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The Honourable NOËL A. KINSELLA
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Wednesday, March 28, 2012

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

Prayers.

BUDGET SPEECH

ACCOMMODATION FOR SENATORS IN COMMONS GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I remind honourable senators that the budget speech will be delivered in the other place at 4 p.m. tomorrow, Thursday, March 29, 2012. As has been the practice in the past, the section of the gallery in the House of Commons that is reserved for the Senate will be reserved for senators on a first-come, first-served basis. As space is limited, this is the only way we can ensure that those honourable senators who wish to attend can do so. Unfortunately, any guests of senators will not be seated.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

FOREIGN CRIMINALS

Hon. Gerry St. Germain: Honourable senators, Canada is regarded internationally as being a generous country. Our high standard of living is backed by a justice system based on fairness and supported by laws that uphold our nation's will for a high degree of accountability to be placed upon those who commit wrongs. However, recent developments originating out of California may question whether the interests of Canadians are well served when our government's officials seek to protect the lives of the most atrocious foreign criminals.

Honourable senators, I speak with reference to the case of convicted fugitive Arthur Carnes. Five years ago, Carnes brutally murdered his boss and then proceeded to dismember the body while documenting his heinous act with digital photos. Carnes then posted these photos on a website along with a manifesto he wrote in honour of "natural born killers," which detailed the ways available to commit graphic slayings of human beings. He then fled to Canada, where he was arrested some months later in Fort Langley, British Columbia, by the RCMP.

In 2009, the Government of Canada deported Carnes back to the State of California to stand trial. As part of the deportation agreement, Canadian officials received assurances from the State of California that Carnes would not face the death penalty for the heinous, cold and calculated slaying that he committed. I understand that agreements are negotiated from time to time in the interests of fairness. However, when such extraordinary and profound circumstances exist, like they do in the case of Arthur

Carnes, I believe that the Government of Canada has no place in protecting the life of a foreign citizen whose crimes committed are of such wicked proportions.

When commenting on the murder, Sacramento Deputy District Attorney Kevin Greene described Carnes' acts as "pure evil" and said that Carnes "cares nothing about human life, whether it is of a man, woman or child."

Honourable senators, I will state again for the record that I was an MP for Mission-Port Moody when Clifford Robert Olson went on his murderous rampage, killing several of my young constituents and showing not one ounce of remorse for the pain he caused so many. I have been a witness to the tragic after-effects that a major crime has on individuals and entire communities. While Carnes may not have killed in the quantity of Olson, his crime shares in his type of malice.

Carnes committed his crime knowing of the possible penalties he could be subjected to, including the death penalty. His escape and illegal entry into Canada should not have negated the use of the most severe penalty possible. Honourable senators, I believe that the Government of Canada has no business protecting the interests of foreign criminals like Arthur Carnes against the possible outcome of legitimate judicial systems, such as the one administered in the United States of America.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Thordur Aegir Oskarsson, Ambassador-designate of the Republic of Iceland, and Mr. Steingrímur J. Sigfússon, Icelandic Minister of Economic Affairs.

On behalf of all honourable senators, welcome to the Senate of Canada. The distinguished visitors are guests of the Honourable Senator Johnson.

• (1340)

I also wish to draw the attention of honourable senators to the presence in the gallery of Mr. Eirik Moen, Secretary-General of the International Democratic Union, who is the guest of the Honourable Senator Finley.

Welcome to the Senate of Canada.

MR. LUKE NOFTALL

Hon. George J. Furey: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak about a remarkable and courageous young man, a fellow Newfoundlander and Labradorian, named Luke Noftall. At the age of 12, Luke was an accomplished student and athlete. He was also, at this age, diagnosed with epilepsy. As colleagues know, this chronic disorder affecting the central nervous system is caused by a malfunction of the electrical signals that control the operation

of the brain. This condition can and does negatively affect the learning and social growth of our children, and this condition presents challenges to the health, well-being and self-esteem of youth like Luke. For years, Luke has struggled with this condition, a struggle that completely changed his young life. He has faced this struggle with courage and resilience. He has undergone countless procedures and spent far too much of his young life in hospitals.

In a recent letter to Premier Dunderdale, Luke said:

Four years ago, I underwent a major brain resection; three brain surgeries in five days. Twenty-one days in the hospital plus months of rehab, and still my seizures continued. I do not remember much of that year.

Today, at age 19, Luke is a student at Memorial University. His amazing courage and determination will not allow this chronic neurological disorder to stop him. With the support and love of his very caring family, Luke continues to face the tremendous burden of dealing with this every day.

Honourable senators, March 26 marked World Epilepsy Awareness Day, a day dedicated to increasing awareness about epilepsy worldwide and a day to shed light on courageous individuals like Luke, who is the Epilepsy Ambassador for Newfoundland and Labrador. As long as we have young people in Canada who, like Luke, are determined to succeed no matter what obstacles they face, we can all continue to have great hope for the future.

Honourable senators, please join me in recognizing the outstanding courage and determination of Luke Nofall and the 300,000 Canadians who deal with epilepsy on a daily basis.

BELARUS

UNITED CIVIL PARTY

Hon. Doug Finley: Honourable senators, I rise again to applaud the courageous delegates who are attending the United Civil Party's Fourteenth Annual Congress in Belarus this weekend. These delegates continue, under extremely adverse conditions, to work to advance the cause of freedom and democracy in Belarus. Simply because they desire fair and free elections, these delegates have faced an oppressive regime that has jailed, tortured and beaten their leaders, activists and supporters. Two years ago, I was proud to meet with the United Civil Party's candidate for presidency, Jaroslav Romanchuk, their Chairman, Anatoly Lebedko, and party activists Andrei Dmitriev and Vladimir Neklyayev. Their open passion and vision for a free Belarus was truly inspiring.

Since then, Belarus has had what could barely be described as an election in December 2010. President Lukashenko's percentage of the popular vote fell a few points to a close win of 79.67 per cent.

Over 40,000 Belarusians took to the streets to protest this fraudulent election. Consequently, the Lukashenko regime violently and brutally cracked down on pro-democracy

protestors. Over 700 activists, 25 journalists and 7 opposition presidential candidates were detained, beaten and tortured. Some candidates and activists will likely remain in jail for years to come.

Early this morning, I received an update from Belarus that demonstrates that Lukashenko is showing no signs of change. The aforementioned Anatoly Lebedko, who visited this Senate less than two years ago, was detained along with two other senior officials of other democratic parties.

Honourable senators, enough must be enough. It is time for the world to take a stand against this ruthless and brutal dictatorship. Canada must stand with our friends in Belarus and oppose the Lukashenko regime. I will be setting up communication with all of the involved parties in the pro-democratic movement, right or left.

I encourage all Canadian members of Parliament and senators to subscribe to this with me. For further information, please contact my office. We must demand the unconditional release of all political prisoners in addition to immediate free and fair elections to be monitored by international officials. The Belarusian people deserve a government that respects human rights, the rule of law, freedom of speech and freedom of the press. It is time for the last dictator in Europe to allow democracy to flourish in Belarus.

I applaud all of the delegates who attend the United Civil Party's annual congress for their work in advancing the cause of freedom, and my thoughts and prayers are with all the political prisoners who are wrongfully detained.

Za svobodu — For freedom.

MISSING AND MURDERED ABORIGINAL WOMEN AND GIRLS

Hon. Mobina S.B. Jaffer: I rise today to give voice to the missing women in British Columbia. Heather Chinnock, Sarah de Vries, Tanya Holyk and Sherry Irving are but a few names of the Aboriginal women who have gone missing in British Columbia. Sadly, these names and dozens of others are often buried deep within the footnotes of police investigations and public inquiries. The cries of the families who mourn the loss of their loved ones often fall upon deaf ears. Not only are these families forced to cope with the loss of their mothers, daughters, sisters and wives, they are also forced to accept the reality that they may never see justice.

Honourable senators, I have been working on this issue in my province of British Columbia for several years and have followed the progress of the investigations quite closely. Many years ago, when several Aboriginal women went missing, their loved ones and colleagues sought help from the police. Unfortunately the police did not heed their plea. At the time, we all remained silent. After a lot of hard work, a few cases were brought before the courts, providing a few of the families with the justice they had longed for.

Unfortunately, the majority of the families who have been suffering for well over a decade are still struggling to accept that the cases of their loved ones will never be heard in court.

This is a great tragedy, one that deeply affects not only members of the downtown Vancouver community where my family resides but also the province of British Columbia and, indeed, the entire nation.

Sadly, most of the women who have gone missing belong to extremely vulnerable and marginalized groups. They therefore do not have the resources they require to access justice. The Aboriginal families are not heard. The Aboriginal families are not getting justice.

Honourable senators, we must remain mindful that the 65 women who have been reported to have gone missing in Vancouver between 1978 and 2011 are Canadian women. Today again their families are struggling to be heard and to seek justice. I would like to conclude by giving a voice to one young woman who, before going missing herself, drew attention to the discrimination that she and many of her Aboriginal sisters were confronted with.

Sarah de Vries, who disappeared in 1998, wrote honestly and earnestly in her diary about the racial discrimination that she felt was prevalent in the way her community was dealing with the cases of missing women. When discussing instances of when non-Aboriginal women go missing, she stated it would be:

Front page news for weeks, people protesting in the streets. . . . While the happy hooker just starts to decay like she didn't matter, expendable, dishonourable . . .

• (1350)

Ms. de Vries went on to state:

It's a shame that society is that unfeeling. She was a woman's little girl, gone astray, lost from the right path. She was a person.

These women's families are seeking justice and still have to be heard by the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry.

INTERNATIONAL ADULT LEARNERS' WEEK

Hon. Catherine S. Callbeck: Honourable senators, never before has it been so important for Canadians to continue learning over the course of a lifetime. In this new global economy, we must have a skilled workforce that can adapt to changes in the workplace, the job market and technology.

To help highlight the value and importance of lifelong learning, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO established International Adult Learners' Week, which is being celebrated this week. The week serves to raise the awareness of the public to lifelong learning. This year's theme is "I'm Still Learning," a quote attributed to Michelangelo that is meant to remind us that everyone, regardless of skills, education or background, can all benefit from continued learning.

This week also gives us the opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of adult learners and their teachers across the country.

Dianne Smith from my province has a story that inspires. Dianne admits her reading skills were poor. As a result, she had to hold down three jobs to support her family. It was manual work and, as she got older, she realized she would not be able to do it forever. She learned about a literacy upgrading program through Prince Edward Island Literacy Alliance, and she decided to try it.

Dianne has never looked back. The day before her fiftieth birthday she obtained her Grade 12 certificate. New opportunities came along and doors were opened. She now owns and operates her own licensed community care facility in Charlottetown where she employs more than a dozen people. She is involved in a number of volunteer activities in the province. She has travelled across Canada and beyond to speak about the literacy challenges that adults face, including an appearance before the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology in 2007.

Honourable senators, upon receiving her Grade 12 diploma, Dianne said:

It may not be much of an accomplishment to a lot of people, but I get a big lump in my throat, and tears come to my eyes and you'd think I'd won the 6/49.

There is no question that this was a great accomplishment. She recently wrote a book with two other adult learners called *Relentless Journeys: Literacy Stories Shared by Three Women in Canada*. They hope to encourage others to continue learning.

I want to end with a quote from Margaret Eaton, President of ABC Life Literacy Canada:

Literacy is a wonderful tool that opens up a world of opportunities for individuals and allows them to engage fully and confidently in life's activities — whatever they might be. And learning is a lifelong journey that should never end.

JAMAICA

Hon. Don Meredith: Honourable senators, last week Jamaica's Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Minister, Senator the Honourable Arnold J. Nicholson, came to Canada for the first official foreign visit since being appointed to his post in January by the Right Honourable Portia Simpson-Miller, Prime Minister of Jamaica. His choice of Canada for his first official foreign visit testifies to the long lasting friendship and goodwill that exists between our two countries.

While in Canada the minister met with both private sector and public officials and identified key areas where our government would be able to assist the Jamaican people, including capacity-building in agriculture and the military.

We highlighted Canadian organizations which are partnering with their Jamaican counterparts to make a difference on the island. Our discussion focused on the Federation of Canadian Municipalities which is helping Caribbean authorities to support nearly 50 local governments and agencies in their economic

development initiatives. As well, the University of Alberta is also helping to raise the professional standards of teacher education offered in Jamaican colleges.

Honourable senators, the highlight of the minister's visit was his keynote address at the national launch of Jamaica50 Canada festivities, for which I served as patron of honour. With guests coming from across the country, this event was considered the largest gathering of the Jamaican Diaspora in Canada to date. We were also joined by many viewers from around the world by web stream.

In his address Minister Nicholson stated:

At the bilateral level, and as result of the policies which successive Canadian government have adopted over nearly 50 years, Jamaica has been the recipient of cherished technical assistance. In the fields of education, health, local government, justice reform and in disaster preparedness and relief, we have been able to count on the bounty that flows from the Canadian Government and people.

I would also like to personally thank my colleague the Honourable Marjory LeBreton, Leader of the Government in the Senate, for graciously greeting Minister Nicholson in the absence of our Prime Minister. In her address she echoed Minister Nicholson's warm sentiments, stating:

The friendship that exists between Jamaica and Canada, between our two peoples, has always come easily. The greatest strength of Canada-Jamaica relationship is the people-to-people ties we share.

In order to continue fostering this relationship in the coming months I will be hosting a Jamaica Day on Parliament Hill and there will be spirits — lots of spirits — to provide parliamentarians with an opportunity to experience Jamaican culture and celebrate 50 years of diplomatic relations between our two countries.

Honourable senators, please join me in thanking all those who have made a contribution to Jamaica's 50 years of independence. May we continue to work shoulder to shoulder for generations to come.

[Translation]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

2011 ANNUAL REPORT TABLED

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, pursuant to section 61 of the Canadian Human Rights Act and section 32 of the Employment Equity Act, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 2011 annual report of the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

GLOBAL CENTRE FOR PLURALISM

2012 BUSINESS PLAN TABLED

Hon. Claude Carignan (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 2012 Executive Summary of the Corporate Plan for the Global Centre for Pluralism.

[English]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Catherine S. Callbeck: Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 57(2), I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to the need to adequately support new mothers and fathers by eliminating the Employment Insurance two-week waiting period for maternity and parental periods.

[Translation]

INDUSTRIAL ALLIANCE PACIFIC INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES INC.

PRIVATE BILL—PRESENTATION OF PETITION

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau: Honourable senators, I have the honour to present a petition from Industrial Alliance Pacific Insurance and Financial Services Inc., in Vancouver, British Columbia, calling on the government to pass a bill authorizing Industrial Alliance Pacific Insurance and Financial Services Inc. to be continued as a body corporate under the laws of the Province of Quebec.

[English]

QUESTION PERIOD

JUSTICE

CHILD PROSTITUTION—SEX TOURISM

Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. This week we learned that at least 73 Canadians have been arrested outside of Canada for abusing or molesting children, or for possessing child pornography in the last three years. The number is a mere indication of how great the problem truly is in most cases of sex tourism, because it goes unreported.

• (1400)

In 1997, Bill C-27, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (child prostitution, child sex tourism, criminal harassment and female genital mutilation) was passed by both houses. I ask the Leader of the Government if she can please find out how many people have been prosecuted in Canada under this act. I only know of two cases.

This past weekend, Prime Minister Harper announced that our government would be providing support for projects to combat human smuggling in Thailand. What is our government doing to address the much broader and urgent problem of Canadian sex tourism in Thailand?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, Senator Jaffer asked for some specific details on facts and figures with regard to prosecutions in Canada, and then she asked an additional question, which I will obviously have to take as notice and provide a written response.

Senator Jaffer: Honourable senators, I have four supplementary questions. What resources have been set aside to ensure that the provisions of Bill C-27, which deal with sex tourism, are properly enforced and implemented?

What resources and training are consular staff who work abroad provided to deal with cases of sex tourism?

How many security offices are there in Thailand to deal with the issue of sex tourism?

What steps are being taken to ensure that offenders are treated with the same severity that they would face had they exploited Canadian children?

Senator LeBreton: Those are all good and valid questions, honourable senators. I would be very happy to seek a written response.

I would be remiss if I did not, though, applaud the efforts of my colleague in the other place, Joy Smith, who, as honourable senators know, has worked tirelessly on human trafficking and has another private member's bill before Parliament. If there is a champion on human trafficking and the abuse of women brought to this country for the sex trade, I can think of no person more deserving of our thanks than Joy Smith.

Senator Jaffer: Honourable senators, I would also like to join the leader because I work very closely with Joy Smith and I know the work she does. I work with her closely in Vancouver on issues of human trafficking and I would also like to take this opportunity to commend her work.

However, I ask that the leader look at this specific issue, which is more than human trafficking; it is Canadian men going to Thailand and committing acts of sex tourism. I would like answers to the questions I asked.

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

TOBIQUE FIRST NATION

Hon. Sandra M. Lovelace Nicholas: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

The community of Tobique First Nation is facing an intolerable housing situation. Out of desperation, one of the elders has been on a 10-day hunger strike, and many others have written to me about the deplorable conditions of their homes. They have sent pictures of the broken and rundown conditions in which they are living.

Many community members have said INAC has not responded to their requests for help. The homes are in very bad condition and there is a lot of mould, which has caused ill health for many of them. Every time they request help, they are put on the bottom of the list and are ignored.

The community is under third-party management and not sure how funds are distributed to the band council. It appears that selected people get repairs and that most of the people who are on social assistance and who really need the help are not getting it.

Can the government look into this deplorable situation and investigate how much money is being distributed and why the most in need are not getting help?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I would like to suggest that it is not correct to say that the government or anyone involved with the government has put this issue to the bottom of the list; that is not the case at all. We are committed to ensuring the health and safety of First Nations people. I am familiar with the situation that the honourable senator has raised.

We have been in contact with the band regarding the elder whom she mentioned and her housing concerns. The band has advised that they have the resources to deal with this particular issue. As a government, we have invested significant funds in First Nations housing over the past few years, resulting in over 1,700 new homes and 3,000 renovations on-reserve every year.

We do have a problem with flooding. We have a situation on the Albany River in Northern Ontario as well.

With regard to the question on third-party management, funding has not decreased to the First Nation since the third-party management has been put in place. The third-party management works to ensure accountable, effective and proper use of public funds. The third-party management has not in any way interfered with or stopped the flow of financial assistance into the community.

Senator Lovelace Nicholas: I am sorry, honourable senators, I did not say that the government was responsible. All I said was that they are not responding.

[Senator Jaffer]

I am asking for the government to look into why these people are being ignored, whether it is by INAC or the chief and council in the community. I am not accusing the government of anything.

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I did not take it as an accusation. I took the honourable senator's statement as saying that these issues are put at the bottom of the list. I was simply pointing out to Senator Lovelace Nicholas that the government is working very closely with the leadership in this particular First Nations community. She did ask about third-party management. Third-party management has not in any way interfered with or caused any difficulty in the dispensation of funds.

Where I do take issue with the honourable senator is with the notion that somehow or other the government does not put the interests of First Nations people first and foremost, which of course we do, particularly when they face situations like they are facing right now in Northern Ontario and in New Brunswick with regard to the issue of flooding.

[Translation]

ENVIRONMENT

POLAR ENVIRONMENT ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH LABORATORY

Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, the Polar Environment Atmospheric Research Laboratory, also known as PEARL, is a world-renowned Canadian atmospheric research station located in the northernmost part of the world. Researchers there monitor the ozone layer, greenhouse gases and pollution in the High Arctic. In particular, last year, the research station played a key role in discovering the very first hole in the ozone layer over the Arctic.

But, now that the government has cut the station's funding, including funding for the Canadian Foundation for Climate and Atmospheric Sciences, the station will be forced to close its doors in April. Could the leader please tell us why the government is refusing to support climate research by depriving this important laboratory of the funding it needs to remain open?

[English]

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, Environment Canada has provided partial funding, along with other bodies, since 2009 for the Polar Environment Atmospheric Research Laboratory. I believe I have already answered this question in this place. Regardless, university researchers have not been successful to date in their application for funding to do the research at PEARL. Environment Canada's ozone and weather monitoring station at Eureka, Nunavut, does continue to operate and function. It is not affected by the inability of the applications for research funding.

• (1410)

Senator Tardif: Honourable senators, is the leader telling me, then, that the station will not be closing at the end of April? That is not what the scientists working there are saying. Would she confirm whether the station will be staying open, yes or no?

Senator LeBreton: All I can tell the honourable senator is what I have been advised. Environment Canada's ozone and weather monitoring station at Eureka continues to operate and is not impacted by the outcome of the university researchers' being unsuccessful to have funding for their applications with PEARL.

Senator Tardif: I do not understand, Senator LeBreton. There are no funds. They cannot operate the station if there are no funds. If they have been unsuccessful, there are obviously no funds.

Will the government make funds available to keep this important research station going?

Senator LeBreton: Environment Canada does have an ozone and weather monitoring station in Nunavut. I have just repeated that the operations of Environment Canada at this station have not been affected by the PEARL decision.

Senator Tardif: I do not think that is the same thing, Senator LeBreton. The station being operated is 1,200 kilometres south. It is the most northerly station that will be cut.

This station provides a very important service. We are talking continually about Arctic sovereignty. It seems to me that if we are talking about Arctic sovereignty, and this is something that the leader's government is always speaking about, then having an occupied station all year long doing world-class science, being the place where international groups want to come and do research, that would be affirming Canadian sovereignty.

Why is the leader's government allowing this Arctic research station to close?

Senator LeBreton: The fact of the matter is that Environment Canada is still operating there. I will seek, honourable senators, to get further information.

As far as I know, Environment Canada is still conducting research, operating stations in the North. With regard to the university funding, obviously they were not successful. Environment Canada still puts significant funding into projects, but I will seek further clarification.

Hon. Grant Mitchell: Honourable senators, this is another classic case of the government simply saying what it wants to believe over and over and over again — even though it is fundamentally wrong — somehow hoping it will turn out to be right.

Let me paraphrase the leader's consistent answer in another way: "Black is white; in is out; up is down; red is brown; and, oh, by the way, that parrot is not dead."

The fact of the matter is that the station is shutting. It is over; it is dead. Black is not white; black is black and white is white, and that poor parrot is dead.

Given that this station is critical for finding all kinds of climate-related information from ozone depletion to climate change in the North, how is it that this government will ever have one possible

chance of making the proper decisions about climate change mitigation, adjustment and accommodation if they just will not seek out the proper scientific evidence upon which to make those decisions?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, regarding the honourable senator's little "black and white" statement, the one thing that is very sad for honourable senators opposite is that red is now blue.

Environment Canada operates in the North. With respect, I indicated to Senator Tardif that I would seek clarification. Environment Canada has put money into PEARL, and university research people who worked at PEARL were also seeking funding. They were not successful with their application for funds, but that does not take away from the fact that Environment Canada operates a station in the North for weather and ozone layer monitoring.

As I promised Senator Tardif, because she asked a very serious question — I cannot say the same for Senator Mitchell — I will seek clarification.

Senator Mitchell: The question that I would like to pursue further is the question of sovereignty. My colleagues alluded to the important international law maxim that it is not contrived military appearance and military activity that will establish sovereignty in disputed areas like the North, which I should point out is disputed because of the climate changes that this government will not acknowledge. What stands a nation in good stead in international courts is day-to-day use by people who live there and by significant scientific and occupational pursuits. Those will be lost.

Has the government given any consideration to what impact that will have upon our ability to continue to establish our sovereignty in an area that is now in question because of the very climate changes that this government simply hides its head in the sand about and says "those are not occurring; that parrot is not dead"?

Senator LeBreton: With regard to the whole issue of Northern sovereignty, the honourable senator knows full well that we have a refuelling and docking station for the Royal Canadian Navy and other government vessels operating in the North. That has not changed.

The North is very important to this government. We have made more investments and have done the most for the North by any government since John Diefenbaker's government in the 1950s and early 1960s.

Senator Mitchell: This government has done a lot to the North, because what climate change will do to the North is almost incomprehensible, and this government is doing nothing to try to fix that.

Let us go another route. It is \$1.5 million to run the PEARL station. This government is putting \$30 million into 1812 festivities. Therefore, let us just say this government cuts that in

half and spends \$15 million on 1812 and \$15 million to fund PEARL for 10 years. Would that not be the perfect solution, where this government could glorify the past with \$15 million and also be better prepared for a climate changing future for another \$15 million? Would that not be a better, more effective use of funds?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I will not get into hypothetical arguments with Senator Mitchell about various government programs. The government has many initiatives. We are clearly committed to Arctic sovereignty, and we are clearly committed to jobs and the economy in this country. When the budget comes down tomorrow, we will see the direction the government will be taking into the future. I will not get into a situation of answering "what if" and "why here instead of there?" That is a futile exercise.

Senator Mitchell: It is interesting that the leader would raise jobs and the economy, because the PEARL station is critical to jobs and the economy. It is critical for training many young Canadian scientists and PhD graduate students in climate science. It is critical for the jobs those scientists get because they are trained. It is critical for the kind of private-sector money they attract with joint projects and funding for private sector to assist those projects.

All of that is lost. Has the government made an assessment of how much training will be lost; how many PhD graduate students will not be trained here, if at all, but will be trained somewhere else; and how many of those jobs will go somewhere else, if they ever get those jobs at all? Could she give us an idea of how much private-sector funding will be lost because this government cannot afford to find \$1.5 million a year from an 1812 project that could easily be cut in half and get just as much out of?

Senator LeBreton: First, Environment Canada and other organizations have contributed to PEARL since 2009. The question here is the funding applications of some university researchers. To date, this funding has not been approved, but that does not take away from Environment Canada's work and actions in the North.

Senator Mitchell's suggestions are interesting; I will note them, but I will not promise the honourable senator that I will even pass them along.

• (1420)

[Translation]

DELAYED ANSWERS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. Claude Carignan (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table a delayed response to an oral question raised by Senator Huley on March 13, 2012, concerning the modernization of the fishery. I also have the honour to table a delayed response to an oral question raised by Senator Cowan on December 16, 2011, concerning the Auditor General.

[Senator Mitchell]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

MANAGEMENT OF ATLANTIC FISHERIES

(Response to question raised by Hon. Elizabeth Hubley on March 13, 2012)

This government recognizes the importance of fisheries to Canadians and its value in terms of the Canadian economy. In 2010, Canada exported \$4.1 billion in seafood products and the commercial fishing industry accounts for approximately 80,000 jobs across the country. However, domestic and international drivers continue to place pressure on the industry, and flexibility is needed to allow people within the fishery to better adapt their enterprises in response to changing resources and market demands.

Over the last year, the Minister has met with people from across Canada, including the fishing industry, stakeholders and representatives from various governments. He has also visited a number of industry facilities to get a better grasp of the state of fisheries in Canada. He heard concerns about the future of many fisheries, the challenges that exist, and the opportunities for change.

As a result, in moving forward with modernizing Canada's fisheries management system, we will be guided by three principles: sustainability, stability, and economic prosperity. To this end, all policies are being reviewed with these principles in mind and examined in light of today's global economic context.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada has been formally meeting with stakeholders and Aboriginal groups since early January to discuss how fisheries management can be modernized. The amount of feedback the Department received and the broad spectrum of opinions demonstrates that change is required. This government is listening to what Canadians have to say. All views will be considered as we develop a plan for the future.

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans values the insights and opinions of fishermen, Aboriginal groups, and other stakeholders personally invested in the industry. The Department has visited each region to discuss these issues with stakeholders, and the Minister has himself met with hundreds of fishermen over the past number of months in dozens of communities from coast to coast to coast.

AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA

BILINGUAL CAPACITY

(Response to question raised by Hon. James S. Cowan on December 16, 2011)

As this is personal information under the *Privacy Act*, Mr. Ferguson would have to provide his test results to the Senate directly, or provide them to the Leader of the Government in the Senate, with agreement that the information can be shared with the Senate.

Officials in the Privy Council Office have been requested to follow up with Mr. Ferguson in this regard, and request that he undertake to provide the Senate with this information, as had been indicated during his appearance.

[English]

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

ORDER PAPER QUESTIONS—REQUEST FOR ANSWERS

Hon. Catherine S. Callbeck: Honourable senators, I would like to know the status of the government's reply on two sets of questions I placed on the Order Paper of June 7, 2011. No. 8 was with regard to the Canada Pension Plan and No. 9 related to the federal strategic review. Both of these questions had been submitted previously in different Parliaments. In fact, questions regarding the Canada Pension Plan were first placed on the Order Paper in October 2007. I would like to know when I might receive a reply to these questions.

[Translation]

Hon. Claude Carignan (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, we will confirm when we will be able to answer those questions. I am not sure this should be a point of order.

[English]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

APPROPRIATION BILL NO. 4, 2011-12

THIRD READING

Hon. Richard Neufeld moved third reading of Bill C-34, An Act for granting to her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the financial year ending March 31, 2012.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Question.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Bill read third time and passed.)

APPROPRIATION BILL NO. 1, 2012-13

THIRD READING

Hon. Richard Neufeld moved third reading of Bill C-35, An Act for granting to her majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the financial year ending March 31, 2013.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Question.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Bill read third time and passed.)

STUDY ON THE PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE 2004 10-YEAR PLAN TO STRENGTHEN HEALTH CARE

SEVENTH REPORT OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE—DEBATE ADJOURNED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the seventh report of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology entitled: *Time for Transformative Change: A Review of the 2004 Health Accord*, tabled in the Senate on March 27, 2012.

Hon. Kenneth Kelvin Ogilvie: Honourable senators, I move that:

The report be adopted and that, pursuant to rule 131(2), the Senate request a complete and detailed response from the government, with the Minister of Health being identified as minister responsible for responding to the report.

He said: Honourable senators, it is with pleasure that I rise before you today to speak to this report and to urge its adoption.

First, I would like to thank my colleagues on the committee. I particularly wish to inform honourable senators that this report comes to you with the unanimous support of all members of the committee. In that regard, I want to specifically acknowledge the role of the deputy chair, Senator Eggleton, for his leadership and support in reaching this objective.

Honourable senators will know that this report arises from a request from the Minister of Health to this chamber that the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology conduct the mandatory second review of the 2004 10-year health accord. We have done so. We found that there has been progress since 2004. Some of the objectives have been moved along to some considerable degree and I will perhaps identify some of those specifically. We have also clearly established that a great deal is left to be done.

At the outset, before I take honourable senators through some specific recommendations, I want to give you a very important overall observation of the committee. Witness after witness

identified critical issues in our health care system. Actually, it is health care systems.

One of the most important issues identified is that the system and systems are replete with silos. The elements within the health care industry, if I can use that term, appear to be isolated, and the term used consistently was that of a silo. It may surprise honourable senators, however, to note that witnesses, those people charged with delivering health care, consistently indicated to us that there are sufficient funds within the system, if you include the committed annual increases, to lead to an adequate health care system for Canadians, one that Canadians should appreciate. They believe that the major reason we have not moved forward arises in part because of the silo system and the fact that there has been almost a complete absence of innovation in the real delivery of health within our overall systems.

To that end, the first of our major recommendations in the report is that the annual increases committed to health care in this country from the federal government be used in large measure to identify and develop innovative practices and to distribute them across the health care system in this country. Witnesses were unequivocal in their insistence that this be a major recommendation.

As another background point, one of the major elements we identified in terms of inhibiting the development of a number of innovative practices that have been attempted is the way in which remuneration is handled within the health care system and within the Canada Health Act. It is a single model that appears to be inflexibly used within the provincial systems. This is a major inhibitor of health care delivery, particularly at the primary care level, in developing community practices that would deal more effectively with the health care of our citizens.

• (1430)

I would like to now briefly take you through some of the specific categories in the health care accord and to indicate some of the major difficulties.

The first one listed in the accord actually deals with wait times. This is an area in which there has been significant progress since the accord was first signed. Most of the provinces have achieved a 70 per cent level in terms of the objectives set in the major categories identified. However, it is clear that there are still major issues. It is critical to evaluate what are appropriate wait times, to evaluate clearly when that wait time begins, and to be able to develop adequate analyses of the achievements of these objectives for wait times.

To give you an example of recommendations, we have recommended that certain organizations that already exist and that are funded on an annual basis be directed to develop the information necessary to identify appropriate wait times and the appropriate mechanisms for evaluating. Two organizations, for example, are the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation and the Health Council of Canada, in particular that it examine best practices and make those available across the system.

A second important category of the 2004 accord is the category of health human resources. Honourable senators, I want to indicate that in many of our recommendations we see an

opportunity for the provinces and territories to work together with the federal government to bring about change. However, we see in a number of these categories areas where the federal government should take the lead in bringing these organizations together, and human resources is one of those categories. We believe that the federal government should take the lead in working with the provinces and territories to develop adequate training facilities and adequate numbers of people being trained to meet the needs of health care in Canada.

One of the critical issues is not just maintaining the existing method of training but to develop new, multidisciplinary health care training opportunities. The silo issue that was so widely identified arises largely because people are trained to operate as silos and they do not see the delivery of health to individuals as involving a number of people with different backgrounds working together.

The issue of home care is another important area that the committee identified. The committee believes indicators should be developed to measure the quality and consistency of home care, end-of-life care and other continuing care services across the country. We believe this must include ways to promote the integration of mental health and home care services.

I will not read the specific recommendations. I hope you will understand that we have recommendations in all areas that I am giving you examples of as I move through a summary of the report.

We believe there must be a development in recognition of the importance of end-of-life care. In particular, we believe that in the area of continuing care in Canada, there must be an integration of home care, facility-based care, long-term, respite and palliative care services, and this should be fully within the health care system.

We believe, honourable senators, that there must be reform in the primary care system. It is in this area specifically that the method used for remuneration of health professionals appears to be a major inhibitor of progress in these areas.

In the area of electronic medical records, in this day and age it is simply not acceptable that we have not moved further with regard to the integration of information technologies within the active practice of health care in this country. We had one exasperated professional indicate in Ontario, "I do not care that I cannot get the record from Alberta. I want to get it within my own hospital." The issue here is again largely the silo problem and individual practitioners not willing to use integrated systems.

Therefore, honourable senators, we have recommendations with regard to the achievement of these, the setting of targets, and the interoperability of information technology systems.

One of the areas where we have seen some real progress since the 2004 accord is access to care in the North, but much more needs to be done. In this area there are some examples of the

beneficial use of video conferencing and information technology; however, there is still a long way to go. Accountability measures are required to evaluate performance of health care systems in the North, and we must address inter-jurisdictional barriers that frustrate the delivery of health care in the North.

The national pharmacare system, which was one clear category of the 2004 accord, seemed to move along and blow a tire somewhere around 2006. It is not our role to ascribe responsibility; it is our role to identify —

An. Hon. Senator: What happened?

Senator Ogilvie: It blew a tire, sir, and there was no pharmaceutical available to repair it, apparently. I will not get into the mental health issues at this particular place, senator.

The national pharmacare program is an area where we have clear recommendations to get that back on track and to deal with integrating the whole issue of the dispensing of pharmaceuticals in this country, looking at the issue of dealing with rare diseases; and the issue of formularies across the country has to be looked at in terms of bringing the best cost systems to the country, and so on.

We have also recommended that there be a pan-Canadian public health strategy that prioritizes healthy living, obesity, injury prevention, mental health and the reduction of health inequities among Canadians, with a particular focus on children, through the adoption of a population health approach that centres on addressing the underlying social determinants of health.

I want to come to the section on innovation. Clearly, all those witnesses who appeared before us believe that innovation is critical to delivering adequate health care to Canadians. We believe that the governments must establish a Canadian health innovation fund to identify and implement innovative and best-practice models in health care delivery and a dissemination of these examples across the country. There needs to be an implementation and impact of the strategy for patient-oriented research. We believe that we need to work on focusing on and identifying leading practices in health care delivery and work together to promote this dissemination, and that Health Canada be charged with taking a lead in creating a network between federally funded, pan-Canadian health research organizations and other interested stakeholders.

Honourable senators, this leads us to the area of Aboriginal health, which is another area where we strongly believe equitable health care must be developed. It must take into consideration and be sensitive to the culture of the peoples concerned. We believe that removing and reducing jurisdictional barriers is critical to successful movement in this particular area.

We believe in this regard again that the federal government must work with the provinces and territories to address the social determinants of health, with a primary focus on potable water, decent housing and educational needs. Honourable senators, we are all beginning to understand that social determinants underlie a great number of the important issues that we face and need to deal with in moving society forward.

• (1440)

Honourable senators, we believe that our recommendations are pragmatic. We believe that they are doable. We believe that organizations already exist in this country through various funding models to provide the evidence needed to move these issues forward. We believe that the witnesses who argued so strongly that there is adequate funding in the system to achieve these provided that we break down the silos and introduce innovation were correct.

Honourable senators, it is essential that change occur. It must occur; and that is why the title of our report to you is *Time for Transformative Change*. Honourable senators, I hope you will join me in supporting this report.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Art Eggleton: Honourable senators, I am pleased to rise to join the honourable senator in support of this report and the recommendations that come forward unanimously from the committee. Senator Ogilvie has taken a moment to thank everybody who participated; and I echo that and thank him. I started this in a previous Parliament as chair of the committee. He took it over and we have worked well together, as have all members of the committee, in bringing about this result. This result is not new to this committee, which has a tremendous track record in the studies it has done and the reports it has produced; and I mention only the health care ones.

Under the chairmanship of Senator Michael Kirby, who preceded me, a major study was done. Our Leader of the Government in the Senate was involved, as were many others, in producing a wide-ranging set of recommendations dealing with health care. That was followed by a study and report on mental health, *Out of the Shadows At Last*, also under Senator Kirby's chairmanship. This report brings many elements of both of those studies together. I am very pleased about it, and Senator Seidman was particularly vocal at committee about making sure that as we integrate the various parts of the health care system, mental health must be a key part.

This seventh report, with its 46 recommendations, can lead the way toward reform of our health care system in this country to make it work better for Canadians and to bring it up to date with the current realities. Health care is not just the health care system as we know it; it is much more than that. For example, Senator Ogilvie talked about the social determinants of health and the need for our Aboriginal communities to have potable water, decent housing and proper education. All of those things affect health. In the committee's study on poverty, housing and homelessness, we found that the poorest quarter of Canadians uses twice the health care resources in this country that the richest quarter uses. There are so many other aspects of our quality of life and our way of living that come into our health care system.

The first recommendation of this report sets the tone for that transformative change. It says that whatever money we have on the table, and the federal Minister of Finance in December announced the formula for additional federal contributions to the Canada Health Transfer, should be used by and large to bring about

change, to act, as the words in the report say, as "an incentive to change." Change to what? Change as per the balance of the 45 recommendations that follow it.

I have to say clearly that through all these recommendations, I can agree with my colleague that it is not a question of more money but rather a question of innovation and trying to do better within the existing envelopes. There is \$200 billion in our health care system. We can do a much better, more efficient and more effective job and spend the money smarter. We can bring about reforms without adding a lot of money. That is quite true. What money we do add, as that first recommendation says, should be an incentive to change.

That does not mean the federal government can walk in, put the money on the table and walk away. No, it cannot do that. This report clearly says that the federal government is integral to this entire system and that it must be part of the collaboration with the provincial and territorial governments. Throughout this report, you will see recommendations for the federal government with the provincial and territorial governments, or you will see suggestions that the federal government take the lead in a number of areas. It clearly has to be a collaborative effort by all levels of government. Breaking down silos within the health care systems is also key.

The committee was mandated to do this statutory review as a result of the 2004 health accord. This is the second review, the first one being done by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health. This is the last review before the expiry of the accord in 2014; therefore, it is a significant review. While we could take a lot of time to examine in detail the review, I recommend that you read it in the report. You will see some successes and some failures, and you will see some part successes and part failures.

The first section deals with wait times. There was a fair bit of success in the area of wait times, in particular with respect to cancer, heart, joint replacements and sight restoration, where they accomplished a lot. They did not get diagnostic imaging worked out as they could not find the right criteria or benchmarks in that regard. However, they did move the ball along a lot in terms of accomplishments in the area of wait times.

We found that a couple of things were lacking. First, there are many speciality areas, other than the ones I mentioned, that need attention; and second, from what point were they measuring that wait time? It turns out they were measuring it from the time that it was determined someone needed a surgical procedure. Some people asked about the wait time to see a family doctor. For those who do not have a family doctor, it takes extra time. What about the wait time between then and when you actually see the specialist? Things like that need to be improved upon so that we have a better national measurement that is pan-Canadian and that people can relate to. Certainly, this issue produced a fair number of reports, and a lot of federal money — \$5.5 billion — went into reducing wait times.

In terms of human health resources, we are suggesting a federal lead with respect to an observatory so we can determine our health professional needs in the various parts of the country. Today, we have more people in health care practice than we had at the beginning of this exercise in 2004; but in some rural, remote and Aboriginal areas, we are still lacking. People who are foreign-

educated and -trained are not getting into the health care field as fast as they should, even though a mechanism has been put in place by the federal government to do that. It needs more attention.

We have also said that in the development of health care professionals, universities and colleges need to increase inter-professional training of health care practitioners to develop multidisciplinary teams to have not only the family doctor but also nurse practitioners and people in mental health care, et cetera, as a key part of primary care reform. Developing multidisciplinary teams of health human resources requires starting with educational systems to try to bring them closer together. Here, again, there are too many silos.

• (1450)

I will try to move quickly and not cover some of the areas that my colleague has. When it comes to electronic health records, this is a case where a lot more progress could be made. We have to start with the doctors, themselves, having their own electronic medical records, or EMRs. We still have a bit of way to go with that. That is just a doctor having them within their own office, however, there are the other health care professionals and the relationship to hospitals and pharmacies. Electronic medical records have a long way to go in terms of development. There are issues of privacy and of one system talking to another so that they can properly integrate them. There is a lot more work that needs to be done in terms of electronic medical records.

As for access to care in the North, again, we have to bear in mind that in those remote and rural areas it is very difficult to get the physical attention that they need from doctors or nurses. Telehealth will continue to be important there and that must be developed.

The National Pharmaceuticals Strategy, as I think my colleague said, dropped off in 2006. I will not mention what happened in 2006 around this place, but that program needs to get back on the rails. We have suggested a national pharmacare program with principles of universality and equitable access for all Canadians, including a national catastrophic drug coverage program and a national formulary. This needs to be put back in place and given the kind of emphasis that the committee suggests.

The next section is prevention, promotion and public health. This is where we need a lot of new attention because it is where a lot of savings will come from. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure; the old adage still applies. Tackling issues such as obesity, trying to cut down on chronic diseases, promoting healthy lifestyles, dealing with the social determinants of health and dealing with injuries, particularly to children, all cry out for more preventive action, which can save a lot of the money in the system which could be used to bring about a lot of the reforms that we have talked about in this report.

In terms of health innovation, a key thing is that we have asked the federal government to take the lead in working with the provincial and territorial governments to establish a health innovation fund. Innovation is where we will make the changes. Let us have this innovation fund to help spread good practices

and to identify practices that can be improved upon and can bring about a spreading of these reforms throughout the health care system.

Honourable senators, let me also mention home care because, again, home care is an area for which we have to develop a strategy in a pan-Canadian context. We have recommended that — a pan-Canadian home care strategy — including a focus on reducing the burden faced by informal caregivers. We all know about helping our family and friends by being informal caregivers and the kind of burden that places on so many people and so many families. We learned a lot at the committee about autistic children, for example, and how they need various supports. Rest and respite care are part of all of this.

We have also suggested that we must further enhance the palliative care area in terms of services provided in the home to help people to pass into that final stage of their life with some dignity and a minimum amount of pain. We need more infrastructure in terms of residential hospices. If a person cannot be at home for their last days, then these residential hospices have proven to be quite beneficial where they have been established. However, there is still a need for a lot more of them.

A final point we make about home care that applies right across the board is the integration of these systems. We need to have a continuum of care. We need to have an integration of home care facilities, long-term care facilities, palliative care facilities, acute care facilities and the other aspects of this entire system.

There needs to be a breaking down of silos and a better integration of all of them.

I think I will stop there, honourable senators. There is so much more in the report, but I would invite you to have a good look through it because this is an issue of our time. It is a very key issue for Canadians, and this committee has worked well together to bring forward this set of 46 recommendations to help make it better for Canadians, to help bring it up to date, to make it more responsive to our needs, and to be able to do it within a reasonable financial framework, as long as we carry out innovation in the system. Thank you very much.

Hon. Nancy Greene Raine: Honourable senators, I would just like to say a few words about this report because I agree that we are at a transformational point. We know that health care issues are going to be one of the biggest challenges facing us as we move forward and that there are a lot of specific issues, such as demographics, combined with an increasing level of obesity in children.

I wanted to bring to the attention of honourable senators that a report was released yesterday by ParticipACTION and the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology which has outlined, for the first time ever, physical activity and sedentary behaviour guidelines for the early years. These are the years from infancy until the age of five years. One of the things that the research has shown is that it is not only physical activity that is necessary, but it is a curtailment of sedentary activity.

I know this has been distributed to the offices of all honourable senators. I recommend that we all take a look at it and work together, on both sides of this house, to put forth every effort we can to change behaviour and create a young, healthy population from birth all the way up.

Thank you very much for the work the committee is doing on this.

Hon. Wilfred P. Moore: Honourable senators, this is a very important report, and I want to commend the chair, the deputy chair and the committee members for the work they did here and for separating the disciplines of health and healthy living versus health care, that is, the care you need upon not looking after yourself or if you have become afflicted with some condition.

I would like Senator Ogilvie to comment on this: He mentioned twice in his remarks that the way remuneration is handled within the provincial systems is an inhibiting factor. Could he comment a little further on that just to get something on the record here?

Can you not use my time?

Hon. Suzanne Fortin-Duplessis (The Hon. the Acting Speaker): It is on his time.

Senator Moore: It is on my time.

Senator Ogilvie: May I ask a question?

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Yes.

Senator Ogilvie: The honourable senator has raised an important matter, and I wonder if I might ask him a question with regard to the issue he has raised on remuneration. Has the honourable senator thought about the fact that the way in which remuneration occurs now is largely a bill-payer issue from an individual practitioner for services rendered to an individual patient for a single visit?

• (1500)

I wonder if the honourable senator had considered what would happen if a few colleagues at the family physician level got together and were to run a clinic, and then decided if they had a nurse practitioner and a nurse along with them that they could actually treat patients much more fully in one stop. Then, perhaps — if they had limited testing capability within the clinic — they could see the patient immediately, deal with a relatively easy medical issue in one stop, and send the patient away having been treated overall and received the benefit, moving on to full health.

Did the honourable senator consider that such an organization would not be able to bill for that overall health service? The provincial governments have appeared to have been largely inflexible in terms of recognizing a willingness to use different models of remunerating the delivery of health care service, even within the Canada Health Act.

I wonder if that is what the honourable senator was considering when he raised his point.

Senator Robichaud: Very good question.

Senator Moore: That is a wonderful question, honourable senator. I did not think of all those things. In the honourable senator's example — with regard to a clinic and physicians

working in a clinic with the backup of nurse practitioners and nurses — he says they are not able to bill now. I do not understand how that works, but maybe the honourable senator could tell us about that.

Senator Ogilvie: Honourable senators, in raising this supplementary question, I wonder whether Senator Moore is considering whether it is possible for provincial health care systems to recognize such a billing system, or whether it is simply a question that they have been unwilling to recognize such possibilities. We heard there was very clearly inflexibility at the decision making level in this area.

Once again, I would ask the honourable senator, is that the nature of the question he was putting?

Senator Moore: Honourable senators, it is. I must say, I am surprised at the response. I had hoped that the report of the honourable senator's committee would lead to some resolutions of that inhibiting factor because it would clearly save money and be of benefit to the patients who we are hopefully trying to serve.

(On motion of Senator Callbeck, debate adjourned.)

[Translation]

EDUCATION IN MINORITY LANGUAGE

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Losier-Cool calling the attention of the Senate to the evolution of education in the language of the minority.

Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I informed my honourable colleague, Senator Comeau, that I would be speaking today. I move that, at the end of my speech, debate be adjourned in his name.

Honourable senators, I rise today at the invitation of Senator Rose-Marie Losier-Cool, who encouraged us to participate in a debate on the inquiry on the evolution of education in the language of the minority. I would like to thank our honourable colleague for this excellent initiative.

I will be talking about a part of the history of my community, the Franco-Albertan community, as I recount the story of its struggle to access education in French. This narrative continues to unfold and is at the heart of the very identity of my community and has deeply affected me throughout my career.

It is the story of the struggles and the perseverance of a community that understood that schools are vital to the survival of its culture and its language, as well as to the personal development of its members. These past struggles have made it possible today for more than 5,000 Franco-Albertan students, including my own school-aged grandchildren, to receive an education in their own language. I would like to remind you just how difficult this journey has been.

[Senator Raine]

I will give you some historical dates as reference points and will divide the time covered by my speech into five periods: first, the period before 1892; second, the period after the 1892 legislative changes; third, the period after the 1925 ordinance; fourth, the 1960s and 1970s; and last of all, the period after the enactment of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982.

The first French schools were established in Alberta in the 1860s by Catholic missionaries. At the time, Alberta was part of Rupert's Land, which was under British control. However, Rupert's Land was administered by a private company, namely the Hudson's Bay Company, which practised bilingualism out of respect for the anglophone and francophone communities that were quite present in the territory.

French was the first European language spoken in the territory. More than 500 French names still connect Alberta to its francophone roots: Morinville, Legal, Bonnyville, Jean-Côté, Falher, and so on. They underscore the contribution of the first francophones to the development of Alberta.

The church, including the Oblate Fathers and the Grey Nuns, played an important role in the development of Western Canada. The Grey Nuns, a congregation of Catholic nuns from Quebec, established their first school in 1859, in Lac Ste. Anne, and a second one at the Lac La Biche mission three years later. That same year, in 1862, Father Albert Lacombe established a school in Fort Edmonton. These three schools marked the beginning of French Catholic education in Alberta.

In 1870, the vast territories in Western North America, including Rupert's Land, were transferred to Canada and called the North-West Territories. Under the North-West Territories Act of 1875, a public school system was set up. The act allowed religious minorities, be they Catholic or Protestant, to establish separate schools funded independently through a tax. Since Catholics at the time were francophone for the most part, the legislation fostered education in French. It allowed for the establishment of separate Catholic schools and school districts where French was the language of instruction.

Honourable senators, as history classes remind us today, at the turn of the 20th century, the people who developed Western Canada had a vision for the country that was British and English. They did what they could to make that vision a reality, including developing an immigration policy and bringing in legislation and regulations that made English the mandatory language. An 1892 ordinance changed the existing education system and made English the official language of instruction in all schools in the North-West Territories.

The use of French as a language of instruction was no longer permitted in public schools as of 1892.

• (1510)

However, legislative changes made in the early 20th century allowed for the use of French in primary courses when the students did not understand English. More specifically, the legislative changes ensured that any school board could authorize the limited use of French during a year of primary school and could raise the money needed to pay the teachers' salaries.

The time allocated for primary courses varied from half an hour to an hour or more per day, and each school's schedule had to be approved by a school inspector. Since French was not a mandatory subject and there were no French exams, anglophone inspectors did not hesitate to reduce the time spent on teaching French.

That is how things were when my maternal grandparents raised their children. Rosario and Ernestine, who were both from Quebec, moved to Alberta, where they met at the beginning of the 20th century. They did not speak English when they arrived in Alberta, yet they had to raise their children in an anglophone community with very little institutional support to help them maintain their French language and culture. None of their children received an education in French.

In addition, once the children started school, they were made fun of by the other children and even sometimes by the teachers because of their French accents. That being said, all of Rosario and Ernestine's children and most of their grandchildren kept their mother tongue, but there is no doubt that this was a major challenge. Their story is similar to those of many other francophones, particularly the many French-speaking immigrants, mainly from Quebec, who moved to Western Canada in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

In 1925, in response to lobbying by the francophone community, new ordinances were issued with regard to French primary courses. From that point on, if the school board allowed it, francophone students could go to school in French for the first two years of their education, with the exception of one English reading class. However, as of grade 3, students were unable to receive more than one hour a day of instruction in French.

Despite the 1925 ordinance, many teachers offered bilingual instruction only in grade 1, whereas others started teaching in French at the beginning of the year but then quickly changed to English. In addition to the fact that the law placed considerable limitations on teaching in French, the so-called bilingual schools also faced pressures that caused some school boards and teachers to put more focus on teaching in English.

First, the inspectors who evaluated subjects taught in English tended to associate poor academic performance with the fact that students were learning French. When the inspectors reported to board members, that allowed them to justify the need to dedicate more time to teaching English.

Another problem resulted from the beliefs of many francophone parents. Some believed that strong knowledge of English would help their child become successful, and others questioned whether French was even useful in an anglophone setting. In addition, schools had to cope with a constant shortage of bilingual teachers.

Following the 1892 ordinance, francophone Catholics were no longer allowed to train and certify their own teachers, and teachers' colleges in Alberta did not offer teacher training courses in French. School boards tried to recruit Catholic teachers from Quebec, but Alberta's education ministry refused to recognize their teaching certificates.

So board members who wanted to keep their schools open often had to hire non-francophone teachers. Under the circumstances, the private school system was one of the survival tools that Franco-Albertans developed. Edmonton's Collège des Jésuites was established in 1913. The Académie Assomption for girls was established in 1926 by the Sisters of the Assumption. In 1908, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate established the Juniorat Saint-Jean for young men, which became known as the Collège Saint-Jean in 1943 and is now the Faculté Saint-Jean, a francophone university campus that offers a number of undergraduate and graduate degrees and where I once served as dean.

I myself had the opportunity to receive the majority of my schooling in private institutions, first with the Grey Nuns, then at Académie Assomption. These institutions were required to teach all school subjects in English, and they had to follow the provincial curriculum. However, I was taught by francophone nuns in a francophone environment. The private school system played a fundamental role in the preservation of the French language and culture for many Franco-Albertans like me.

However, francophone families that wanted to educate their children at private institutions had to make sacrifices. For instance, in my case, my parents were forced to bear a significant financial burden so I could attend such schools. Furthermore, I had to leave our family home at age six in order to go and live in a convent to learn French. In addition to those obstacles, these private institutions — which only boys could attend initially — were not accessible to everyone and were more likely to meet the needs of the elite.

In addition to private schools, I would also point out that, throughout the 20th century, the political fight for French schooling was spearheaded primarily by the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta, which remains to this day the central organization in the Franco-Albertan community. Educational support was provided by the Association des instituteurs bilingues de l'Alberta, founded in 1926, then by the Association des éducateurs bilingues de l'Alberta as of 1946.

Prior to 1965, Alberta's Ministry of Education provided no pedagogical support for the teaching of French, so those associations oversaw curriculum development in French and the development of cultural activities. All of this work was carried out by volunteers, often on Saturdays and Sundays.

It was not until the 1960s and 1970s that changes were made to the provincial legislation to allow teaching in French. In 1968, education legislation was passed to permit French-language instruction for up to half the school day, and up to 80 per cent of the school day in 1976. These changes were motivated by the growing popularity of French immersion programs across Canada in the 1970s. Thus, by the end of the 1970s, for all intents and purposes, francophone students in Alberta could now be educated in their own language. However, the government made no distinction between francophone and anglophone students, who were grouped together in the same classes.

Accordingly, between 1968 and 1982, a growing number of young anglophone and francophone students were in the same classes in immersion programs. Until the end of the 1970s, it was

widely believed in Alberta that the French immersion program was beneficial for francophones. Thus, there was little opposition to allowing francophone and anglophone students to go to the same schools, and sometimes even to be in the same classes.

Unfortunately, this experience demonstrated that immersion schools served as a vector for francophone assimilation, since those schools had not been intended for students whose mother tongue was French, but rather for students whose mother tongue was anything but French.

• (1520)

In this context, a number of parents and stakeholders believed that the French immersion model did not meet the specific needs of students whose mother tongue was French.

In order to stop assimilation and reinforce the francophone cultural identity, Franco-Albertans called for their own schools, schools that would specifically serve the francophone community. In 1982, a group of francophones from Edmonton known as the Bugnet group asserted that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which had just been enacted, gave them the right to separate French-language education. The Bugnet group took the provincial government to court, claiming that it was depriving them of legitimate rights guaranteed by section 23 of the charter. This was the beginning of a long journey that ended at the Supreme Court of Canada in 1990.

At the same time, in the 1980s, another association, the Société des parents francophones pour des écoles francophones à Edmonton — of which I am proud to have been a member — was established in Edmonton. While the Bugnet group was focusing its efforts in the legal arena, our association was pressuring the Edmonton Catholic School Board to set up publicly funded French Catholic schools. In 1984, our efforts began to produce results, with the opening of two French public elementary schools, one in Edmonton and the other in Calgary.

However, francophones still did not have a separate high school. The Société des parents francophones continued to lobby. It organized meetings, petitions and visits to administrators and politicians. In 1988, parents even occupied the offices of the Edmonton Catholic School Board for two days. That same year, the school board finally established separate programs for francophone high school students in Edmonton.

In March 1990, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the Alberta School Act was inconsistent with section 23 of the charter and ordered the provincial government to revise its legislation. The court confirmed the right of francophones to have their own schools and independent control over those schools. In March 1994, the Franco-Albertan community held its first French school board elections in a number of regions in the province. It was an historic moment in the fight for French-language education, and it came more than 100 years after English was imposed as the mandatory language of instruction for francophones.

Honourable senators, I will close by saying that the past 30 years have been full of changes in education for the francophone minority in Alberta. Today, there are five French school boards in Alberta that cover more than 40 schools and 5,000 students.

These changes are the result of lengthy legal and political battles. These efforts brought about not only the establishment and control of separate French schools, but also an awareness, a pride and a greater confidence among Franco-Albertans. Today, the French schools are the cornerstone of a flourishing community that continues to fight assimilation, welcomes more and more French-speaking immigrants and defends the recognition of its language rights.

Hon. Pierre Claude Nolin: I want to thank the senator for her speech, which brings me to my question. A few years ago, a Franco-Albertan called on the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada to recognize the ancestral rights of the French-Canadians who were living in Alberta when Alberta joined Confederation. In the little bit of time remaining, I would like the senator to explain to us the status of that case, which I feel is extremely important for the francophone community of Alberta.

Senator Tardif: I want to thank the honourable senator for that important question. The Caron case is still before the courts. The Alberta government does not accept Mr. Caron's arguments. I believe that with the proper funding, this is a case that could go all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada.

I mentioned Rupert's Land. At that time, Queen Victoria made promises that recognized the rights of francophones in practice and in tradition. When Rupert's Land was sold and that land was transferred to Canada and became the North-West Territories, that promise did not change. Now, a professor — from Campus Saint-Jean at the University of Alberta, in fact — has found archived documents that show Queen Victoria's commitment to the bilingualism that existed at the time.

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau: Honourable senators, I would first like to commend the senator for her excellent speech, for her commitment to her francophone community in Alberta and for her recognition of the excellent work done by her community to preserve the French language in Alberta.

That being said, I too would like to have the opportunity to speak about the achievements of the francophones in Nova Scotia, particularly the Acadians, and the things they have done to preserve their language and education in their province. I therefore move the adjournment of debate for the remainder of my time.

(On motion of Senator Comeau, debate adjourned.)

[English]

POVERTY

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Robichaud, P.C., calling the attention of the Senate to the issue of poverty in Canada — an issue that is always current and continues to have devastating effects.

Hon. Hugh Segal: Honourable senators, I rise to speak to the inquiry advanced by our colleague, Senator Robichaud of New Brunswick.

[Translation]

I would like to express my thanks and my deep respect for his commitment to this issue. As a member of Parliament in the House of Commons and as a senator, he has always been a strong advocate for the interests of everyone in his riding, his province and Canada, both the haves and the have-nots, and he has always advocated in a straightforward and very enthusiastic manner. I respect him for the work he has done and for this study, which is very important for us as citizens of Canada.

[English]

As we sit here today, between the budget that just came down in the Province of Ontario and the budget that is about to come down in the other place tomorrow, I think it is of value that we reflect on the implications of public policies and how they affect the day-to-day lives of the people who are the most disadvantaged amongst our fellow Canadians. Ten per cent of Canadians live beneath the poverty line. That is now in excess of 3 million men, women, and their children, people for whom life is not a series of choices about which college to send their kids to, which summer camp to sort out, whether to be part of the fashion season, or whether to go to the theatre; their choices are more direct. Do you pay the rent? Do you pay the heat? Do you buy your necessary pharmaceuticals? Do you buy fresh food? Do you have any money left over for clothes for your kids?

• (1530)

The truth of the matter is that the single-most expensive public policy mistake any government can make — government of the left, government of the centre or government of the right — is to not work at reducing the number of people who live under the poverty line. Why is that? If we are concerned about the cost of health care, what we know about those who live in poverty is that they get sick sooner, stay in hospital longer, and die earlier. The fancy term for this is “morbidity and mortality.” The bottom line is: They get sick more intensely and more quickly, and they die at a much younger age than those who are not disadvantaged. Imagine that.

Imagine, honourable senators, having before us a public policy option of reducing the number of people who live under the poverty line, thereby taking the pressure off our health care system and off our prisons. Why would it be that in the great city of Kingston, where we have seven federal and provincial prisons within a 50-mile radius of the downtown area, 10 per cent of the population live below the poverty line and generate 94 per cent of Her Majesty's guests in those institutions?

Do honourable senators know what it costs to keep one person who has been found guilty of an offence? At a minimum, it costs \$70,000 to \$80,000 per year. High security costs \$140,000 to

\$150,000 per year. What would it take to lift most people from below the poverty line to above the poverty line? It would take \$15,000 per year.

If one is a right wing Conservative who wants to save money and protect the taxpayers, then investing in reducing the number of people who live under the poverty line is the most efficient expenditure one can make. All of the pathologies which we know are so counterproductive — leaving school early, family violence, unemployment, illiteracy and family breakup — are made worse by poverty.

If we had all the money in the world, if we could print the money without regard to where it came from and triple our federal and provincial budgets, we would not have enough money to deal with all those other issues. However, we do have enough money to deal with reducing poverty. It would be the one instrument that federal and provincial governments could work on together.

I want to pay tribute to the honourable senators who worked so hard on the report on health care that is before us, *Time for Transformative Change*. It is a piece of work that brings credit to this entire institution and will be of great value. The fact that it is unanimous speaks to how well we can work together in this place on things that really matter for Canadians.

The report references the social determinants of health, specifically the problem with our brothers and sisters among First Nations. However, the truth of the matter is that the social determinants of health — namely poverty — are as bad among low-income people everywhere as they are among low income people in our First Nations, with one exception: whereas the incidence of poverty among non-First Nations is at 10 per cent, in many parts of Canada the level for our First Nations brothers and sisters is at 15 per cent to 30 per cent, if not higher.

We looked at poverty in rural Canada when Senator Fairbairn did an outstanding job as Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry some years ago. It was an honour to have my first committee assignment under her leadership. We found that in rural Canada the poverty numbers are worse, and they are silent and hidden. At least in the cities, an infrastructure that includes food banks and various agencies and organizations provides some measure of support. In rural Canada, there is little public transit, which makes the situation far worse. The isolation makes it even more difficult to deal with.

Honourable senators, there are not many areas of public policy that generate a broad range of support from left, right and all the major political traditions. Not one issue would group Richard Milhous Nixon, Daniel Moynihan, Winston Churchill or Donald S. Macdonald, the former Liberal Minister of Finance, Minister of Defence and Chairman of the Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada appointed by the Right Honourable Pierre Elliott Trudeau, who made his report to the Mulroney administration which followed thereafter. Every single one of those people, as well as the Right Honourable Robert L. Stanfield, took the position that we can do a better and more efficient job of dealing with poverty than we are doing. They were all in favour, in one way or another, of a guaranteed annual income, a basic income floor or a refundable tax credit — call it what you like.

They asked this question, and I ask every honourable senator this same question: Why would it be that when we had seniors living in poverty in Ontario in 1975, under a minority Conservative government, that our friends in the Liberal Party and in the NDP at the time passed a motion at the Standing Committee on Social Policy that the minister's salary be reduced to \$1 and that the deputy minister's salary be reduced to \$1, which they had the power to do? We found out that our opposition friends were going there because of the stories of senior women, whose husbands had left no pension or savings, who were buying dog food and cat food to add a little bit of protein to their diets on a meagre income. That was not a creation of the *Toronto Star* — and, God knows, they are capable of the odd creation over time — but that was hard reality. Once that was found out, three and a half weeks later the Honourable W. Darcy McKeough, in his pin-striped suit, tie and Toronto club cufflinks, rose in his place and announced a guaranteed annual income supplement for all seniors in Ontario. There were no special applications, no new welfare programs and no interviews across glass dividers about how poor they were and how they could prove it. They were seniors and they had built our province. They had the right to a basic income level with decency and honesty. Within two years, the rate of poverty among that population went from 30 per cent to 3 per cent. The idea caught on across this great country, and the federal government brought it in.

Today, the OECD says that Canada is among the top five in keeping our seniors out of poverty. We perform better than many other countries, but for working-age people, we are down around number 20. It is as if we have decided, like they used to in the 17th and 18th centuries, that “the poor are always with us.” There is nothing we can do; it is a like a blight; and we just have to live our way through it. Did Tommy Douglas say that about people who were sick and could not afford health care? He did not say that. Neither did Mr. Justice Emmett Hall, nor John Diefenbaker, nor Mike Pearson. They said that we could do better and we did better as a country.

I believe that unless we are prepared to confront the real cost of poverty, on which the National Council of Welfare did an excellent report, and unless we are prepared to confront the lives we destroy, the communities we weaken, and the economic productivity we diminish, and deal with the poverty issue straight up by taking the position that no one will live in poverty in this country, then we will be weakening our social infrastructure and diluting our economic prospects. We will be impoverishing our health care system when the demographic bubble hits and many people, simply by virtue of advanced years, are in greater need of support from the health care system because the amount of the space in that system now being taken up by low-income people who have nowhere else to go. They do not have a general practitioner or a friend who can get them in to see a specialist a little sooner. They do not have any of those options. They show up at the emergency ward, the single most expensive place in our entire system within which to give primary care. My colleague, the physician across the way, understands more than most.

• (1540)

That is our challenge, and this inquiry is a great opportunity for colleagues to address how we can advance the case. I have no knowledge of what will be in tomorrow's budget, but I give credit to the government for expanding the WITB, the Working Income

Tax Benefit, program over the years. It was brought in by the present government to encourage low-income people who are working to stay in the workforce by allowing them to keep more of what they are earning. That is good, but it is not enough.

The question I put to you is as follows: Why can we not learn from the experience in a place called Dauphin, Manitoba? In Dauphin in 1976 — with Pierre Elliott Trudeau as the Prime Minister of Canada and Ed Schreyer as the Premier of Manitoba — there was a federal-provincial test. A rural community that had to face the vagaries of good crops, bad crops, good wheat prices, bad wheat prices got a guarantee. The guarantee was that no one would fall beneath the poverty line: At the end of year if the crops are bad and there is a variation in prices, we will protect you. Not a lot of money was spent. Only 17 per cent of the community ever drew a penny from that program. Guess what? Now there is an academic with a CIHR grant looking at the outcomes. Everyone benefitted.

Here is what happened in that community during those five years: Arrests went down; admissions to hospitals went down; car accidents went down. When you remove the stress of not knowing if you can pay the rent, not knowing if there is going to be food on the table for your kids, it is amazing how people are dominated by the better angels and the better opportunities and not the pathologies of poverty.

Not only did they find out how much money could be saved in our health care systems, but they dealt with the disincentive concern you hear about. I call it the “beer and popcorn allegation.” If you give poor people money they will have no incentive to work — as if living on welfare, which in every Canadian province is 18 to 20 per cent beneath the poverty line, is where anybody wants to be.

I ask for five minutes.

The truth of the matter is that this is a reality we have seen in other countries. Prince William is the patron of a charity in the big cities of the United Kingdom called Centrepont to help people who live on the street. He and the people who work in that charity — he slept on the street himself several times without security present — took on this proposition of saying you cannot trust poor people to do the right thing with money, as if by virtue of fact they are poor they cannot figure out what is important. We have the welfare systems which are the swells telling the lessers how they will live. That is what welfare is: spouse in the house and all those interesting questions that we see, people appearing before glass wickets to argue for how much they need to feed their kids.

In the United Kingdom, Panorama asked what would happen if we gave you 700 pounds a month. Some would rent caravans they can plug in at a trailer park to have heat and a warm place to sleep. Others would buy winter clothing or try to rent a room. The number of people who would spend the money on things we might find inappropriate like alcohol and drugs was less than 7 per cent.

A core message that I hope we can take from this wonderful inquiry put forward by Senator Robichaud is as follows: A decent human condition is not just the preserve of those who are wealthy. The right to have a life of choices and decency and family is not

just for those of us who may be a bit more fortunate than others. It is the right of everyone. I say this as a Conservative because I believe that if we are going to have a society of freedom and order, order implies a basic fairness and decency for all our fellow human beings. If we are not prepared to do that, then we should prepare ourselves for all the excess costs of young people with no work coming from families with no prospects being told that drugs or violence or crime is actually better than having no prospects at all.

We can do better, colleagues. I thank Senator Robichaud for the leadership in his inquiry, and I hope we can do our best wherever we have influence. There are people in this chamber who may have influence in the other place to fight hard for this kind of progress. We can afford it, we can do it, and the federal government has the capacity with the provinces to show collective leadership on this issue.

Thank you, colleagues.

(On motion of Senator Callbeck, debate adjourned.)

LITERACY

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Callbeck, calling the attention of the Senate to the importance of literacy, given that more than ever Canada requires increased knowledge and skills in order to maintain its global competitiveness and to increase its ability to respond to changing labour markets.

Hon. Catherine S. Callbeck: Honourable senators, I introduced this inquiry because I believe that helping Canadians to improve their literacy skills should be a national goal.

We will all gain from progress in this area. It will mean increased productivity in our economy, and better quality of life for Canadians and communities with more active and involved members.

First, I want to commend Senator Fairbairn for the work she has done on the issue over the years. She has provided outstanding leadership on literacy and has fiercely advocated for improved literacy programs and services across this country. I have long been impressed by her passion and desire to make sure that all Canadians have the necessary basic skills to improve their lives. Thank you, Senator Fairbairn.

I also want to commend Senator Demers for the work that he has done and is doing to bring attention to Canada's literacy deficiencies. He has spoken many times about what it is like to not have the literacy skills a person needs in day-to-day life. He shares his story in the hope it will help others. He has become a real role model for the benefits of learning.

We all know people who have been held back because of a lack of literacy skills. I think of the senior who told me when he wanted to talk to a certain person that he had to drive to that

person's home because he simply could not read the phone book to get his number, or the gentleman who attended church every Sunday and when a hymn was announced he would open the hymn book and hope that no one would notice that he did not have the right page and that he could not read the lyrics.

We all have similar stories. More than 40 per cent of working-age Canadians, those aged 16 to 65 years, have low literacy skills. In fact, when we include seniors the percentage rises to 48 per cent. That means that nearly half of Canadians have low literacy skills. They have trouble coping with the demands of everyday life and work.

• (1550)

The problem most face is comprehension. People with low literacy skills may be able to read the words on the page, but they cannot understand them. True literacy is much more than the basic skills of reading. It includes the ability to analyze, to understand and to apply what has been read. The Canadian Council on Learning released a report in 2008 entitled *Reading the Future*. The projection for the year 2031 is that the percentage of people with low literacy skills will still be at about 40 per cent unless something is done, but the actual number of adults with low literacy skills will go up from about 12 million to about 15 million. This is mainly due to an overall increase in population, an aging population, increased immigration, and skill losses that can occur over a lifetime.

The increased number of people with low literacy skills will have a profound effect on the country in many ways. As I have noted in the past, research shows that there is a strong relationship between literacy skills and social and economic issues, like health, productivity and crime. On an individual level, low literacy skills have been linked to poor health outcomes. People can be ill more often, and they might experience more workplace accidents and more missed medications, and even die younger. Studies also show that people with low literacy skills are apt to have low employment rates. They tend to work fewer hours at a time and fewer hours during the week.

They find themselves unemployed for longer periods, and those periods happen more often.

There is even a correlation between literacy levels and crime. Seventy-five per cent of Canadian offenders have low literacy skills. Thirty-six per cent of them have not completed grade 9. According to the Correctional Service of Canada, the average educational level of a person entering a federal facility with a sentence of two years or more is grade 7. Studies show that participation in prison-based literacy programs can help ensure inmates do not reoffend. Increased literacy skills can even help build self-confidence and encourage higher levels of involvement in community groups and volunteer activities.

Nationally, adult literacy levels have a tremendous influence on the growth or decline of the country's economy. The C.D. Howe Institute stated that Canada could see a 2.5 per cent rise in labour productivity and a 1.5 per cent rise in per capita domestic product, the GDP, if we increased our overall literacy skills by

1 per cent. If you put that into dollar figures, a 1 per cent increase in Canada's literacy rates could boost the national income by a huge \$32 billion.

A highly literate workforce can help a business become more efficient and competitive. It can increase workplace safety: Understanding safety regulations and procedures can prevent injuries. Everyone wins.

For all the reasons I have outlined and others, we need to increase our efforts to raise literacy levels across the country.

There are many ways that this can be done. The federal government could, for example, through its Labour Market Agreements, target funding to workforce or workplace literacy initiatives. Government could provide incentives to small and medium-sized businesses that sometimes lack the capacity, funding and time needed to provide literacy and other skills training to employees.

The benefits for both employee and employer far outweigh the costs. Improved customer service translates into higher profits. Positive, engaged employees mean increased productivity. Employees are healthier and more skilled, and a company increases its competitiveness. It has been shown that the rate of return can be tremendous.

The federal government can also ensure that the literacy and language training needs of immigrants to Canada are given a high priority. Canada is relying more and more on its immigration population to fill gaps in the labour force. We need to focus more on literacy issues facing newly landed immigrants to help them adapt and integrate into society more quickly.

Even though we all recognize the value of education, there is still a general lack of awareness of the literacy challenges Canada faces. Many Canadians are really shocked to hear that 40 per cent of Canadians lack the literacy skills to fully participate in the workforce and in life. Many of that 40 per cent would be surprised to learn that they have a literacy problem at all. The federal government could work with stakeholders to develop and implement a national public awareness campaign that stresses the importance of acquiring the literacy skills needed to find and keep a job and have a productive life.

Too many people of all ages and ethnic backgrounds lack the literacy, problem-solving and communication skills they need to enjoy a better quality of life. Without a doubt, improving these skills would have real benefits to individuals and to society. That is why I introduced this inquiry, and I hope that honourable senators will take the opportunity to give their input on how we can raise literacy rates in Canada. Today more than ever we must work to keep literacy high on the crowded agenda that faces our nation. We need to encourage workplace training, literacy and essential skills programs. We need to encourage Canadians to keep updating their skills through their whole lives. By improving literacy levels across the board, we can improve everyone's quality of life and strengthen the Canadian economy at the same time.

(On motion of Senator Tardif, debate adjourned.)

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY THE EVOLVING LEGAL AND POLITICAL RECOGNITION OF THE COLLECTIVE IDENTITY AND RIGHTS OF THE MÉTIS

Hon. Gerry St. Germain, pursuant to notice of March 27, 2012, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples be authorized to examine and report on the evolving legal and political recognition of the collective identity and rights of the Métis in Canada, and, in particular on,

- (a) the definition, enumeration, and registration of the Métis;
- (b) the availability and accessibility of federal programs and services for the Métis; and
- (c) the implementation of Métis Aboriginal rights, including those that may be related to lands and harvesting; and

That the Committee submit its final report no later than June 30, 2013, and that the Committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings until 180 days after the tabling of the final report.

Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I have a question.

In the spirit of the debate that my honourable colleague and friend Senator Comeau put forward, could Senator St. Germain give us a few more details about the proposed study and whether this would include any travel?

Senator St. Germain: Yes, definitely. I will try to give the honourable senator whatever information she would like. It does include travel. It will include travel into the Northwest Territories, northern Alberta, where the Metis communities are, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia. We planned on a trip into the Sault Ste. Marie area, towards Lakehead, but that will be fact finding. The committee will only be travelling, as a committee, into Western Canada, and it will also be fact finding in the Labrador area.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY EAST AND WEST COAST NAVY AND AIR FORCE BASES

Hon. Pamela Wallin, pursuant to notice of March 27, 2012, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence be authorized to examine and report on Canada's east and west coast navy and air force bases; in

particular the committee shall be authorized to examine the capabilities, roles, responsibilities and state of readiness of:

- (a) Maritime Forces Atlantic (MARLANT) and Maritime Forces Pacific (MARPAF) headquarters, including their respective Joint Task Forces;
- (b) the Joint Rescue Coordination Centres, the Joint Operations Centres and the Marine Security Operations Centres (MSOC);
- (c) the long range patrol and transport and rescue squadrons;
- (d) the Royal Canadian Navy submarine fleet;
- (e) the Royal Canadian Navy Halifax Class frigate fleet, including an examination of the Halifax Class Modernization Frigate Life Extension Program (HCM FELEX); and
- (f) the Royal Canadian Air Force search and rescue and maritime helicopter fleets; and

That the Committee submit its final report to the Senate no later than December 31, 2013, and that the Committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings until March 31, 2014.

The Hon. the Speaker: Shall I dispense? Are there further questions? Debate?

Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Yes. I notice that it is a very detailed proposal put forward for the committee to study, but perhaps the Honourable Senator Wallin can just highlight some of the main things.

Senator Wallin: Yes. I mentioned this yesterday; they are really all spelled out there. This is travel to these two locations — Halifax and Esquimalt, B.C. They are each home to a Marine Security Operations Centre, so that is one of the reasons we are going there. Also, they have joint search and rescue operations co-located. This was travel that was approved for this fiscal year. We were unable to complete that travel, so we would like to do so in the next fiscal year.

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

Hon. Senators: Question!

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

(The Senate adjourned until Thursday, March 29, 2012, at 1:30 p.m.)

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