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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, April 5, 2012

THE HONOURABLE PIERRE CLAUDE NOLIN
ACTING SPEAKER

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

Debates Services: D'Arcy McPherson, National Press Building, Room 906, Tel. 613-995-5756
Publications Centre: David Reeves, National Press Building, Room 926, Tel. 613-947-0609

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THE SENATE

Thursday, April 5, 2012

The Senate met at 1:30 p.m., the Honourable Pierre Claude Nolin, Acting Speaker, in the Chair.

Prayers.

[Translation]

ROYAL ASSENT

The Hon. the Acting Speaker informed the Senate that the following communication had been received:

RIDEAU HALL

April 4, 2012

Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, signified royal assent by written declaration to the bill listed in the Schedule to this letter on the 4th day of April, 2012, at 6:22 p.m.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Wallace
Secretary to the Governor General

The Honourable
The Speaker of the Senate
Ottawa

Bill Assented to Wednesday, April 4, 2012:

An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Firearms Act (*Bill C-19, Chapter 6, 2012*)

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

MR. HENK TEPPER

Hon. Pierrette Ringuette: Honourable senators, last week, Henk Tepper, a New Brunswick potato farmer who was being detained in Lebanon because he was wanted by Algeria on an Interpol warrant, returned to Canada and was reunited with his family. Henk was in jail for over a year, a nightmare that he and his family are not likely to forget.

In May of last year, Henk's father, his wife and his sister came to ask me for help. I told them that I would do whatever I could to bring Henk home. With help from Henk's lawyers, I gathered

and studied all of the facts relating to his case. It would be impossible for me to go into detail about communications between my office and Lebanon because they were too numerous.

[English]

In May, June, July and August, I met with Ministers Nicholson, Baird and Ablonczy, the RCMP and the Clerk of the Privy Council, Wayne Wouters, providing them with all the documented facts.

Also, at the end of June, you will remember that I asked honourable senators to sign a petition to be sent to Lebanon. All my Liberal caucus colleagues signed it. I want to take this moment to thank my colleagues for their unwavering support.

I will also take this opportunity to thank, on my behalf and on behalf of lawyer Jim Mockler and the Tepper family, the Honourable Senator Mac Harb. Mac, you have been, without reservation, a pillar of strength and determination in Canada as well as in Lebanon for the return of Henk, especially when we went to Lebanon for our series of meetings. I was so impressed with the high regard they have for you. You joined the Tepper team, and we are extremely grateful for your help.

When Senator Harb, lawyer Jim Mockler, lawyer Joe Karam and I met with dignitaries in Lebanon, they questioned us: Why had they not received any request from the Government of Canada to return Henk home? However, through those meetings and continued dialogue, the Government of Lebanon made the courageous and just decision not to extradite Henk Tepper to Algeria.

Honourable senators, there are not enough words to express my and the Tepper family's appreciation for the Lebanese government. Throughout this nightmare, they have been patient, understanding and, above all, courageous. Henk would not be home without their courageous decision. Citizens of Lebanon and Canadian-Lebanese citizens should be extremely proud of the current government.

On Saturday, March 31, Henk Tepper, accompanied by his lawyers Jim Mockler and Joe Karam, arrived at the Ottawa airport and was greeted by his family as well as myself and Senator Harb. It was one of the most fulfilling and emotional moments of my life.

On Sunday, as we arrived in Grand Falls and Drummond, there were groups all along the road to greet Henk.

[Translation]

Honourable senators, today I have the honour of drawing to your attention the presence in the gallery of two distinguished Lebanese gentlemen, the Lebanese embassy's chargé d'affaires, Georges Abou Zeid, and our very good friend, Joe Karam, who was Henk Tepper's lawyer in Lebanon. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

• (1340)

THE LATE MR. JEAN-CLAUDE LANGLOIS

Hon. Claude Carignan (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, today I would like to pay tribute to a great man who passed away during the night of Wednesday, April 4, 2012.

Every person's life leaves an impression, and Jean-Claude Langlois's left a huge one. At age 77, Mr. Langlois left our community, and left behind a legacy as a great builder.

He began his career as a teacher in the early 1960s and worked in that field for 13 years. It was during that time that he invented the familiar Mot Mystère word search puzzle to help his students learn French.

In the late 1960s, Mr. Langlois decided to market this teaching tool. It was a huge success and marked the start of a new career for this French teacher, who then became a great and respected businessman in our region.

He quickly became interested in journalism and started his own newspaper, *La Concorde*, which was first published in October 1969. Through the acquisition of a series of competitors, Mr. Langlois became the owner of four newspapers, *La Concorde* and *L'Éveil* in the Deux-Montagnes RCM and *Nord Info* and *Voix des Mille-Îles* in the Thérèse-de-Blainville RCM.

Jean-Claude Langlois's life can be summed up by the old saying that anything worth doing is worth doing right. His commercial and philanthropic success bear witness to that fact. Jean-Claude Langlois was a builder the likes of whom we seldom have the chance to meet since, in addition to achieving such great success in his professional life, Mr. Langlois was also extremely kind-hearted. He was involved in many charitable causes. As an honorary president, a donor or a simple volunteer for a cause, Jean-Claude never hesitated to devote part of his life to promoting and supporting the organizations in his community. He gave his full support to the Fondation Hôpital Saint-Eustache, Fondation Drapeau-Deschambault, Aide aux enfants handicapés Blainville-Deux-Montagnes and Maison des soins palliatifs Sercan, not to mention the many charitable organizations to which he provided space in his newspapers.

The success of his newspapers resulted from his willingness to promote the people of his region. Like all media owners, he had a great deal of power. He never abused his power. Instead, he used it to showcase other people and their ideas. I will always remember the election campaign coverage when he created a rule for exemplary objectivity and impartiality, where each party was given the same meticulously planned coverage in order to ensure that all parties were on a perfectly level playing field.

Some losses have many repercussions. The passing of Jean-Claude Langlois is one such loss, and no one is left unaffected. He was a rock in our community and, for many, he was a beacon on that rock.

Personally, I have known the man for nearly 25 years and he left an indelible mark on my life. Thank you, Jean-Claude, for all you have given us.

I wish to express my sincere condolences to his children, Serge, Claude and Michel, his grandchildren, and his long-time colleagues and friends, André Roy, Rémy Binette and Carole Côté.

[English]

NATIONAL CAREGIVER DAY

Hon. Catherine S. Callbeck: Honourable senators, today is National Caregiver Day. An estimated five million Canadians provide care for their loved ones who are gravely ill or dying because of age, disabling medical conditions, chronic injury, long-term illness or disability.

We must recognize the important role and value of family caregivers, not only for the family but for society as a whole. Family caregivers are the invisible backbone of our health care system. They provide hands-on care, assistance and emotional support day after day to loved ones who are gravely ill or dying.

The new reality is that caring for an aging parent or family member is becoming a normal part of life for an increasing number of Canadians. Today it is not if but when one will become a family caregiver.

This weekend as we celebrate Easter, a chance for Canadians to rest and spend time with family, let us remember that family caregivers will be working continually to provide care and support for their loved ones.

Honourable senators, please join with me in marking National Caregiver Day by recognizing the individual Canadians who, by providing care and compassion, make a difference in the life of a gravely ill or dying loved one.

[Translation]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

REMOTE SENSING SPACE SYSTEMS ACT

INDEPENDENT REVIEW TABLED

Hon. Claude Carignan (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, an independent review of the Remote Sensing Space Systems Act.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Claude Carignan (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 58(1)(h), I move:

That when the Senate adjourns today, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, April 24, 2012, at 2 p.m.

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Honourable senators, is leave granted?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

[English]

CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. James S. Cowan (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 56, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to the 30th Anniversary of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which has done so much to build pride in our country and our national identity.

[Translation]

QUESTION PERIOD

JUSTICE

LONG-GUN REGISTRY

Hon. Céline Hervieux-Payette: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Following the passage of Bill C-19 — which dredges up very bad memories for Quebecers — and today's decision by Quebec's courts to suspend application of section 29, the destruction of registry data in Quebec, could the leader tell us if the government intends to respect the decision of Quebec's courts?

[English]

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): The Minister of Public Safety reported this morning that with Royal Assent and Bill C-19 becoming federal law, the long-gun registry will no longer be in place in Canada. However, we will, of course, respect and deal with any future decision of the court.

• (1350)

While I am on my feet, the government was just made aware of the decision of the court in the province of Quebec and has not yet fashioned a response to exactly what will be done in the future.

Senator Hervieux-Payette: We are in a country where due process is one of the fundamental pillars of our democracy. I am wondering if this declaration of the minister is valid until the

court has finished dealing with it. The first step was to preserve the data. The second step, of course, is to recuperate the data, and this will be addressed in another court proceeding.

Will the minister respect the court process of this country and ensure that we get back the data, paid for by the citizens of Quebec and whose will it is to keep it?

Senator LeBreton: I answered that in my first answer, honourable senators. The government was just made aware, an hour or so ago, of the decision of the Quebec court. I cannot comment any further on what actions will be taken. This will have to wait until we are back, when we will have a more definitive idea of how exactly we will respond.

[Translation]

Senator Hervieux-Payette: Honourable senators, this is my last supplementary question. Not so long ago, when we were discussing the appropriateness of destroying or abolishing the Canadian Wheat Board, a judge made a ruling that was never respected by the government.

That is why my question for the leader is the following: is her government going to respect the judicial process to the end?

[English]

Senator LeBreton: I just answered the question. With regard to the Wheat Board, it was a different type of circumstance.

In any event, I can only say to honourable senators that the government just, within the last hour, received the decision of the Quebec court, and we will respond appropriately.

Hon. Joan Fraser: Supplementary. I am sorry, honourable senators, but despite three attempts, and listening very carefully, I do not understand the answer of the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Will she or will she not obey the injunction until the final court case is settled?

Senator LeBreton: I actually said that in my first answer. I said that Minister Toews indicated this morning that the government would respect the decision of the court.

[Translation]

FINANCE

FUNDING FOR KATIMAVIK

Hon. Maria Chaput: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate and has to do with the Katimavik program.

The youth unemployment rate is twice as high as the national average, civic engagement is at an all-time low, and there is a shortage of skilled labourers.

The minister's government has abolished Katimavik, a program to help young people acquire useful, transferable job skills.

I would like to share what some of the young participants in Katimavik have said. One young woman said, "What we learn here is worth just as much as a diploma." One young man said:

[English]

... it is terribly wrong to cut Katimavik. It changed my life in 2000.

[Translation]

Should the acquisition by young people of these useful, transferable job skills not be part of your job strategies in the economic plan? Why abolish Katimavik?

[English]

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): I hope honourable senators noticed today that the country experienced extremely strong job growth: 82,300 net new jobs, which means over 690,000 net new jobs since July 2009. Of these figures today, 90 per cent were full-time jobs. I would urge the honourable senator to look at the statistics, because a significant number of those jobs were for young Canadians.

These are positive signs. We are on the right track. The youth employment numbers made up a significant proportion of the good news that came out of Statistics Canada this morning.

With regard to Katimavik, as I indicated on Tuesday to Senator Losier-Cool, this program has been in place for over 30 years. Taxpayers have paid out over \$379 million into the Katimavik program. There is a dropout rate of over 30 per cent. Since 1977, Katimavik has received 99 per cent of its funding from taxpayers. There has been no effort on the part of Katimavik to raise its own money. In fact, if the senator is worried about ordinary Canadians, Katimavik has cost taxpayers \$28,000 for every young person the program supports. That, of course, as we know, is a very good salary for many Canadians.

Our government is very proud of our record in investing in affordable, effective programs that engage youth, including Encounters with Canada, Forum for Young Canadians and organizations that support youth, such as the YMCA and YWCA.

Linda Brunet of Encounters with Canada has stated that "The support this government has provided to youth has been invaluable."

[Translation]

Senator Chaput: The Katimavik program has given young Canadians an opportunity to learn about and appreciate Canada's rich regional and cultural diversity. These young Canadians, as you know, have had unforgettable experiences in every province across Canada. Those experiences have given these young people more than just a job before returning to their studies; they have also given them the skills and tools needed to return to the labour market. The program has also provided a great deal of assistance to the community organizations that welcomed them across Canada.

I know of some young people who, through this program, helped develop regional programming for a community radio station when it was being launched. I know of some who helped

low-income seniors living in retirement homes renovate their personal spaces. I saw many such community-based projects carried out through Katimavik.

I have never heard a single Canadian say that the Katimavik program was a waste of money.

I repeat my question: why eliminate such an important program for our young people?

[English]

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I point out that Katimavik has been in place for over 30 years. It did not do one thing to reach out on its own and raise its own money. It relied totally on the Canadian taxpayer to the tune of \$28,000 per young person who participated. There was a dropout rate of over 30 per cent. The government supports many programs, including Encounters with Canada, that educate and provide youth participation in good and valid projects to enhance their Canadian citizenship. Katimavik is a program whose time is up, and the government will not change its position on this. The Katimavik program is over.

Hon. Jim Munson: To the Leader of the Government in the Senate, did the government cut the program because it is a Liberal initiative?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, if that were the case we still have a lot of cutting to do.

The fact of the matter is this program's usefulness has now passed. I have made very clear that Katimavik made no effort to raise any of its own funds; it relied solely on the taxpayer of Canada.

The government participates in many programs to support our youth. The employment numbers out today point to the fact that a significant number of those jobs were for youth.

• (1400)

Furthermore, there are many areas in this country where businesses, manufacturing and various organizations are crying out for skilled workers. I would suggest that we focus on ensuring that our young people know of these positions that are available and that they are properly trained, whether through skills training or colleges and universities, to ensure that they are well equipped to fill these jobs that are so urgently crying for people to fill them.

Senator Munson: In probably one of the leader's favourite papers, the *Ottawa Citizen*, there was a column today by Elizabeth Payne. She made an interesting point. She said that Katimavik should be a Tory favourite, owing to the fact that it is aligned with Conservative values of volunteerism and youth engagement. She suggested that the government might want to consider rebranding Katimavik. Its current name means "meeting place" in Inuktitut, and it is fitting, given Canada's proud Aboriginal heritage. However, perhaps — a more Conservative-friendly name could save the program. What about "the Governor General's youth corps" or "the royal Canadian volunteer corps"?

I just know these things. The leader's answer moments ago — talk about taking it to another level — “this is about Trudeau time” and so on and forth.

It is hard to imagine, as Ms. Payne said, a federal politician who would not like the idea. You could call it “Torytic,” or whatever you want to call it. It is difficult to argue with the benefit of this program.

Would you stop chirping, senator? I am trying to ask a question. You chirp all the time.

Each dollar invested in the program produces roughly \$2.20 return for the communities Katimavik serves. How can one argue with that?

We have hundreds of emails from parents. Those who signed up for the program this year, who are still in the program and who are ready to go this summer, cannot go. They completed the selection process for the upcoming sessions and now they are left out in the cold.

One mother said the following:

My son was accepted to the July run of the Katimavik program. He was excited about his future, excited about seeing a different part of Canada, and excited about helping others, because he was accepted in the program. He did not apply to university or college this year. Now what does he do?

This was his dream, and our government has crushed it. Madam leader, it is not our government, and certainly not my government, that has crushed this young man's dream. As his mother asked, I now ask the leader: What does he do?

Senator LeBreton: First, the honourable senator suggested at the beginning of his question that the *Ottawa Citizen* is my favourite newspaper. As a matter of fact, it makes a good liner for my cat litter box.

The fact of the matter is, as I mentioned before, Katimavik has long outlived its usefulness. It is paid for directly by the taxpayer. We were elected on jobs, the economy and prosperity for the future. We have not raised taxes.

Since the honourable senator is worried about students and student jobs, the Economic Action Plan 2012 provides an additional \$50 million to assist more young people in gaining tangible skills and experience through the Youth Employment Strategy. I would suggest to the honourable senator that he direct the mother who wrote the email to other programs that the government has to assist young people. It would be advisable that he do that.

The budget also doubles the resources of the Industrial Research and Development Internship Program to place even more students into hands-on research and internships in Canadian companies.

We have provided many opportunities for youth. Previously, as I pointed out in this chamber, we permanently increased Canada Summer Jobs by \$10 million — 3,500 additional jobs per year, for

a total of 40,000 jobs for students each summer. As well, Career Focus helps employers provide recent graduates with internships; this program helped 2,800 graduates in 2010-11.

Honourable senators, these are the programs that young people should be focused towards, not a 30-year-old program in which a very few people participate. Katimavik itself, as the sponsor of this program, has done absolutely nothing, other than to rely on the taxpayer, to raise one cent. If they were so committed to the program, why were they not out raising money on their own to keep this program going?

Senator Munson: There are robo-calls, and now there are robo-answers. Tony Clement can spend \$50 million on gazebos. That was a Summer Work Experience program. The leader never, ever answers a direct question.

What does the leader say, as I asked previously, to the mother of this young boy who signed up for the Katimavik program and was ready to go? It crushed her son's dream. What does the leader say to that family? Could she answer that?

Senator LeBreton: I answered that. I suggested that the honourable senator have that mother direct her son to the Canada Youth Employment Strategy. There are all kinds of opportunities for young people, whether it is working in universities or manufacturing, where they can get meaningful training for jobs that will last well into the future.

I know the honourable senator has a hard time accepting this because of his particular background, but the fact of the matter is that Katimavik is dead and the government will not be reinstating the program, no matter how many times the honourable senator gets up and asks questions about it.

ATLANTIC CANADA OPPORTUNITIES AGENCY

EMPLOYMENT CREATION

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: According to Statistics Canada, when we compare job numbers from February of this year to June of 2008, we find that in Nova Scotia alone more than 4,900 more people are unemployed; indeed, the numbers this morning show that the numbers are going up again. Since July 2008, the local unemployment rate has risen. I have not had a chance to check this morning's numbers, but I understand they have gone up from 6.9 per cent to 8.2 per cent over the period I quoted.

Yet, in the recent budget — and Senator Duffy should be paying close attention to this — the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency was cut by almost \$17.9 million per year. That is 21 per cent of ACOA's \$84.6 million operating budget.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans was cut by \$79.3 million per year and Marine Atlantic was cut by \$10.9 million per year. These are all important departments in Atlantic Canada; this is again an abandonment of Atlantic Canada by the Harper government.

For a government that claims to be creating jobs, it seems to me it is doing the complete opposite. Why would this government be cutting budgets in areas that are already suffering from heavy job losses?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): I guess the honourable senator is worried about the jobs of the few people who work for these agencies and not the many jobs created through the programs of ACOA.

The honourable senator knows that all ACOA's programs remain solidly funded and continue to help small and medium-size enterprises create jobs and growth in the Atlantic region. Over the coming days and weeks, ACOA will be informing unions and employees about specific changes and will communicate these changes accordingly. These are changes to the operation of ACOA. These are not changes to the money that ACOA sends out to small business.

Of course, as I said before, the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy is further evidence of our commitment to Atlantic Canada. Obviously, this program will be a great boon to Atlantic Canada, not only in Nova Scotia but also to other related industries in other provinces of Atlantic Canada.

• (1410)

Senator Mercer: The Leader of the Government in the Senate talks about cuts to operations. That is interesting. I am very curious about that.

I have asked the minister before about high-paying jobs that were going out to Minister MacKay's friends in the very departments of this government that have slashed budgets. For example, John Lynn, hired to head Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation under then ACOA Minister Peter MacKay, and Kevin MacAdam, a former staffer of Minister MacKay, hired as the director general of ACOA regional operations in Prince Edward Island, had a salary of \$133,000 —

Senator Mitchell: That's job creation.

Senator Mercer: Patrick Dorsey was senior adviser to Premier Binns before being named ACOA's vice-president for PEI in 2007 — all of that, again, when Minister MacKay was ACOA minister. Cecil Clarke landed himself a job as consultant to the Cape Breton County Economic Development Authority for over \$135,000 a year, honourable senators. I repeat: \$135,000 a year.

Honourable senators, their salaries add up to almost half a million dollars. That is a lot of money that could be providing local jobs for Atlantic Canadians. Instead of cutting these executive jobs, the budget will be focusing on layoffs from the local jobs of people in the region.

I seem to recall an old adage in labour: Last in, first out. I ask the leader again: When is John Lynn getting his pink slip? What about Kevin MacAdam, Patrick Dorsey and Cecil Clarke? When will they be fired?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, the Honourable Senator Mercer was the executive director of the Liberal Party before he was appointed to the Senate.

The fact of the matter is, honourable senators, Atlantic Canada —

Some Hon. Senators: Oh, oh!

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Order! Can we listen to the answer, please?

Senator LeBreton: Atlantic Canadian families are no different than families anywhere in the country. Atlantic Canadian families, workers, entrepreneurs and taxpayers overwhelmingly agree that our hard-earned tax dollars should be spent wisely and, more important, effectively.

Atlantic Canadian communities and businesses will benefit from a host of opportunities stemming from the Economic Action Plan 2012. Our budget includes an extension of the hiring credit for small businesses, continued support for the forestry sector, and \$1.1 billion over five years for research and development. On top of that is the naval shipbuilding.

Senator Mercer: Happy Easter!

Senator LeBreton: Happy Easter to you, too, Senator Mercer.

Senator Mercer: Honourable senators, indeed I was the national director of the Liberal Party before I was appointed. I was happy to do that and I was happy to take the appointment from Mr. Chrétien — just as all the people on the other side were happy to take their appointments for their various jobs.

What Senator Moore wanted to know was this: Why is the leader reading her answers? Tell us what you really feel.

DND is now sending out pink slips. In Nova Scotia, we are losing 62 jobs in Halifax and at CFB Greenwood — a total of 178 job losses in Atlantic Canada from the Department of National Defence.

Minister MacKay and Mr. Harper have no problem getting jobs for Mr. MacKay's buddies — high-paying jobs at ACOA — but cannot stand up and prevent job losses for departments that are operational in Atlantic Canada. When will these people be fired and when will you stop cutting jobs in Atlantic Canada?

An Hon. Senator: Hear, hear!

Senator LeBreton: The honourable senator chides me for reading an answer because I am putting real figures on the record, but then he reads his question.

The honourable senator knows full well that the goal of this government is strong growth, low taxes and prosperity in the future. Atlantic Canada factors into that at an extremely high level. I did put on the record the money that the government is putting into Atlantic Canada, including into the forestry industry and into research and development. Atlantic Canada will benefit from all of that. Again, I mentioned shipbuilding, which was celebrated by people in Atlantic Canada. That project will go forward and will be beneficial to people all over Atlantic Canada.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

F-35 AIRCRAFT PURCHASE

Hon. Francis William Mahovlich: Honourable senators —

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Order! Can we listen to the question, please?

Senator Mahovlich: Thank you, Your Honour.

My question is to the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Auditor General Michael Ferguson stated that the government misled the people by using a \$15-billion price tag for the purchase of 65 F-35s. Documents, he noted, showed a total price tag of \$25 billion over a 20-year period for defence personnel salaries and operating costs. Yet nothing is mentioned here about maintenance.

A dear friend of mine retired from politics and from the hockey world. His name was Leonard Red Kelly. He went into business in aerospace and airplane maintenance. I often went over to have lunch with him. He explained to me that if you flew a plane, every part in that plane had so many hours. If it flew one hour, then certain parts would have to be replaced. This was a business unto itself, so you had to replace all these parts.

I figured out that for a plane worth at least \$200 million or \$300 million, the maintenance for an F-35 — that is, for 65 of those planes — would be at least \$2 billion to \$3 billion a year.

Senator Mitchell: Unbelievable!

Senator Mahovlich: In 20 years, it would be close to \$27 billion.

Senator Mitchell: Oh, my God — they forgot \$27 billion!

Senator Mahovlich: Could the leader please come up with the price tag for the maintenance of these F-35s in the next 20 years?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have been around long enough to remember Red Kelly. He played for Detroit and Toronto. Of course, the Maple Leafs never recovered after he left.

The Auditor General, as I pointed out yesterday, raised some issues with regard to the F-35. The Auditor General did say this morning in committee that the government is going in the right direction. I think it is important to point out here that no contract has been signed; no money has been misspent because no money has been spent.

Honourable senators, let us let the secretariat that has been put in charge of overseeing this do their work, report to Parliament and go from there.

As I pointed out yesterday, the government accepts the findings of the Auditor General and is taking the proper steps to address all the Auditor General's concerns.

Hon. Grant Mitchell: Honourable senators, the Auditor General made it very clear and stated explicitly that cabinet knew that the price tag — even though it was low — that was

going to be put on the jets was \$25 billion. They knew that explicitly. At the same time, they sat by in their seats in Parliament when the \$14-billion piece of information was given to Parliament, and they did not do a single thing to fix that lie.

What does it say about the nature of these people in that cabinet that they would sit by and observe a \$10-billion lie to the people of Canada and do nothing, but nothing, to fix it?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I am not sure to what the Honourable Senator Mitchell is referring exactly. All I know is that the Auditor General pointed out some problems between the Department of National Defence and Industry Canada and the handover to Public Works.

• (1420)

The cabinet, the Governor-in-Council, has accepted the Auditor General's findings. A secretariat has been set up. However, it is very important to point out that no contract has been signed and no money has been misspent because no money has been spent.

Senator Mitchell: Who is going to get fired to right the wrong as these people sat by and allowed that government to lie to —

[Translation]

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: The time for Question Period has expired.

[English]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ENERGY, THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

BUDGET—STUDY ON CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE OF ENERGY SECTOR— THIRD REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Mitchell, seconded by the Honourable Senator Mahovlich, for the adoption of the third report of the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources (budget—study on the energy sector), presented in the Senate on March 29, 2012.

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

Hon. Senators: Question.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

BUDGET AND AUTHORIZATION TO ENGAGE SERVICES AND TRAVEL—STUDY ON RESEARCH AND INNOVATION EFFORTS IN AGRICULTURE SECTOR—SIXTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the sixth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry (*budget—study on research and innovation efforts in the agricultural sector—power to hire staff and to travel*), presented in the Senate on April 3, 2012.

Hon. Claude Carignan (Deputy Leader of the Government) moved the adoption of the report.

Hon. Serge Joyal: Honourable senators, I would like to ask the Honourable Senator Carignan if the budget for this study, which was set at more than half a million dollars, is the amount the Senate is being asked to authorize or if the budget has been revised.

Senator Carignan: To my knowledge, there is no change to the budget for the time being. I believe that any committee need not spend its entire budget. The committee must ensure that the monies are spent as diligently as possible. I believe that the deputy chair, Senator Robichaud, who is present, could also respond to any specific queries.

Senator Joyal: Honourable senators, the following question is directed to the Honourable Deputy Leader of the Government as well. If I have understood correctly, the total budget for all committees — there are 17 currently sitting — is \$1,700,000, and the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry would take up almost one-third of that amount. Is the honourable senator not concerned that a single committee would spend almost one-third of the total budget for all committees on a single study?

[English]

Hon. David Tkachuk: The presentation of the budget is here because it is part of the report, but it was not approved. None of the international travel was approved. The only thing that was approved, if you go to the last page of the *Journals of the Senate*, was the amount for some \$200,000, which included the trip to Eastern and Western Canada by the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. The other part was turned down by the Internal Economy Committee and by the budget committee in its report.

Senator Joyal: I thank the honourable chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration for his response because that answers part of my preoccupation. I have risen before in the house when such

requests were placed before us and the proportion of the total amount for committees was so high, in fact, as to impair the future possibility of committees to request additional money. That is why I am raising this matter, and not because I am opposed to what the Agricultural Committee in its wisdom might choose to do.

As the Honourable Senator Carignan has mentioned, I am sure there are rules for any committees to ensure that the appropriations are well spent. I thank the chair of the Internal Economy Committee for that information.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

INVOLVEMENT OF FOREIGN FOUNDATIONS IN CANADA'S DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Eaton calling the attention of the Senate to the interference of foreign foundations in Canada's domestic affairs and their abuse of Canada's existing Revenue Canada Charitable status.

Hon. James S. Cowan (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to the inquiry launched by Senator Eaton on, in her words, "the interference of foreign foundations in Canada's domestic affairs and their abuse of Canada's existing Revenue Canada Charitable status."

I have listened closely to the honourable senators who have spoken on this debate. Many issues have been raised and some serious accusations have also been levelled against some of Canada's most respected and dedicated charitable organizations.

The privileges honourable senators enjoy in this place should never be used as a shield for a drive-by smear campaign. Our privileged right of speech in this chamber should never be used to try to stamp out the right of other Canadians to their fundamental Charter right of freedom of speech; yet that is what I fear this inquiry is trying to do.

There is a great deal of concern right now amongst charitable organizations across Canada because of things that have been said in the course of this debate, and last week's budget would seem to suggest that their concerns are justified. These organizations, perhaps reflecting their "charitable" nature, are concerned. Many thousands of Canadians are angry that parliamentarians, sent here to debate serious issues of vital national importance, are instead spending valuable time "trying to stifle the voices of millions of Canadians with whom you may not agree." That wording was contained in thousands of emails that I have received on this topic.

• (1430)

Honourable senators, the people who work for and support our charitable organizations have dedicated themselves to working to build a better world for all of us. Whether you or I or Prime Minister Harper agree with all the details of their respective visions is irrelevant. What constitutes the public good will be different for different people and it is the respect for these differences that is the hallmark of a free and democratic society.

The fact that an organization may have charitable status should not give licence to the government to censor what it says on a particular issue. Participation in public policy debate should not depend on one's tax status.

It may be helpful to begin with some context. My friend Senator Wallace made an admirable contribution to the debate when he outlined the history of charities in Canada, and I commend his remarks to you.

In 2003, the Government of Canada published a document that is readily available on the Canada Revenue Agency website and continues in full force and effect. It set out the government's policy with respect to political activities that the government has said charities may engage in. This policy statement, CPS-022, has governed the political activities of Canadian registered charities for close to a decade now. It sets out the overall context for charities as follows:

... Canadian society has been enriched by the invaluable contribution charities have made in developing social capital and social cohesion. By working with communities at the grassroots level, charities are trusted by and understand the needs of the people they serve. This is important work that engages individuals and communities in shaping and creating a more inclusive society.

Through their dedicated delivery of essential programs, many charities have acquired a wealth of knowledge about how government policies affect people's lives. Charities are well placed to study, assess, and comment on those government policies. Canadians benefit from the efforts of charities and the practical, innovative ways they use to resolve complex issues related to delivering social services. Beyond service delivery, their expertise is also a vital source of information for governments to help guide policy decisions. It is therefore essential that charities continue to offer their direct knowledge of social issues to public policy debates.

Notice that there is no mention of charities being required to advance the policies of the government of the day, or a suggestion that a charity may not challenge or question government policy. To the contrary, there is fundamental respect that our charities are engaged directly on issues that matter to Canadians. They have what is referred to in the circular as "a wealth of knowledge" about how policies will affect people's lives, and enabling charities to offer their knowledge to public policy debates is, in fact, a good thing and something to be encouraged, not silenced.

Honourable senators, think of the work done by charitable organizations over the years on issues that were controversial at the time but are now widely accepted. Think of acid rain

and, before that, think of the health organizations that worked tirelessly against smoking while "big tobacco" was telling Canadians and others that there was no proof cigarette smoking was bad for one's health. Look at the work being done today on the export of asbestos. Will this government next try to silence or shut down the Canadian Medical Association for its criticism of Canada's asbestos policy?

Senator Finley said that the word "charity" has become, in his words, distorted, contaminated and debased, migrating from being largely a religious-based concept to now being part of the murky lexicon of financial, political and other institutions. Honourable senators opposite appear to want to return to some mythical earlier time when charities restricted themselves to what the Conservative government considers to be approved "good works" and stayed away from advocating on public policy issues.

Honourable senators, the campaigning or advocacy role of charities has been an important factor in our history since the 18th and 19th centuries. Some of the greatest social movements have been led by charities. The campaign against the ill-treatment of children; the movement to abolish slavery; the campaign for women's rights, including the right to vote, were spearheaded by charitable organizations. This is not a recent phenomenon. There is a long and venerable tradition of charities engaging in political activities.

Is this to be undone now? Are charities now to confine themselves to government-approved issues and carefully avoid advocating for causes that have not met with this government's prior approval? Many Canadians have suggested that this government's policies aspire to some television-inspired fantasy of the 1950s, but with this change it would appear the Harper Conservatives want to turn the clock back even more radically, to the Middle Ages.

By contrast, the 2003 policy statement of the Chrétien government recognized and indeed welcomed the role that charities play in public policy development. It provided clarity — and "clarity" is an important word — on what charities could do without jeopardizing their charitable status. It defined "charitable activities," "prohibited activities" and "permitted political activities." The line between what was and what was not allowed was defined by the nature of the activity and not by whether the charity supported a particular government policy. For example, a charity may not engage in partisan political activities, but it may engage in a public awareness campaign to enable the public to make decisions about an issue related to the charity's work.

As I understand it, and I have spoken to many people in the charitable sector across the country, these rules, which were prepared after broad consultation across the country, have worked well. Let us be clear, honourable senators. I have not heard anything to indicate that any Canadian charity has violated these rules. The Budget Plan released last week states:

Recently, concerns have been raised that some charities may not be respecting the rules regarding political activities.

Honourable senators, I fear we are entering into some sort of an echo chamber. The main people who seem to have been raising these concerns are here in this chamber.

[Senator Cowan]

Senator Mockler gave a disturbing speech in which he listed what he characterized as “good foundations” and then what he characterized as “the qualified bad, not to mention ugly foundations.” Honourable senators will not be surprised to hear that those in the latter category support causes that Senator Mockler does not like. He proceeded to point out that charities should not take part in an illegal or partisan political activity. I should have thought that no one should take part in illegal activities. He went on to accuse certain foundations of “questionable practices” and what he called “dirty tricks.”

I asked Senator Mockler if he would identify some specific examples of illegal activities and which bad and ugly foundations engaged in them. He declined to reply, referring me back to the text of his speech. I have since re-read his speech very carefully, honourable senators. I saw no specifics of any illegal activities.

Indeed, honourable senators, the first purported example provided in his speech was the time Paul McCartney went to Newfoundland and Labrador to protest the seal hunt. I fail to see how that act was an illegal act by a foundation. We may or may not agree with Mr. McCartney’s view or with his methods of demonstrating his protest, but surely we would not seek to ban former Beatles protesting in Canada. What would be next? John Lennon and Yoko Ono should not have been allowed to stage their bed-in for peace at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montreal?

• (1440)

Senator Munson: All they were saying was give peace a chance.

Senator Cowan: Or would John Lennon make it on the “good Beatle list,” while Paul McCartney is relegated to Senator Mockler’s “bad and ugly Beatle list?”

Honourable senators, accusing any person or organization of illegal activities is serious business. I am quite sure that if there had been any breach of the rules, the Canada Revenue Agency would have acted. I am not aware that any such action has been taken.

If Senator Mockler has knowledge of illegal activity, he has a responsibility to bring it to the attention of the RCMP and the Canada Revenue Agency.

What then is the real issue for colleagues opposite in and around this inquiry? Since their concerns appear to have been heard and accepted by the Harper government, as we saw in last week’s budget, understanding the real issues at play becomes even more important.

The main allegation seems to be that “foreign foundations” are “infiltrating” Canada “under the guise of Canadian charitable foundations.” These are the words that I took from Senator Finley’s speech.

These are the kind of words that have been used in this inquiry by honourable senators opposite. Senator Eaton went even further. She spoke of “political manipulation” and “influence peddling.” These are very serious charges, honourable senators. Influence

peddling, for example, is an offence under section 121(1) of the Criminal Code and is punishable by up to five years in prison. If Senator Eaton has knowledge of influence peddling and is not simply engaging in a drive-by smear under the protection of parliamentary immunity, she should contact the appropriate authorities.

On the issue of foreign influence, Senator Plett seemed to sum up the crux of the argument being made by colleagues opposite, when he said:

Canada is indeed a sovereign nation, which is why foreign entities should simply not be allowed to meddle in the Canadian regulatory process under the guise of charities.

Senator Mockler took the same position. He said:

We must together put a stop to the interference of foreign foundations in Canada’s domestic affairs.

I must tell honourable senators that I find the direction in which this seems to be going deeply troubling.

There are many students of history in this chamber who recall, as I do, another Senate investigation, in another country, into foreign infiltration of domestic organizations. The McCarthy hearings in the United States were not a high point in that chamber’s history.

The rhetoric that has been employed in this debate is reminiscent of such low periods in history — listing “good” versus “bad and ugly” foundations, telling Canadians to beware of “foreigners” who are “infiltrating” our charitable organizations — Senator Mockler even used the word “hijacking” — and Senator Plett went so far as to suggest that environmentalists would take money from al Qaeda, Hamas and the Taliban. Senator Duffy contributed that such activities were “anti-Canadian.”

Honourable senators, instead of an international communist conspiracy, apparently we now have an international environmentalist conspiracy. Is today’s Senator McCarthy question going to be: “Are you now or have you ever been a member of a conservation society?” Is that what we will be asking witnesses who appear before our Senate committees?

Honourable senators, this may seem far-fetched.

Some Hon. Senators: Yes, it does.

Senator Cowan: Remember the words used by Senator Finley: “foreign foundations” who are “infiltrating” Canada, environmental organizations whose secret intent is to “undermine” and “do irreparable damage” to Canada’s economy. According to Senator Finley, that is what Canadians must stand on guard against.

Honourable senators opposite appear to want two things: Senator Eaton and Senator Finley seemed to be arguing for greater transparency about all sources of income received by

charitable organizations, whether or not charitable receipts are issued. At first blush, that seems unobjectionable, subject to the privacy concerns raised by Senator Nancy Ruth during the debate last Thursday.

Honourable senators, I understand that organizations like Tides Canada and the Suzuki Foundation — two of the charitable organizations singled out for particular attack by senators opposite — are very transparent about their funding. Indeed, some might question whether supporters of the government would be better to address their calls for transparency to their own leader. Prime Minister Harper to this date has refused to make public the full list of donors to his leadership campaign in 2002. Canadians do not know whether he is in any way beholden to foreign organizations, and I rather think that the Prime Minister wields more authority in this country than the Suzuki Foundation.

Senator Munson: He likes to travel.

Senator Cowan: The second goal of members opposite seems to be for legislation or regulation of foreign funding for these charitable organizations. Senator Plett said:

We need to ensure that we protect our sovereignty from the manipulation of foreign interests and lobbyists who wish to exploit our regulatory processes for their own agendas, agendas that are clearly against Canada and Canadian sovereignty.

Senator Mockler said:

. . . the time has come for the Canada Revenue Agency to close that gap, to close the loopholes for those foreign foundations with their sole purpose of making Canada look unpleasant and undesirable in other parts of the world.

Honourable senators, these are not new ideas. Senators opposite are certainly not the first politicians to express such concerns and to want legislation to control foreign funding of domestic non-governmental organizations. A few years ago, another influential politician said words very similar to those we have heard in this inquiry. He said: “We are for their,” and he was referring to NGOs, “funding being transparent . . . we don’t want them to be led by puppeteers from abroad.”

That was President Vladimir Putin of Russia. In 2006, he signed a law giving Russian authorities wide-ranging powers to monitor the activities and finances of NGOs. President Putin said he was particularly concerned about activities that, in his words, “threaten Russia’s sovereignty and independence.” Does that sound familiar?

The law that was passed in Russia in 2006 blocked foreign-funded NGOs from “carrying out what amounts to political activity” in Russia. As President Putin explained, “Whether these organizations want it or not, they become an instrument in the hands of foreign states that use them to achieve their own political objectives.” What an example for Senators Eaton and Plett and Prime Minister Stephen Harper to follow.

The Putin law was roundly and justifiably condemned by Human Rights Watch, among a long list of others. Indeed, some observers said the law made Russia “ill-suited for international leadership roles like its [then] chairmanship of the G8 group of the world’s major industrialized countries.” That, honourable senators, was a quote by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty about the law. I wonder how it would characterize the proposal by Senator Eaton and the support it is receiving from the loyal supporters of the Harper government?

Is Putin’s Russia really the model for Canada? Is that a precedent we should follow? This government already has the unfortunate distinction of being the first Canadian government in history to be denied a seat on the UN Security Council. Do we really want international human rights advocates and others now to be debating whether Canada should lose its position in the G8?

Honourable senators, I am not afraid of free speech. I celebrate it and I will proudly and emphatically defend it. However, I worry when someone — particularly a parliamentarian representing the government of the day — stands and suggests that we should silence Canadians because they are “under the influence” of “foreigners” who want to undermine Canadian peace and prosperity.

Let us be clear, honourable senators: reasonable people can disagree about what is a good and a bad policy choice. The Canadian way, as exemplified in our Charter of Rights and Freedoms, is to allow free and open debate — the marketplace of ideas. I am frankly a little surprised to see Conservative colleagues, who I would have thought believed in the free market above all else, seeking to somehow control and even suppress the expression of those ideas with which they happen to disagree.

• (1450)

Let us also be very clear: Foreigners do not have a monopoly on concerns for the environment. Many Canadians right across this land share a deep concern for our environment. Many Canadians are genuinely concerned about the impact of the oil sands development and possible problems resulting from pipelines carrying crude oil. It is patronizing and insulting to dismiss their very real, serious concerns as a result of foreign influences, or in Senator Eaton’s words, “has-been and wannabe movie stars.”

Canadians are highly intelligent, discerning individuals. They are capable of making up their own minds about issues. They do not need this government intervening to keep ideas out of earshot.

Environmental issues are not simply local or domestic issues. Nature does not recognize political boundaries. That is why international cooperation on environmental issues is vital. We should not be surprised if our American neighbours have an immediate interest in environmental issues in Canada. Likewise, I would hope and expect our government to recognize that Canadians have an interest in what happens south of the border if a danger is posed to Canada and our environment.

The Progressive Conservative government of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney certainly recognized this during the acid rain debates. In the 1980s, there were Canadian environmental groups

who went to the United States to lobby American decision-makers to try to bring an end to the scourge of acid rain. Would Senator Plett say that was wrong and an intrusion into the sovereign affairs of the United States of America? Should concerned Canadians have remained silent as they watched their lakes die?

I wonder how Senator Eaton would have viewed a counterpart in the United States Senate at that time had they criticized Canadian environmental groups as a threat to the vital coal industry of the Appalachians. Should Canadian environmental groups have been silenced?

The Government of Canada and representatives from our oil industry have not hesitated to go and lobby in other countries, not because their policies pose a danger to Canadian soil, but because their policies are seen not to be in Canada's economic interests. There were extraordinary lobbying efforts focused on the U.S. government and the American public with respect to the Keystone Pipeline project.

In London, England, Canadian taxpayers funded a two-day lobbying retreat, what one newspaper dubbed "Oil Lobbying for Dummies." Our government convened a meeting that brought together Canadian diplomats from 13 different European posts. Ottawa-based consultants were flown over to England for the event, together with industry stakeholders, such as Shell Oil, Statoil, Total, the Royal Bank of Scotland and the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers. There was a presentation on how to conduct advocacy in Europe and a session entitled "Address Criticism and Emotions."

Many Canadians might think that big oil has the money to do this kind of lobbying on its own, that Canadian taxpayer dollars should not be spent so freely on junkets to London in support of the oil industry, when Canadians are being told that Old Age Security will have to be cut back, along with spending on health care and education. Yet senators opposite are indignant when some of our American neighbours try to express their views in Canada about our oil policies.

A few weeks ago, the news broke of a secret high-level committee that was formed in 2010, specifically to coordinate the promotion of the oil sands. That committee brought together the president of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, with deputy ministers from Natural Resources Canada, Environment Canada, Alberta Energy and Alberta Environment to synchronize their lobbying offensive in the face of mounting protest and looming international regulations targeting Alberta crude.

Plans to form this committee were apparently first discussed at a March 2010 meeting in Calgary involving high-level officials from CAPP; CEOs from the oil and gas companies; senior federal and Alberta government officials; and Bruce Carson, the former close adviser to Prime Minister Harper who went back and forth between working in the PMO and heading up the new Calgary School of Energy and Environment, established with a federal grant of \$15 million.

Some Hon. Senators: Oh, oh.

Senator Cowan: Then, of course, there was an investigation into possible illegal lobbying by Mr. Carson for his former escort fiancée and revelations about other questionable activities. Mr. Carson fell out of favour as this became public, but the secret committee he established evidently lives on.

Honourable senators opposite are focused on trying to stop legitimate registered charitable organizations in Canada from having any voice. Somehow I am not worried that these charitable organizations have so much muscle and money as to have an unfair advantage over the combined efforts of big multinational oil companies and the federal government, which is prepared to fly dozens of officials overseas for a retreat on how to lobby for big oil.

Our registered charities work hard to raise money for causes that are important to Canadians. The people giving the money do not influence the causes; they choose the charity that is working for the cause that they support.

I understand that some wealthy donors are reputed to give money only if the results support the positions they endorse. I am thinking in particular of the billionaire Koch brothers, who reportedly donate large sums of money to the Tea Party in the United States and have also given money to the Fraser Institute in Canada.

Koch Industries is, of course, a very large oil company, with annual revenues estimated at \$100 billion. They have spent millions funding environmental skepticism. Dave Koch has been clear about his family's tight ideological control of its donations. This is what he said:

If we're going to give a lot of money, we'll make darn sure they spend it in a way that goes along with our intent. And if they make a wrong turn and start doing things we don't agree with, we withdraw funding.

Honourable senators, I must say that I have never heard of donors to Canadian environmental charities seeking to direct the results of their donations like that. However, I appreciate that this is an important issue, and if indeed, as senators opposite have suggested, this is happening, as it appears to be happening for those who wish to argue against the science of climate change, then this is something that should be examined further.

Tides Canada has been quite clear that it is fully transparent about its donors, but as Senator Mitchell told us, organizations such as the Fraser Institute are not so open or transparent.

There are also, of course, other organizations such as Focus on the Family, for example, that are registered Canadian charities and are deeply involved in often controversial issues of public policy. Focus on the Family has reportedly received over a million dollars in services from its U.S. counterpart. How much of that supported lobbying efforts in Canada against our policies on same-sex marriage and abortion rights?

It is ironic that as honourable senators opposite are calling for increased transparency about foreign donors to environmental causes, the Harper government is refusing comment about allegations that climate change skeptics in Canada have been getting money from the U.S. Heartland Institute. The Heartland Institute is well known for funding work and engaging in advocacy that casts doubt on the scientific evidence linking climate change to human activity. Indeed, its website boasts that its GR staff made “more than a million contacts with elected officials in 2010.” A million contacts with elected officials. Were any of these in Canada?

The office of Environment Minister Peter Kent said about the allegations of this funding, “we will not be commenting on these matters.” That is what the Harper government really thinks about transparency: no comment.

Honourable senators, I appreciate that senators opposite believe that Canadians should know more about the activities and funding of registered charities, since registered charities benefit from our tax laws. However, it is rather strange that they are focusing on foreign funding of charitable organizations.

• (1500)

Foreign donations would not receive any taxpayer-subsidized benefit under Canadian law. There is no charitable receipt that can be issued for Canadian tax purposes unless there is Canadian income for it to be deducted against. Senator Day raised that question with Senator Eaton when she spoke to this inquiry. Honourable senators will recall that she dismissed that as a very technical question.

Honourable senators, this surely is not a very technical question. Surely the benefit under our tax laws is the very crux, the lynchpin, of her argument.

That tax position may be contrasted with the position of corporations such as big oil companies. As I have discussed, there is much lobbying on these same issues by large corporations which are then able to deduct the cost of their advocacy and lobbying, including large fees paid to powerful lobbyists and lawyers as business expenses. In other words, those lobbying efforts are being subsidized by the Canadian taxpayer, who may profoundly disagree with the issues being advanced by those lobbyists behind closed doors.

I am sure we all agree that one of the things the Senate does best is to conduct a serious study of a particular issue. Before last Thursday's budget, I planned to suggest that the concerns raised in this inquiry, especially some of the serious allegations made, should be subjected to closer scrutiny by a serious study in a Senate committee. Of course, and I am sure there was agreement on this, we cannot in good conscience look at one side, the charitable organizations, without equally looking at the other side, the corporate lobbying deductions, particularly when foreign donors to charitable organizations do not gain any benefit under Canadian tax laws for their donations, whereas those corporations certainly do receive a taxpayer-subsidized benefit.

Like many Canadians, I was astounded to see, buried at page 205 of the almost 500-page Budget Plan of the Harper government, that the Harper government had recently decided

that the Income Tax Act should be changed “. . . to restrict the extent to which charities may fund the political activities of other qualified donees . . .”

Recently concerns have been raised that some charities may not be respecting the rules regarding political activities. There have also been calls for greater public transparency related to the political activities of charities, including the extent to which they may be funded by foreign sources.

Accordingly, in a budget otherwise focused on austerity and cutting government back, the Harper government is allocating an additional \$8 million to the Canada Revenue Agency so it can ensure that charities follow the rules. The government will be introducing what it calls “new sanctions for charities that exceed the limits on political activities.”

Honourable senators, what will be next — mandatory minimum sentences for anyone daring to speak out at an environmental assessment hearing or who writes an op-ed against the export of asbestos? Bill C-10 ushered in a new era of a war on drugs for Canada. Is the Harper government now proposing to launch a war on charities as well?

I mentioned earlier in these remarks that the Chrétien government's 2003 policy statement was the result of months of broad consultations. The policy document itself was produced in draft form by CRA and made available for public input — the Liberal government's standard operating practice with new policy documents — and then it was finalized. Honourable senators, I am aware of no public consultation in relation to these changes.

According to a report published in the *Toronto Sun* over the weekend, this change was introduced by the government because “. . . Ezra Levant went ballistic — as did *Sun News* . . .” over activities of the David Suzuki Foundation. According to the report, a government spokesman made a point during the budget lockup of ensuring that at least *Sun Media* noticed the changes to the rules governing charities. This spokesperson called it “the Ezra rule.”

“Did you see the Ezra rule?” asked a government spokesman . . . “Page 204,” said the spokesman. “At the bottom.”

Honourable senators, that is how public policy is now being made — no fact finding. Once again, why look at the facts? Evidence-based policy making is so Liberal government. The Conservative government is no facts, no consultations — silence the critics, bury them in reporting and red tape, and vilify anyone who dares to disagree. Indeed, now they are, in Senator Duffy's words, “anti-Canadian.”

Is *The Globe and Mail* anti-Canadian? They had a very thoughtful editorial on Saturday. Indeed, it was their lead editorial. It was headed “Beware of foreigners bringing money” and began:

The Conservatives are continuing in their dishonourable attack meant to intimidate environmental groups, in a budget item that stands out for adding a needless new cost.

It was referring, of course, to the \$8 million allocated to the CRA under the budget. The next sentence says it all:

Witch-hunts don't come cheap.

The editorial continued:

Foreign sources? It's not illegal for Canadian charities to take money from outside the country. And why should it be? If a Canadian cancer researcher, or a program to keep inner-city youth in school, receives money from a foreign foundation, is anything wrong with that? Why, then, is it wrong for an environmental group?

We live in a globalized world — the phrase is nearly as ubiquitous as what it represents. The Canadian government is only too happy to solicit foreign capital, foreign students (it has special scholarships for them), foreign culture, foreign labour. But foreign charitable donations for advocacy? Why, they're a threat to the Canadian way of life!

The editorial concluded:

Environmentalists have every right to seek out foreign donations, just as foreign oil companies have every right to make their views known on the perceived benefits of the Gateway pipeline. The pipeline may turn out to have great benefits for Canada, but the environmental risks need to be discussed, and the federal government ought to respect the rights of Canadian charities to raise money abroad and express, in a non-partisan way, their concerns. Who is the hijacker here?

I agree. By the way, while we all understand that the target of the government's campaign is environmental charities, in fact the rules which are being proposed affect all charities across the board. I said earlier, and I understand from my consultations with folks in the charitable sector across the country, that the 2003 rules are clear and well understood. By contrast, the new rules, at least the ones set out in the Notice of Ways and Means Motion to Amend the Income Tax Act set out in Annex 4 of the Budget Plan, are circular and manifestly unclear.

I can only hope that the lack of clarity is not a deliberate attempt to put a chill on charities. After all, the sanction imposed is very severe. As set out on page 437:

Budget 2012 proposes to grant to the CRA the authority to suspend for one year the tax-receipting privileges of a charity that exceeds the limitations on political activities.

If a charity provides inaccurate or incomplete information in its annual information return, the tax-receipting privileges will be suspended.

Meanwhile, let me read to you the new definition of "political activity" that the budget will introduce into the Income Tax Act.

... political activity includes the making of a gift to a qualified donee if it can reasonably be considered that a purpose of the gift is to support the political activities of the qualified donee;

"Political activity" is defined to include a gift if it can be reasonably considered — it does not say by whom, perhaps by the minister — that a purpose, not the sole or even the primary purpose, just a purpose, is to support the political activities of a qualified donee. Is that clear to honourable senators? It is certainly not clear to me.

• (1510)

One has to know what political activities are in order to understand and apply the definition, and this would be in our Income Tax Act with severe sanctions for it is violations.

Honourable senators, I am deeply concerned that the effect, if not the purpose, of these changes will be to put a chill on the political engagement of our charitable organizations. I mentioned the cautionary tale of the law introduced by Vladimir Putin to impose tighter controls on non-governmental organizations. A report prepared by Human Rights Watch about the impact of the law was entitled *Choking on Bureaucracy: State Curbs on Independent Civil Society Activism*. Articles about the terrible law had headlines like "Putin's war on civil society."

Let us be clear, honourable senators, that what is at stake is nothing less than the quality and freedom of our civil discourse. I realize that the stakes have been raised considerably by the budget last week. I believe that it is therefore even more important that we act quickly to give this issue the serious study it deserves, to understand the ramifications of the issues that have been raised and also to ensure that our policy is consistent with respect to advocacy and that we are not singling out charities for special and, I would say, unfair treatment.

I therefore would like to propose that we give a reference to our Standing Senate Committee on National Finance to study this issue.

To this end, at the next sitting, after we return from the break, I will give notice of a motion that the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance be authorized to examine and report on the tax consequences of various public and private advocacy activities undertaken by charitable and non-charitable entities in Canada and abroad, and that in conducting such a study, the committee take particular note of, first, charitable entities that receive funding from foreign sources; second, corporate entities that claim business deductions against Canadian taxes owing for their advocacy activities, both in Canada and abroad; and third, educational entities that utilize their charitable status to advocate on behalf of the interests of private entities.

Honourable senators, I must say that it is my impression that Canadian registered charities understand very well the line between acceptable political activities and unacceptable ones. As I have said in these remarks, to my knowledge there has been no suggestion from the Canada Revenue Agency that any Canadian registered charity has violated the law and breached that line by any activities raised in this inquiry.

I do not believe in witch hunts, and I do not believe that because an individual or an organization takes a different position from mine that is a valid reason to single it out and suggest that it is somehow nefarious or seeking to undermine the Canadian economy or incite Canadians against their government.

I believe strongly in freedom of speech, and I have seen nothing to suggest that any of our registered charities are abusing that freedom. To the contrary, I am personally proud of the work of organizations like Tides Canada and the David Suzuki Foundation. I believe we have much to be grateful to them for, but I am not afraid to refer these questions to our National Finance Committee, provided of course that we examine all tax and revenue implications of public and private advocacy and do not single out charities more than their corporate counterparts.

Thank you, honourable senators.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Senator Patterson, do you have a question?

Senator Cowan, will you entertain a question?

Senator Cowan: I will.

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: Thank you, honourable senators. I am shocked that this has become a diatribe about free speech with allegations of McCarthyism and Putin-style suppression of free speech.

In my comments, which the honourable senator did not refer to, I specifically said it was not about free speech but about transparency and permitted political activities.

I believe the honourable senator spoke positively about Senator Wallace's thoughtful remarks on this issue. Senator Wallace did say that there were limits on permitted political activities of charities, according to legislation and case law.

I would like to ask the honourable senator if he thinks there should be any limits on permitted political activity by charitable organizations. I think he mentioned election campaigns might be something not permitted.

If he does think there are to be limits, would he not agree that it is appropriate that the Canada Revenue Agency monitor and enforce them?

Senator Cowan: I thank the honourable senator for the question. I do believe there should be limits. I do not think charities should engage in partisan political activity. As I have said, there are guidelines that have been in place since 2003. As Senator Wallace pointed out in his remarks, there are very clear guidelines, and there are limits on the amount of resources a charity can spend on political activities. I do not think charities should be engaged in election campaigns or partisan activity. I think the rules that have been in place for the last 10 years have worked well, and people that I have spoken to in the charitable

sector — and I said this several times during my speech — understand where the lines are. I think they are quite happy to abide by them.

As to whether the Canada Revenue Agency needs more resources in order to police the system, I am not aware that they do. I am confident that they have been watching these activities of charitable organizations over the last 10 years and I am not aware that it is a problem.

The answer is, yes, I do agree that there should be limits on the political activities. I think that the limits that are currently in the guidelines and legislation are adequate. I was not aware, until Senator Eaton raised this issue a few weeks ago, that there was a problem.

Hon. Percy E. Downe: I wonder if the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate would take another question.

Does he share my surprise that the government will contribute additional funding to the Canada Revenue Agency to go after charities but will not contribute any additional funding to go after overseas tax cheats?

Senator Cowan: I thank the honourable senator. He brought to our attention a few weeks ago this issue and the inaction of the government on that front. Hopefully we will hear from a number of senators to contribute to that debate as well.

It is passing strange that this is a target. If they are really after money, then one would think that that \$8 million would go a long way to catching some of the tax cheats that the honourable senator referred to in his inquiry, whose names have been in the hands of the government for a considerable period of time.

Senator Downe: We noticed yesterday when the Auditor General filed his report that there was a specific section on the revenue agency. To give an example of how far that \$8 million could go, the Auditor General highlighted that the Canada Revenue Agency has the Non-Filer/Non-Registrant program that deals mainly with GST registration requirements and people who do not comply. The total budget for this wing of the CRA is \$39 million. This is out of a departmental budget, according to the Auditor General, of \$4.5 billion.

This wing, which has a budget of \$39 million, employs only 700 people but in the past was able to generate an additional \$2.8 million for the Canadian government from unpaid taxes for the fiscal years 2009-10 and 2010-11. One can imagine what an additional \$8 million or any funding for finding overseas tax cheats could do. This refers mainly to domestic concerns.

If the funding can be reallocated so quickly by the government for their new interest in charities, why can they not provide any funding to find overseas tax cheats?

• (1520)

The honourable senator quite correctly confirmed what the CRA has confirmed, in the Senate, in writing, that four years after 106 Canadians were identified for hiding over \$100 million in Liechtenstein, not one person has been charged, unlike in the

United Kingdom, where eight months after the information was received, people were charged. Australia, the U.S. and other countries have all acted; Canada has not. They now have an additional 1,700 names from one bank in Switzerland, and two years later there are no charges.

Why will the government identify charities as a priority but not wealthy Canadians with hidden overseas accounts? Does the honourable senator have any comments on that?

Senator Cowan: What the honourable senator says makes good sense, as usual. It seems to me that if the object is to try to put resources where there's going to be a return, then chasing those people who have already been identified as having breached our laws and who have the resources to respond to any judgments that might be entered against them, if one is going to get a return on one's investment, then that would be where it is.

However, honourable senators, I fear that what we are doing here is because some supporters of the government are manufacturing an issue and the government has responded, as I said in my speech. Without any apparent public consultation, without any attempt to speak to the people who are actually engaged in this business across the country, they have now manufactured and raised the spectre of this issue, and now we will throw some money at it and hope it goes away.

That is the reason I suggest that the appropriate way for us to deal with this is to make a reference to our Standing Senate Committee on National Finance and have it do a study. However, it needs to be a balanced study. If there is a problem with our charities, by all means we should address it, but let us not just pick one part of it; let us look at all the parts.

It is not clear to me. Senator Eaton dismissed Senator Day's question as a complex technical problem, but the crux of her argument was that foreign foundations funnelling money into Canada through Canadian foundations is somehow an abuse of our tax system. I do not see the connection there. I do not see how there could be any tax consequences. I am not arguing whether it is a good thing or not, but I do not see the tax consequences. However, if there are tax consequences, I am sure that our Senate committee could do an admirable job of a study in that regard and we would all be the wiser when it was done.

Hon. Nicole Eaton: I thank the honourable senator for his thoughtful, non-partisan rebuttal. The issues he raised show that we need a debate on this. It is very interesting and there is a lot of feeling on both sides of the chamber about this issue.

That said, honourable senators, I have spent my life in the charitable sector raising money in academe, hospitals and cultural institutions. Yes, they have done lobbying, which is different from political activity. Yes, they have done expert testimony, which is again different from political activity.

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: I remind the honourable senator that she must have a question, as she has already spoken.

Senator Eaton: I do have a question.

What troubles me is when I see the end of our seal hunt in Atlantic Canada and the de-marketing of our salmon in British Columbia, and we cannot tag the millions of dollars. Well, we can, but not easily. It takes someone like Vivian Krause to go through two or three permutations before they find that a lot of the money came from the U.S.

Can the honourable senator tell me what business the U.S. has to de-market our salmon farms on the B.C. coast or our seal hunt?

Senator Cowan: As I said in my remarks, on the transparency issue, I have no problem with that. I think we should be transparent. I understand that was a major issue.

The honourable senator will also agree with me that one of the things she was talking about is that somehow this is an abuse of our tax system. I could not make that connection, nor could Senator Day. I would hope that the honourable senator would support a reference to a committee so that we could get to the bottom of this.

I have no difficulty with transparency, honourable senators. Senator Nancy Ruth raised some issues about privacy. We obviously have to be concerned about that and there may need to be some parameters around disclosure. However, on the face of it, I see no reason why charities should not disclose where they get their money and where their money goes.

Some Hon. Senators: Oh, oh.

Senator Cowan: If I could continue to answer. Senator LeBreton would like to speak.

Senator LeBreton: You had a big problem —

Some Hon. Senators: Oh, oh!

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Order.

Senator Cowan: May I continue?

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: It is the honourable senator's time.

I want to remind honourable senators who may raise the question, because the question was asked, that both honourable senators have unlimited time to speak on an issue like this one, and that includes the question. For those who are inclined to question why it is so long, it is completely in order to entertain all the time the leader wants to use for questions and answers.

Senator Cowan: Honourable senators, I have no difficulty with the concept of disclosure. I have spent a lot of time in the charitable sector as well and I have raised a lot of money for many different institutions, although perhaps not to the extent that the honourable senator has. However, I certainly have asked many people for a lot of money over the years.

I am sure the honourable senator would agree with me that the people one talks to about giving money are much more concerned now than they were, say, 10 or 15 years ago about how much of

the money they give will be spent on administration and how much will actually go to supporting the cause. I think the honourable senator would agree with me that that is a good thing.

Anything we can do to make that more transparent, and if we need to make a change in our law or our practice to ensure that happens, I fully support that. I have no difficulty with that.

Senator Duffy: What is the problem?

Senator Cowan: That is the question. It is apparently un-Canadian.

Senator Patterson: Senator Cowan did not refer to my participation in this inquiry, but I did point out in my remarks, first, that it does not appear to be easy to track the donations from foreign charities through to Canadian charities because they are often, I will not say laundered, but channelled through a series of devices, including PR firms and charities, that make it difficult to expose.

Second, I pointed out that Canadian laws on disclosure — and I am pleased the honourable senator accepts that transparency is desirable, subject to the privacy issue — are much less rigorous than the comparable laws imposed by the Internal Revenue Service of the United States on American charities.

I would like to ask the honourable senator the following: If it could be proven — and I welcome further investigation — that Canadian disclosure requirements are significantly less when it comes to the salaries of those involved in charities and when it comes to the purposes and the amounts of donations, would the honourable senator agree that perhaps Canadian laws could be improved in that respect in promoting fuller transparency so that we can determine the source of funds, just as we want to do this for political and leadership campaigns and in the partisan political sector?

Senator Cowan: As I have said, honourable senators, I have no difficulty with the transparency. Frankly, I was not aware this was a problem until it was raised here. I think we should look at whether we can improve the transparency so that Canadians can see where money is going, particularly money that is receipted, because there is a tax consequence to that. Subject to privacy laws, I have no difficulty with that and I would fully support it. I would hope that is the very kind of thing we could look at in the course of a study by our Senate committee.

• (1530)

Senator Downe: Honourable senators, this question will be much shorter than the previous one. The real problem with disclosure rules and the Canada Revenue Agency does not pertain to charities, although that is a problem. The biggest problem — and it verges on questioning how the CRA is run — is what happened in Liechtenstein. When we asked the Government of Canada if any of the 106 people who were hiding taxes overseas were eligible for the voluntary disclosure rule, where any Canadian can come forward to the CRA and disclose that they have not been paying their taxes and receive a reduced fine and settle their account, we were advised in writing that because the

names were given to the government, none of the 106 were eligible for the disclosure. A year later the government flip-flopped, changed their policy and advised us, again in writing, that 20 of the 106 were now eligible. What is the sense of having disclosure rules if the CRA is not enforcing the ones they currently have?

Senator Cowan: That is a good question and it is good that the honourable senator has raised it. I always understood that once one knew that the Canada Revenue Agency was on one's tail, then any of these voluntary disclosure exemptions and loopholes were closed. However, as we have seen in a fairly high profile case not so long ago, that does not appear to be the case. I think the honourable senator has made a good point.

(On motion of Senator Segal, debate adjourned.)

[Translation]

ELECTORAL RIDING REDISTRIBUTION

INQUIRY—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Maria Chaput rose pursuant to notice of April 2, 2012:

That she will call the attention of the Senate to the process for readjusting federal electoral boundaries and the impact it could have on the vitality of official language minority communities.

She said: Honourable senators, today I would like to talk to you about the process for readjusting federal electoral boundaries and the impact it could have on the vitality of official language minority communities.

Currently, 10 three-member commissions are drafting new electoral maps for each of Canada's provinces. Several of these commissioners have a more difficult task ahead of them because, under the Fair Representation Act, Ontario, Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia will have additional ridings.

This spring, each of the 10 commissions will publish a proposed electoral map in the *Canada Gazette* and in at least one major newspaper in their respective provinces.

The proposed map will be accompanied by a notice indicating dates, times and locations of public hearings. People wishing to participate in the public hearings must inform their province's commission within 23 days of the publication of the notice.

Following the public hearings, the commission can rework the proposed map, which the Chief Electoral Officer will then submit to the House of Commons.

Canadians must be prepared to take a very careful look at the proposed electoral maps and to express their views during the public hearings. Electoral boundaries are adjusted only once every 10 years, so people have a civic duty to take the opportunity to participate in the process.

[Senator Cowan]

I am addressing this issue today because I have learned in the past that readjusting electoral boundaries can significantly affect the demographic weight of official language minority communities.

In fact, if the necessary precautions are not taken, a francophone community might be divided among two or three ridings, which weakens the strength and demographic weight of francophones in all the ridings involved.

This happened during the provincial riding redistribution in Manitoba in 2008, when the traditionally francophone communities of Sainte-Anne and Richer were separated from the communities of Saint-Adolphe, Île-des-Chênes, Lorette and Sainte-Geneviève.

Keep in mind that this does not just affect the community's weight during an election campaign. A strong presence within a riding allows the MP to take into consideration the needs and interests of the community, which is not necessarily the case if the minority language community is split between two ridings, where its presence is less felt and its strength diminished.

A strong presence in a riding also makes it easier for the community to take charge of developing its institutional vitality. It is easier to deal with just one MP when discussing a project that will benefit the people of the riding than it is to deal with two or three MPs whose ridings may or may not be affected by the project in question.

However, there are provisions in Canadian legislation that enable communities to defend their rights.

The main criterion the commission takes into account when redrawing the electoral map is the equal distribution of the population among the ridings. The commission does have some flexibility, though. It can, in fact, use its judgment and discretion to create ridings that differ in size from the average riding. It can do so in order to: respect communities of interest or identity for example, communities based around language or shared culture and history; respect historical patterns of previous electoral boundaries; or maintain a manageable geographic size for districts in sparsely populated, rural or northern regions of the province.

Therefore, each commission has the latitude to keep francophone communities in the same district, even if this has an impact on population equality, within reasonable limits.

The commissions must, of course, take into account the different communities in a given district, but there are provisions in the law that apply specifically to official language minority communities.

First, it is important to refer to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Section 3 of the Charter guarantees the right to vote, and the Supreme Court has ruled that the purpose of the right to vote is to ensure effective representation, not simply equal electoral power.

This principle was applied by the Federal Court in 2004 in *Raïche v. Canada* to set aside a royal proclamation that transferred certain francophone New Brunswick parishes, in whole or in part, from the district of Acadie—Bathurst to that of Miramichi.

The court ruled that the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for New Brunswick had erred in applying the rules governing the preparation of its recommendations for transferring parts of these parishes. The Federal Court therefore set aside this recommendation from the commission and a new commission was formed.

The new commission then recommended returning these francophone parishes to the district of Acadie—Bathurst. The francophone presence was thus maintained and strengthened in this riding in such a way as to respect the integrity and institutional vitality of the community, as per its wishes.

Official language minority communities are also protected by the Official Languages Act. In fact, Elections Canada and the 10 commissions formed for the provinces are subject to the Official Languages Act and, under Part VII, are required, like all other federal institutions, to take positive measure for:

enhancing the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and supporting and assisting their development; and . . . fostering the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society.

The commissions have the legislative obligation to take positive measures to support community development only with respect to official language minority communities.

In this regard, ensuring that changes to the boundaries of electoral districts do not weaken official language minority communities would be a perfect example of a positive measure. This can also be done by ensuring that these communities are heard and that their concerns are taken into account.

• (1540)

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge a positive measure taken by Chief Electoral Officer Marc Mayrand. In fact, Mr. Mayrand invited Commissioner of Official Languages Graham Fraser to a conference of the people appointed to the 10 commissions and asked him to make the appointees aware of the specific situation of official language minority communities. That initiative deserves recognition.

I should also note that Franco-Manitobans are in good hands. The commission for Manitoba is chaired by Justice Richard Chartier, who wrote the report *Above All, Common Sense*, which redefined the provision of French-language services in Manitoba.

All Canadians have to be sure to carefully review the map that will soon be proposed for their respective province and, if need be, attend the public hearings to express their views. This is not a show of lack of confidence in the commissions or the quality of their work.

Public hearings are part of the redistribution process, so it is up to the communities affected to add to the discussion. Participation in public consultation is really a crucial phase of the process. It is up to the communities in each province to present detailed briefs to the commission during the consultation period. First of all, this will inform the commission members about issues they might have been unaware of but can still address. In addition, a lack of challenges during consultations could negatively affect any future challenges once the proposed maps are approved by the House of Commons.

Honourable senators, I know that many of you are very involved in your respective communities. It would be very helpful if all of the communities that could be affected by this redistribution participate in the public hearings, the dates of which will be announced shortly, in order to share their observations and suggestions. The commissions that have been given this important task will be the richer for it and we will then be able to trust their wisdom in coming up with a second draft. This is the very definition of participatory democracy.

(On motion of Senator Robichaud, debate adjourned.)

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Fernand Robichaud: Honourable senators, the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry had asked for

\$505,658 and the amount granted was \$237,690. Those figures appear in the *Journals of the Senate* for April 3, 2012, on page 1123.

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Honourable senators, before proceeding to adjournment, I would like to thank you for your confidence. I hope I have lived up to your expectations.

[*English*]

Honourable senators, it has been a privilege to be invited by my colleagues to preside over our deliberations. We are now approaching Easter and Passover, so let us hope we will have a good rest.

[*Translation*]

We will return refreshed and restored in two weeks' time, after a well-deserved break.

Some Hon. Senators: Happy Easter!

Hon. Claude Carignan (Deputy Leader of the Government): I move that the Senate be adjourned so that we can go to confession and be ready for Easter.

(The Senate adjourned until Tuesday, April 24, 2012, at 2 p.m.)

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