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Wednesday, October 3, 2001

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**THE HONOURABLE DAN HAYS
SPEAKER**

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THE SENATE

Wednesday, October 3, 2001

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

Prayers.

We ask for God's blessing on all who mourn or suffer, with confidence that the human family is sustained and renewed by Divine Love.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

STATEMENT BY MAJOR RELIGIOUS GROUPS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer: Honourable senators, I am making a statement today at the same time as a statement is being made in the House of Commons by Mr. Stephen Owen, Member of Parliament for Vancouver Quadra. This is a statement sent by major religious groups in British Columbia. The statement reads as follows:

God Keep our Land
A Call to Justice, Peace & Solidarity

Canada is founded on the affirmation that God alone is supreme, and that the rule of law must be preserved.

This affirmation is the foundation of the rights and freedoms we enjoy as one nation of diverse peoples. Our acknowledgement of God's supremacy and the rule of law calls us forever to renew our commitment to justice, peace and solidarity.

The attack upon the United States of America on September 11th, 2001 was calculated to uproot the whole human family.

This horrific affront was intended to make neighbours look upon each other with suspicion and hatred; to make us abandon our vocation to be united under God's love. Many people have died, innocent families have been left vulnerable to bigotry and violence, and a shadow has fallen over our ability to live together as citizens.

We affirm that God's justice and mercy are infinite, surpassing human power in majesty and perfection.

We affirm our solidarity as leaders in diverse faith communities, and urge our brothers and sisters to enrich the common good with brave new works of peace, mutual understanding and material assistance.

We call upon all Canadians to join their prayers and their good will, to guard against prejudice and hatred, to befriend and support each other.

RECOGNITION OF PEOPLE IN TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRY

Hon. Pat Carney: Honourable senators, on Monday, October 8, Canadians celebrate Thanksgiving, when we reflect on our many blessings of family, friends and country. Many Canadians give thanks for the right to live and love, work and pray, and achieve and contribute in a country so awesome in its magnificence, so generous in its opportunities that we have been able to live for generations in peace and plenitude.

I should like to give special thanks to all those Canadians who serve us in our transportation industry, so necessary to our national prosperity, purpose and unity. In the last few weeks I have travelled extensively by air, rail, ferry and bus on Senate business. Everywhere I have found those transportation personnel who help us to travel to where we want to go on business or pleasure to be exemplary in the performance of their work.

In particular, I wish to thank the flight crews and others in the aviation industry who have served us so well, particularly in the stressful weeks since September 11, when, for the first time, our sense of security was breached in many parts of our homeland by the terrorist attacks in New York, Pennsylvania and Washington.

• (1340)

Flight crews have proved to be one of the most vulnerable sectors in the war against terrorism in the last few years, yet they continue to serve us with their superb skills and training, transporting us to wherever the flight plan takes us. They are in command of their aircraft but, like their passengers, these crews are dependent on the skills and professionalism of others in the aviation industry, including the air traffic controllers, the meteorologists, the ground and freight handling personnel, security forces and agents, the caterers, cleaners and the "rampees," or ramp service agents, who handle our luggage. They have been the unsung heroes and heroines of the last few weeks, performing their tasks with efficiency, cheerfulness and an unflinching sense of professionalism.

Again, in my experience, I have found those aviation personnel who serve the public to be endlessly courteous in the last few difficult days. No matter how long the airport lineups, people have been processed with calmness and reassurance. No matter how many cancellations have been necessary, airline reservation clerks have been patient and helpful. If delays and disruptions have affected our lives, so have they affected the lives and plans of the flight crews who have been assigned to take us wherever we need to go.

Honourable senators, our thanks should extend to the rail, ferry and bus crews who have also weathered the disruptions of the last few weeks with similar courtesy and helpfulness. We are lucky to have people of their calibre in their jobs, and we should give them special recognition at this time of thanksgiving.

CONFERENCE ON WOMEN IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Hon. Landon Pearson: Honourable senators, on Monday, October 1, I attended the first day of a three-day conference on women in the criminal justice system organized by the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies and the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres. I was there to learn more about justice for young girls in trouble with the law and problematic approaches to the protection of children exploited in the sex trade, two issues of deep concern to me. I was also there to hear the voices of women from the margins of society who so rarely have an opportunity to speak out about the abuse, exploitation and neglect that have characterized their childhoods, conditions that often underlie law-breaking behaviour in adolescence and adulthood. I was not there, however, to hear a virulent, anti-American, demagogic diatribe. I greatly lament that this should have occurred at an event that, in other respects, fully merited our government's support.

As a member of the opening panel, which was supposed to be international, I had already had my five minutes to speak about respecting the rights of both boys and girls to be protected from violence and humiliation and to discuss the upcoming United Nations Special Session on Children. Minister Hedy Fry had spoken eloquently and compassionately about racism and discrimination, and an Aboriginal woman had spoken about the misery of her early life.

The calculated rant to which we were then subjected came as a stunning shock. Neither Minister Fry nor I were surprised, of course, by rhetoric about colonialism and oppression. We have often heard that before, but the vicious attack on our neighbours to the south was conveyed in a tone such as I have never heard before at a public event. As the daughter of an American mother, I was deeply wounded, and on behalf of what I am sure is the vast majority of Canadians, I repudiate both the tone and the sentiment of this ugly tirade.

I am further distressed that the publicity accorded this speech may have tarnished all the good the conference was hoping to achieve by promoting dialogue on issues related to women in the prison system and, even worse, suffocated the voices of girls and women who had something quite different to say.

Under most circumstances, honourable senators, I would have walked out on such a speech, but I could not walk out on women who had come, often from long distances, to tell us their painful stories.

RESPONSE OF GOVERNMENT TO TERRORIST ATTACKS ON UNITED STATES

Hon. David Tkachuk: Honourable senators, our country is facing its greatest challenge since the Second World War. The two major policy announcements by the government regarding the terrorist attacks of September 11 were made outside of Parliament. In the House of Commons, the Prime Minister continues to answer questions about government policy by suggesting that these questions are mere attempts by the opposition parties in the House to politically profit from a terrible situation. Political leaders, therefore, are forced to explain their policy, as did Mr. Clark recently, with letters to the national newspapers.

Honourable senators, the Canadian people remain unsure of the government's position. Some may still believe that terrorism may not wash up on our shores, but it will. As a member of NATO, our response should be the same as though these acts were committed against our own countrymen.

The government's inability to articulate the will of Canadians to rid this world of these evil forces has been lacking and has not been stated in a way that engenders confidence in our Parliament or in our country. I am, therefore, asking the opposition parties in the House of Commons to call an emergency national opposition meeting as soon as possible to present a united front in the House of Commons to hold the government accountable and to present a united program to ensure the safety and security of our citizens.

This united caucus is necessary and will provide needed support for our men and women in the Armed Forces, the RCMP, CSIS and others. It will push the government to provide the security needed at our borders, present a united front in committees, settle issues of intelligence in air transportation, and provide a coherent response to the paramount issue in Canada of home security.

Many in the opposition parties have differences of opinion that in the recent past may have seemed insurmountable. Yet we have just witnessed a terrible act, immediately south of where a majority of Canada's population resides, that presents a clear and present danger to our country. We must provide to the Canadian people an alternative, one that is prepared to govern if our present government fails in this task or loses the confidence of the Canadian people. We owe that to Canada.

A new strength and determination will force the present government to consult and to defend its actions in Parliament rather than at fundraising dinners and on *Larry King Live*. For those in the Liberal caucus who have been disappointed — and there are some — with their executive's response in governing this issue, this is an opportunity to consult with and join forces with other Canadians who, acting together, can contribute meaningfully during the terrible situation with which we are all forced to deal.

Honourable senators, there are times in the business of a nation when bold steps are necessary, and this situation demands those steps.

[Translation]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. Fernand Robichaud (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 tomorrow, Thursday, October 4, 2001 at 1:30 p.m.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY WATERS TREATY ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-6, to amend the International Boundary Waters Treaty Act.

Bill read first time.

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

On motion of Senator Corbin, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.

DEFENCE AND SECURITY

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY HEALTH CARE SERVICES AVAILABLE TO VETERANS AND TO APPLY DOCUMENTATION FROM PREVIOUS SESSION TO STUDY

Hon. Michael A. Meighen: Honourable senators, I give notice that on Thursday, October 4, 2001, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Defence and Security be authorized to examine and report on the health care provided to veterans of war and of peacekeeping missions; the implementation of the recommendations made in its previous reports on such matters; and the terms of service, post-discharge benefits and health care of members of the regular and reserve forces as well as members of the

RCMP and of civilians who have served in close support of uniformed peacekeepers;

That the papers and evidence received and taken on the subject during the Second Session of the Thirty-sixth Parliament be referred to the Committee;

That the Committee report no later than June 30, 2002;

That the Committee be permitted, notwithstanding usual practices, to deposit its report with the Clerk of the Senate, if the Senate is not then sitting; and that the report be deemed to have been tabled in the Chamber.

[English]

QUESTION PERIOD

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Hon. John Lynch-Staunton (Leader of the Opposition): Yesterday in Question Period, I quoted from the transcript of the previous day's committee hearings on Bill C-11 some of the statements made by the Assistant Deputy Minister for Policy of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, to the effect that the regulations necessary for the implementation of provisions of Bill C-11 would not be in final form until March of next year at the earliest. The point of bringing that up at the time was to have the government admit that the urgency it has put on the bill is no longer valid, as no regulations, no implementation of the bill.

The assistant deputy minister also pointed out that the regulations are being drafted at this time and that they are hoping to have them for republication before the end of the calendar year.

• (1350)

That statement is completely contradicted by the minister herself who, yesterday, during Question Period in the other place, stated that she was ready to go with the regulations which have already been before committee. They are not before a House committee as no committee there has been seized with the regulations. The Social Affairs Committee here, as of 1:15 this afternoon, had not been seized with the proposed regulations.

I ask the Leader of the Government in the Senate to tell us what the facts are. Who is stating the status of the regulations accurately, the assistant deputy minister or the minister?

Hon. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, it is my understanding that the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology was given a report with respect to regulations, but I understand that it did not include the legal language of those regulations. It included the broad areas for which the regulations would be written to comply with the matters of the act.

Whether the regulations based on that broad general framework will be ready almost as soon as the bill is passed and receives Royal Assent would best be put to the minister herself, who will appear before the Social Affairs Committee tomorrow morning.

Senator Lynch-Staunton: That does not answer my question, honourable senators. Surely, if the regulations are before committee, the cabinet would have approved the transmission of those regulations and, if so, the minister here should be aware of their status. Is Minister Caplan accurate when she says:

We are ready to go, virtually ready to go with the regulations which have already been before committee.

What committee have these regulations been before?

Senator Carstairs: The same document that was provided to the Senate committee apparently was also provided to the House of Commons committee. However, as I said earlier, my understanding is that that is not the legal and technical language of the regulations; it describes the broad framework of the regulations. I can only assume that that is what the minister was referring to.

Since the minister is appearing before the committee tomorrow morning, I think we should seek that clarification from the minister at that time.

Hon. Lowell Murray: Honourable senators, I want to know if, to the knowledge of the Leader of the Government in the Senate, the regulations or this description of regulations have been vetted by cabinet or by a cabinet committee. Is it possible that Ms Caplan was referring to a cabinet committee rather than to a parliamentary committee?

Senator Carstairs: Honourable senators, I cannot give any more information than I have already given. I have seen the document that was distributed to the committee. I glanced at it quickly. It was quite clear that it did not have the normal legal language I would expect regulations to have. To my knowledge, that is the only document that has been circulated and the only document that has been discussed, at least in the House of Commons committee. I have been assured by others in the government that the Justice Department is writing the regulations as quickly as it can.

THE SENATE

HASTE OF HEARINGS OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION
AND REFUGEE PROTECTION BILL

Hon. Douglas Roche: My question is to the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Yesterday, in response to Senator Lynch-Staunton's very legitimate concern about what he called the unseemly schedule of the Social Affairs Committee hearings on Bill C-11, the Leader of the Government said that the bill is receiving a thorough review in the committee. Would that that were the case.

The schedule of witnesses from Monday through to today, culminating, as the Leader of the Government has said, with the minister herself appearing tomorrow morning, is absolutely jammed. This is preventing the committee from, if I can use a famous expression, sober second thought of a bill that has immense implications for the future of Canada. We are told that this bill is being rushed in order that it can be part of Canada's response to the events of September 11. Yet expert witnesses have said that it provides no more in-depth treatment of terrorists than we already have on the books.

We are being told by experts that it has profound implications for how our immigration and refugee system will work. Furthermore, the Canadian Bar Association has said it has profound implications with regard to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

I should like to ask the Leader of the Government whether, in view of the unseemly pressure that the committee is under to come to a considered view as to the merits of this bill, she will join those of us who are expressing deep concern about the undue haste of this bill and urge the minister, before she appears before the committee tomorrow morning, to take her foot off the accelerator and allow the Senate the proper time needed to study this bill of enormous importance for the future of Canada?

Hon. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, the work of the committee is determined by the committee. They have been meeting regularly and, I would be the first to say, putting in extremely long hours in order to deal with this particular piece of legislation. The individuals who have been attending that committee should be congratulated for the effort they are putting in. However, I do not determine, nor does the minister, the work of the committee.

Senator Roche: May I take from that answer from the minister that in fact there is no pressure being exerted by the government to get this bill out of committee tomorrow? Can I take that answer back to the committee this afternoon and say, "We should stop this hurried parade of witnesses and give ourselves more time to consider this bill, and do so over the next three weeks in a reasonable amount of time"?

Senator Carstairs: Honourable senators, I have made my views clear on this bill from the beginning. I think it is an important response to what happened on September 11. I have, quite frankly, urged that the Senate deal with it as quickly as it can.

Having said that, the actual work of the committee is up to the committee.

• (1400)

POSSIBILITY OF BILL ON TERRORISM

Hon. Douglas Roche: Of course, the committee should work with deliberate speed. I am not suggesting otherwise, but the minister, in her last response, referred to the tragic events of September 11 as a motive for getting the bill through. Why does the government not bring in a bill on terrorism itself and stop expecting the immigration bill, Bill C-11, to carry the responsibility for terrorism?

Hon. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Government): Wait; perhaps the honourable senator's dreams will be fulfilled.

the economic situation, its impact on public finances, and changes to the government's fiscal policy?

[*English*]

Hon. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, in the May economic update the Minister of Finance provided, he indicated that he would remain vigilant to economic developments and monitor the situation closely. That certainly remains the priority of the Minister of Finance. He has clearly indicated he is prepared to do an economic update this month. We are anticipating that update shortly after we come back from the break, and I should think it will be a comprehensive update, particularly based on the consultations that he has been undertaking over the last few weeks with the private sector.

[*Translation*]

FINANCE

POSSIBILITY OF INTRODUCING BUDGET IN RESPONSE TO CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION— CHANGE IN FISCAL POLICY

Hon. Roch Bolduc: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. During the year 2000, two budgets were brought down; one in February and the other, a minibudget, in October. That one handed out a little money to everyone. The election was then called.

Since the second budget, the economic situation, as analysed by the Minister of Finance, has changed considerably. Major industries such as telecommunications and high tech have been hard hit in the past year. The events of September 11, 2001 have had a negative impact — over and above the immediate damage — on the airlines, tourism and the aviation industry, not to mention the layoffs in the automobile industry and elsewhere. We sense far greater hesitancy among consumers. The financial markets have been hit hard. Third-quarter corporation profits will, it appears, be disappointing, which will accentuate the drop in stock values and the devaluation of assets. The central banks are injecting billions of dollars into the financial system in Washington and Ottawa, in Japan and in the European Union. The Canadian dollar is almost at an all-time low. National security will necessitate considerable additional expenditures. The government is not excluding the possibility of returning to a deficit situation, having predicted that 2002 revenues will not be as expected. The government continues its spending programs as before.

I have recently received press releases from various departments, all of course defending good causes, but all meaning that money is going out: from Canadian Heritage, Justice, Health, Fisheries and Oceans, Agriculture and Agri-Food. Canadians are concerned. They are learning more from what the Prime Minister has to say in speeches to partisan meetings than from the House of Commons.

My question is as follows: Will we soon be getting a budget from the Minister of Finance to give us an up-to-date picture of

CHANGES TO BUDGET PROCESS

Hon. Roch Bolduc: Honourable senators, is the government initiating a new process? It brought down two budgets in the course of the year preceding the elections. The following year, it presented none. Between the two elections, it presented a budget, and then, two more for the new election. Is this a new system? Does the government intend to present an economic update in October and then prepare an annual budget for the month of February as has been the case up to now?

[*English*]

Hon. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, the Minister of Finance has made the decision that he would like to get back to the normal schedule, which is the economic update in the fall and the budget in February.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

PARAMETERS OF SPECIAL CABINET COMMITTEE IN RESPONSE TO TERRORIST THREATS

Hon. David Tkachuk: Honourable senators, yesterday I asked a question of the Leader of the Government in the Senate about the terrorist attacks in the United States, the government's response and NATO. As reported in Hansard, at page 1342, the leader said in part:

Our clear position is that we are NATO partners. We accept the obligations under Article 5...

She went on to say:

Suffice it to say that Minister Manley has been put in charge of a cabinet committee to develop a strategy, to develop policies, and even to develop laws, if necessary, in order to meet not only this terrorist threat, but terrorist threats in the future. We are willing to fulfil our obligations.

I had heard about this committee, so I thought I would check the press release. I could find no press release, which I found strange because this is an important committee. I could not find one in my office. I had the Library of Parliament check with the Prime Minister's Office, and it had no press release either. Therefore, I was forced to go to the regular source, which is the Liberal fundraising dinners, and, sure enough, October 1, in Kingston, there was an announcement made on Minister Manley's subcommittee. This committee is rather far-reaching, and I was wondering what are the parameters of this committee? Is it war effort, home security or military preparedness?

Hon. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, to answer the latter part of the question first, it is all of those things. With respect to the first part of the question, it is a rare thing for a government to issue a press release about the formation of a cabinet committee.

Senator Tkachuk: Honourable senators, is this committee in charge of our war effort, home security, military preparedness or all three? The leader seemed to imply that in her last response yesterday, but she did not make it clear.

Senator Carstairs: The special committee of cabinet established by the Prime Minister and headed by John Manley, Minister of Foreign Affairs, is bringing together all of the ministers who are clearly players at the table. That includes the Minister of Defence, the Solicitor General, the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Senator Tkachuk: Honourable senators, it is nice to know who the people are, although I am still not sure what this committee will do. Let me ask another question. Why was Minister Manley put in charge and not the Prime Minister?

Senator Carstairs: It is a cabinet committee, and all cabinet committees are chaired by members of the cabinet because they have an overarching responsibility for the duties that have been imposed upon them. For example, the Social Union Committee is chaired by the Minister of Justice, the Economic Union Committee is chaired by the Minister of Natural Resources, and so forth.

Senator Tkachuk: Honourable senators, this is unbelievable. The minister gave names to all these committees, and yet for this subcommittee, which she claims is so important and will carry out obligations under Article 5 of the NATO treaty, develop a strategy and develop policies, she does not say what it will develop strategy, policy or laws upon. Who will this committee report to? Will it report to another committee? Will it report to the Prime Minister? Would the leader ask Mr. Manley to appear before this chamber in Committee of the Whole, because if she will not answer the questions, perhaps he will?

Senator Carstairs: The cabinet committee that Mr. Manley chairs, as with all other cabinet committees, reports to the whole cabinet. That is the process by which it works. That is the process by which it has always worked. I do not believe there is a change. As to their primary duties, one understands, that since September 11, the issue of terrorism and our fight against terrorism has not only been of concern to the government, but, I

would suggest, to most Canadians. Clearly, that is the focal point upon which the cabinet committee will work and address as to how we can respond to the needs not only to have adequate security in this country but also to protect us from terrorists wherever they exist.

• (1410)

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

RESPONSE TO TERRORIST ATTACKS ON UNITED STATES

Hon. David Tkachuk: Honourable senators, I have one more question. Yesterday, when I mentioned that Prime Minister Blair had given a clear direction to his country and to his people as to what was expected of them and how they would fight the war on terrorism, the minister said:

Prime Minister Blair was certainly rather hawkish today in terms of his statements to the meeting of his political party. Perhaps it was the setting that brought that out in him.

Considering that two of the major policy statements of the Prime Minister were made to two Liberal Party fundraising dinners, would the Leader of the Government also believe that the setting made Prime Minister Chrétien rather hawkish?

Hon. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, first, the Prime Minister has been controlled from the first statement he made on September 11. I might add that he made a statement before a statement was made by the President of the United States.

In addition, it might interest the honourable senator to know that although Prime Minister Blair called the British Parliament back for September 14, it was immediately adjourned and has not met since.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

REPORT OF CONFERENCE OF DEFENCE ASSOCIATIONS— NEED FOR INCREASED DEFENCE SPENDING

Hon. Michael A. Meighen: Honourable senators, my question is also for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. The international coalition led by the U.S. is readying itself for war against terrorism. The American ambassador to Canada, among others, is now pushing this government to make a real commitment to defence spending. Indeed, the Conference of Defence Associations is reporting that we must make a major increase in defence spending just to maintain our existing military capacity. Considerably more money must be invested if we wish to upgrade and expand our military forces. The Conference of Defence Associations reached these conclusions after reviewing the Department of Defence's internal business plans and reviewing comments made by the chiefs of the land, air and maritime staffs.

Will the government immediately address the shortfalls identified by the report and help make our forces combat ready?

ENVIRONMENT

REPORT OF COMMISSIONER OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT—DAMAGE CAUSED BY AGRICULTURAL WASTE

Hon. Mira Spivak: Honourable senators, the agriculture waste in Ontario and Quebec alone equals that of a country the size of Japan — that is, 100 million people. We have learned that from the report of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, who has stated that the misuse of manure and fertilizer has already damaged the ecosystem and that the situation is getting worse. There is a tide of waste creeping into the largest body of fresh water in the world, serving 16 million people. That being the case, surely there is some urgency to prevent further damage.

Can the minister tell us about the federal government's plans to address "unsustainable agriculture"? Those are the words of the commissioner, who told us that agriculture as it is presently being conducted is unsustainable.

Hon. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, like the honourable senator, I read the summary of the report — and I have not had time to read the whole report of the commissioner — with some concern for the future of not only our agriculture viability but also the by-products of that viability and their impact on the entire environmental and ecosystem of our country.

There were also some good news announcements in the reports of both the commissioner and the auditor. They indicated, for example, that Lake Erie, which had been considered a dead lake, is now alive once again. That is good news, but there were certain indications that more must be done. I have been assured that the report is being taken extremely seriously and that it is the desire of the government to work with its provincial partners — because there are provincial partners engaged here — to address the concerns raised by the commissioner.

Senator Spivak: Honourable senators, there is a huge amount of manure getting into ground water and rivers, as the commissioner has stated. She has also stated that this is a federal government problem that the government is not addressing with enough urgency. The issue is quick action because this is a systemic problem. It is a problem that has been going on for some time. It is a problem that Senator Grafstein, for one, has brought to our attention in his bill. However, it needs quick action.

Could the minister bring us back some information as to timelines and the nature of the action to be taken? I know that cannot be done today, but a great number of Canadians are concerned about this issue.

Senator Carstairs: As the honourable senator well knows, because she sits on the Agriculture and Forestry Committee, agriculture is a shared responsibility between the provinces and the federal government. It will be necessary to work with our partners at the provincial level to develop a strategy and to address the issues that have been brought to our attention by the commissioner.

Hon. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, over the last several budgets, the government has put considerably more resources into the hands of the military than had been there in the decisions made in 1993, 1994 and 1995, where, quite frankly, program review brought down the budgets of almost every single department, with the exception of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. The government has set itself the goal of ensuring that resources are there for the military.

Honourable senators, it is interesting to note that the honourable senator began his question by speaking about what the American ambassador demands of us. The American ambassador does not set defence policy in Canada. In Canada, defence policy is set by the Canadian government.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Meighen: Honourable senators, appearances to the contrary, that is reassuring to hear. It is also interesting that the American ambassador's words are given some importance in this country, rightly or wrongly, whereas I wonder whether our ambassador's views in the United States are accorded the same importance.

Be that as it may, I am concerned with the dismissal of the Conference of Defence Association's report by the Minister of Defence as being "old think." Those are his words. Given the fact that the report was based on his own chief's assessment and his own department's assessment, his remark is inaccurate and insensitive.

The minister has also been quoted as saying that one of the most serious errors the military can make is to prepare for the last war. Indeed, he is correct.

When might Canadians expect to hear some "new think" from this government and minister as to the new threat posed by worldwide terrorism?

Senator Carstairs: Honourable senators can anticipate to hear some "new think" shortly. However, it is important to put on the record what has been happening with our defence establishment over the last few years. For example, the department has equipped the air force CF-18 fleet with precision-guided munitions; commenced upgrade programs for the CF-18 and the CP-140 Aurora fleets; purchased the Coyote and LAV-III for the army, high-end reconnaissance and light-armoured vehicles respectively; acquired new conventional submarines for the navy; enhanced our command and control and intelligence sharing systems; and opened a deployable joint operation headquarters in Kingston. That is indication that the government is moving in the right direction and is using the savings it has been able to acquire because of good government management. Some of those savings are going to the defence establishment.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

• (1420)

STATUS OF WOMEN

CONFERENCE ON WOMEN IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE
SYSTEM—COMMENTS BY FORMER CHAIR OF NATIONAL
ACTION COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Hon. Gerry St. Germain: Honourable senators, my question is directed to the Leader of the Government in the Senate as well. It relates to a statement made here earlier today by a fellow senator about the hostility that seems to have developed in the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. When I was a member of Parliament in the other place and a cabinet minister, I attended meetings of that organization where I observed a hostility toward members of Parliament, regardless of party affiliation. The members of that organization seemed to line up with certain individuals who supported their causes, regardless of how irresponsible the causes were perceived to be by the public.

When I represented 130,000 people in Mission—Port Moody, I could never identify one single person who belonged to this organization. Yet it was funded quite generously by the federal government and has been since. I am not singling out the government of the day as the only contributor to this organization.

The hostility I am speaking of was exhibited in the presence of a cabinet minister and a senator. It is easy to say that the senator should have walked out, but I do not know what I would have done had I been there. I imagine that the shock of the message was enough to keep one seated.

Does the honourable minister not think it is time to reconsider the funding of special interest groups in general, but especially that of those that appear to have developed a deep-rooted hostility toward everyone that is not with them?

Hon. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I will be very clear. The author of the speech referred to is a former chair of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. She was not attending the conference on behalf of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. She was invited because she is a professor at the University of British Columbia and is apparently knowledgeable about issues impacting the lives of women in Third World countries.

Like Senator Pearson, I dissociate myself completely from the remarks made. I do not think they were helpful in contributing to the dialogue in this country that is helping to develop policy.

It is my understanding that organizations like the National Action Committee on the Status of Women no longer receive core funding. They only receive project funding when a project proposal is deemed worthy of support.

CANADA-UNITED STATES INTER-PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

FORTY-SECOND ANNUAL MEETING—
REPORT OF CANADIAN DELEGATION TABLED

Leave having been given to revert to Tabling of Reports from Inter-Parliamentary Delegations:

Hon. Jerahmiel S. Grafstein: Honourable senators, I have the distinct privilege and honour of tabling the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canadian-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group to the forty-second annual meeting held in the Rockies from May 17 to 21, 2001. I commend this report to all senators for careful reading.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

NATIONAL DEFENCE

QUALITY OF FAMILY LIFE IN THE MILITARY—
INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Cohen calling the attention of the Senate to the quality of life of the military family and how that quality of life is affected by government actions and by Canadian Forces policy.—(*Honourable Senator Comeau*).

Hon. Norman K. Atkins: Honourable senators, I want to speak for a few moments today on the inquiry set down by our former colleague Senator Erminie Cohen. This inquiry calls the attention of the Senate to the quality of life of the military family and how that quality of life is affected by government actions and by Canadian Forces policy.

As we all know, the improvement of the social and financial condition of Canadians in general, and certainly of our Armed Forces and their families, was near and dear to Senator Cohen's heart. This is an issue on which she worked with Senator P  pin and others.

I should like to speak at some length on this subject after the approaching Thanksgiving break. As Senator Cohen said when she introduced the matter, the aim of this inquiry is consider ways to improve the living conditions of Canada's military family and, in so doing, to celebrate their contribution to Canada. I want to review in detail the report of the Standing Committee of the House of Commons on National Defence and Veterans Affairs entitled "Moving Forward: A Strategic Plan for Quality of Life Improvements in the Canadian Forces" and the government's response to that report.

As well, other studies have been completed on the abuse of women in military families and I believe their conclusions should be brought before the Senate for review.

At this time in our history, when we are preparing for a long and arduous war against terrorism throughout the world, we must be especially cognizant of the needs of the military family unit.

I look forward to speaking on this inquiry in the near future and therefore move the adjournment of this inquiry in my name.

On motion of Senator Atkins, debate adjourned.

• (1430)

AGRICULTURE ISSUES

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Tunney calling the attention of the Senate to Canadian agricultural issues, specifically grain, dairy and hemp.—(*Honourable Senator Sparrow*).

Hon. Herbert O. Sparrow: Honourable senators, I rise to speak for a moment on the inquiry brought forward by Senator Tunney on May 17, calling the attention of the Senate to Canadian agriculture issues. I want to make reference particularly to the loss of jobs in the agriculture industry in Saskatchewan in the last year.

This issue is prompted by the assistance being given to the air industry and Air Canada. The figure being tossed around is that the Canadian government will make a contribution of \$180 million in the first stage to assist the air transportation industry. It is said that Air Canada will be laying off an additional 12,000 people due to its economic problems. These

problems have arisen in the last three weeks, and we have acted very quickly to try to assist that industry.

I am not taking issue with what the government is doing for Air Canada. The devastating effects of the national economy on the agriculture industry in the past year have been brought to the attention of the Senate, the government and the Minister of Agriculture, but nothing has been done. Recent reports indicate that Saskatchewan lost 26,000 jobs in the agricultural industry last year. That is in the province of Saskatchewan alone. We warned that a large number of farms and jobs in the agricultural industry would be lost. This matter certainly has been brought forward by the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry. Senator Gustafson has worked diligently to ensure that this committee and the Senate are aware of these problems. I commend him for that.

I would appeal to the Senate, to the Leader of the Government in the Senate, to all senators and to the Agriculture Committee to continue to bring forward the serious problem that exists in Canada's agriculture industry. Saskatchewan losing 26,000 jobs, in addition to what was lost in the last two to three years, means that the industry is in serious trouble in the West and that it may not survive.

Honourable senators, we talk about the transportation industry being important in Canada. I do not argue with that; I know it is important. However, I would think that in the Canadian context there is nothing more important than the well-being of Canadians. The well-being for the future of Canada rests in the agriculture industry. We must not forget that.

On motion of Senator Milne, debate adjourned.

The Senate adjourned until Thursday, October 4, 2001, at 1:30 p.m.

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