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Thursday, February 6, 1997

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THE HONOURABLE GILDAS L. MOLGAT
SPEAKER

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THE SENATE

Thursday, February 6, 1997

The Senate met at 2:00 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.

Prayers.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. B. Alasdair Graham (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 next, February 11, 1997, at 2 p.m.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

QUESTION PERIOD

JUSTICE

SALE OF AIRBUS AIRCRAFT TO AIR CANADA—
ALLEGED CONSPIRACY TO DEFRAUD FEDERAL GOVERNMENT—
KNOWLEDGE OF GOVERNMENT MINISTERS—SOURCE OF
INFORMATION PROVIDED BY WAY OF
DELAYED ANSWER—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. David Tkachuk: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. On December 12, 1995, Senator Balfour asked when the Attorney General and Solicitor General first became aware of the defamatory letter from the Department of Justice to Swiss authorities accusing former Prime Minister Mulroney of criminal activities.

On June 12, 1996, the government furnished Senator Balfour with a partial answer, saying the Attorney General became aware of the defamatory letter on November 4, 1995.

On November 5, 1996, Senator Balfour asked for a reply to the second half of his question, submitted to the government almost a year previously. Two days later on November 7, 1996, the Government of Canada told him officially that the Solicitor General, Mr. Gray, became aware that the defamatory Justice letter had been sent on November 9, 1995.

You will notice the difference between the two replies: The government told this chamber that the Attorney General had become aware of the defamatory Justice letter on November 4. Over a year later, the same government told us that the Solicitor General had become aware that the defamatory letter had been sent on November 9.

It did not tell us, as Senator Balfour had requested, when the Solicitor General had become aware of the letter.

In essence, if not in fact, the Government of Canada misled this chamber with this reply. Indeed, it was not until February 9, 1997, more than a year after Senator Balfour's initial inquiry, that we found out that the Solicitor General knew all along about this letter. He knew about the investigation; he knew about the accusations being formulated by the government against Mr. Mulroney; yet when a direct question was posed as to his knowledge of the defamatory letter, the Solicitor General and the Government of Canada consciously chose to deceive the members of this chamber and deliver a response to a question that was never asked.

My question for the minister is threefold: Who drew up the response to Senator Balfour's question regarding the Solicitor General? Why would the Leader of the Government in the Senate not have picked up on what seems an obvious attempt to mislead this chamber? Third, and last, could we finally have an answer to Senator Balfour's question: On what date did the Solicitor General become aware of the defamatory letter from the Department of Justice?

• (1410)

Hon. Joyce Fairbairn (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, first of all, there has been no attempt whatsoever by the government to mislead or misinform this house. In deference to the Solicitor General, my friend has asked questions involving timing, and I would prefer to take his question so that that issue can be clarified. I would rather do it that way than give an answer off the cuff here today.

However, let me say that the Solicitor General has been very open in his comments. I will ask him to put particulars of those comments together in order to provide an answer to my honourable friend's question, and I will have that answer for him as quickly as I can.

Senator Tkachuk: We have heard that kind of answer before, that there has been no attempt to mislead the chamber. In fact, even when ministers are caught deceiving the Canadian public, no one takes responsibility for their actions, and the standard response is exactly in line with that of the government leader here today, namely, "We didn't mean to do that."

What I want to know is: Who did mean to do it? Certainly, the answers to such questions would have to have been written by the Solicitor General's department — and here, I am guessing. However, they must have known what was going on within their own department, and I would assume that such questions would have been directed to the people who might know the answers. In other words, these questions would not be directed at people who would not know the answers.

Therefore, honourable senators, my view is that the answer given by the government leader is not a good answer. The government has been misleading us all on this issue, and I want to know the answers to those questions. I do not appreciate someone saying to me, "I am sorry, we did not mean to do it." I want someone to take responsibility for their actions.

Senator Fairbairn: Honourable senators, I may be misinterpreting the honourable senator's remarks, but I have never, in any way, intentionally misled this house. I hope, indeed, that I have misinterpreted my honourable friend's remarks.

Let me reiterate that I have always — and will continue to attempt to answer questions in this chamber with the information that I have, and if I do not have sufficient information, I will go back to the source and find out some more. That is my commitment to members on both sides of this chamber.

In the case of the honourable senator's question, he is choosing to believe that the house has been misled with false information. I would suggest to him that that is not the case. However, I will not stand here today and make up an answer out of my own recollection. I would rather be precise and get him a proper answer, and I will do just that.

HERITAGE

PROPOSED PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL POLICY—AWARENESS BY MINISTER OF SENATE'S PREVIOUS INITIATIVE—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Terry Stratton: Honourable senators, I have a question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Yesterday, in an article on the front page of *The Globe and Mail* concerning the upcoming round-table meeting on culture, there was mention that the gathering is expected to pave the way for the establishment of a parliamentary committee on cultural policy.

Honourable senators, that is precisely the type of committee that my colleague Senator Johnson has been calling for here in the Senate, and a number of other senators have indicated their support for the setting up of such a committee.

My question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate is this: Is the Minister of Canadian Heritage aware of the fact that the initiative to set up such a parliamentary committee has already been undertaken by Senator Johnson here in the Senate?

Hon. Joyce Fairbairn (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, the Minister of Canadian Heritage would

be aware of Senator Johnson's initiative. However, following the round-table discussions and before the weekend, I should like to talk to the minister and draw that initiative again to her attention.

Therefore, in response to my honourable friend's question, I will follow up on Senator Johnson's proposal with the minister and see whether we can do something on this issue, either together or separately.

Senator Stratton: I appreciate the government leader's response. Considering the background and expertise of some of the senators in this chamber, they could add greatly to the value and relevance of such a committee.

Is my understanding correct that the Leader of the Government in the Senate is stating that she will suggest to the minister that such a study either be undertaken by a Senate committee, or that a joint committee be formed to study this subject-matter?

Senator Fairbairn: What I will undertake to do is talk to my colleague, following her discussions. I should indicate that the minister will not be alone at that meeting; Mr. Eggleton and Mr. Manley will both be in attendance with her, so it should be a very collegial and cooperative meeting. Afterwards, I will speak to the minister and impress upon her the comments that the honourable senator has made.

There are, as he said, senators on both sides of this chamber who have tremendous backgrounds in this area, certainly Senator Johnson and others. Therefore, I will speak to my colleague on all of the options that are available to Parliament, but I think it would be more appropriate to approach her after she has had her discussions.

HEALTH

INQUIRY INTO SAFETY OF BLOOD SUPPLY—REFERENCE BY RED CROSS SOCIETY TO SUPREME COURT OF CANADA— AVAILABILITY OF LEGAL FUNDING FOR CONSUMER GROUPS— GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Richard J. Doyle: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate and has to do with the ongoing struggle of Canadian victims to make certain that their rights will not be forgotten in the continuing inquiry into the blood system in Canada.

The minister will recall that, at the commencement of his examination into the tragic events that occurred at the onset of the AIDS epidemic of the 1980s, Mr. Justice Horace Krever granted standing to a number of organizations representing people who became infected with HIV or hepatitis C. These "consumer groups" secured counsel to safeguard their interests — or the interests of their surviving families — in a forum that might otherwise be dominated by the preservation tactics of the governments and delegated agencies involved. Funding was adequate to sustain fair representation during the hearings.

As R. Douglas Elliott, counsel for the Canadian AIDS Society has explained, the funding was cut off when your government, the Red Cross and others decided to appeal Judge Krever's references to the Federal Court.

Faced with the virtually limitless resources of the federal government, the Red Cross and several major pharmaceutical companies, the lawyers for the consumer groups obtained intervenor status for their clients at the Federal Court in the hope that resources would materialize. After considerable pressure, Privy Council provided a token amount of funding for the hearings in the Federal Court's trial division. Unlike the commission funding, this new financial aid was grossly inadequate. It covered only the actual time spent in court and nothing for the expensive preparation time leading up to the hearing itself. As we are all aware, the consumer groups were successful in defeating the attack on the commission, notwithstanding the imbalance of resources.

• (1420)

To the dismay of the victims, the Red Cross appealed the decision. The federal government is no longer pursuing the matter, but they said they could not intervene in support of the consumer groups because of their previous support of the Red Cross.

Mr. Elliott says:

The Red Cross has announced its intention to proceed to the Supreme Court of Canada and we are in trouble. The Red Cross is funded by Canadian provincial tax payers, through the Canadian Blood Agency. The lawyers representing the consumer groups have been bled dry by this process. In contrast, it has been publicly stated that the Red Cross has spent between eight and ten million dollars on legal fees defending their corporate reputation.

If the federal government does not change its position on funding the consumer groups, the victims of this tragedy will lose their voice. The powerful interests who are responsible for this tragedy will have triumphed through brute force and out-spending the opposition. Given the federal government's complicity in the initial attack on Justice Krever, their failure to support the victims of this tragedy can only be characterized as a national disgrace.

Honourable senators, I apologize for taking so much time with detail, but the matter, as I said at the outset, has tragic overtones. I know the minister will want to answer carefully the questions: What relief is in store? What hope lies ahead of rescue?

Hon. Joyce Fairbairn (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, the senator has no apology to make to me for his comments or their length. This is an issue that has tragic overtones. It is a difficult and incredibly complicated issue. Certainly the victim groups could have no finer advocate on their

behalf than my friend Senator Doyle. I will take his question to my colleague and try to get an answer for him.

INQUIRY INTO SAFETY OF BLOOD SUPPLY—INVESTIGATION BY
RCMP OF SHREDDING OF RELEVANT DOCUMENTS BY
DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Richard J. Doyle: Honourable senators, I have a supplementary question. The federal government has asked the RCMP to look into the deliberate destruction of key documents related to the tainted blood scandal. This "look into" the complaint of Information Commissioner John Grace is described as "preliminary." Can the minister shed any light on when "preliminary" will be taken seriously and become "full-scale"?

Hon. Joyce Fairbairn (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I will add that query to the other question. My honourable friend knows that when the Information Commissioner reported on this matter, the Minister of Health accepted all of his recommendations, and also sent on the report to Mr. Justice Krever.

Obviously, steps will be taken in the future to prevent such activity from occurring again. My friend is concerned with what went before, and I will try to obtain an answer as to a possible timetable.

DELAYED ANSWER TO ORAL QUESTION

Hon. B. Alasdair Graham (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have a response to a question raised in the Senate on December 10, 1996 by the Honourable Senator Spivak, regarding commodity price hikes impairing profit margins for prairie farmers.

AGRICULTURE

COMMODITY PRICE HIKES IMPAIRING PROFIT MARGINS
OF PRAIRIE FARMERS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

(Response to question raised by Hon. Mira Spivak on December 10, 1996)

The circumstances surrounding the increase in propane and fertilizer prices suggest that the increases can be explained in terms of supply and demand.

In the case of propane, the price increase was not limited to western Canada, but has also occurred in the rest of Canada and in the United States. According to Natural Resources Canada (which monitors the propane market), propane inventories heading into this heating season were low. The adverse harvesting conditions in western Canada resulted in a large and unanticipated demand for propane to dry crops. In addition, the early winter and very low temperatures that occurred in the prairies further added to the increased demand.

The large increase in fertilizer prices can be traced back to the late fall of 1994. The nitrogen and the phosphate sectors of the fertilizer industry are operating at full capacity in Canada and the United States. The price of these fertilizers have increased up to 35% in some locations. On the other hand, the potash industry still has considerable excess capacity, and consequently the price that farmers pay for potash has increased very little over the last two years. The higher prices and the higher profits enjoyed by fertilizer producers has resulted in announced expansions and new plant construction in North America. This expansion will help alleviate the tight supplies and should result in downward pressure on fertilizer prices.

Nevertheless, it cannot always be assumed that markets are competitive. The Competition Bureau of Industry Canada has the authority to investigate price fixing and other anti-competitive behaviour.

The Minister of Industry will not be calling for an inquiry into the recent increases in propane gas prices. The Director of Investigation and Research, who is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the *Competition Act*, is already conducting a preliminary examination of this matter. If these price increases raise an issue under the Act, the Director will take the appropriate action.

The Act provides that the Director shall commence an inquiry whenever the Director believes on reasonable grounds that an offence has been or is about to be committed, or that grounds exist for the making of an Order by the Competition Tribunal. The Director is also required to commence an inquiry upon receipt of a properly documented application by six Canadian residents or when directed to do so by the Minister of Industry.

Work is underway by a Federal/Provincial Sub-committee on examining farm input prices, as agreed to at last summer's Federal/Provincial meeting. The Sub-committee is headed up by Hal Cushon of Saskatchewan, and a representative from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada has been appointed.

ANSWERS TO ORDER PAPER QUESTIONS TABLED

FOREIGN AFFAIRS—SUMMIT OF PEACE MAKERS—
DETAILS OF ARRANGEMENTS

Hon. B. Alasdair Graham (Deputy Leader of the Government) tabled the answer to Question No. 142 and 143 on the Order Paper—by Senator LeBreton.

TRANSPORT—MARINE ATLANTIC OFFICIAL—
POSSIBLE CONFLICT OF INTEREST—DETAILS OF CONSULTATIONS

Hon. B. Alasdair Graham (Deputy Leader of the Government) tabled the answer to Question No. 146 on the Order Paper—by Senator Comeau.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX—READING MATERIALS—
STUDIES BY DEPARTMENTS

Hon. B. Alasdair Graham (Deputy Leader of the Government) tabled the answer to Question No. 148 on the Order Paper—by Senator Di Nino.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BELL CANADA ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Peter Bosa moved second reading of Bill C-57, to amend the Bell Canada Act.

He said: Honourable senators, I welcome this opportunity to speak on second reading of Bill C-57, to amend the Bell Canada Act. Canadians know something about the obstacles of distance and geography, and more about overcoming them. How else could they have built the best country in the world despite its being spread over a huge land mass with some of the world's most challenging terrain and weather?

It is fitting that Canada should be a leader in the adoption of new information technology that will further shrink these barriers; technology that will soon bring us a host of services delivered by a competitive marketplace that will offer the best value to the consumer. In its convergence policy statement released in August of 1996, the government committed itself to reducing or eliminating the legal and regulatory impediments to competition on the information highway. Bill C-57 is an example of how the government is fulfilling that commitment.

The legislation before us today is a simple measure with important consequences. It will permit Bell Canada to hold a broadcasting licence and thus compete with cable television companies. The government's convergence policy allows for a balanced approach to competition between telecommunication companies and cable TV companies. That is why the government has established a "no head starts" approach.

Once the rules for competition in local telephone services have been implemented, Bell and its Stentor partners will be able to provide broadcasting distribution services. By allowing Bell Canada and the other telephone companies across the country to operate in the field of broadcasting, we are taking a key step toward the convergence of two successful sectors that will lead the way to the information economy.

With this legislation, as in all of its telecommunications policies, the government's goal is to create the conditions needed for fair competition, expanded consumer choice, and continued support for Canadian culture on the information highway. To reach that goal, the government's convergence policy framework takes into account current technological and market realities on the information highway. Our intention is to have the world's most competitive telecommunications and broadcasting sectors.

• (1430)

In addition to developing and implementing its convergent policy, the government has moved on a number of fronts to implement its information highway strategy, including: successfully negotiated spectrum for Canadian-supported global mobile satellite systems at a World Radiocommunication Conference; licensed four competitive suppliers of personal communications services — the new digital wireless technology that will provide users with a low-cost, portable on-ramp to the information highway and create an estimated 8,500 new jobs; created a competitive model for the delivery of direct-to-home satellite services; and awarded three local multi-point communication systems — or LMCS — licenses in October.

LMCS, in short, is a wireless broadband system that will carry basic and advanced communication services. LMCS licensees will provide competition to cable, telephone and satellite-distribution systems.

Honourable senators, as this list demonstrates, the government's information highway objectives of creating jobs through innovation and investment in Canada, reinforcing Canadian sovereignty and cultural identity, and ensuring universal access at reasonable costs are being pursued on many fronts.

As the Minister of Industry has said, "We want competition in the cable and local telephony markets as soon as possible." This seems to be a sentiment with which everyone can agree. When this bill was debated in the other place, it met with universal support. This was demonstrated in the speed with which the Standing Committee on Industry acted in reviewing the bill and the support that the bill has received from members of the opposition.

We know that the telecommunications and broadcasting industries support the government's goal of fostering competition on the information highway. Certainly, Bell Canada, with its commitment to excellence and customer service, is anxious to move ahead with its plans to invest in the highway.

Cable and telephone companies across Canada have said they plan to invest some \$15 billion over the next decade to develop the infrastructure needed to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the new technology. If we look only at the telephone companies that make up the Stentor group, including Bell Canada, it is estimated they will spend approximately \$8 billion. The policy framework established by this government would allow companies formerly separated by laws, regulations and technology to innovate and bring new services to the market.

Bell Canada's entry into the cable distribution market and the cable companies' entry into Bell Canada's market would promote competition among these innovative, aggressive and prosperous companies. In the end, the benefits will flow to Canadian consumers and businesses.

In conclusion, honourable senators, with such obvious benefits and widespread agreement, there can be no reason not to speed the passage of this bill and every reason to act on it as quickly as possible.

Hon. Noël A. Kinsella: Would the honourable senator entertain a few questions?

Senator Bosa: Certainly.

Senator Kinsella: If I heard correctly, the honourable senator said that, in the debate at second reading in the other place, there was universal support for the bill. Did I hear that correctly?

Senator Bosa: That is my understanding, honourable senators.

Senator Kinsella: At report stage on December 4, 1996, they reported the bill with amendments. If there was universal support for it, why were these amendments necessary?

Senator Bosa: Honourable senators, it is obvious, then, that I was given some inaccurate information.

On motion of Senator Kinsella, for Senate Bolduc, debate adjourned.

NATIONAL ORGAN DONOR WEEK BILL

THIRD READING

Hon. Wilbert J. Keon moved third reading of Bill C-202, respecting a National Organ Donor Week in Canada.

Motion agreed to and bill read third time and passed.

INTERNAL ECONOMY, BUDGETS AND ADMINISTRATION

FOURTEENTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE—DEBATE ADJOURNED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the fourteenth report of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration (*Senate Supplementary Estimate 1996-97*), presented in the Senate on February 4, 1997.

Hon. Colin Kenny moved the adoption of the report.

He said: Honourable senators, Supplementary Estimates are required to cover unexpected operational and one-time expenditures which must be undertaken in 1996-97. These expenditures result from external factors which could not have been anticipated when the budget was prepared, and I would like to review the main areas for which these funds are needed.

The first area is committees. A significant part of the Senate's role is to carry out the in-depth study of issues in special and standing committees. While members of the House of Commons must devote much of their time to constituency work, we devote our time to committee work.

This year, Senate committees are engaged in a number of special studies for which additional funding is required. These studies involve issues which are important to Canadians and include such topics as the state of post-secondary education in Canada; the importance of the Asia Pacific region, especially with regard to trade; the amendment to the Constitution regarding Term 17 of the Terms of Union of Newfoundland with Canada; our international competitive position in communications; and the state of transportation safety and security in Canada.

Honourable senators, it is the established practice of both the Senate and the House of Commons to fund special studies, special committees, and joint committees from Supplementary Estimates. After consultation with all committee chairpersons, it is estimated that an additional \$822,000 will be needed to supplement the funding included in the Main Estimates.

The second major area where Supplementary Estimates are required involves security issues. The total proposed cost amounts to \$986,000.

First, I will discuss East Block security. At a meeting on June 13, 1996, the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration agreed to assume full responsibility for the East Block security and fire prevention, resulting in a net savings to Parliament. Since security will be provided by the Senate, the additional salary costs of \$325,000 incurred by the Senate will be more than offset by reductions at the House of Commons which will no longer have to incur these expenses.

The Senate will install specialized surveillance equipment which will reduce the need for foot patrols, resulting in additional salary savings for the taxpayer. This cost-saving initiative, as well as consolidation of East Block security, will reduce the total PY requirement by two, resulting in salary savings of \$80,000 per year. These savings, when applied against the one-time equipment costs of \$240,000, will translate into a continued and substantial cost reduction after the initial payback period of three years, which is within the norm of Treasury Board guidelines.

• (1440)

Regarding other security issues, the House of Commons recently installed equipment to upgrade the security of Parliament. This equipment complements and enhances the efforts of security staff. The Senate must take similar measures if it is not to be the weak link in Parliament's overall security effort. Optimal security depends upon coordination, cooperation

and collaboration between the two houses. These factors were specifically addressed in the Auditor General's 1992 report to the Senate and the House of Commons on matters of joint interest. That report states:

The Senate and the House of Commons, in consultation with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, would ensure that future upgrades and purchases of communications equipment are, where appropriate, integrated.

Three such integrated activities are detailed as follows. First, our radio communications system. The House of Commons recently adopted a new radio communication system which will come into use on April 1, 1997. The new system is more secure and allows for a more efficient use of existing radio frequencies. However, it is not compatible with the radio communication system currently in use at the Senate.

The Senate will adjust its equipment in order to ensure that an integrated, compatible radio communication system is in place, and security risk is minimized. The cost of integrating the Senate's radio communication system is estimated at \$125,000. All other costs for the parliamentary communications infrastructure will be borne and funded by the House of Commons.

Second, in relation to the Senate's share of security at the Visitor Welcome Centre and the visitor scanning equipment at other entrances: The *ad hoc* committee of senior officials established by the Solicitor General to assess the security situation on the Hill recommended screening at the Visitor Welcome Centre located at the main entrance of the Centre Block. As a result of this recommendation, the House of Commons decided to implement visitor scanning at the Centre Block.

At its meeting on June 13, 1996, the Internal Economy Committee decided to extend similar visitor scanning to all Senate main entrances. This decision was necessitated by the fact that all precautions in the House of Commons would have been rendered useless if the Senate did not follow suit.

The decision to establish the Visitor Welcome Centre has resulted in increased costs to the Senate of \$46,000 to hire security personnel during the summer months. The equipment costs for implementing visitor scanning at all Senate main entrances totalled \$25,000.

Third, with respect to the X-ray inspection system: Visitor scanning procedures do not ensure a thorough search. Therefore, in order to conduct a thorough search of visitors and their bags and packages, X-ray inspection systems need to be used in conjunction with the walk-through metal detectors currently deployed at the Senate main entrance in the Centre Block. The House of Commons has already implemented such a system at the Visitor Welcome Centre.

To ensure that security measures remain effective, the Senate must offer similar safeguards at the entrances for which it is responsible. Otherwise, anyone wishing to breach security will attempt to circumvent the House of Commons security measures and use Senate entrances. This equipment also significantly speeds up processing time. The cost of acquiring X-ray inspection systems for entrances for which the Senate is responsible will be \$225,000.

The Senate's computer/communication network is the third major area for which supplementary estimates are required. The total amount is \$583,000. The Senate's communications system must be updated so that it remains compatible with the House of Commons system. The Senate informatics strategic plan is to be implemented to ensure such compatibility, and to reduce future costs.

In 1996, the Senate undertook a complete review of its outdated and inadequate informatics infrastructure. It established a subcommittee of senators, headed by Senator De Bané, which developed a series of specific recommendations. In addition, two independent consultants evaluated the subcommittee's work and made several recommendations. These consultants were Progestic Consultants in Management; Informatics Inc., of Ottawa; and FGT, "Conseillers en Formation, Gestion et Technologie Inc." de Montréal. The Senate began implementing some of these recommendations last year and, as a result, the basic infrastructure has been installed and corresponding software implemented.

Not all of the recommendations have been responded to, however. Those that remain will have to be implemented this year to ensure that the Senate can continue to communicate with the House of Commons and with the information systems of other institutions, as well as to make its initial investment worthwhile.

Changes in government-wide financial and administrative practices are having an impact on the Senate's technological needs. In order to meet new Treasury Board standards, the Senate will need to renew many of its systems, including its financial management system, if it is to live up to new accounting and reporting requirements. These changes cannot be deferred as they are mandatory for all government departments and agencies. It is, therefore, appropriate for the Senate to adopt these changes.

Finally, supplementary funds are also needed for the completion of parliamentary committee rooms, at a total cost of \$470,000. In order to compensate for the loss of rooms due to renovations by Public Works, and to meet the needs of increasing committee activity, two replacement parliamentary committee rooms will be operational by next year. Part of the Public Works master plan for the major renovations being undertaken on the Hill is maintaining a minimum number of committee rooms in operation while others are being renovated. Two such rooms will be operational by 1997. These rooms require appropriate furniture in line with their use and the design concept utilized by Public Works, in addition to simultaneous translation equipment to meet official languages legislation. The installation of this

equipment is not optional, and until it is in place and functional, the Senate will not be able to use these rooms for committee meetings.

The total supplementary estimates required is as follows: Committees, \$822,000; security issues, \$986,000; computer communication networks, \$583,000; completion of parliamentary committee rooms, \$470,000; for a total of \$2.861 million.

In 1993, the government put into place a new "carry forward" policy which allows organizations to use a portion of unspent funds from previous years to offset expenses during the next year. Under this Treasury Board policy, the Senate can access up to \$1.324 million this year. These funds are obtained through supplementary estimates as follows: Carry forward, \$1.324 million; new funding requirement, \$1.537 million. The total supplementary estimates are \$2.861 million. Although additional requirements for this year total \$2.861 million, only \$1.537 million represents new funding.

Honourable senators, a great deal of work has gone into the preparation of these supplementary estimates, and I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge contributions made by the members of the Internal Economy Committee and other senators. First, I wish to thank very much the committee's deputy chairman, Senator Di Nino, for his advice and counsel throughout this fiscal year. I also wish to thank Senator De Bané, who chaired the *ad hoc* subcommittee on informatics, as well as the honourable senators who served on that subcommittee, namely, Senators Carstairs, Comeau, Milne and Nolin.

I should also like to thank Senator Corbin, as well as Senators Marchand, Twinn, Watt and Adams for their advice on the layout and furnishing of the new Aboriginal Peoples committee room, which is scheduled to be operational in the fall of 1997.

• (1450)

I should also like to acknowledge the work of Senators Forrestall, Nolin and De Bané regarding security issues and for being the liaison with the Senate protective staff. Their feedback to the committee was much appreciated.

Finally, I should like to thank Senators Rompkey, Petten, LeBreton and Stollery for their assistance and advice on many issues that came up before the committee during the year.

Honourable senators, the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration recommends that senators approve the total Supplementary Estimates of \$2.861 million for 1996-97.

Hon. Willie Adams: Honourable senators, I have a question. It seems that in the last two or three years the parking situation around the Senate has worsened. It may be due to the renovations being done in the Centre Block. However, some senators are apparently allowing their secretaries to use their parking spaces. How will that change in the future?

Senator Kenny: Thank you for the question, Senator Adams. It is truly a difficult one to answer. During my time in the Senate, parking has always been a difficult issue. The spaces around the Senate buildings are reserved exclusively for senators' vehicles, with the exception of space we have made available to individuals who have difficulty getting around. We have made certain accommodations in at least two instances in that regard. There are fewer parking spaces than there are senators. How senators use the spaces is a difficult and contentious issue. There is no easy solution.

The honourable senator asked about what will happen in the future. I regret to say that in the future there will be no parking around this building. To a large extent, the problem will be resolved in as much as Public Works has advised us that in order to proceed with the construction of the C-bus facility in the north-west corner of the building and in order to comply with fire regulations, some time this spring or summer we can expect to be asked to move all of our vehicles from the immediate proximity of the building. The staff of the Senate has been working diligently to find other places where senators can park.

In terms of parking, the future does not look very promising for senators due to the massive construction that is both planned and under way and the fact that we are not in conformity with the local fire requirements.

I do not know if that addresses the honourable senator's question regarding secretaries using senators' parking spaces, but that is a difficult question on which to be precise.

On motion of Senator Doyle, debate adjourned.

INTERNAL ECONOMY, BUDGETS AND ADMINISTRATION

FIFTEENTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE—DEBATE CONTINUED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the fifteenth report of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration (*Senate Estimates 1997-98*), presented in the Senate on February 4, 1997.

Hon. Colin Kenny, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration, moved the adoption of the report.

He said: Honourable senators, the Senate's proposed budget for the 1997-98 fiscal year is \$40,674,800, which is .1 per cent lower than in the 1996-97 budget.

The Senate has reduced its Estimates significantly over the past several years, from \$44,590,000 in 1991-92 to a proposed \$40,674,800 for the 1997-98 Estimates. That reduction of 9.1 per cent over a six-year period is in line with the Government of Canada's restraint program. However, even in 1991-92, the Senate was not adequately funded. Some of the reductions made over these years resulted from technological advances and streamlining of operations. Others are only false economies because they were achieved by deferring expenditures which still

must be made some time in the future, probably at a higher cost to the Senate.

The Senate is experiencing a significant deterioration of its capital assets, including furniture, office equipment and buildings. There is also concern that health and safety issues are not being addressed properly.

Capital costs show a modest increase of \$18,500. A larger increase will be necessary in 1998-99, however, to begin re-establishing adequate funding levels in the Senate's furniture, fixtures and equipment budgets. These budgets have been significantly reduced over the past several years as part of the Senate's budgetary restraint measures. They cannot go on indefinitely.

In 1991-92, the Senate spent \$529,615 for building repairs and maintenance. In 1997-98, the budget for this function stands at only \$49,600. In 1998-99, we must begin re-establishing adequate funding to ensure that basic building maintenance can be carried out in a timely fashion, thereby avoiding even higher maintenance costs later. Failure to budget for basic building maintenance will inevitably result in higher costs to the taxpayer.

The same is true for furniture, fixtures and equipment. In 1996-97, the furnishing, fixtures and equipment budget was reduced to \$45,000. This funding level has been maintained for 1997-98. However, in 1991-92, the Senate spent \$263,413 for furniture.

Continuing to operate at this reduced budgetary level leaves no flexibility to deal with ongoing operations in future years, and the Senate's ability to adapt to the changing environment is seriously hampered. It must be noted that, given the value of the assets in the Senate inventory and the amount of our budget for replacing and repairing furniture, the minimum replacement cycle for Senate furniture is 200 years. Even though I may have eternal hope that some of us and some pieces of our furniture may last that long, quite frankly, such a replacement cycle is unacceptable.

• (1500)

Many areas have been underfunded in order to meet reduction targets, resulting in a budget that is inadequate to meet the needs of the Senate. Senators' research and office budgets are still 20 per cent below authorized levels of funding; and the committees' budget is insufficient to fund ever-increasing committee activity. This situation is untenable and the Senate must soon find ways to rectify it. Inadequate funding is having a negative impact on the ability of senators to perform their duties. Resources directly related to their obligations must be increased. Any further streamlining of operations or additional investments in technology will require funding.

FGT Consultants of Montreal were engaged by the Senate last year to advise on strategic planning for information systems, and they recommended that the Senate allocate a minimum of \$500,000 per year in its budget for hardware and software upgrades and strategic projects. We are well below this mark.

A few significant changes are envisioned in the 1997-98 budget. Most operational requirements remain similar to last year. Minor expenditure increases in some areas have been more than offset by decreases in others. There are four significant factors affecting the proposed 1997-98 budget. The first is an increase required by Treasury Board for employees' contributions to the Public Service Superannuation Plan, the Canada and Quebec Pension plans, supplementary death benefits and the employment insurance account. The second is a decrease in committee activity and senators' travel, reflecting the likelihood of a general election. The third is a decrease to reflect the transfer of some functions to the Library of Parliament. Fourth, there is an increase in the 1997-98 budget for computer services. This recommendation came out of a review of the Senate's outdated informatics structure by the subcommittee of senators chaired by Senator De Bané to which I referred in my earlier remarks on the Supplementary Estimates.

With regard to employee benefit plans, this statutory budget item is calculated as a percentage of total personnel costs. The percentage is set each year by Treasury Board and is based upon forecasts for the coming year. Historically, the final percentage of benefits to salaries has been in the range of 11 per cent to 14 per cent. However, for the 1997-98 fiscal year, Treasury Board has indicated that the budget should be set at 17 per cent of salaries. The increase for this item is \$502,000.

With regard to the question of why the Senate has to increase staff benefit packages when Canadians in the private sector are taking smaller and smaller packages, it would appear that, historically, the cost of employee benefit plans has been inadequately budgeted in the government's Estimates. Year-end adjustments were often required to cover the balance owing. This year, in response to concerns raised by the Auditor General, Treasury Board, being responsible for administering employee benefit programs for departments and agencies, including the Senate, indicated that this practice was to cease and the situation was to be rectified. Therefore, Treasury Board informed departments and agencies that their calculations were to be adjusted. This would ensure that the government's Main Estimates accurately reflect the expected costs. This increase has no effect on the plans themselves, and no additional benefits are being provided by this increase.

In order to meet our target of a zero per cent increase in the Senate budget and to counteract this \$502,000 increase, your committee had to take a number of steps to decrease other areas of Senate activity. If the increase to employee benefit plans imposed by Treasury Board were to be excluded, the 1997-98 budget would be 1.3 per cent lower than the previous year.

These areas of decrease are as follows: The first with which I will deal has to do with committees. The budget for committees has been reduced to \$400,000 from \$833,290 to reflect the traditional impact that a federal election has on committee activity. Historically, elections have resulted in reduced committee activity and a subsequent reduction in expenditures. Since the Senate's committee activity represents an important part of its role in government, this budget reduction must be temporary in nature.

The second area of decrease has to do with senators' travel. The statutory budget for senators' travel has been reduced by \$100,000, again because of the likelihood of an election.

Third, there is the transfer of functions to the Library of Parliament. In 1995, the Library of Parliament began providing a full range of library services to the Senate. This included acquisition, receipt and distribution of books, periodicals and newspapers on a charge-back basis, with the Senate continuing to pay for all items purchased. To eliminate the need for a cumbersome charge-back system and to reduce administrative costs, the Senate's budget for the purchase of books and subscriptions has been transferred to the Library of Parliament, which will assume this function from now on.

Finally, with regard to informatics, the 1997-98 budget for computer services includes an increase of \$100,000 to continue the implementation of the informatics strategic plan. Although still inadequate according to our consultant, FGT Consultants of Montreal, this increase will include the cost of retaining an assistant network officer on a contract basis to carry on the heavy workload that goes with informatics.

A number of projects have been identified by Senator De Bané's subcommittee on information technology. However, they will only be undertaken in 1997-98 if the required funding becomes available as a result of budget savings elsewhere in the administration's budget.

Again, a number of members of the Internal Economy Committee deserve thanks for their work in the preparation of these estimates. I wish to thank Senators Poulin and Nolin for their many contributions in developing a communications strategy for the Senate, which has been a high priority for the Internal Economy Committee during this fiscal year and which will be a high priority next year as well.

I thank Senators Carstairs, Cochrane and Poulin for acting as Internal Economy's liaison senators with the Senate Committees Directorate.

As well, the committee has much appreciated the work of Senator Wood on the development of the Senate's official language policy and the work of Senator Gauthier in the development of the Senate's Page Program.

I thank Senator Cohen for her work on the committee this year, for liaising with us concerning very successful initiatives taken by the two Speakers concerning the Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy last fall.

To these senators and to all the others who served on Internal Economy during this year, I wish to express my appreciation.

Honourable senators, your Internal Economy Committee recommends that senators approve the proposed budget of \$40,674,800 for 1997-98.

On motion of Senator Kinsella, debate adjourned.

The Senate adjourned until Tuesday, February 11, 1997, at 2 p.m.

THE SENATE OF CANADA
PROGRESS OF LEGISLATION
(2nd Session, 35th Parliament)
Thursday, February 6, 1997

GOVERNMENT BILLS
(HOUSE OF COMMONS)

No.	Title	1st	2nd	Committee	Report	Amend.	3rd	R.A.	Chap.
C-2	An Act to amend the Judges Act	96/03/19	96/03/20	Legal & Constitutional Affairs	96/03/21	none	96/03/26	96/03/28	2/96
C-3	An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (nuclear undertakings) and to make a related amendment to another Act	96/03/27	96/03/28	Social Affairs, Science & Technology	96/05/01	none	96/05/08 referred back to Committee 96/05/16	95/05/29	12/96
C-4	An Act to amend the Standards Council of Canada Act	96/06/18	96/06/20	Banking, Trade & Commerce	96/09/24	none	96/09/25	96/10/22	24/96
C-5	An Act to amend the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act and the Income Tax Act	96/10/24	96/10/31	Banking, Trade & Commerce	97/02/04	eleven			
C-6	An Act to amend the Yukon Quartz Mining Act and the Yukon Placer Mining Act	96/10/21	96/10/23	Aboriginal Peoples	96/11/05	none	96/11/06	96/11/28	27/96
C-7	An Act to establish the Department of Public Works and to amend and repeal certain Acts	96/03/27	96/03/28	National Finance	96/05/14	none	96/06/12	96/06/20	16/96
C-8	An Act respecting the control of certain drugs, their precursors and other substances and to amend certain other Acts and repeal the Narcotic Control Act in consequence thereof	96/03/19	96/03/21	Legal & Constitutional Affairs	96/06/13	fifteen	96/06/19	96/06/20	19/96
C-9	An Act respecting the Law Commission of Canada	96/03/28	96/04/23	Legal & Constitutional Affairs	96/05/09	none	96/05/14	96/05/29	9/96
C-10	An Act to provide borrowing authority for the fiscal year beginning on April 1, 1996	96/03/26	96/03/27	National Finance	96/03/28	none	96/03/28	96/03/28	3/96
C-11	An Act to establish the Department of Human Resources Development and to amend and repeal certain related Acts	96/04/24	96/04/30	Social Affairs, Science & Technology	96/05/15	none	96/05/16	96/05/29	11/96
C-12	An Act respecting employment insurance in Canada	96/05/14	96/05/30	Social Affairs Science & Technology	96/06/13	none	96/06/20	96/06/20	23/96

No.	Title	1st	2nd	Committee	Report	Amend.	3rd	R.A.	Chap.
C-13	An Act to provide for the establishment and operation of a program to enable certain persons to receive protection in relation to certain inquiries, investigations or prosecutions	96/04/23	96/04/30	Legal & Constitutional Affairs	96/05/28	one	96/05/30	96/06/20	15/96
C-14	An Act to continue the National Transportation Agency as the Canadian Transportation Agency, to consolidate and revise the National Transportation Act, 1987 and the Railway Act and to amend or repeal other Acts as a consequence	96/03/27	96/03/28	Transport & Communications	96/05/08	none	96/05/16	96/05/29	10/96
C-15	An Act to amend, enact and repeal certain laws relating to financial institutions	96/04/24	96/04/30	Banking, Trade & Commerce	96/05/01	none	96/05/02	96/05/29	6/96
C-16	An Act to amend the Contraventions Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts	96/04/23	96/04/25	Legal & Constitutional Affairs	96/05/02	none	96/05/08	96/05/29	7/96
C-18	An Act to establish the Department of Health and to amend and repeal certain Acts	96/04/24	96/04/30	Social Affairs, Science & Technology	96/05/08	none	96/05/09	96/05/29	8/96
C-19	An Act to implement the Agreement on Internal Trade	96/05/14	96/05/30	Banking, Trade & Commerce	96/06/11	none	96/06/12	96/06/20	17/96
C-20	An Act respecting the commercialization of civil air navigation services	96/06/05	96/06/10	Transport & Communications	96/06/19	one	96/06/19	96/06/20	20/96
C-21	An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 1996	96/03/21	96/03/26	—	—	—	96/03/27	96/03/28	4/96
C-22	An Act granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 1997	96/03/21	96/03/26	—	—	—	96/03/27	96/03/28	5/96
C-26	An Act respecting the oceans of Canada	96/10/21	96/10/23	Fisheries	96/12/03	none	96/12/04	96/12/18	31/96
C-28	An Act respecting certain agreements concerning the redevelopment and operation of Terminals 1 and 2 at Lester B. Pearson International Airport	96/04/23	96/05/30	Legal & Constitutional Affairs	96/06/10	seven	defeated 96/06/19	defeated 96/06/19	
C-29	An Act to regulate interprovincial trade in and the importation for commercial purposes of certain manganese-based substances	96/12/03	96/12/13	96/12/17 Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources					
C-31	An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 6, 1996	96/05/28	96/05/30	National Finance	96/06/13	none	96/06/18	96/06/20	18/96
C-33	An Act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act	96/05/14	96/05/16	Legal & Constitutional Affairs	96/05/28	none	96/06/05	96/06/20	14/96
C-35	An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (minimum wage)	96/10/31	96/11/07	Social Affairs, Science & Technology	96/12/04	none	96/12/05	96/12/18	32/96
C-36	An Act to amend the Income Tax Act, the Excise Act, the Excise Tax Act, the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions Act, the Old Age Security Act and the Canada Shipping Act	96/06/18	96/06/19	Banking, Trade & Commerce	96/06/20	none	96/06/20	96/06/20	21/96

No.	Title	1st	2nd	Committee	Report	Amend.	3rd	R.A.	Chap.
C-41	An Act to amend the Divorce Act, the Family Orders and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act, the Garnishment, Attachment and Pension Diversion Act and the Canada Shipping Act	96/11/25	96/11/28	Social Affairs, Science & Technology					
C-42	An Act to amend the Judges Act and to make consequential amendments to another Act	96/06/18	96/10/02	Legal & Constitutional Affairs	96/10/21	none	96/11/07 (2 amend.)	96/11/28	30/96
C-45	An Act to amend the Criminal Code (judicial review of parole ineligibility) and another Act	96/10/03	96/10/22	Legal & Constitutional Affairs	96/12/05	none	96/12/18	96/12/18	34/96
C-48	An Act to amend the Federal Court Act, the Judges Act and the Tax Court of Canada Act	96/06/18	96/06/20	—	—	—	96/06/20	96/06/20	22/96
C-54	An Act to amend the Foreign Extraterritorial Measures Act	96/10/21	96/10/30	Foreign Affairs	96/11/06	none	96/11/07	96/11/28	28/96
C-53	An Act to amend the Prisons and Reformatories Act	97/02/05							
C-56	An Act for granting Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 1997	96/09/24	96/09/26	—	—	—	96/10/01	96/10/22	25/96
C-57	An Act to Act to amend the Bell Canada Act	97/02/04							
C-61	An Act to implement the Canada—Israel Free Trade Agreement	96/11/07	96/11/28	Foreign Affairs	96/12/11	none	96/12/12	96/12/18	33/96
C-63	An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act, the Parliament of Canada Act and the Referendum Act	96/11/27	96/12/05	Legal & Constitutional Affairs	96/12/12	none	96/12/18	96/12/18	35/96
C-68	An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 1997	96/11/25	96/11/27	—	—	—	96/11/28	96/11/28	29/96

COMMONS PUBLIC BILLS

No.	Title	1st	2nd	Committee	Report	Amend.	3rd	R.A.	Chap.
C-202	An Act respecting a National Organ Donor Week in Canada	96/12/13	96/12/18	Social Affairs, Science & Technology	97/02/04	none	97/02/06		
C-216	An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act (broadcasting policy)	96/09/24	96/12/03	Transport & Communications					
C-243	An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act (reimbursement of election expenses)	96/05/16	96/05/28	Legal & Constitutional Affairs	96/09/26	none	96/10/01	96/10/22	26/96
C-270	An Act to amend the Financial Administration Act (session of Parliament)	96/12/03	96/12/11	National Finance					
C-275	An Act to establish the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians	96/04/30	96/05/14	Legal & Constitutional Affairs	96/05/16	three	96/05/16	95/05/29	13/96
C-347	An Act to change the names of certain electoral districts	96/11/25	96/11/27	Legal & Constitutional Affairs	96/12/12	three	96/12/12	96/12/18	36/96

SENATE PUBLIC BILLS

No.	Title	1st	2nd	Committee	Report	Amend.	3rd	R.A.	Chap.
S-2	An Act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act (Sexual orientation) Sen. Kinsella	96/02/28	96/03/26	Legal & Constitutional Affairs	96/04/23	none	96/04/24		

No.	Title	1st	2nd	Committee	Report	Amend.	3rd	R.A.	Chap.
S-3	An Act to amend the Criminal Code (plea bargaining) (Sen. Cools)	96/02/28	96/05/02	Legal & Constitutional Affairs	96/11/07	Rec.			
S-4	An Act to amend the Criminal Code (abuse of process) (Sen. Cools)	96/02/28	96/10/28	Legal & Constitutional Affairs					
S-5	An Act to restrict the manufacture, sale, importation and labelling of tobacco products (Sen. Haidasz, P.C.)	96/03/19	96/03/21	Social Affairs, Science & Technology					
S-6	An Act to amend the Criminal Code (period of ineligibility for parole) (Sen. Cools)	96/03/26		Dropped from Order Paper re: Rule 27(3)					
S-9	An Act providing for self-government by the first nations of Canada (Sen. Tkachuk)	96/06/13		Dropped from Order Paper re: Rule 27(3)					
S-10	An Act to amend the Criminal Code (criminal organization) (Sen. Roberge)	96/06/18	96/12/10	Legal & Constitutional Affairs					
S-11	An Act to amend the Excise Tax Act (Sen. Di Nino)	96/06/20							
S-12	An Act providing for self-government by the first nations of Canada (Sen. Tkachuk)	96/11/25							
S-13	An Act to amend the Criminal Code (protection of health care providers) (Sen. Carstairs)	96/11/27							
S-14	An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Department of Health Act (security of the child) (Sen. Carstairs)	96/12/12							

PRIVATE BILLS

No.	Title	1st	2nd	Committee	Report	Amend.	3rd	R.A.	Chap.
S-7	An Act to dissolve the Nipissing and James Bay Railway Company (Sen. Kelleher, P.C.)	96/05/02	96/05/08	Transport & Communications	96/05/15	none	96/05/16	96/10/22	—
S-8	An Act respecting Queen's University at Kingston (Sen. Murray, P.C.)	96/06/06	96/06/10	Legal & Constitutional Affairs	96/06/13	none	96/06/13	96/06/20	—

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