilling their language obligations regarding service to the public because they fail to adequately follow up on the plans they have developed or agreements they have signed, or because they fail to monitor the impact of their actions.

Those two features require management and leadership. If one does not have management and one does not have leadership, those things are not done. They have not been done for five years under this government's regime.

How can this leader say that her government is committed to official languages as some kind of initiative or priority when she simply has not applied the resources and does not have the priorities or, perhaps the leadership to make that priority happen when the government has had five years to do that?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, we do appreciate when the Commissioner of Official Languages reports to Parliament and draws Parliament's and the government's attention to areas that require it. The honourable senator must have had plugs in his ears.

Senator Mitchell: If only I had.

Senator LeBreton: The honourable senator seems to say that the complaints have occurred only in the last five years. However, on page 8 of the present report of the Commissioner of Official Languages, it shows that the number of complaints filed by Canadians in the area of official languages services to the public is lower under this government than it was under the previous Liberal government.

Senator Tkachuk: Read the report.

Senator Mitchell: Complaints are lower undoubtedly because Canadians have diminishing interest in approaching this government for anything because they do not receive service or response; all they receive is spin. There is never any answer, no solution to problems, no advancement, no vision and no leadership. Why would anyone go to this government?

We will see how many go to this government in the next election.

Here is an easy, specific problem when you talk about doing something specific to fix the problem. The commissioner's top recommendation to Ottawa, to the government, is:

... table a new bill as quickly as possible to protect and uphold the language rights of the travelling public and Air Canada employees, and make Jazz directly subject to the Official Languages Act.

How hard can that solution be? When will you implement it?

Senator LeBreton: When the honourable senator talks about "spin," he reminds me of that little cartoon character that runs around in the desert and creates a lot of dust.

Senator Comeau: The Tasmanian Devil.

Senator LeBreton: That is who it is.

The obligation to provide bilingual services to the public and a bilingual workplace applies to Air Canada under the Air Canada Public Participation Act. Our government intends to table legislation to address the commissioner's recommendations regarding Air Canada Jazz.

Senator Mitchell: The Royal Canadian Mounted Police has been singled out as having little or no resolve to address language-of-work issues that have persisted for years. I assume that comment would include at least the last five years under this government's regime.

Can the minister give the people of Canada some indication of whether her government, in working with the Commissioner of Official Languages, will take specific measures relating to the RCMP and their failure to provide proper official languages services?

Senator LeBreton: The honourable senator is now asking me, as the Leader of the Government in the Senate, to take on the work of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

Senator Comeau: He has done his work.

Senator Tardif: Just enact the recommendation.

Senator LeBreton: I imagine that the Commissioner of Official Languages, when he reports to Parliament and looks at all agencies of government, obviously will look at the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

PERSONAL INFORMATION DISCLOSURE OF VISA APPLICANTS

Hon. Roméo Antonius Dallaire: Honourable senators, Citizenship and Immigration Canada has now standardized the forms needed to obtain a visa in this country. It is interesting that in the new form, they ask any applicant who has served in the military, police or civil defence services to disclose when they served, what unit they served in, where that unit was located and what their responsibilities were. When I read that, it brought me back to some of the intelligence data gathering that we used during the Cold War.

• (1420)

Particularly with regard to the complaint by the Russians, has Canada reopened a new venue of seeking intelligence from more recent allies through the visa application form?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I will take that question as notice and refer it to the proper departmental officials for response.

Senator Dallaire: The new form also requires that the individual disclose present or past membership in a political party, a trade union or any other social, professional or youth organization.

Can I take for granted, then, either through membership in the professional army or as a non-state actor, with respect to an individual who was a child soldier and is now an adult, that that person could essentially be denied a visa as a result of having been a child soldier?

Senator LeBreton: Senator Dallaire always has the same round-about way of coming back to his favourite topic. I will take that question as notice.

Senator Dallaire: I would add that it raises a further question. If this is the application and the interpretation of the application by staff on how to obtain a visa, will that have an impact on the application of any such rules on child soldiers being returned to Canada? Would that affect the decision one year from now regarding Omar Khadr, after his year in jail?

Some Hon. Senators: Shame!

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I just said that Senator Dallaire always manages to get the question back to his favourite subject matter. I will take the question as notice.

[Translation]

DELAYED ANSWERS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have the honour to present three delayed answers to oral questions raised by Senator Chaput on September 28, 2010, concerning Industry — the 2011 Census; by Senator Cordy on October 5 and November 2, 2010, concerning Industry — the 2011 Census; and by Senator Moore on October 5, 2010, concerning Industry — the 2011 Census.

INDUSTRY

2011 CENSUS

(Response to question raised by Hon. Maria Chaput on September 28, 2010)

The data from the mandatory 2011 Census and the voluntary National Household Survey will be collected, processed, analyzed and released independently.

There are three language questions in the 2011 Census and five language questions in the 2011 National Household Survey. The questions that are included in both the census and the survey are: knowledge of official languages, home language and mother tongue. In addition, the National Household Survey will include questions on knowledge of non-official languages and language of work.

The three questions asked in the 2011 Census will provide the information necessary to derive information on first official language spoken which is needed to support policy and programs administered under the *Official Languages Act*. The language information, coupled with the demographic information from the 2011 Census, will be released in 2012.

Data collected in the National Household Survey will provide supplemental information on the situation of Canada's various language groups. The survey data from the larger suite of language questions, when combined with data from the ethno-cultural, place of birth, immigration, place of work and other questions, will provide information that can be used to analyze the linguistic diversity of Canada's population.

This is the first time Statistics Canada will conduct the National Household Survey. Statistics Canada will analyze and release the results of the survey applying the same methods and approaches as used for all its surveys. The schedule for releasing results of the National Household Survey, while not yet determined, is expected to occur throughout 2013. The product line will be separate from that of the 2011 Census and will be finalized following the processing and evaluation of survey results.

(Response to questions raised by Hon. Jane Cordy on October 5, 2010 and November 2, 2010)

The sample size for the mandatory 2011 long form Census was approximately 2.9 million dwellings. The voluntary National Household Survey replaced the mandatory long form census and will be sent to approximately 4.5 million dwellings, an increase of 1.6 million dwellings. The government is allocating \$5 million in additional funding to Statistics Canada to cover the increased printing and mail-out costs associated with the increased sample. All other costs related to the development and implementation of the National Household Survey are covered as part of the approved census budget.

(Response to question raised by Hon. Wilfred P. Moore on October 5, 2010)

Enumerators working on the 2006 Census were initially paid on a 'per form' basis in the first few weeks of field collection. The 'per form' rates were established to equate to an hourly rate of \$11.88. Payment moved to an hourly rate once the field workload diminished and it became less advantageous to pay on a 'per form' basis. The Office of the Auditor General (OAG) observed that the 'per form' mode of payment was cumbersome, difficult to understand, and may have been one of the reasons Statistics Canada's recruitment efforts fell short in many parts of the country in 2006. The OAG recommended that new compensation approaches be explored for 2011. Statistics Canada will be paying all field enumeration work on an hourly basis for the 2011 census and the National Household Survey. The hourly rate will be \$14.72 an hour for enumerators.

[English]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ELECTRICITY AND GAS INSPECTION ACT WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—
DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Stephen Greene moved second reading of Bill C-14, An Act to amend the Electricity and Gas Inspection Act and the Weights and Measures Act.

He said: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak in support of Bill C-14, which has the short title Fairness at the Pumps Act. This bill amends the Weights and Measures Act and the Electricity and Gas Inspection Act to protect Canadians from inaccurate measurement.

Commercial transactions, the countless exchanges between buyers and sellers that take place every day in our country, are made on the basis of trust. The seller sells the agreed-upon quantity at a fair price; the buyer makes the agreed-upon payment in a timely manner.

Canadians across the country have for some time called for stricter legislation to strengthen their fair business practices and industries that measure or weigh the products they sell.

I should like to remind my honourable colleagues that many Canadians have become concerned about whether or not they are getting what they are paying for when purchasing goods on the basis of measure. Federal measurement standards took a drubbing in the media in 2008 when several news outlets, including the *Ottawa Citizen*, revealed that Canadians were not always receiving all of the gas they pay for.

Consumers often cannot tell if a measuring device is not operating properly unless it is wildly off the mark. They have no means of judging for themselves the accuracy of the measuring device. For example, if the device is overcharging consumers, who is to know? Who is to compel the retailer to fix the faulty device if that retailer does not even know himself or herself that the error exists? Bill C-14 provides the foundation for addressing such issues.

On that foundation, retailers will be able to build a solid track record that will go a long way toward developing renewed trust with Canadian consumers, trust that they are receiving precisely what they pay for every time. The government's goal with Bill C-14 is clear: to ensure that gas pumps and other measuring devices are measuring accurately so that Canadians get what they pay for.

To be precise, the bill gives the force of law to three specific changes that have been carefully designed to protect consumers and level the playing field for businesses. First, the bill sanctions mandatory inspection frequencies for measuring devices used by retailers. Second, the bill authorizes the Minister of Industry to designate qualified non-government inspectors to carry out inspections of measuring devices. Third, the bill sets out stiffer penalties that can be imposed under the Weights and Measures Act and the Electricity and Gas Inspection Act, and puts in place a new graduated system of administrative monetary penalties.

Many countries — France, Germany and most of the U.S. — have used mandatory inspection frequencies in their weights and measurement legislation for years. Canada has lagged behind. It is time a modernizing law, such as the Fairness at the Pumps Act, puts our country's approach to retail measurement in line with international standards.

Bill C-14 moves substantially forward by calling for mandatory inspection frequencies. This means inspections must be carried out every one to five years, depending on the industry and type of measuring device.

Under Bill C-14, inspection frequencies will be introduced in eight sectors: retail petroleum, downstream or wholesale petroleum, dairy, retail food, fishing, logging, grain and field crop and mining. Other sectors might be added in the future depending on the results of ongoing consultations with stakeholders.

Establishing mandatory inspections frequencies for measuring devices helps address a critical element of the measurement problem: retailers who neglect to maintain their measurement equipment and, as a result, charge customers unfairly for the goods they purchase.

Importantly, Measurement Canada will not carry out these mandatory inspections. The bill authorizes specially trained private sector companies to do the work on behalf of government. Measurement Canada will evaluate and monitor them every year to ensure they are doing their jobs correctly. If they do not, their authority will be revoked.

Once authorized service providers have been designated, they will be available for hire whenever retailers need them. This, combined with mandatory inspections, will lead to a much higher number of inspections than under the current legislation. More inspections will lead to more accuracy in the marketplace.

Authorized service providers could also service and repair measurement devices as they perform their inspections. In this way, small businesses will find they can kill two birds with one stone and keep their equipment working optimally at all times.

Under Bill C-14, other weaknesses in the existing statutes are addressed by increasing fines and putting into place a new graduated system of administrative monetary penalties.

Court-imposed fines for the variety of offences listed in the Weights and Measures Act and the Electricity and Gas Inspection Act will rise from \$1,000 to \$10,000 for minor offences and from \$5,000 to \$25,000 for major offences. The bill also introduces a new fine of \$50,000 to be levied against those who repeatedly violate the act.

To levy fines under the two existing laws, the government must prosecute alleged offenders, but a process as complex as a criminal proceeding and a punishment as severe as prosecution is not always the most appropriate way to deal with all those who violate the law. Some contraventions of the law may call for less stern penalties. It is common sense. That is why administrative monetary penalties are also being introduced.

Bill C-14 gives federal authorities a means of penalizing offenders without actually prosecuting them as criminals. Although this bill calls for swift punishment when necessary, it also recognizes that some measurement offences are relatively minor and inadvertent.

As such, Bill C-14 offers what we call the graduated enforcement approach, which means that the penalty always fits the offence. Canadians believe in appropriate justice, and this legislation reflects that ethos. Indeed, the Fairness at the Pumps Act approaches the very issue of enforcement in a spirit of fairness and constructive encouragement rather than casting all offenders as hardened criminals.

• (1430)

Clearly, honourable senators, as commodity prices continue to soar, so does the need for Canadian consumers to develop a greater sense of confidence in transactions based on measurement. This need was a strong impetus for Bill C-14, but this bill was also drafted with a keen eye to the needs of other stakeholders.

In truth, action on this issue significantly predates the negative media coverage of 2008. Measurement Canada had already begun consulting with stakeholders, including business operators and consumer groups, on a broad range of proposed reforms. A legislative review of the Weights and Measures Act and the Electricity and Gas Inspection Act had been announced in the Industry Canada 2006-07 *Report on Plans and Priorities*.

Stakeholder consultations underscored the fact that retailers can be victimized also by inaccurate measurement, whether by their own inadvertent errors or their competitors' deliberate practices. Those consultations led to the recommendation for mandatory inspection frequencies.

Businesses know that the best way for their businesses to maintain the trust of consumers is to have their measuring devices and instruments undergo regular inspection. In addition, because they know exactly how much they are selling, they face fewer inventory problems, which streamlines their business practices and saves them time and money. The legislation offers tangible benefits for businesses, including the small business operator.

Bill C-14 is about fairness — fairness for consumers and fairness for retailers. This legislation will encourage a fair process and fair business transactions for Canadian consumers and businesses across Canada who purchase or sell goods on the basis of measure.

This bill is a step in right direction towards ensuring that Canadians can trust that they are receiving exactly what they pay for. I urge honourable colleagues to defend the interests of Canadians and to contemplate the merits of Bill C-14.

Thank you, honourable senators, for allowing me to address this bill.

(On motion of Senator Tardif, debate adjourned.)

NATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Wallin, seconded by the Honourable Senator Marshall, for the second reading of Bill S-209, An Act respecting a national day of service to honour the courage and sacrifice of Canadians in the face of terrorism, particularly the events of September 11, 2001.

Hon. Grant Mitchell: Honourable senators, I rise to speak to Bill S-209, an Act respecting a national day of service to honour the courage and sacrifice of Canadians in the face of terrorism, particularly the events of September 11, 2001.

I appreciate the significance of Bill S-209 and the intentions, emotions and respect from which it comes. I know that it comes from a place upon which Senator Wallin has firmly placed her feet, a place with which she has defined herself. It is a place that respects patriotism and service to countries, service to something bigger than ourselves. It is a place that respects sacrifice for the greater good. It is a place that respects heroism and sacrifice, once again, for the greater good and for our country in physical and other forms of sacrifice.

All those things add up to a definition of a place that is clearly defined by a deep love of this country, and I respect Senator Wallin for being so strong in finding her definition in this house, in this Senate and on that place.

They are all good things. They are particularly good things if they are applied with sincerity and humility, and I have no doubt that the inception of this bill captured those two important elements.

I have a problem with the process in that the idea of selecting days is becoming exceptionally ad hoc. It is becoming popular, and it is happening more and more frequently. Days are selected so often without any kind of context or appreciation that we should assess the conditions or parameters under which different groups and individuals be recognized in this way or any number of other ways.

We all know that the Order of Canada is not presented to someone based on legislation. None of us can stand up with a private member's bill and say that a certain person should receive the Order of Canada. Medals of bravery in the military are not allocated to someone simply because of a commander's arbitrary decision that that person should have it. We do not choose judges based on a piece of legislation or in an arbitrary fashion; we have parameters. We do not choose memorial parks to reflect honour upon an outstanding citizen or hero without a basic process that is not ad hoc. We do not name buildings after important and significant contributors to our society through legislation.

In each of those cases, we set up a managed, regularized process where we have parameters, criteria and objective groups that can make the decision. Why do we not have that kind of process when it comes to determining who should be honoured by a special day?

It is not that I am opposed to this particular honour. I feel as much as everyone in this Senate the sense of loss and frustration that we all felt so profoundly on that day. We could see in Canadian families who lost people that there is an element of need for recognition of that particular day in a special way, perhaps as a day or in some other way.

However, I know that we are reaching a point where selecting days is much too arbitrary, and it is rolling over on itself. We should step back and find a way to select days in a structured, professional and objective way.

If we simply begin to allocate a day to a group without properly knowing the context and the structure within which that decision has been made, or without an objective process — I am not saying we are doing that in this case, by any means — we might diminish other groups that have been recognized already in that way, or if the honour is not bestowed on a group that is equally worthy, although I am sure this group is. We could miss groups equally deserving of this honour who simply were not lucky enough to have a defender among the 105 of us to decide that their particular recognition is driven through this institution and they be bestowed with some great honour.

We need to step back and consider how we can allocate these days in a way that is fair to all such groups. Heroism, sacrifice, respect for country and service to something bigger than ourselves happen every day in Canada. Perhaps they do not happen every day in Canada in the way that is captured by this bill, but they happen in many important ways. I want to know, when we bestow the honour of a day on a group, that we are not making a mistake with other groups and that we are treating the broad spectrum of possibilities for such honours in a way that is balanced and objective.

• (1440)

Hon. Hugh Segal: Would the honourable senator take a question?

Senator Mitchell: Yes.

Senator Segal: It was not my sense from the wording of this particular proposal before us that it was conferring a particular recognition on a particular group. It was my sense, and correct me if I am wrong, that the purpose of this piece of legislation was to pay tribute to all those who engaged in a way that would provide support and succour to those who went through the suffering engaged as volunteers, engaged in service, or engaged in terms of being helpful.

It was a large community involving everyone from volunteer fire people to members of the Armed Forces, and to individual citizens who lined up in the thousands across Canada to give blood and to be of support to our neighbours who were under attack.

I did not get the sense that this was as narrow as perhaps the honourable senator's comments unwittingly implied.

Is it his sense that this is a very narrow proposition? I do not think I heard him say that, in the absence of a specific bureaucratic process, we should not proceed. I heard him say that he would like a broader process, one that was a bit more laid out and explicit, which I understand, but I do not think I heard him suggest we should not proceed.

Senator Mitchell: I am sorry, honourable senators, I did not express myself clearly. I do not think we should proceed until we have a better process or at least a way of answering some of these questions.

If the honourable senator is arguing, and he argues it very well, that this is much broader and it is not narrow, then what he has raised is one very important criterion for the discussion or the

determination process, which would be how broad or how narrow? Is it one person? Is it better because it is 10,000 people? He just begged the very question I am asking, and I would put that into the terms of reference for whatever group we would try to define to make these decisions better.

As a more specific answer to the question, the short description of this bill is very precise. It gets down to terrorism and specifically to September 11. However, it does not talk about a listing of who it would be honouring, at least at this level. Maybe one would get into that when one makes presentations and people talk about it on September 11 from now until forever.

In summary, my point is, thanks for listing one criterion for an award of this nature — broadness versus narrowness. It is a very important consideration to be made. We need to have those criteria, otherwise we may be excluding groups now that should not be excluded and we should have a group that will ensure that everyone who is deserving of this level of recognition should be recognized. Currently it is pure happenstance. There may be many people and groups out there who should be recognized. It is pure, unadulterated happenstance. One may happen to come across them in some media and say, “I will do it,” but what about all the other people who do not bump into a senator and whose issue and need or merit for recognition never comes to the light of this chamber?

Hon. Pamela Wallin: Would the honourable senator take another question?

Senator Mitchell: Certainly.

Senator Wallin: This is the third time that this bill has been put forward in this house. Each time the questions raised by the other side seem to have indicated a misunderstanding of what was being proposed. Therefore, I would ask the honourable senator if he would move expeditiously to send this bill to committee for study, which is what he seems to be asking for, that it needs to be looked at and studied.

Senator Mitchell: It is not actually my decision to do that. That is a discussion between the house leaders. I guess they have been discussing it and apparently the honourable senator has been discussing it with her house leader because she is intense about it, as she should be.

If we want to talk about why it has been delayed three times, it is prorogation. That is why it has been delayed.

Senator Wallin: Would the honourable senator take another question?

If there is, as I gather from Senator Mitchell's comments, a desire and need to better understand this, and he believes more debate and understanding is required, can I ask that he move, seek or speak to his leadership about moving this to committee? When this has been raised before, it has been adjourned.

Senator Mitchell: I do get the impression that there is great frustration sometimes in getting a speaking place on the honourable senator's side and with its leadership. I often find that. I am finding that on some of my bills when people say they have not been told they can speak yet. Over here, we do not have to wait to be told to speak.

If the honourable senator wants to get it done, she should talk to her leadership and get them to do it. Do not ask me. It is not my job to do that; it is her job and his job.

Hon. Joseph A. Day: Would the honourable senator take another question?

Senator Mitchell: Yes.

Senator Day: The bill focuses on paying tribute to Canada's civilian and military efforts in the battle against terrorism, which at the beginning of the fighting in Afghanistan would have been all of the activity that is going on; but since General McChrystal has reclassified, and therefore NATO has reclassified, the activity as a counter-insurgency, would counter-insurgents and those who are fighting counter-insurgency, both civilian and military, be included? Has the honourable senator considered that point when reading the word “terrorism”?

Senator Mitchell: I had not considered that distinction, although it is a very significant distinction, if not probably subtle to the general public. Again, it is exactly the kind of thing that needs to be considered in these processes.

The Order of Canada review process is a very detailed, elaborate and careful process. It is not just thrown out after a couple of hours of debate in the Senate or the House of Commons and someone is all of a sudden an Order of Canada, because it has huge implications for the significance, value and honour of that honour. We have to ensure that we are not just stumbling from award to award, somehow bestowing honours that will be diluted by the very fact that we are not using sufficient criteria and applying sufficient rigour in the way they are awarded.

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Will the honourable senator accept another question?

I could not help but overhear a few minutes ago the honourable senator saying something to the effect that the deputy leader on this side was able to stop, mute or tell this side of the chamber whether or not they could speak. Perhaps he knows something that I do not about this side of the house, contrary to what probably happens on the other side of the house, except for our honourable colleague, who seems to have a gift for many words. That reminds me of the old expression about a man of few words but who spoke often.

The members on this side of the house, probably contrary to his side, can speak whenever they want. The members on this side of the chamber speak when they want to and they do not need to seek permission from this person.

Senator Mitchell: I will give the deputy leader the answer, although there is no real question. He said, “unless he knows something,” — that would be me — “that I do not know.” Well, I do know something he does not know. He should talk to his backbench because, as many over there will tell you, they have a problem with it.

(On motion of Senator Peterson, debate adjourned.)

ITALIAN-CANADIAN RECOGNITION AND RESTITUTION BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Fraser, seconded by the Honourable Senator Rompkey, P.C., for the second reading of Bill C-302, An Act to recognize the injustice that was done to persons of Italian origin through their “enemy alien” designation and internment during the Second World War, and to provide for restitution and promote education on Italian-Canadian history.

Hon. Consiglio Di Nino: Honourable senators, this item stands adjourned in the name of Senator Comeau. I have spoken with him. Hopefully, everyone will be in agreement that I speak. It will then remain adjourned in his name and as well, as the critic of the bill, I would certainly reserve myself the 45 minutes time limit.

Is that agreed?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

• (1450)

Senator Di Nino: Honourable senators, 70 years ago, on June 10, 1940, to be exact, the Government of Canada declared many Canadians of Italian heritage “enemy aliens” and ordered their internment. Bill C-302 deals with this measure, the consequences of which still send a chill throughout the Italian Canadian community. The impact lasted decades and affected not only those who were interned, but their families, friends, co-workers and neighbours. Being branded an enemy alien and the associated consequences destroyed untold lives and had an escalating effect for decades. Many changed their names; some moved to other communities or countries; but most just suffered. The label “enemy alien” and its impact continued to permeate society for more than a generation. Immigrants from countries seen as “not on our side of the war” were mercilessly mistreated, discriminated against and, at times, persecuted. I know; I was one of those enemy aliens who, together with my mother and father, arrived at Pier 21 in Halifax on August 21, 1951, just six short years after hostilities ceased. The issue of redress for those interned has been of great interest to me for decades.

I am deeply insulted by the introduction of Bill C-302 by a Liberal member in the other place; and for me to properly convey this message to you, I need to divulge some things about my past, some of which I have never publicly talked about, regarding my experiences as a young immigrant to Canada in 1951.

[Translation]

We arrived in Canada when I was 13. The impact of that June 10, 1940 decree by Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, ordering the internment of a number of Canadians of Italian background as “enemy aliens,” was still strong. Many more were investigated, fingerprinted and kept on a watch list. All Canadians of Italian background, whether citizens or not, were under suspicion and this continued for decades, indeed generations.

After the Second World War, Canada needed workers and invited Europeans to emigrate to this part of the New World. What most found was hostility, discrimination, racism and the doors to the so-called “Canadian community” closed. Immigrants did the most menial jobs. This has not changed much. The most difficult part was the rejection of immigrants by mainstream society, particularly newcomers from “enemy countries.” When I arrived, the spirit of 1940, the public declaration of “enemy alien,” was alive and well.

This was the Canada we found. Other than as workers in the most unpleasant, dangerous and dirty jobs, we were not wanted by most Canadians. Most of us endured that and created our own social and cultural environment. In retrospect, I saw it as a rite of passage. Boys and girls had to go to school, where they suffered the indignities other children generally direct towards those who are different. They were following the example set by the community and, indeed, in their own homes.

[English]

My first encounter with this rejection came days after our arrival in Toronto. Walking down the street with an Italian boy who had been in Canada a year or so and understood English, we were confronted by a distressed, screaming woman who would have attacked us had we not run away. When we were a safe distance, my friend informed me that the lady had called us “murderers.” She accused us of killing her son. We later found out that her son, a Canadian soldier, had died in Italy during the Italian campaign. Years passed before I understood the pain of that wounded mother. While one may understand the sentiments of that mother, there were many other incidents I experienced during my first years in Canada that had no justification other than pure xenophobia.

A couple of weeks after our arrival, I started school, but because I did not speak English, I was placed in Grade 3 with children much younger than me. Even at that age, the enemy alien feelings were strong. The constant bullying, taunting and insults made my life and the lives of other DPs, as all foreigners were then called, very difficult. The teachers generally turned a blind eye.

The next year, my family moved to Parkdale, one of the toughest areas of Toronto. It was then, as it is now, a first stop for new immigrants. Of the 110,000 people living in the Parkdale area, it is estimated that 40 per cent or more are immigrants. Although different than mine, challenges to newcomers remain today. Now in Grade 8, I found myself in a new school with lots of DPs, mostly from Poland, Ukraine and the Baltics. The boys became my friends and indeed “brothers-in-arms.” We were older, and the bullying, taunting and insults most often ended in gang-style fights. The principal of the school, a nun who christened me “Con” because my name, Consiglio, was unpronounceable, was a tough cookie. That label still sticks, by the way, and I always blamed that nun. She was wonderful actually. She did not condone violence so the confrontations would take place outside of school hours and became much more serious. None of the DPs would walk far alone. The results were quite predictable — lots of physical pain.

We, the DPs, decided to start a baseball team, not because we particularly liked the game but because we could use the bats as weapons. Our parents were mostly unaware of our difficulties

until they had to deal with broken noses and teeth or even more serious injuries. They were busy surviving. On reflection, what disturbs me most was the lack of police intervention. Indeed, the police were often part of the problem.

To be clear, this was happening between 1951 and 1953. It was no secret that main stream society did not wish to associate with us. We were not accepted. This had a very deleterious impact on our young minds. We were relegated to our own friendships and resources, and some of us were driven to the wrong side of the tracks, where we were welcomed gladly by other marginalized youth. Except for a life-changing event, I probably would have followed the criminal path — a direction some of my friends took.

After a rather difficult weekend, I returned home to find my mother and father extremely upset and distressed. They had no idea where I had been for the previous two and a half days. They were not ignorant of the direction that my life was taking. After an emotional confrontation, my father, who was the gentlest person I have ever known, with tears in his eyes told me forcefully, “If you are going to dirty my name, change it first.” Even at 16, I recognized their pain.

• (1500)

Honourable senators, that was the day my new life began.

I should add that my father was conscripted into World War II months after my birth and did not return from the war until I was 10, as he had spent several years as a POW in North Africa, making it very difficult for him and me — an only child — to get to know each other, particularly during those years of turmoil.

[Translation]

Honourable senators, I will spare you many more such examples of experiences I had during those days and years, but I trust I have been able to paint a meaningful picture. I share these unpleasant memories with you because they remind us that discrimination and marginalization have no place in our Canadian society. The social costs are enormous.

As I said in this chamber on June 9, 2010, war is madness where perfectly sane people behave inhumanely. One of the most draconian and hurtful examples was the declaration to segregate certain groups of Canadians, including the Italian community, and brand them “enemy aliens.” I and countless others were hugely affected by that action, which very likely drove many, particularly young people, to the margins of society. Sadly, although in a different context, it is still happening today.

[English]

This brings me to Bill C-302. I stated I was deeply disturbed by the introduction of this bill. Before I explain further, I believe it would be informative to review this issue.

Seventy years ago, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King ordered the internment of Canadians of Italian background as enemy aliens. Since then, there have been 12 governments;

7 under Liberal leadership and 5 under Conservatives. I believe the Liberals have governed Canada for some 50 of those years.

The position of successive Liberal governments on this issue over these many years has been to deny and to refuse. Let me briefly summarize.

Not much was heard from governments on this issue during the 1950s and mid-1960s. After the 1968 Trudeau sweep, aided by enormous support from the Italian Canadian community, the internment issue began to awaken. However, it was quickly quashed by Prime Minister Trudeau’s position. I remind you that many Liberal members owed their election wins to the Italian Canadian community and, indeed, some were of Italian background, and yet, on this issue, silence.

As noted by Minister of Immigration and Citizenship, Jason Kenney, at the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage in the other place on Thursday, November 26, 2009:

Prime Minister Trudeau, from 1968 to 1984, took the position that what was in the past was in the past, and we should not in any way deal with issues of historical recognition or redress for incidents such as wartime internment, not only for Italian Canadians but also for the Japanese, Canadians of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the first war, and immigration restriction measures. He completely opposed such efforts.

This attitude prevailed throughout the Trudeau administrations.

[Translation]

Jean Chrétien was next elected Liberal Prime Minister from 1993 to 2003. On June 8, 1993, Mr. Chrétien, as Leader of the Official Opposition, in his letter to Thor Bardyn, Chair of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, regarding redress for World War I internments, stated:

The Liberal Party understands your concern. As you know, we support your efforts to secure the redress of Ukrainian-Canadian claims arising from their internment and loss of freedoms. . .

You can be assured that we will continue to monitor the situation closely and seek to ensure that the government honours its promise . . .

Prime Minister Chrétien did not honour his promise.

Here is another example of how the issue was dealt with under the Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin Liberal regimes. On Wednesday, December 14, 1994, the Honourable Sheila Finestone, Secretary of State for Multiculturalism and Status of Women, said:

Mr. Speaker, I have just tabled the letter I sent to the following groups: the Chinese Canadian National Council, the German Canadian Congress, the Canadian Jewish Congress, the National Association of Canadians of Origins in India, the National Congress of Italian Canadians, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and the Canadian Ukrainian Civil Liberties Association.

[Senator Di Nino]

The letter conveys the government's decision on redress. This is not a decision the government has taken easily, but it is one that after much discussion reflects a commitment to building a more fair and equitable society . . .

Seeking to heal the wounds caused by the actions of previous governments, six ethnocultural communities have requested redress and compensation totalling hundreds of millions of dollars . . .

. . . the government will not grant financial compensation for the requests made.

May I add, honourable senators, neither did they offer an apology.

[English]

I was particularly interested in how those members of the other place of Italian background dealt with this issue when sitting at the cabinet table. Here is what I found.

The Honourable Sergio Marchi, born of Italian parents in Argentina, who came to Canada at a young age, was Minister of Citizenship and Immigration from June 1994 to January 1996. Other than criticizing the Mulroney government for the 1990 apology, while he was minister or at any other time during his parliamentary career, he did absolutely nothing, at least publicly, to promote an apology or redress for the internees.

The Honourable Joe Volpe, also of Italian origin, first elected in 1988 and was re-elected six times, was Minister of Citizenship and Immigration from January 2005 to February 2006. Do you want to know what he did to promote an apology or redress for Canadians of Italian background who were interned?

Senator Comeau: Absolutely nothing.

Senator Di Nino: Absolutely nothing. You guessed it.

Senator Comeau: That figures.

Senator Di Nino: However, we know that he apparently supports this bill, as I believe do all Liberals members in the other place.

The Honourable Maria Minna was Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and, subsequently, Minister of International Development. The Honourable Judy Sgro was also Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Both are good friends of mine, by the way. What was achieved on this file under their leadership while they sat serving at cabinet tables?

Senator Comeau: Zero.

Senator Di Nino: Nothing. Silence.

Senator Tardif: Do something now.

Senator Munson: What did Brian Mulroney do?

• (1510)

Senator Di Nino: I am coming to that. Hold on.

When Prime Minister Jean Chrétien was electioneering at a function at Villa Colombo in Toronto in September 1997, demonstrators dressed as internees made their position clear on Mr. Chrétien's broken promise on redress.

Honourable senators, there is a definite pattern here — one of denial and refusal. This denial and refusal was not limited to the internment of Italian Canadians, but as well to many other grievances with a number of other communities, including Aboriginal communities. Let me quote from Mr. Angelo Persichilli's article in *The Toronto Star* of January 2010, speaking about the internee issue:

For almost 30 years the issue was forgotten but it resurfaced in the 1970s when some Italian Canadian community leaders started talking about an apology and financial compensation. . . . Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, another Liberal, said the issue was closed. He told the House of Commons that he did not believe "in attempting to rewrite history in this way."

. . . .

At that point, while they were in opposition, we saw the first Liberal flip-flop. They criticized the Mulroney government, saying it had not offered enough. "We want an apology in the Parliament, not in a banquet hall," said then Liberal MP Sergio Marchi. Marchi also intervened in Ottawa by asking the Conservative government to deal "urgently and efficiently" with this "injustice" and give financial compensation, as it had in the case of Japanese Canadians.

Senator Comeau: Typical Liberal.

Senator Di Nino:

The Liberals maintained this position all the time that they were in government. In 1997, they said "the issue is closed."

That is the end of the quotation.

[Translation]

Now we come to the next Liberal Party leader, Paul Martin, who made a visit to Italian groups in Montreal and in Toronto to make announcements regarding acknowledgement of the internment of Canadians of Italian background during World War II. As reported by Agata De Santis in Issue 7 of *Accenti.ca* in an article entitled "Italian Canadians to be Compensated for Wartime Injustices: So Who Gets the Money?":

On November 12th, 2005, Prime Minister Paul Martin stood in a park pavilion in Montreal's east end, surrounded by his ministers and prominent members of Montreal's Italian community, to announce a historical agreement-in-principle.

... The compensation — an initial amount of \$2.5 million — is not, however, geared to the individuals who were interned (most of whom have, in fact, passed on) or their families, but rather to the Italian Canadian community as a whole. And, a sore point for some in the community, it will not be accompanied by an official apology in the House of Commons.

The money will be used to fund projects that acknowledge and educate the public about the historical impact of the internments, and celebrate the contribution of Italians to the country.

... The agreement-in-principle is just that, an agreement that in principle will work. The next step will see the finalization of the agreement, which will include the terms and conditions of the program, guidelines and eligibility requirements for projects, and a detailed structure of exactly how the projects will be overseen.

... The money comes from the federal government's Acknowledgement, Commemoration, and Education Program, also known as the ACE Program. It's a three-year, \$25 million initiative announced during the February 2005 budget. Administered by the Multiculturalism Department within the Heritage Ministry, the Program was created to acknowledge that federal wartime measures and immigration restrictions affected many ethnocultural groups, including Italians.

In the previously-mentioned January 2010 article by Angelo Persichilli, he wrote:

I don't even want to talk about the farce performed by Paul Martin when, a few weeks before the 2006 federal election which it was clear the Liberals were going to lose, he agreed to requests for money and an apology, once again trying to buy votes.

Honourable senators, while current Liberal leader, Michael Ignatieff, has, in the past, written a great deal about human rights, particularly as Director of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at Harvard University, I was unable to locate any formal position on the subject of remedies and apologies.

[English]

Now let me tell you what the Conservative record is on these matters — a remarkable contrast.

In 1984, Minister of Multiculturalism Jack Murta announced that the government would offer a formal apology to Japanese Canadians. He was followed in that ministerial capacity by Mr. Gerry Weiner, who concluded negotiations for a comprehensive settlement. On September 22, 1988, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney acknowledged wartime wrongs to Japanese Canadians.

On November 4, 1990, in a speech to major Italian Canadian organizations, including the National Congress of Italian Canadians, internees and their families and hundreds of others,

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, on behalf of the Government of Canada, apologized to those who suffered under the June 10, 1940 decree.

Before I quote Prime Minister Mulroney, let me illustrate to you the meaning of leadership. A couple of weeks before the scheduled announcement, Prime Minister Mulroney telephoned me to discuss the event. It quickly became clear to me that he was under strong pressure to cancel the event. He, in fact, said so.

After a lengthy discussion, he said to me, "Con, give me one good reason why we should do this." I said to him, "Prime Minister, we should do it because it is the right thing to do." After a couple of seconds of silence, he said, "You are right. We will do it." He hung up and we did it. That is leadership.

This is what he said to the community on November 4, 1990:

What happened to many Italian Canadians is deeply offensive to the simple notion of respect for human dignity and the presumption of innocence. The brutal injustice was inflicted arbitrarily, not only on individuals suspected of being security risks but also on individuals whose only crime was being of Italian origin. In fact, many of the arrests were based on membership in Italian-Canadian organizations — much like the ones represented here today. None of the 700 internees was ever charged with an offence and no judicial proceedings were ever launched. It was often, in the simplest terms, an act of prejudice — organized and carried out under the law, but prejudice nonetheless.

This kind of behaviour was not then, is not now, and never will be acceptable in a civilized nation that purports to respect the rule of law. On behalf of the government and the people of Canada, I offer a full and unqualified apology for the wrongs done to our fellow Canadians of Italian origin during World War II.

I was sitting with Annamarie Castrilli, the then president of the National Congress of Italian Canadians and a force behind the apology efforts, also with Ms. Mila Mulroney and University of Toronto professor Julius Molinaro, an internee, and his wife. When the Prime Minister spoke those words, the whole place erupted in emotional, joyous applause. There was not a dry eye in the room, certainly not at our table. A huge weight was lifted from the shoulders of those who had suffered the unjust, oppressive law.

• (1520)

As stated on the Ukrainian Canadian site InfoUkes in December 1990 in an article titled, "Haunted by history: Ukrainians, Italians and Chinese seek redress for historical ill-treatment by Ottawa," written by Tom Philip:

After years of inaction, recent weeks have seen a marked change in the government's attitude towards righting historical wrongs. Speaking in Toronto in November, Prime Minister Mulroney offered an "unqualified" apology to Italian Canadians interned during the Second World War. Two weeks ago Mr. Weiner met with representatives of the Chinese Canadian National Council, which is seeking compensation of \$23 million in "head

[Senator Di Nino]

taxes” paid by Chinese immigrants to Canada in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. And on November 13 the prime minister met in Edmonton with UCC President Dmytro Cipywnyk and other members of the Ukrainian community.

Honourable senators, please note: A different pattern is emerging. We now skip 13 years of denial and refusal by Liberal governments to 2006. A new era has begun.

[Translation]

On June 22, 2006, Prime Minister Stephen Harper formally apologized to the Chinese-Canadian community for the dreaded head tax and the draconian exclusion of Chinese immigrants to Canada.

On May 9, 2008, the Ukrainian-Canadian Restitution Act was enacted. The Harper government established the Ukrainian-Canadian Foundation with \$10 million in funding to educate and commemorate the internment of persons of Ukrainian background during World War I.

On June 11, 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized on behalf of the Government of Canada and all Canadians to Aboriginal peoples for Canada’s role in the Indian residential school system, in these words:

The Government of Canada sincerely apologizes and asks the forgiveness of the Aboriginal people of this country for failing them so profoundly.

On March 19, 2009, I had the privilege of announcing the Italian-Canadian Advisory Committee members for the Community Historical Recognition Program (CHRP) on behalf of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney.

This group provides advice on the merit of eligible Italian-Canadian Community Historical Recognition Program projects to raise awareness of and commemorate wartime measures and immigration restrictions in Canada’s past.

The CHRP, created by Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his government in 2006, is a grants and contributions program for community-based commemorative and educational projects related to historical wartime measures and immigration restrictions applied in Canada. A total of \$5 million, double the election promise of Prime Minister Martin, is available to the Italian-Canadian community for projects such as monuments, commemorative and educational material, and exhibits.

The CHRP fund that our government has made available represents the first money ever released by any government in Canadian history to commemorate this experience.

[English]

Conservative governments have also been responsible for the creation of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, which received Royal Assent on February 1, 1991, with a \$25 million endowment by the Mulroney government. The provision of

funding to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and the creation of Pier 21, Canada’s Immigration Museum in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where my family and I first set foot in Canada so many years ago, have become a reality under the Stephen Harper governments.

Under Conservative governments, from 1984 to 1993, led by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, and from 2006 to date under Prime Minister Stephen Harper, we have acknowledged wrongdoings and apologized on behalf of the Canadian government and Canadians to Aboriginal peoples, Chinese Canadians, Italian Canadians, Japanese Canadians and Ukrainian Canadians. Do honourable senators recognize a different pattern that is now emerging? Liberal governments deny, Conservative governments act.

I strongly disagree with the proposed private member’s bill, Bill C-302, as I find it insulting to me, to all internees of all backgrounds and to their families and their communities. It is infuriating that members of past Liberal governments, who now purport to have supported such measures, had neither the interest nor the courage to deal with these issues, except to raise them at election times and to criticize Conservative governments when they dealt with them.

Senator Tkachuk: Typical.

Senator Di Nino: This bill so insults me because if Liberals had the courage, they could have, and indeed should have, acted when they were in power. They had ample opportunities in the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s, but also in the 13 years between 1993 and 2006. Instead, we have heard nothing but criticism. They now come up with this unnecessary, politically motivated legislation, which only brings back terrible memories for those of us who suffered the indignities and consequence of the decree of June 10, 1940. This bill is pure political hypocrisy.

Honourable senators, the principal purposes of this bill have been achieved. An apology to Italian Canadians was delivered eloquently and effectively on behalf of the government by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney on November 4, 1990. The Conservative government under Prime Minister Stephen Harper set up a Community Historical Recognition Program, from which a \$5 million grant was provided to acknowledge and educate Canadians about the consequences of that tragic decree 70 years ago.

Once again, like Mr. Ignatieff said, “They didn’t get it done.” It seems to me a constant refrain. Honourable senators, for me, one thing is indisputable. The Liberals have lost the moral authority to deal with this issue.

Where do we go from here? I understand that other colleagues are interested in contributing to this debate at second reading. They are welcome to do so, after which we can then decide how we dispose of the bill.

Honourable senators, I do not wish to conclude my remarks without praising my country, Canada. The environment for immigrants to Canada after World War II, other than those immigrants from the United Kingdom or France, was unquestionably a hostile one for at least a couple of decades. This problem was not a Canadian problem. It happened all over

the world in other nations where those who came from other places were seen as enemies and in whose lands sons, fathers and yes, even daughters and mothers perished or were physically or psychologically injured.

As time healed and the community began to understand that the pain was shared and that those who came to Canada came looking for peace and to build new lives and future communal prosperity, the pain, hatred and fear began to subside. Established Canadians mostly began to embrace their neighbour's customs, cultures and friendships. We all became Canadians. The result, honourable senators, is what we have today — the envy of the world, a place of tolerance, prosperity and peace. It is not perfect, but pretty close when compared to most other nations. We did it together, and each one of us is reflected in the Canada we know and love. I am proud of my roots, but I am fiercely Canadian and lucky to be so.

(On motion of Senator Comeau, debate adjourned.)

• (1530)

IMPORTANCE OF CANADA'S OIL SANDS

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Eaton calling the attention of the Senate to the benefits of Canada's oil sands.

Hon. Linda Frum: Honourable senators, last Tuesday night, both CBC and CTV evening newscasts had as their top story the news that 230 ducks had landed on an oil sands tailings pond near Fort McMurray.

Just a few miles away, a small airplane carrying oil sands workers had crash-landed, killing one person with nine others injured. That oil sands human tragedy was not the top story. In fact, it was not big news at all; the ducks were. These ducks were so important that they even bumped Omar Khadr off the top spot for Canada's nightly news.

After years of suspense, Khadr had confessed to being a member of al Qaeda, a terrorist and a murderer, and he is likely to be back in Canada next year, but the ducks were more important news. That tells you all you need to know about Canada's oil sands. The moral compass of the oil sands critics has become distorted.

Do not get me wrong; it is of course regretful when ducks are killed by accident when landing on an industrial site. It is a waste. Even so, it should not have been the top story in the country. It was not the greatest moral failure in the world last Tuesday.

Two years ago, another 1,600 ducks died when they landed in a tailings pond. Syncrude was prosecuted under the criminal law and fined a total of \$3 million. Just for comparison, the serial

murderer and rapist Russell Williams was ordered to pay the families of his victims a grand total of \$8,800. That is \$100 for each crime. Syncrude's fine works out to \$2,000 per duck. There is something wrong here.

We should care about the environment and wildlife. Part of the measure of human ethics is the respect with which we treat plant and animal life, but it becomes perverse when we care more about flora and fauna than we do about people.

By focusing on these occasional and minor bird accidents in the oil sands instead of the massive, systematic, routine environmental devastation in OPEC or the shockingly common violation of human rights in OPEC countries, critics of the oil sands are no longer acting ethically. It is like a policeman ignoring an armed robbery to give a ticket to a jaywalker.

It is not just about ducks. Take greenhouse gases. One of the chief objections to the oil sands is that they have a slightly higher carbon footprint than some other sources of oil. Not all other sources, mind you. Canadian oil sands oil takes less carbon to produce than heavy oil from Venezuela or California and even less than oil from Nigeria and Iraq because of all the natural gas those countries flare.

If you subscribe to the theory of manmade global warming, you would want to replace high carbon oil from Venezuela, California and other sources with lower carbon oil from Canada's oil sands. Even that is not the whole story.

The entire oil sands combined emit about 30 megatonnes of carbon dioxide each year, or about 5 per cent of Canada's emissions. There are individual coal-fired plants in the United States that emit 25 megatonnes a year each, such as the Scherer plant in Juliette, Georgia. That is just one single power plant. Even that big plant is barely in the top 20 coal-fired high emitting power stations in the world.

By far, the world's largest emitter of carbon dioxide is China, with half a dozen individual coal-fired plants bigger than the one in Georgia. China builds two or three new coal-fired plants every week.

Even if we shut down the entire oil sands and threw hundreds of thousands of Canadians out of work in the name of reducing carbon dioxide, less than a week later, China would replace any reductions of CO₂ with growth of their own. That is just what the Chinese are doing on purpose. Underground coal fires in China account for 360 megatonnes of carbon dioxide a year. That is just what they burn by accident, the equivalent of our entire oil sands every month. Even that is not the full story.

If we shut down our oil sands production, as Greenpeace and other anti-oil sands activists would have us do, that oil would simply be added to what is pumped from other OPEC countries, places with far worse environmental records. It is the opposite of the environmentalist motto, "think globally, act locally."

Oil sands critics are engaging in a form of pollution imperialism; they would rather any side effects from energy production happen in the poor Third World rather than here in Canada, even though we are far better at mitigating that pollution. Not exactly an enlightened viewpoint.

[Senator Di Nino]

I mention this because so few of the critics of the oil sands do. They would rather point to a pound of CO₂ in Canada than a tonne of it in China. That is not true environmentalism; that is either a political agenda or a fundraising agenda.

Honourable senators, do not confuse any of this for an acceptance of the environmental status quo here in Canada. Like everyone in this chamber, I hope that the oil sands and all Canadian industries continue to relentlessly pursue new technologies and new ways of doing business to become cleaner and cleaner each year. I know that many of the new oil sands technologies, especially the in situ underground ones, do not need tailings ponds, and they use recycled, non-potable water instead of river water. This is a very hopeful sign of things to come.

There are other technologies being tested that are completely water-free, such as Petrobank's THAI process, which stands for "toe-to-heel air injection." That is another underground process that combusts the bitumen using compressed air, melting the oil away for easy extraction, no water or steam needed.

With no open-pit mines, no tailings ponds and no water needed, the THAI process should be an environmentalist's dream, but paradoxically, some anti-oil sands lobbyists expressed dismay at such breakthrough technologies because they will lose their best fundraising tools, those graphic pictures of the open-pit mines.

Honourable senators, when activist pressure groups gang up on liberal Western companies and give a free pass to the world's dictatorships, the outcomes can be perverse.

Let us recall the example of Talisman Energy. About 10 years ago, Talisman Energy bought into a four-country consortium pumping oil in Sudan. Talisman was the only liberal, human rights respecting company in the group, and it soon spent millions of dollars setting up hospitals and schools and digging new water wells. It even donated hundreds of prosthetic limbs to Sudanese children who had been injured by landmines. Talisman did not just pump oil; they provided social services and spread a little bit of Canada in Sudan.

Because Sudan was a human rights abuser, Talisman soon faced pressure to quit Sudan. Protesters targeted Talisman, and it was even threatened with sanctions and lawsuits. Talisman's share price started to fall because of its political situation. Eventually, Talisman caved in to the pressure and got out of Sudan, selling its stake to India's national oil company.

What happened? The one liberal do-gooder in Sudan left. It did not need the hassle, but the oil did not stop flowing for a second. All that happened was that a country that did not care about human rights bought Talisman's shares. Talisman is gone, the hospitals and schools are gone, and far from getting better, Sudan fell off the human rights cliff, murdering 300,000 of its own people in Darfur.

The NGOs had every reason to be worried about Sudan, as Darfur proved. Instead, protesting against the Sudanese government, which was hard, or against the other oil companies in Sudan, they focused on the easy target, the one oil company that cared about Western values and its liberal reputation.

Where are all the NGOs that hounded Talisman out of Sudan? They have moved on to greener pastures; they have moved on to the oil sands. We are next on their to-do list. If they had it their way, they would shut down the oil sands; just ask them. Just as Talisman was immediately replaced by an oil company that did not care about human rights, Canada's oil sands production would be replaced by countries that do not care about human rights, countries like Saudi Arabia and Iran.

• (1540)

As Senator Eaton pointed out, it is in our Canadian character to be modest and humble. It makes us welcoming and tolerant of others, but sometimes that same attribute makes us vulnerable to people taking advantage. Radical activist groups, most of which are paid for by foreign lobbyists, are taking advantage of our good humour and good faith and are attacking the oil sands unfairly while giving passes to the world's worst offenders, and, too often, we as a country have allowed our critics to seize the moral high ground through sheer force of will.

It is time we took that moral high ground back. Every Canadian from every province can be deeply proud of the manner in which our oil sands are being produced, not just in terms of the environment, but also in respect for Aboriginal people and other minorities and in terms of fair wages. It goes without saying that Canada's reputation as a peaceful nation is morally superior to the warmongers of OPEC. We should stop granting Greenpeace and other groups the moral authority to condemn our conduct while they ignore that of OPEC.

We should make it clear that we will not be driven out of the oil business to make way for unethical competitors the way Talisman was driven out of Sudan. We are Canadian. We believe in self-criticism and self-improvement; we have a lot of patience, even for people pointing out our flaws, but that patience has its limits. The national frenzy in the face of the accidental death of 230 ducks, contrasted with the usual silence in the face of OPEC atrocities, is that limit.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is now the chair of OPEC — Iran, the builder of nuclear bombs, the attacker of democratic dissidents, the exporter of terrorism and anti-Semitism. Iran beat or killed more than 230 opposition activists in its last rigged elections. Why do not we talk about that, rather than 230 ducks?

On behalf of senators of all parties and of all provinces, I am happy to join with Senator Eaton to say Canada's oil is nothing to be ashamed about. In fact, Canadian oil — oil sands oil — is the most ethical oil in the world.

(On motion of Senator Segal, debate adjourned.)

HUMAN RIGHTS**COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY
GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING
THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION
OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN AFGHANISTAN**

Hon. Nancy Ruth, pursuant to notice of November 2, 2010, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights be authorized to examine and report on the role that the Government of Canada may play in supporting the promotion and protection of women's rights in Afghanistan after Canada has ended its combat operations in 2011; and

That the committee submit its final report to the Senate no later than December 16, 2010, and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings for 180 days after the tabling of the final report.

Hon. Suzanne Fortin-Duplessis (The Hon. the Acting Speaker):
Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to.)

(The Senate adjourned until Thursday, November 4, 2010, at 1:30 p.m.)

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