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THE HONOURABLE GILDAS L. MOLGAT
SPEAKER

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THE SENATE

Monday, March 10, 1997

The Senate met at 8:00 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

MUSEUM OF THE REGIMENTS

CALGARY, ALBERTA

Hon. Dan Hays: Honourable senators, I rise to make a statement concerning the Museum of the Regiments, a facility in my home city of Calgary which is a matter of some public attention at the present time.

Later today, I will be tabling a petition signed by some 8,200 Calgarians and presented to me by Ms Jo Repp of Calgary. These Calgarians are concerned about the relocation of the Canadian Forces Base Calgary, and the fate of the Museum of the Regiments and what it represents for our city.

I should note that Ms Repp is not an employee of the museum, nor is she associated with it in any formal capacity. She is, however, a friend of the museum, and is deeply committed to preserving it.

Ms Repp has asked me to share with the Prime Minister, the Minister of National Defence and all parliamentarians the wish of Calgarians that the Museum of the Regiments remain in Calgary.

By way of background, the Museum of the Regiments is the umbrella name for the facility that contains the collections of the four founding regiments in Calgary. These include the Lord Strathcona's Horse, the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, the King's Own Calgary Regiment and the Calgary Highlanders. The museum also houses the Canadian Forces Base Calgary Museum and Archives. The building and the land are owned by the Department of National Defence and the five museum components are all accredited Department of National Defence museums.

The Calgary Military Museum Society is authorized by the Department of National Defence as a cooperating society of friends to assist with projects and fundraising. The society raised the amount of \$5.5 million required to renovate the old Sir Sam Steele School building, and transform it into what is now the Museum of the Regiments. It also assisted the four regiments in raising an additional \$2.5 million to build the displays that are resident in the museum.

As the Department of National Defence continues the process of rationalizing its budget expenditures, the Calgary Military Museum Society is examining all areas of operating costs of the

Museum of the Regiments, and is searching out new, innovative sources of funding to cover anticipated reductions in DND support.

Although the Calgary Military Museum Society has already begun looking for alternative sources of funding, it is their hope that they will be able to continue their dialogue with the Minister of National Defence with a view to ensuring the long-term viability of the museum.

Honourable senators, it is important that the Museum of the Regiments remain in Calgary, because it plays a major role in informing Calgarians about the military's past, present and future. Millions of dollars have been donated to maintain the history of Calgary's service personnel, and many thousands of volunteer man-hours are contributed annually. More than 50,000 visitors tour the museum annually, including nearly 8,000 children. Furthermore, the Museum of the Regiments hosts some 2,000 students, aged 10 through 12, during each school year. It also allows Cubs, Brownies, Guides and other Calgary youth groups to participate in overnight educational experiences right in the museum.

With the majority of Calgary's military units about to be relocated, the need for our museum to continue its important work in Calgary has grown even more apparent. Fiscal requirements and efficiency considerations compel the government to review and, in the case of Alberta, consolidate several of our military operations. This is a function of the times in which we live and of the challenges we face given limited resources. Calgarians have come to understand this, but Calgarians will not, nor should they, remain silent with respect to the preservation of Calgary's proud military heritage which is reflected in the Museum of the Regiments.

• (2010)

Colleagues, I share the concern of Ms Jo Repp, the Calgary Military Museum Society, and the 8,200-plus Calgarians who signed the petition. I believe that the Museum of the Regiments should remain in Calgary, and I thank and congratulate all those who, through the petition that I will table in this chamber, have made the views of Calgarians respecting the future of the Museum of the Regiments in Calgary a matter of public record.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

WOMEN IN THE SENATE

Hon. Lorna Milne: Honourable senators, I was away last week, and missed Senator Anderson's speech on the occasion of International Women's Day. In speaking today, I am only two days out in my commemoration of the day itself, so I thought I might add a few statistics about women in the Senate to what Senator Anderson said last week.

Until 1929, of course, I am sure you all know that women were not “persons.” The first woman appointed to the Senate was Cairine Wilson, in 1930, after the Privy Council in England decided that we were, indeed, persons.

Once the precedent had been set in 1930, one would have thought that there might have been a flood of women being appointed to the Senate. However, it was not until 1935 that the second woman was appointed, and 1953 before the third woman senator was appointed. In fact, numbers three, four and five were appointed in 1953.

Since 1990, honourable senators, women have constituted a much more equitable proportion of the appointments to the Senate. If we continue this current trend, we might even get up to gender parity someday.

By my count, Senator Anderson was the 41st woman appointee; I am number 42, and Senator Poulin is number 43. Senator Forest is the most recent addition, at number 45.

Right now, there are 24 women here in the Senate, and we make up 23 per cent of the 104 seats. This compares quite favourably with the House of Commons, where only 17 per cent of the seats — or 53 out of the 295 seats — are held by women.

The 24 women who are senators today represent more than half the number of women who have ever been appointed to the Senate, and 10 of us were appointed by our current Prime Minister. Some have even suggested that in order to be appointed to the Senate by the current Prime Minister, one must be female, but I would point out to honourable senators that in his appointments to this house, the Prime Minister has almost reached gender parity — he has appointed nine men.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the right-hand gallery of Mr. John Maloney. Mr. Maloney is a member of Parliament from the Niagara Peninsula and he is accompanied today by a delegation of young people from his constituency.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

TOBACCO BILL

FIRST READING

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-71, to regulate the manufacture, sale, labelling and promotion of tobacco products, to make consequential amendments to another Act and to repeal certain Acts.

Bill read first time.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this bill be read the second time?

On motion of Senator Graham, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading on Wednesday next, March 12, 1997.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO MEET DURING SITTING OF THE SENATE

Hon. John B. Stewart, Chairman of the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 58(1)(a), moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs have power to sit at 4:00 p.m. tomorrow, Tuesday, March 11, 1997, even though the Senate may then be sitting, and that rule 95(4) be suspended in relation thereto.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Hon. Finlay MacDonald: Honourable senators, some years back, when His Honour the Speaker occupied the place where the Honourable Senator Graham sits today, a certain custom prevailed in this chamber. On the occasions when a member stood up — as has the Honourable Senator Stewart here tonight — and asked for permission to suspend the rules in order to allow a committee to meet while the Senate is sitting, I remember the Deputy Leader of the Government, as he then was, asking for an explanation. In an attempt to emulate our distinguished Speaker, I thought I would ask the same question of Senator Stewart.

Senator Stewart: Honourable senators, I think the request of the Honourable Senator MacDonald is eminently sensible.

The Standing Senator Committee on Foreign Affairs, as honourable senators know, has a reference dealing with Canada's relations with the Asia Pacific region. One of the topics concerning the committee greatly is the relationship between human rights and trade. Tomorrow at four o'clock we would like to hear from Professor Bernard Frolic of York University. Professor Frolic is a member of the staff of the Joint Centre for Asian Studies at that university, and he will be dealing with the question of human rights.

Honourable senators, if the committee receives permission to meet, I would especially invite the Honourable Senator MacDonald to come to that meeting. I know he would contribute greatly to our proceedings.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

HUMAN RIGHTS

VISIBLE MINORITIES AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF CANADA— REPORT TO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION—NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Donald H. Oliver: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will call the attention of the Senate to a report submitted to the Canadian Human Rights Commission by John Samuel and Associates Inc., entitled “Visible Minorities and the Public Service of Canada.” Furthermore, I shall outline the most significant points made by that report, which was initiated by the CHRC to provide constructive input to the Public Service of Canada by identifying elements in hiring practices and workplace environment that might help explain why the public service’s visible minority representation rate lags well behind those of both the private sector and the Canadian labour force as a whole.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

RECENT FUNERAL FOR CANADIAN AIRMEN WHO DIED IN PLANE CRASH IN BURMA DURING WORLD WAR II—NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Lorna Milne: Honourable senators, I give notice that on Wednesday next, March 12, 1997, I will call the attention of the Senate to the recent funeral for Canadian servicemen whose plane crashed in Burma in 1945.

MUSEUM OF THE REGIMENTS

PRESENTATION OF PETITION

Hon. Dan Hays: Honourable senators, I have the pleasure to present a petition today respecting the future of the Museum of the Regiments in my home city of Calgary, Alberta, containing the signature of Ms Jo Repp and more than 8,200 other signatories. The petition requests that the Prime Minister and the Government of Canada allow the Museum of the Regiments to remain in Calgary.

• (2020)

QUESTION PERIOD

NATIONAL DEFENCE

DEPLOYMENT OF CANADIAN AIRBORNE REGIMENT IN SOMALIA— ADEQUACY OF RESPONSE OF CHAIN OF COMMAND—MOTION TO REFER QUESTION TO FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE— REQUEST FOR RESPONSE

Hon. Lowell Murray: Honourable senators, almost four weeks have passed since I proposed a motion in this chamber to refer certain matters related to the deployment of Canadian Forces in Somalia to the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs. I spoke to that motion on February 12. Since that time, there has been no engagement on the part of the government. The adjournment stands in the name of the Chief Government Whip, Senator Hébert.

The honourable leader will recognize that this is a matter that is both urgent and important. I think the government has had sufficient time to decide what to do about this motion. I therefore ask her: What is the government’s position?

Hon. Joyce Fairbairn (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, Senator Murray will know that in the period since this motion was placed on the Order Paper, various discussions have taken place, and the government is currently examining the latest options or proposals concerning the mandate of the committee. It is examining them very seriously and a response will be made very soon.

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, the minister refers to discussions that have taken place informally. Indeed, such discussions have taken place, but there is, as yet, no commitment on the part of the government to have these matters studied by the Foreign Affairs Committee or by any other committee of the Senate.

Meanwhile, time is pressing and other matters are coming to light. The minister is aware, no doubt, that there has come to light recently information that the former Chief of the Defence Staff and the present Deputy Minister of National Defence made representations to the government to the effect that the commission of inquiry was investigating events beyond its mandate — this, just before General Boyle was called to testify about destruction of documents in Somalia.

More recently, this past weekend, it came to light that the government’s decision to close down the commission of inquiry was taken on the advice of the Department of National Defence, just as the commission of inquiry was about to look into the cover-up involving officials of the Department of National Defence. I will not take the time of the Senate to rehearse the serious allegations that were made before the commission of inquiry today concerning the senior people in the Department of National Defence.

I make the point that the government cannot, in all decency, leave matters stand where they are. If the commission of inquiry, the Létourneau Commission, is to be shut down, the argument is surely very strong that the Senate should complete the uncompleted work of the commission of inquiry.

What I ask the minister to do is to clear the air and, at a minimum, to let this matter come to a vote, and to do so promptly.

Hon. Gerry St. Germain: Honourable senators, my question to the Leader of the Government in the Senate is in regards to the same matter. Further to what Senator Murray has pointed out, is the government leader aware that members of the public are asking about this motion as well? In fact, in my travels in southern British Columbia over the last week or so, I have had three or four inquiries as to whether the government has taken a position on the request by Senator Murray. I am wondering whether the Leader of the Government is aware that the public is concerned about the way in which the government appears to be trying to shut down this inquiry without an alternative means of exposing everything that should be exposed, and having everything studied in a proper fashion.

Senator Fairbairn: Honourable senators, I certainly accept my honourable friend's information. However, I cannot judge the extent to which the public is responding to this motion. I, too, have been out travelling in various provinces, and I confess to him that the issue has not been raised with me. Apparently my honourable friend has had a different experience. I will say, as I said earlier to Senator Murray, that his motion is being taken seriously by the government. There have been discussions on ways of proceeding.

I cannot give Senator Murray a time by which I will have an answer for him. I can only tell him that it will be very soon.

HUMAN RIGHTS

VISIBLE MINORITIES AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF CANADA — REPORT TO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION— GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Hon. Donald H. Oliver: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Earlier, I gave notice of an inquiry in relation to a report that was commissioned by the Canadian Human Rights Commission. My question is on the same report.

As the honourable leader will know, the visible minority representation in the public service was 4.1 per cent in 1995. In contrast, visible minority representation in the private sector is 8.2 per cent. The labour force in general has a 12-per-cent visible minority representation. Given that the public service representation rate is half of that of the private sector, and almost one-third of the general labour force, what measures, if any, is the Liberal government taking to eradicate inequitable hiring practices in Canada's public service?

Hon. Joyce Fairbairn (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I thank Senator Oliver for his question. He will appreciate that I cannot give him a detailed response tonight. However, I will certainly send his comments on to my colleague. I commend the honourable senator for putting forward his inquiry and will listen with interest to his speech when he makes it.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

DEPLOYMENT OF CANADIAN AIRBORNE REGIMENT IN SOMALIA— ADEQUACY OF RESPONSE OF CHAIN OF COMMAND—MOTION TO REFER QUESTION TO FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE— REQUEST FOR RESPONSE OF CHAIRMAN

Hon. Finlay MacDonald: Honourable senators, I have a question for the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee. Is he of the opinion that Senator Murray's suggestion should be better considered by his committee rather than by a special committee?

Hon. John B. Stewart (Chairman, Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs): Honourable senators, I understand that questions can be asked in the Senate to the chairs of committees relative to the work that has been sent to the

committee by the Senate. What we have in this case is a proposal for a reference to the committee. It has not yet been dealt with definitively by the Senate and, consequently, it is not a matter with which I could deal in my capacity as chair of the committee.

Senator MacDonald: Honourable senators, with all due respect, that is a rather niggling point. It is a proposal that has been discussed with the honourable senator, and on which he has expressed some views. Surely he can enlighten us with respect to where we might be going with this matter.

Senator Stewart: Honourable senators, anything I might say would not be a true representation of the views of the committee because the matter has not been discussed with the committee. For example, the deputy chairperson of the committee has not had a chance to hear the discussion, and I really could not say anything that would be useful. If Senator MacDonald wants to ask me privately about my opinion on the matter, I do not mind dealing with that outside the chamber. However, I cannot deal with such a question addressed to me as chairperson of the committee.

• (2030)

SENATOR'S STATEMENT

HEALTH

CLOSING OF MONTFORT HOSPITAL IN OTTAWA

Leave having been given to revert to Senators' Statements:

Hon. Peter Bosa: Honourable senators, I wish to echo the statements of a number of senators who have expressed their deep concern about the proposed closing of the Montfort Hospital in Ottawa. For the past couple of weeks I have heard several friends refer to the possible closing of the of the only francophone teaching hospital in Ontario with a mixture of surprise, sadness and disappointment.

Honourable senators, for some 25 years I have served on the board of directors of the Northwestern General Hospital, and on the President's Advisory Council in Toronto. As a result, I think I know something about the cultural aspects and sensitivity of a public facility affecting such a large community in Ontario.

I hope that the Montfort Hospital will remain a priority, even during this cost-cutting saga. It is an institution that deserves to be kept open.

Hon. Pat Carney: Honourable senators, I should like to ask a question of Senator Bosa.

The Hon. the Speaker: I am sorry to inform the Honourable Senator Carney that no questions are allowed under Senators' Statements. However, with the agreement of honourable senators, she may be allowed to do so. Is it agreed?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Carney: Honourable senators, since the funding cuts to which the honourable senator has referred flow from the federal government's funding cuts to the provinces for health care, has the honourable senator raised this issue with the Prime Minister, who leads the government that has cut health funding to the provinces? If he has, what success has he had?

Senator Bosa: Honourable senators, the Prime Minister himself has made representation to the Government of Ontario

on the same subject. The question raised by the honourable senator requires a detailed answer. One would need to go into the issue of the funding cuts that have been undertaken by the Province of Ontario. One would then need to compare those cuts with the diminished funding provided by the federal government in transfer payments.

The Senate adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.

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