



CANADA

Debates of the Senate

1st SESSION

• 39th PARLIAMENT

• VOLUME 143

• NUMBER 15

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, May 17, 2006



THE HONOURABLE NOËL A. KINSELLA
SPEAKER

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

Debates and Publications: Chambers Building, Room 943, Tel. 996-0193

Published by the Senate
Available from PWGSC – Publishing and Depository Services, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5.
Also available on the Internet: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

THE SENATE

Wednesday, May 17, 2006

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

Prayers.

[*Translation*]

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AWARENESS MONTH

Hon. Wilbert J. Keon: Honourable senators, in the late 1970s, the Canadian Multiple Sclerosis Society chose the month of May as Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month in Canada. During the month, volunteers and staff at all levels organize numerous public awareness activities.

Canada has one of the highest rates of multiple sclerosis in the world.

[*English*]

Multiple Sclerosis, MS, is an unpredictable, often disabling disease of the central nervous system — the brain and the spinal cord. The disease attacks the protective myelin covering of the central nervous system, causing inflammation and often destroying the myelin in patches. In its most common form, MS has well-defined attacks followed by remission. At the time of diagnosis, it is difficult for doctors to predict the severity of MS, its progression and specific symptoms. The people afflicted with MS and their families have great difficulty living with this disease.

There is no known cause or cure for MS. There are an estimated 50,000 Canadians living with the disease. Each day, three Canadians learn they have MS and this statistic puts Canada as the world leader in the incidence of this terrible disease.

Canada is also a world leader in multiple sclerosis research. I believe that a major reason for this is that Canadian researchers collaborate with each other and with other researchers around the world.

Dr. Brenda Banwell, at the Hospital for Sick Children, Dr. Amit Bar-Or, Dr. Douglas Arnold, at the Montreal Neurological Institute; and Dr. Dessa Sadovnick, at the University of British Columbia, are leading a study of children with MS at 22 hospitals in 17 Canadian cities from Victoria to St. John's.

Dr. Sadovnick and Dr. George Ebers, formerly of the University of Western Ontario and now a professor at Oxford, lead the Canadian collaborative project on genetic susceptibility.

The MS Scientific Research Foundation and the MS Society of Canada fund the multi-million dollar research projects that I have mentioned.

• (1340)

Canada is pre-eminent in research in leading the fight against this terrible disease. I am sure that honourable senators will respond enthusiastically when you see volunteers selling carnations or coming to your door for a donation.

[*Translation*]

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE OF LA FRANCOPHONIE

Hon. Rose-Marie Losier-Cool: Honourable senators, I rise today to draw your attention to the Ministerial Conference of La Francophonie, which was held last weekend in St. Boniface, Manitoba. This nineteenth ministerial conference since 1971 was organized by the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie. The theme of the conference was conflict prevention and human security.

The OIF ministerial conferences are held between each Francophonie Summit. The purpose of these conferences is usually to follow up on the decisions made at the last summit and to prepare for the next one. The next summit, honourable senators, will be held in September in Bucharest, Romania.

The conference in St. Boniface was held under the auspices of the Secretary General of the OIF, former Senegalese President, Abdou Diouf, whom many honourable senators here know and respect deeply for his immense wisdom and great humanity.

The conference in St. Boniface brought together the ministers of foreign affairs from over 20 member countries of the Francophonie, including Canada. The conference had two main objectives:

- increased and more effective participation by the OIF in international peacekeeping initiatives, by providing training and technical assistance; and
- closer partnership between the OIF and other international bodies such as the United Nations.

Honourable senators, as I often tell you, la Francophonie is an international reality. It has its importance and its usefulness. The conference in St. Boniface is a good reminder of the key role the Francophonie plays in our world and Canada's place in it.

[*English*]

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT ON FIREARMS REGISTRY

Hon. David Tkachuk: Honourable senators, the Auditor General's May 2006 report indicates that the former government has seriously misled parliament. Honourable senators will recall that in 2002, the centre's records were in such a mess that Sheila Fraser had to abandon her audit.

While progress has been made since 2002, there remain what the Auditor General terms “major difficulties,” including the existence of long-standing problems in the long-gun registration database. This means that the Canadian Firearms Centre does not have a clue as to how many of its firearms records are correct or incomplete.

The Canadian Firearms Centre’s new and improved management team bungled the new computer system. Originally budgeted at \$32 million, costs for the centre have soared to \$90 million, and the system is still not operational. Canadians have been lied to about the results in the long-gun registry’s past and projected costs.

To quote the Auditor General:

Parliament’s control over the public purse hinges on its voting of annual appropriations to fund departments, signalling its approval of their spending plans. Reporting of departments’ expenditures accurately against their annual appropriation cost is thus a cornerstone of parliamentary control.

As parliamentarians, we rely on the information that the government provides us when we vote supply, or when we attempt to hold the government accountable. We are now told that the performance reports of the Canadian Firearms Centre misled Parliament on how well licensing and registration activities have performed. We are told that the centre ignored government contracting rules, as well as Treasury Board rules that require proper records to be kept of meetings where decisions were made. We are told that, rather than come clean on their spending, they hid it. We learn that the former government, after being given legal advice in early 2004 that the registry needed extra spending authority before the end of the fiscal year, through a Supplementary Estimate, went out and illegally spent \$22 million.

Honourable senators will recall that in January 2004, a new Liberal Prime Minister was trying to make it look like he had the gun registry’s costs under control; it would appear that he did not.

This is a program that we were originally told would only cost \$2 million. The price tag is now \$1 billion and rising.

• (1345)

Had Parliament been told in 1995 that it would cost \$1 billion to set up the gun registry, we might have had an informed debate as to whether this money would be better spent on policing. The fact is that the current firearms registry system is broken and the previous government was unable to fix it.

I heartily applaud the announcement by the Minister of Public Safety this afternoon for reduced spending, with the millions of dollars saved to be redirected to fighting crime. I also applaud the many other necessary and urgent changes to the registry itself, including offering amnesty for one year to those who have not yet registered their unrestricted arms, as well as waiving fees this year for those who have already registered.

[*Translation*]

VISIT OF SECRETARY GENERAL OF LA FRANCOPHONIE

Hon. Lise Bacon: Honourable senators, last Wednesday, the Secretary General of La Francophonie, Mr. Abdou Diouf, arrived in Canada to begin an official visit. The high point of his visit was the Ministerial Conference of La Francophonie on Conflict Prevention and Human Security.

Mr. Diouf came at the invitation of Canada and yet, quite contrary to usual practice, no member of the Canadian government was at the airport to meet him. Worse yet, to add insult to injury, despite his diplomatic passport, Mr. Diouf was subjected to a body search on his arrival here. It is distressing to note the Conservative government’s complete insensitivity to the visit by a dignitary of such importance as the Secretary General of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie. It did not surprise me at all, however, because in its treatment of Mr. Diouf, this government simply remained true to itself; that is, indifferent to Canada’s francophone community.

Indeed, nowhere among the priorities of the Conservative government is there any mention of protecting francophones outside Quebec and developing the French language in minority language communities. Furthermore, as regards the francophone community in Quebec, attached as it is to the growth of the language, we cannot fail to notice this government’s most regrettable absence of cultural awareness. It may be the apostle of law and order, but culture is quite another matter.

I am not saying this today to score political points. There is no need to do that, because the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Bev Oda, has said it so well, if we are to believe Mario Cloutier in *La Presse* of May 11. According to the minister herself, Canadians care little about culture.

That is a comforting statement on the intentions of the government. It is not Canadians who care little about culture, but rather the government under the leadership of the minister responsible. With its total silence on the Francophonie, its lukewarm approach to bilingualism and its staggering lack of understanding of the strategic role of culture in Canada, this government keeps disappointing us.

What a contrast with the time when I was Deputy Premier of Quebec, and Mr. Diouf, already a remarkable and dignified statesman, welcomed me to Senegal with all the honours and savoir-faire of his diplomatic corps.

RIGHT TO ABORTION

Hon. Lucie Pépin: Honourable senators, yesterday, in response to my question on the right to terminate pregnancy, the Leader of the Government in the Senate made the following statement:

[*English*]

The only private member’s bills that have ever been tabled in the other place, or at least in the last Parliament, were by Liberal members of Parliament.

[Translation]

I would like to clarify a few things. Several hours of research in the House of Commons Hansard revealed that the Liberals did not introduce any bills about ending a pregnancy during the last Parliament. However, Conservative member Garry Breitkreuz introduced two motions on this subject during the Thirty-eighth Parliament. Also during that Parliament, on December 3, 2004, another Conservative member, Maurice Vellacott, introduced Bill C-307, restricting women's right to abortion.

Honourable senators, I know that the Leader of the Government is pro-choice. I sincerely hope that we can count on her and her leadership to convince members of her caucus that women who choose to end a pregnancy do so not by pleasure but by necessity. I will take on the task of convincing dissidents within my own party of this. If we work together, we can put an end to this debate.

• (1350)

[English]

INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA

Hon. Nancy Ruth: Honourable senators, today, May 17, is Canada's National Day Against Homophobia. This day was recognized for the first time three years ago by the Quebec-based Fondation Emergence, an organization dedicated to fighting homophobia. It is also the second International Day Against Homophobia, otherwise known as IDAHO. It is held 16 years to the day after the World Health Organization removed homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses. This year, IDAHO will be recognized in some 50 countries. It was endorsed by the European Parliament in its January 18 resolution condemning homophobia, as well as by the Belgian Parliament.

Homophobia is discrimination against lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgendered people because of their sexual orientation. Like so many other forms of discrimination, homophobia arises from fear and ignorance, when belief in persistent myths gives rise to negative attitudes and behaviours. Discrimination can become violent, as seen in the 2001 beating death of Aaron Webster in Vancouver's Stanley Park. That such incidents happen in our society is alarming. Covert forms of discrimination remain in our homes, our communities, our schools and in the workplace, resulting in missed job opportunities, subtle social and professional exclusions, open harassment and the terrorization of children.

Setting aside a day to fight homophobia helps promote relationships among people from all backgrounds and supports the further inclusion of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered people into society.

Honourable senators, I ask that you join with me in recognizing the importance of this day because Canada does not want to promote discrimination. I encourage all honourable senators to continue in the struggle to end discrimination in whatever form it may take.

[Senator Pépin]

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: I draw the attention of honourable senators to the presence in the gallery of Ms. Margaret Healy, President of the United Irish Society of Montreal; Ms. Elizabeth Quinn, Vice President of the United Irish Society of Montreal; Miss Courtney Elizabeth Mullin, Queen of the Montreal St. Patrick's Day Parade; Miss Catherine Conway, Princess of the Montreal St. Patrick's Day Parade; and Miss Tara Lee Duffy, Princess of the Montreal St. Patrick's Day Parade.

All of these women are guests of the Honourable Senator Raymond Lavigne. On behalf of all honourable senators, welcome to the Senate of Canada.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

NATIONAL BLOOD DONOR WEEK BILL

FIRST READING

Hon. Terry M. Mercer presented Bill S-214, respecting a National Blood Donor Week.

Bill read first time.

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

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

• (1355)

INCOME TAX ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Jack Austin presented Bill S-215, to amend the Income Tax Act in order to provide tax relief.

Bill read first time.

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

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

[Translation]

QUESTION PERIOD

NATIONAL DEFENCE

AFGHANISTAN—EXTENSION OF MISSION— HOUSE OF COMMONS DEBATE

Hon. Roméo Antonius Dallaire: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government. Senator Munson informed me that Canada's first female combat death occurred today in Afghanistan. This is a significant event in our country's post-Second World War military history.

[English]

My question for the leader concerns the fact that, in a most precipitous fashion, the other place is going to debate with very little time, barely six hours, a motion introduced by the government on the length of our commitment to the humanitarian mission currently being accomplished by Canadian diplomats, humanitarians, and soldiers in the nascent democracy of Afghanistan.

Why has the Prime Minister turned to the other place to take such a difficult, complex, executive decision? It is not in the tradition of our parliamentary institutions, when we know that those who sit there do not have the information necessary to take a full and complete decision on such an incredibly complex and serious matter. Also, the decision ultimately is non-binding on the Prime Minister. Does the Prime Minister wish to move to a state of surrogate cabinet whereby the other House moves into the executive decision-making of our parliamentary system?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): I thank the Honourable Senator Dallaire for that question.

The decision of the Prime Minister and the government to debate this issue, I believe, speaks for itself. At the request of the opposition, specifically the NDP, the Prime Minister has committed to a parliamentary debate and a vote on any new missions. As reported by the Leader of the Opposition after the opposition's caucus today, the official opposition will listen to the six-hour debate and then decide how members will vote. It is true that past governments did not consult either House on important missions like Afghanistan, but this Prime Minister is determined to do that.

All house leaders of all opposition parties were consulted about this procedure. They agreed to the process and they agreed to the vote, but that was yesterday and this is today.

• (1400)

Senator Dallaire: Honourable senators, it is to be noted that the motion as drafted cannot be amended. It speaks specifically of the length of the mission and leaves the impression that if one is not in agreement with the length of the mission, one could, by extension, be considered to be not in agreement with the mission.

Through this debate, the Prime Minister has created a state of uncertainty with regard to our political commitment to this mission and to troops who are already deployed and have been

bloodied. Our allies in Afghanistan have already taken their decisions to commit their forces. As a result of this political uncertainty with regard to the depth of our commitment, our troops could be targeted more than those of our allies.

Does the Prime Minister realize that he can ultimately be held accountable for the extra danger to our troops that may result from this totally artificial decision-making process in the other House?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I should like to think that there is no wavering on our decision to be in Afghanistan. I hope that there is no political uncertainty about it, despite what some members of the opposition and some media might say.

The Afghanistan government and our 35 allies in Afghanistan are looking to Canada to extend our mission for an additional two years, from February 2007 to February 2009. As many opposition politicians have said, and as the honourable senator knows from his past experience, it takes time to prepare for these missions. Therefore, it is important to get moving on this matter.

The extension of the mission would be a substantial commitment, possibly including the resumption of command of the UN mission in 2008, although we have not yet been asked by NATO to do that.

The debate and vote on this subject is justified at this time. The two-year commitment is consistent with planning by key allies. Both the United Kingdom and the Netherlands will deploy provincial reconstruction teams and battle groups into southern Afghanistan by the summer of 2006. The British will deploy for up to three years and the Dutch will deploy for two years.

The extension of this mission is in keeping with our commitments to our NATO allies on the situation in Afghanistan which, by all accounts, is starting to bear positive results, not only on the human rights side, particularly with regard to women and children, but also for Afghans who are trying to rebuild and conduct their daily lives freely and openly.

Senator Dallaire: Honourable senators, if the government's conviction and commitment is so clear and firm, why must they go through this process in such a precipitous fashion that will have no binding effect on the Prime Minister and his cabinet?

If it is the wish of the government to have the House of Commons and potentially the Senate involved in the executive decision-making of the government, they might wish to consider creating a joint committee that could look at complex subjects such as this. Such a committee could have the necessary resources and take the necessary time to make responsible decisions that affect the lives of Canadians who are working in far-off lands.

• (1405)

Senator LeBreton: The Prime Minister and the government are in no way shirking their executive decision-making powers. What we are doing is something Canada had committed to for some time. The government is responding to the calls of the opposition to consult with the elected members of Parliament in regard to their views on these major decisions.

I would think that that is what the Canadian public supports and desires, that they would want to know exactly how their parliamentarians feel about these decisions while fully understanding that the government has the right to make the decision.

In a free and open society, which is certainly what we are trying to create in Afghanistan, it is prudent and respectful to hear the views of parliamentarians on issues. That is a healthy sign, not something that should be feared.

Hon. Joseph A. Day: Could the Leader of the Government in the Senate advise as to whether the Prime Minister and his cabinet will be bound by the outcome of the vote on this issue that will take place in the other House?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I will answer that question in a hopeful manner. I imagine this issue will create an interesting debate. At the end of the day, I cannot imagine a scenario whereby most parliamentarians in this country would not support a motion after an open debate on an important mission in an area where Canada is making a real contribution.

Senator Day: I did not get an answer.

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

GRAINS AND OILSEEDS SECTOR— AVAILABILITY OF SUPPORT FUNDING

Hon. Daniel Hays (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate with respect to the field of agriculture, prompted by the serious distress we see in the Canadian agricultural sector, particularly with respect to grains and oilseeds.

The budget announced a commitment of \$755 million made by the previous government towards the Grains and Oilseeds Payment Program, an additional \$500 million as referred to in the Conservative platform, plus another \$1 billion for 2006-07 in response to the serious crisis. More money is needed.

Most important, while the \$755 million is being disbursed, \$1.5 billion is not. The Minister of Agriculture stated that he did not want to distribute these funds on an ad hoc basis.

My question is: When will these monies be available for Canadian farmers in crisis?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): I thank the honourable senator for his question.

I understand that the Minister of Agriculture is working on this issue almost as we speak. I will undertake to provide the honourable senator with a precise answer as soon as possible.

Senator Hays: The minister has made it clear that he did not favour an ad hoc program for disbursement of these funds.

I wish to remind the leader and honourable senators of the words spoken by the then Leader of the Opposition, Stephen Harper, regarding an emergency debate touching on agriculture, which dates back to February 3 of last year. He said:

We are looking at severe problems on top of what we already have as we approach this year's planting and seeding. This problem has to be addressed now.

Do I take it from the difference in position articulated by the Minister of Agriculture and the position held by our current Prime Minister when he was in opposition that they are in disagreement as to how this matter should be dealt with?

• (1410)

Senator LeBreton: I thank the honourable senator for the question.

As I said in an earlier answer, Budget 2006 did make good on our commitment to farmers, announcing an additional \$2 billion over two years for agriculture. Budget 2006 provides an additional \$1.5 billion for 2006-07. This includes \$500 million for farm support, plus a one-time investment of \$1 billion to assist farmers in the transition to more effective programming for farm income stabilization and disaster relief. There is also \$200 million to help chicken farmers prevent and fight avian influenza, and, as I have stated previously, farmers are receiving an accelerated payment of \$755 million under the Grains and Oilseeds Payment Program, one of the first undertakings of our government.

With regard to further payments, as I stated in my previous answer, I will undertake to provide an immediate answer.

FARM INCOME CRISIS AND DISASTER RELIEF

Hon. Daniel Hays (Leader of the Opposition): I appreciate the minister's recital, some of which I had already pointed out in a positive way.

Will the government now recognize that agriculture is one of the great priorities that the budget should be focused on — it is too late to focus on it in the Speech from the Throne — although it does not have many words, less than half a page, on agriculture.

Will the minister please take the message back that we in this place, on this side, are wondering why the plight of Canadian agriculture is not characterized as a priority, and ask that it be made a priority?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): Agriculture certainly is a major concern to the government. I hasten to point out that we have been here 100 days plus one. The situation that the farmers in this country face did not develop just since January 23. Minister Strahl, the Minister of Agriculture, is and has been working diligently with other provincial ministers of agriculture and farm leaders. Minister Strahl made several announcements in Calgary a week ago and he is working hard to resolve this problem.

I will obtain a timetable of any future payments from the Minister of Agriculture.

[Senator LeBreton]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

SOFTWOOD LUMBER AGREEMENT— AID TO FORESTRY WORKERS AND BUSINESSES

Hon. Pierrette Ringuette: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

On page 19 of its election platform, the Conservative Party promised to:

Provide real help for Canadian workers and businesses coping with illegal American trade actions....We will continue to help pay the legal bills of Canadian businesses that are fighting American softwood lumber tariffs. We will support displaced forestry workers.

Commit to investing \$1 billion over five years to support Canada's softwood industry...

To date, after 100 days in office, the government has broken all of the above promises. How does this government plan to honour any of these commitments when it has forced an agreement on Canada, removing the ability to help the industry and its workers?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): I thank the honourable senator for the question.

As Senator Ringuette said when I was answering questions a week or so ago, "Well, at least you can read," and I do have our platform here.

• (1415)

The softwood lumber agreements were widely applauded because we finally put in place a mechanism for resolving this trade irritant that was consuming industry, governments and politicians on both sides of the border.

As the honourable senator pointed out, we have only been here for 101 days. Minister Emerson has stated that this deal protects provincial forest management policies that have been the subject of American litigation for years. It creates a framework of certainty and stability. It provides an assurance that our policies will be safe in the future.

Specific language on the anti-circumvention provisions will be carefully developed over the coming months.

SOFTWOOD LUMBER AGREEMENT— REQUEST FOR TABLING

Hon. Pierrette Ringuette: The Conservative government may try to muzzle its caucus, but when push comes to shove, they are not honouring their commitments. This government is trying to hide the reality of the softwood agreement from Canadians.

This is the third time I have asked this question: Will the Leader of the Government in the Senate table in this house this potential softwood agreement, thus putting a dent in this culture of secrecy and refer this document for full study to the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I do not think anybody who has watched me or most members of our caucus would for one moment suggest that we have ever been muzzled. Quite the opposite is true.

In any event, I will take the honourable senator's question as notice.

ATLANTIC CANADA OPPORTUNITIES AGENCY

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND— JOB COMPETITIONS FOR REGIONAL OFFICE

Hon. Jane Cordy: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

The Public Service Commission recently posted a public competition for a senior assistant deputy minister position for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. The position is for vice-president of the Prince Edward Island regional office.

There is great concern by federal public servants in Prince Edward Island that the posting for this position, which pays \$115,000 to \$135,000 per year, was designed by part-time ACOA Minister Peter MacKay to favour a Conservative political operative in Prince Edward Island.

Can the Leader of the Government in the Senate commit to this chamber that Prime Minister Harper will ensure that the minister responsible for ACOA will not interfere and that the proper procedure will be followed in hiring for this position?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, this question comes a day after we tried to put in place an appointments commission that would oversee an appointments process that would be transparent, fair and open to the public.

Minister MacKay is the minister responsible for Prince Edward Island. In a previous Parliament, Minister Don Jamieson, from Newfoundland and Labrador, was the minister responsible for P.E.I. There are many precedents for ministers from other provinces being responsible for P.E.I.

There are also many past examples of when the government did not have representatives in Prince Edward Island and another government member from another province took over political responsibility for that province.

I can say quite simply that whoever is hired for this important position in ACOA, they will undoubtedly and most assuredly be a very qualified individual who will ably carry out his or her responsibilities in this post.

Senator Cordy: Honourable senators, I find it interesting that the position of vice-president of ACOA requires English essential only in language proficiency while another recently posted position for ACOA in Prince Edward Island for someone who

will work under the vice-president requires bilingual imperative language proficiency. Why is there a difference between the two postings? ACOA should not stand for “Atlantic Conservatives Opportunities Agency.”

Has the position of vice-president been tailored to ensure that a friend of the minister gets the job?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, this is interesting. You will get tired of hearing me say we have only been here for 101 days. I very much doubt that anybody in our government would be foolish enough to tell the Public Service Commission how to do its work.

Hon. Joan Fraser (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, could the Leader of the Government in the Senate also ascertain for us, while she is at it, whether this ad for English only essential employment was, as the law requires, published in media in both official languages in Prince Edward Island.

• (1420)

Senator LeBreton: I will find that out for the honourable senator. The Public Service Commission is obviously responsible for hiring within the public service. I will be interested to hear what they have to say in answer to that question, because I am unaware of it myself.

PUBLIC SAFETY

FIREARMS CENTRE— CUTTING OF LONG-GUN REGISTRY

Hon. Lorna Milne: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

After the l'École Polytechnique murders, stronger gun laws were passed in 1991. In 1995, Parliament passed a law requiring all gun owners to be licensed and guns to be registered. As a result, from 1991 to 2002, the homicide rate with rifles and shotguns has fallen by 68 per cent. Recently, Tony Cannavino, President of the Canadian Professional Police Association, said that gun crimes are not committed only by handguns, and that the last six or seven police officers were killed with long guns.

With this fact in mind, I want to ask the Leader of the Government in the Senate if she believes this government's decision to do an end-run around the democratic process and eliminate the long-gun registry is a wise one?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, anyone who purchases a gun must get a licence. The media, and some people who should know better, deliberately confuse the issue of gun control and the long-gun registry.

I have learned some things from television reports about police officers on the street who deal with illegal guns that are not registered. There is a notion that there are 5,000 inquiries a day. There are 5,000 inquiries, but in that registry there are also semi-automatic guns and handguns. The fact that they make 5,000 inquiries does not necessarily mean that the inquiry has

produced any meaningful results or answers. Many police officers have said that is the case.

Gun control is a law in this country. The issue is the long-gun registry. The Auditor General pointed out not only how Parliament was deliberately misled, or even worse, but also that even when people were sent notices that their licences were revoked, 23 per cent of the notices came back as undeliverable mail. The registry has clearly not worked. No one who has known the victim of any kind of crime, but particularly a crime involving gun violence, would ever support any move to not have the strong gun control laws that we already have. These laws were brought in by Conservative governments, first, in 1934, and then again in 1991.

Senator Milne: Honourable senators, I have a supplementary question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. If the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Professional Police Association, more than 40 women's associations, the Centre for Suicide Prevention, the Canadian Pediatric Society and the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians all agree that the firearms registry is worth supporting, why would this government not keep one of the critical elements of this program in place? Today, the cost of registering guns in Canada is about \$15.7 million a year. About \$10 million of that represents the cost of registering rifles and shotguns.

• (1425)

Does the Leader of the Government in the Senate believe that \$10 million a year is too high a price to pay to ensure the safety of Canada's police officers? Is \$10 million too heavy a financial burden for this government to carry to assist in the prevention of crimes involving long guns in Canada?

Senator LeBreton: Would that be \$10 million hidden or not hidden? That would be my answer. In fact, in today's *Ottawa Sun* the former Chief of Police of the City of Ottawa said that the Liberals lied to him. Most ordinary people read the *Ottawa Sun* and I consider myself an ordinary person.

The fact is that criminals use illegal guns in most of the illegal acts that take place on our streets. I certainly support strong gun control laws that protect the lives of all men, women and children.

The long-gun registry does not work and it has been very costly. There is still a registry that the police can consult. I do not believe the registry has to contain the names of farmers. My father was a farmer and had a gun, but my father would never consider using that gun for any illegal purpose. I believe that the long-gun registry should be dealt with, but we should still support our very strong gun control laws.

FIREARMS CENTRE—CUTTING OF LONG-GUN REGISTRY—STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Hon. Lowell Murray: Will the minister obtain a copy of the statement, that the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness made on this matter? I have not seen the statement, but I saw some news reports just before I came in and I have the impression, listening to the exchange, that some of the questions and, if I may say so, some of the answers, have not taken account of the statement. Would the honourable Leader of the Government obtain a copy of the statement and table it here before we adjourn?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I will get a copy of that statement. Briefly, I will run over a few of the things Minister Day announced today.

I do not have the actual statement, but I can outline the immediate actions that the minister announced today. The first action is to transfer responsibility for the operations of the Canada Firearms Centre to the RCMP and the second is to reduce the annual operating budget for the program by \$10 million a year. Minister Day announced the implementation of a refund and waiver of renewal fees for firearms licences and the elimination of the requirement for physical verification of long guns. A one-year amnesty will protect previously licensed owners and the owners of non-restricted firearms from prosecution and encourage them to comply with the current laws.

Honourable senator, the Liberal government had 10 years to complete this registry and it could not administer it properly. Why not give ordinary, law-abiding citizens another year? The amnesty is an important part of the announcement.

[*Translation*]

DELAYED ANSWER TO ORAL QUESTION

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have the honour of presenting a delayed answer to an oral question raised in the Senate by Senator Banks on April 6, 2006, in regard to funding for environmental programs.

PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES

FUNDING OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS

(*Response to question raised by Hon. Tommy Banks on April 6, 2006*)

As Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, I can advise the Senator that since April of last year, my department leads and facilitates, through the Office of Greening Government Operations, the implementation of a government-wide approach to the greening of government activities.

We work very closely with many departments. Through steering groups which meet regularly, we bring together departments to make significant, measurable progress in improving the environmental performance of government operations. This includes a focus on such key areas as reducing building energy consumption, improved fleet management, and green procurement. This progress has been monitored at a high level at Treasury Board Secretariat, Environment Canada, and Public Works and Government Services Canada.

The government, under the leadership of the Minister of Natural Resources, is putting in place a made-in Canada plan for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It has already been announced that a few programs are winding down. Among those already announced is one program component of the Federal House in Order initiative which has

completed its work. This component provided one-time demonstration funding for energy efficient practices and renewable technologies in Government of Canada facilities. The majority of climate change programs, including the remaining program components of the Federal House in Order initiative, are undergoing a review and funding decisions have not yet been made.

• (1430)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

ADJOURNMENT AND ADDRESS TO PARLIAMENT OF PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA PRINTED AS APPENDIX—MOTION ADOPTED

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government), pursuant to notice of May 16, 2006, moved:

That at 2:30 p.m. Thursday, May 18, 2006, if the business of the Senate has not been completed, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings to adjourn the Senate;

That should a vote be deferred until 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 18, 2006, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings at 2:30 p.m. to suspend the sitting until 5:30 p.m. for the taking of the deferred vote;

That the Address of the Prime Minister of Australia, to be delivered in the Chamber of the House of Commons at 3:00 p.m. that day before Members of the Senate and the House of Commons, together with all introductory and related remarks, be printed as an Appendix to the *Debates of the Senate* of that day, and form part of the permanent records of this House; and

That when the Senate adjourns on Thursday, May 18, 2006, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, May 30, 2006, at 2:00 p.m.

Motion agreed to.

THE SENATE

MOTION TO CONGRATULATE HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II ON EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY ADOPTED

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government), pursuant to notice of May 16, 2006, moved:

That the Senate send an Address to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, expressing the heartiest good wishes and congratulations of all Senators on the occasion of her eightieth birthday.

He said: Honourable senators, I think that we all agree that Her Majesty is a remarkable woman. She was born on April 21, 1926, daughter of the Duke of York, who later became King George VI.

As a young woman during the Second World War, Princess Elizabeth joined the British army and became a symbol of hope. At the age of 21, she pledged that her whole life, be it short or long, would be devoted to serving the people of the Commonwealth.

Her Majesty has deep respect and admiration for Canada and its people, and we have deep respect and admiration for our Queen. It is therefore a very great honour for me, seconded by Senator Fraser, to move this motion marking the birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada.

[English]

Hon. Joan Fraser (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I want to add my voice to that of Senator Comeau.

Honourable senators will be familiar with the phrase “Your Gracious Majesty.” I can think of no one to whom the adjective applies more appropriately than to Queen Elizabeth II. She is indeed a woman of rare grace, rare elegance and rare dedication to duty, who has in her long and distinguished reign shown particular affection for this country. We on this side are pleased to support the motion.

Hon. Anne C. Cools: Honourable senators, I rise to join today with colleagues in wishing Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the Queen of Canada, a happy birthday. Queen Elizabeth turned 80 on April 21. Next Monday, May 22, commonly described as the Queen’s birthday, or Victoria Day, Canadians will formally celebrate the Queen’s birthday. Next Monday was chosen by the Royal Proclamation as a formal day of celebration of Queen Elizabeth’s birthday. I would like to put that proclamation on the record, and I am reading from the *Canada Gazette* of February 27, 1957.

QUEEN’S BIRTHDAY

Proclaimed for Celebration

VINCENT MASSEY

CANADA

ELIZABETH THE SECOND, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom, Canada and Her other Realms and Territories, QUEEN, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith.

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME OR WHOM THE SAME MAY IN ANYWISE CONCERN — GREETING:

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS OUR BIRTHDAY FALLING ON THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF APRIL IT IS THOUGHT FIT TO APPOINT THE FIRST MONDAY IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING THE TWENTY-FIFTH DAY OF MAY AS THE DAY ON WHICH OUR BIRTHDAY IS TO BE OFFICIALLY CELEBRATED IN CANADA IN 1957 AND EACH YEAR THEREAFTER.

NOW KNOW YE THAT WE DO HEREBY PROCLAIM AND DECLARE BY THIS OUR PROCLAMATION THAT THE FIRST MONDAY IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING THE TWENTY-FIFTH DAY OF MAY IS HEREBY FIXED FOR THE CELEBRATION IN CANADA OF OUR BIRTHDAY IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SEVEN AND EACH YEAR THEREAFTER.

[Senator Comeau]

OF ALL WHICH OUR LOVING SUBJECTS AND ALL OTHERS WHOM THESE PRESENTS MAY CONCERN ARE HEREBY REQUIRED TO TAKE NOTICE AND TO GOVERN THEMSELVES ACCORDINGLY.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF WE HAVE CAUSED THESE OUR LETTERS TO BE MADE PATENT AND THE GREAT SEAL OF CANADA TO BE HEREUNTO AFFIXED. WITNESS: OUR RIGHT TRUSTY AND WELL-BELOVED COUNSELLOR, VINCENT MASSEY, MEMBER OF OUR ORDER OF THE COMPANIONS OF HONOUR, GOVERNOR GENERAL AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF CANADA.

AT OUR GOVERNMENT HOUSE IN OUR CITY OF OTTAWA, THIS THIRTY-FIRST DAY OF JANUARY IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD, ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SEVEN AND IN THE FIFTH YEAR OF OUR REIGN.

By Command,

C. STEIN,
Under Secretary of State.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN

Honourable senators will know that I am pained by the systematic erosion of the monarch and the monarchical system in Canada, and that I uphold the Royal Family at all times. My commitment to Her Majesty began when she was still a young woman and I a young child. I recall most vividly her coronation in 1953. Her Majesty, too, then took an oath, the Coronation Oath, swearing a commitment to her subjects, to mercy, to justice and to God.

I was then a child of nine years, in Barbados, the British West Indies, in the first form of my school, Queen’s College, the oldest girls’ school in the British Empire. The school was situated on many acres of land, with games fields, hockey fields and three tennis courts, named Queen’s College in honour of Queen Victoria.

In honour of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, my school, Queen’s College, staged a pageant, an outdoor play, in which one student, an upper form girl, dramatically mounted side-saddle on a horse, played Queen Elizabeth I delivering her inspiring address to her own troops poised for battle at Tilbury in 1588, as they awaited the approach of the Spanish Armada. Queen Elizabeth I said:

I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king and of a king of England too; and think foul scorn that Parma and Spain, or any prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realm.

Queen Elizabeth I then told her troops that leadership is about heart and stomach, lion-heartedness in duty and service to God, Queen and country.

Honourable senators, those words influenced my life profoundly. At the time of that pageant, in celebration of the coronation in 1953, I had one particular school mistress who had actually attended the coronation ceremony at Westminster, in London, on June 2, 1953. I vividly recall her accounts of the

event. That school mistress was Grace Adams, the wife of one of the leading political figures of Barbados, later premier, and later Sir Grantley Adams, when she became Lady Grace Adams.

Honourable senators, my childhood was dotted with her accounts of great public men, public service and civic responsibility. I also vividly remember that same school mistress giving accounts of the great British social reformers, parliamentarians like William Wilberforce and Lord Shaftesbury.

Honourable senators, I am an ardent supporter of Her Majesty, and of our system of government known as constitutional monarchy. The Queen, Her Majesty, is the actuating power in our Constitution. For all bills that we pass she is the enacting power. It is Her Majesty's Royal Assent that gives the bill the force of law. The seat of government in Ottawa is Government House. The Parliament of Canada is the Senate, the House of Commons and the Queen. Her Majesty the Queen is the *caput, principium, et finis*; that is, the head, the beginning and the end of Parliament, hence the term "the Queen in Her Parliament."

Honourable senators, I have looked for a quotation that embodies the importance of Her Majesty in Parliament in our Constitution. I would like to put on the record a statement from Benjamin Disraeli, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom in the late 1800s. In his 1852 book, *Lord George Bentinck: A Political Biography*, he described the true force and meaning of the enacting power of the Royal Assent by the Queen. He wrote:

As a branch of the legislature whose decision is final, and therefore last solicited, the opinion of the sovereign remains unshackled and uncompromised until the assent of both houses has been received. Nor is this veto of the English monarch an empty form. It is not difficult to conceive the occasion when, supported by the sympathies of a loyal people, its exercise might defeat an unconstitutional ministry and a corrupt parliament.

Honourable senators, I always try to make the point that the actuating power in our Constitution is Her Majesty and it is very real: It is no vestige, it is no ornament and it is no ceremonial fact.

• (1440)

Honourable senators, I should like to wish Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the daughter of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, a very happy eightieth birthday. I should also like to take the opportunity to wish her many more happy birthdays.

I thank her, her husband and her family for the many decades of dedication, commitment and service to her people, subjects in Canada. I also thank her and her family for the leading role that they played during the Second World War in sustaining the British people and the British Empire people who carried that war by themselves for several years. I thank her for all of that.

Honourable senators, Canadians young and old, veterans and non-veterans, men and women, hold Her Majesty in deep affection. I say, "God bless the Queen." I say, "Long may she reign over us," — very, very long — and I say, "She has a special place in my heart and in my head," and I would submit in the hearts and the heads of many Canadians.

If honourable senators doubt that, we should have witnessed Juno Beach a couple of years ago when all eyes of our veterans were on Her Majesty. All eyes were on Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, because of her long connection to history, of her long connection to Canada, and of the role that she herself and her parents especially, the Queen Mother and King George VI, played in sustaining Canadians through a terrible time of warfare when Canadian men and women were engaged in the theatres of war.

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

Hon. Senators: Question!

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

FUNDING FOR TREATMENT OF AUTISM

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Munson calling the attention of the Senate to the issue of funding for the treatment of autism.—(*Honourable Senator Di Nino*)

Hon. Ione Christensen: Honourable senators, I wish to thank Senator Munson for raising the inquiry on autism. Incidence of ASD, in all its many forms, is now at one out of every 166 children. In the 1970s, it was rarely diagnosed. It is now 10 times what was experienced just 20 years ago.

The challenges are many. Be it autism, FASD, schizophrenia, MPS or Down's syndrome, just to name a few, the children with these damaged brains and bodies are often referred to as "the angels among us." In the past, they were often not long with us, but their short lives always left a bright, shining light and they were never forgotten. Their intellect, their loving nature through adversity, their insight into what life is all about and their happiness with small things were gifts that helped others to grow. However, all of this came at a huge cost to the child, to the parent and to society.

With research and medical advances, these angels are living longer. However, the financial needs to help them to be productive members of society are much more than any family can realistically cope with, and the limited coverage under provincial health care programs is nowhere near enough.

In the United States, the federal funding has more than tripled in the past 10 years for autism; it is now over \$100 million. However, by comparison, \$500 million was spent on childhood cancer, which affects far fewer children.

There are programs that do work, but they require one-on-one therapy, which is hugely expensive and offers no ongoing medical coverage. Parents must literally mortgage their lives to provide for these needs.

With Maroteaux-Lamy syndrome, or MPS, the cost of replacement enzyme treatment is \$200,000 a year, and that is not covered by our health care systems. MPS is an enzyme deficiency that is very rare; there are only 10 cases in Canada. I personally know of two of them — one in the Yukon and one in Ontario.

The cost of FASD to Canadians is upwards of \$344 million a year. The cost for each person affected with FASD is \$1 million over their lifetime. There are 4,000 new cases of FASD every year in Canada. Can we really put off taking action?

I believe that Senator Munson will be asking the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology to undertake to study the financial needs and how they can best be addressed. What better than a Senate committee? However, we should be looking at all afflictions that fall outside of our health care guidelines. There is a great need.

There should be a special health care fund established to deal with these very special, difficult and extremely expensive requirements. It could be of national scope, and available for provinces and territories to draw from.

Over and above the treatment expenses, research chairs should be established to deal with the prevention — as in the case of FASD — and the causes and the cures, in the cases of ASD and MPS. With modern medicine, these children are becoming adults. With care and nurturing, they, for the most part, can be functional and productive in society. It will be very costly, but without such assistance they will become non-functional adults and will be dealt with through institutions, both criminal and otherwise, that is also very costly, I would argue even more costly than helping in the first instance.

Governments of all stripes are not good at committing to long-term programs, but this is one area where funding must be ongoing to be of any help. We must find ways to accommodate the need. The burden on a parent to help such children is enormous. The responsibility to help these angels rests with all society and the governments that society puts in place to represent them.

Hon. Madeleine Plamondon: Would the senator accept a question?

Senator Christensen: Yes.

Senator Plamondon: What does the honourable senator mean by “being productive in society?” I have the feeling that if we are to obtain funding, we must always include the buzzwords “productive in society.”

Not every Canadian will be able to be productive and they will still need care. Could the honourable senator elaborate more on what she means by “productive?”

Senator Christensen: I thank the honourable senator for the question.

Without any assistance in providing for treatment and therapy, all of those children will grow up as a burden on society. With assistance and care, some of those children will be able to function well in society. For example, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder is preventable but, once afflicted, a child will be a burden on society and will need ongoing assistance for life. If the inquiry is referred to committee for further study, the area of funding for ongoing assistance will certainly be a focus. The honourable senator is right when she says that being a productive member of society is not the be-all and end-all. However, many people need continuing assistance and that must be built into the program as well.

On motion of Senator Di Nino, debate adjourned.

• (1450)

CANADA'S COMMITMENT TO DARFUR, SUDAN

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Dallaire calling the attention of the Senate to the situation in the Darfur region of Sudan and the importance of Canada's commitment to the people of this war-torn country.—(*Honourable Senator Nancy Ruth*)

Hon. Nancy Ruth: Honourable senators, our government is committed to doing all that it can to achieve peace in Sudan. This continues to be a major policy initiative and priority for Canada. To provide context to the situation, it is helpful to consider the background of the region, its history and the current situation.

Honourable senators, Sudan is the largest African country and has the sixth largest population. It has been embroiled in conflict for almost half a century and has suffered tremendous instability. Establishing peace in the eastern African region requires addressing and resolving the instability throughout all of Sudan, the impact of which is not confined to national borders. The situation in Sudan must also be addressed and resolved in the context of both the region and the continent. We cannot hope to end the plight of the people of Darfur and the rape of women and girls outside the context of peace in the whole of Sudan. This is reflected in Canada's approach.

Honourable senators, this past January marked the anniversary of the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which effectively ended Sudan's long-standing north-south civil war. The conflict had a devastating toll, taking an estimated two million lives and displacing upward of four million people. Despite the peace agreement, impacts of the war continue to be felt, and a massive and ongoing Sudanese and international effort is required to build the necessary infrastructure to support long-term development in the region and to ensure that it does not lapse into conflict again. Canada is proud to have played a part in the role of the peace process that ended the north-south conflict and is continuing this role, including through our participation in the United Nations peacekeeping force, which has been deployed to oversee the agreement.

At the recent Sudan Consortium, hosted by the World Bank in Paris, Canada announced that it was ahead of schedule in disbursing its pledge of \$90 million in support of the consolidation of peace in Sudan. This funding includes \$40 million for humanitarian assistance over two years; \$10 million for peace-building and good governance initiatives; and \$40 million to support the full implementation of the CPA and reduce poverty. Nearly one third of the \$90-million pledge is specifically earmarked to help the people of Darfur.

Honourable senators, the United Nations estimates that the violence in Darfur, western Sudan, has displaced roughly two million people and killed tens of thousands. Today, 200,000 refugees are living in camps in Chad in increasingly unstable conditions. Canada remains deeply concerned by the continuing violence, the persistent culture of impunity and especially by the attacks on civilians in Darfur. Continuing violence in Darfur has been in violation of the 2004 ceasefire agreement. Canada congratulates the parties on the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement and is encouraged by the prospect of an end to the violence and a peaceful future for the people of Darfur. I commend Canadian officials on the ground in Abuja who have put forth such a tremendous effort to assist the process both in Africa and at the United Nations in New York.

Canada has provided both financial and diplomatic support throughout the peace process. In particular, Canada has contributed to the mainstreaming of gender as a crucial component to the Darfur peace talks and has provided support to the African Union to integrate gender concerns into the peace agreement. The Darfur Peace Agreement makes significant progress on the issues that are important such as political participation; wealth sharing; humanitarian development and infrastructure needs; integration of former combatants into security institutions; democracy building; assistance to the displaced; and, most important, an end to the violence and rape.

Canada commends the tireless efforts of the African Union mediation team, which has been instrumental in the progress achieved thus far. Reaching an agreement is only the first step and implementation and reconciliation must follow quickly. Canada will be there to support both. As part of our efforts to promote reconciliation and end impunity in Darfur, Canada is a strong advocate of the United Nations Security Council's referral of the Darfur situation to the International Criminal Court and was the first and only nation to make a \$500,000 voluntary contribution to assist with the investigation. Canada welcomes the UN Security Council decision as an important step toward addressing the serious crimes alleged by all parties to have been committed in Darfur. We are confident that the International Criminal Court investigation will contribute to establishing a lasting peace for the people of Darfur.

Canada has supported the establishment of peace and stability in Darfur. The African Union took the lead in the international effort to resolve the conflict by deploying a multinational force of over 7,700 military police and civilian personnel. The African Union Mission in Sudan, AMIS, is mandated to encourage the parties to live up to their agreements, to provide protection to civilian populations and to establish the conditions necessary for

the successful implementation of political agreements. Canada has assumed an internationally recognized leadership role in support of the African Union's peacekeeping mission, which was motivated by and is consistent with the principles of R2P — the responsibility to protect.

Canada is currently one of the mission's top donors. Our contributions to AMIS total \$170 million in logistical, financial and materiel support necessary to allow the mission to fulfil its mandate. Canada has supplied helicopters, fixed-wing aircraft and armoured personnel carriers to provide the necessary mobility for the force's effectiveness. Canada is continuing to provide military police and civilian experts to assist in the carrying out of their operations. The AU mission has achieved much under exceptionally difficult circumstances that would have taxed even the most experienced and well-equipped international force. Both the AU and the wider international community have recognized that the time is right for a new phase of international engagement.

• (1500)

The situation demands a new level of international engagement and has led to a request from the African Union to the United Nations to begin planning for the transition of the AU mission to a UN mission. This mission will integrate a peacekeeping force with ongoing, humanitarian, political and development efforts into one cohesive package. The UN planning effort is well underway. We welcome the AU's request to the UN. We will continue to work closely with both organizations and our international partners to provide the necessary support to succeed in the process.

This UN mission will be able to secure greater humanitarian access which has to this point been unacceptably restricted, putting at risk the lives of hundreds of thousands of Darfurians who depend on this assistance.

Canada continues to urge the Government of Sudan to provide unhindered access to aid workers, as previously agreed to, so that the international community can provide assistance where needed.

Canada remains deeply concerned about continuing violence and impunity in Darfur, particularly sexual and gender-based attacks against civilians. Canada has sought to ensure that protection of civilians would be included in UN peacekeeping mission mandates and we are pleased that has been the case in the last seven missions, including the United Nations mission in Sudan. The important component should be maintained in the new mission's mandate.

The mandate of the current African Union Mission in Sudan covers monitoring and observation, participation and confidence-building measures, and the creation of a secure environment. In addition, the mandate authorizes the use of force to protect civilians under imminent threat of violence, similar to Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. Canada will work to ensure that the mandate of a prospective United Nations force is similarly robust.

We support the full and timely implementation of all measures agreed to by the Security Council, including the use of targeted sanctions regarding the serious human rights and humanitarian situation in Darfur.

Canada welcomes the recent designation of four individuals for targeted sanctions as a first step. Those who impede the peace process or constitute a threat to stability in Darfur and the region cannot go unpunished. In keeping with all of our Sudan approach, Canada is closely monitoring the situation in eastern Sudan and we recognize the need for ongoing peace talks.

The humanitarian situation in this region is of great concern, and again Canada calls for unhindered access by international aid agencies to those in need in Sudan. Canada is also working to promote longer-term stability and reconstruction in Sudan by helping to build new government institutions and promote federalism.

We assist civil society organizations and local grassroots community networks on projects that promote human rights, good governance, access to justice and conflict resolution.

In conclusion, honourable senators, we are working in cooperation with the people of Sudan and our international partners to ensure that the future of Sudan is peaceful, democratic and prosperous. This is imperative for Sudan, vital for peace in Africa, and a priority for Canada.

[Translation]

Hon. Roméo Antonius Dallaire: Honourable senators, would the honourable senator accept a question on the content of her presentation that reflected the historic participation of Canada? Like so many other developed countries, we are latecomers, as the people of Darfur were suffering for almost two years prior to the start of this movement to provide aid and security. A decision has been taken not to intervene but rather to support the African Union. For one of the first times, the latter has begun to respond to the urgent need for security in this country.

However, as you indicated, the capabilities of the African Union are now very limited. We can support the operation. And, in this context, the urgent need for a United Nations presence on the ground cannot be minimized. Six million people are living in extreme poverty and continue to be the victims of rape and attacks by subversive elements.

Do you not believe that Canada, having supported the African Union, will want to request a more robust role and a much more concrete and specialized deployment? With the involvement of the United Nations, should Canada now propose a military presence that will also assist with the humanitarian work being carried out in the field?

[English]

Senator Nancy Ruth: It is my understanding that it is up to the United Nations to decide and it is Canada's intention to support the decision.

Senator Dallaire: That is technically correct, except when the UN is preparing a mission it speaks informally to the contributing countries and asks whether those countries are interesting in participating in building the force. That informal discussion happens in parallel with discussion of the mandate in the Security

Council. Once the mandate is approved, a formal request is submitted to those countries that have demonstrated an interest in deploying.

Do you not think that Canada, in both the informal and formal process, should have been offering capabilities to form the backbone of a force of developing countries that have neither the skills nor the equipment to do the job properly?

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, is it the will of the Senate that the time of Senator Nancy Ruth, which has expired, be extended for five minutes?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Nancy Ruth: I think that everyone in this chamber is concerned about Senator Dallaire's comment. I know that Canada is the third-largest donor to the peace process in Darfur. It is a situation that the government is monitoring closely minute by minute.

On motion of Senator Fraser, debate adjourned.

PUBLIC SAFETY

FIREARMS CENTRE—
CUTTING OF LONG-GUN REGISTRY—
STATEMENT BY MINISTER—DOCUMENTS TABLED

Leave having been given to revert to Tabling of Documents:

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I wish to table, in response to the question of Senator Murray, a press release of earlier today from Minister Stockwell Day, Minister of Public Security and Emergency Preparedness, along with questions, answers and statistics on the long-gun registry and frequently asked questions on changes to the firearms program.

THE SENATE

MOTION TO TELEVISION PROCEEDINGS—
DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Segal, seconded by the Honourable Senator Keon:

That whenever the Senate is sitting, the proceedings of the upper chamber, like those of the lower one, be televised, or otherwise audio-visually recorded, so that those proceedings can be carried live or replayed on CPAC, or any other television station, at times that are convenient for Canadians.—(*Honourable Senator Fraser*)

Hon. Jim Munson: This is Senator Jim Munson reporting live from the Senate chamber.

Does that not encourage you, honourable senators, or perhaps scare you?

[Senator Nancy Ruth]

• (1510)

Honourable senators, now that I have your attention, a month ago, we heard from my friend Senator Hugh Segal, who put forward a motion to broadcast proceedings in the Senate. I wish to speak in favour of this motion.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Munson: I come at this issue from two angles. First, I look at this subject from the point of view of a former journalist and as a believer in transparency in our democratic institutions. Second, I have a more self-serving angle as a senator who wants to strengthen this proud institution and to make more Canadians aware of the good work that we do here. Some senators are laughing.

The first point, that of transparency, is a vital one. Canadians, more than ever, expect parliamentarians to be accountable, to show openly what they are doing to make this country better. This is entirely reasonable, and we have the technology and the means at our disposal to meet this expectation.

A well-informed public is in everyone's best interest. Although print media covers some of what we do in this chamber, our actual work is filtered by journalists, editors and producers who decide what is newsworthy. This does not fully meet the need for transparency that Canadians expect.

I believe that by broadcasting our debates, by being more transparent, we will strengthen this institution by being more accountable. I also believe that televising, radio broadcasting, webcasting, and let us not forget the newest and, I am sure, the most popular format amongst my colleagues, podcasting, our debates will strengthen this institution because of the quality of the debate that goes on here.

Honourable senators know the qualities that make the Senate unique. We are representative of different regions. We have better representation from both women and Aboriginal people. We all bring to the Senate a wealth of personal and professional experience that, in many cases, is non-political, and none of us are driven by the desire for re-election when it comes to our position on certain bills or policies.

I believe that these qualities elevate the tone and breadth of our debate. Take, for example, the debate on stem cell research that took place a while ago in this chamber. To hear former Senators Morin and Roche speak to that bill in such a knowledgeable way, I was profoundly moved by what they were saying. Stem cell research is a complex issue and what they said was illuminating for me. I can think of many more examples. I was privileged and moved when I first arrived here and heard former Senator Chalifoux speak about the rights of Aboriginal people and to hear Senator Keon speak about his passion for health care reform.

All Canadians would benefit from hearing these debates. Canadians will see how the work in this chamber is more focused on what is best for this country, and is notably less partisan in its approach. Many times, different sides of the chamber agree on issues, and my support of Senator Segal's

motion is only one example. We have a unique and viable way of working together, which is expressed through constructive debate.

I know there has been some concern about senators using the cameras as an opportunity to perform or showboat. From my experience in television, I do not believe that will be the case. I regret to inform honourable senators that bringing cameras into the chamber will make us more accountable, but will not win us any Gemini awards, although we may get letters of thanks from insomniacs who find a cure by watching some of our drier debates and discussions.

The bottom line is that the Senate is not a private club. The Senate is a place where wise people say wise things, and Canadians should be aware of them. I heartily support Senator Segal's motion, and I urge all honourable senators to do the same.

My only concern on this issue is the logistical requirements of broadcasting our proceedings. A debate on this issue could rage on for months. I believe it is necessary for a committee to review this issue as quickly as possible. For example, there is one idea that perhaps, as an experiment, we could have broadcasting of Question Period only to see how that works.

Honourable senators, this is an issue that must go to a committee to get a proper understanding of costs, logistics and benefits. With a report coming out of the committee, I believe senators will be better informed to debate this issue than they are at the current time. We must move into the future. The future is now, and broadcasting is now. Broadcasting must happen in this place. It happens in town halls and city halls across this country. People are watching their politicians at work. What are we afraid of? Let the cameras in.

MOTION MODIFIED

Hon. Jim Munson: Therefore, I move:

That, pursuant to rule 48(1), the question be referred to the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, it is quite in order, pursuant to rule 48(1), that when any question is under debate in the chamber, an honourable senator may move an amendment to that motion, but also may move that the question that is before the house be referred to a Senate standing committee. This is what Senator Munson has just done.

Therefore, it is my duty to formally put the question. It was moved by Senator Munson, seconded by Senator Peterson, that pursuant to rule 48(1), the question be referred to the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament.

This motion is now debatable or adjournable. That is the question that is now before the house.

Hon. Terry Stratton: There is a point here, Your Honour. When this normally takes place, you, as Speaker, stand up and state that if the last speaker who spoke actually has a statement, that closes debate; did you do that, sir?

The Hon. the Speaker: No, I explained the procedure correctly, namely, that when a matter is before the house, such as this matter, the matter can be amended by the senator who has the floor at that time, or the matter can be referred by way of motion by the senator who has the floor. That is what has been done.

The motion that is before the house is the motion to refer the question to the Senate Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament. It is debatable, amendable, adjournable, et cetera.

On motion of Senator Tkachuk, debate adjourned.

• (1520)

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY CONCERNS OF FIRST NATIONS RELATING TO SPECIFIC CLAIMS PROCESS—ORDER STANDS

On Motion No. 63, by the Honourable Senator St. Germain:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, in accordance with rule 86 (1)(q) of the Senate, be authorized to examine and report on the general concerns of First Nations in Canada related to the federal Specific Claims process, the nature and status of the Government of Canada's Specific Claims policy, the present administration of the policy, the status of the Indian Specific Claims Commission, and other relevant matters with a view to making recommendations to contribute to the timely and satisfactory resolution of First Nations' grievances arising out of both their treaties with the federal Crown and the Government of Canada's administration of their lands, monies, and other affairs under the *Indian Act*.

That the Committee report to the Senate from time to time, but no later than June 14, 2007 and that the Committee retain until September 1, 2007, all powers necessary to publicize its findings.

Hon. Mac Harb: If honourable senators, and in particular, Senator St. Germain, look at the motion as it stands, namely, the line where we talk about "other relevant matters," I would like to insert a friendly amendment to this motion, to read as follows:

Noting that specific claims arise from the Government of Canada's possible breach or non-fulfillment of lawful obligations found in the treaties and the Government of Canada has yet to acknowledge and recognize that the historical fact that the first people, Indian and Inuit, were the first people to inhabit the land and cultivate its natural resources such as furs, wood, growing of corn and the making of trails through the wilderness; in the Arctic, further recognition that the —

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Harb, if we are to get this matter before us, someone must move the motion. It has not been moved yet.

Senator Harb: I saw the order on the Order Paper.

The Hon. the Speaker: It has yet to be moved, though. Do you wish to move the motion?

Senator Harb: Yes.

The Hon. the Speaker: You are moving it in the name of Senator St. Germain?

Senator Harb: No, in my name.

The Hon. the Speaker: Well, it is his motion. I am trying to be helpful. I think it is best that the matter stand for today and we let the mover of the motion move it.

Order stands.

NATIONAL FINANCE

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO RECEIVE PAPERS AND EVIDENCE ON STUDY OF MAIN ESTIMATES, 2005-06 IN THIRTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

Hon. Joseph A. Day, pursuant to notice of May 16, 2006, moved:

That the papers and evidence received and taken and the work accomplished by the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance during the First Session of the Thirty-Eighth Parliament as part of its study of the Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2006 be referred to the Committee for the purposes of its study of the Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2007, as authorized by the Senate on Wednesday, April 26, 2006.

He said: Honourable senators, I do not think that extensive discussion need take place on this. If any senator has a question, I would be pleased to answer it. This motion allows for the evidence and the material gathered by the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance in the previous year before the election to be referred to our committee to be dealt with in our study of the estimates this year.

We would like to make some comparisons. Also, we would like to have referred to our committee work we did in the previous government when we had the mandate and the reference to study the previous estimates.

Hon. Anne C. Cools: Honourable senators, I am prepared to see this go ahead, but in order for the Senate to refer papers to a committee, it ought to have them. A lot of this is going on, honourable senators.

I should like to urge committees in general, when they are coming to a close or there is a dissolution or imminent prorogation, to submit an interim report of two or three paragraphs to the Senate. The Senate will then be in possession of all the evidence. I have been waiting for an opportunity to make this point; maybe I should do it more formally. That is the proper way to proceed. We often refer papers to committees that we do not have in our possession. When I serve on a committee I always nudge the committee to make reports to the Senate, and, Senator Day, we will nudge you to have those reports in to the Senate so that the Senate will receive the information that the committees will later ask the Senate to refer to them.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

[*Translation*]

ANTI-TERRORISM ACT

SPECIAL COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO MEET DURING ADJOURNMENT OF THE SENATE

Hon. Pierre Claude Nolin, pursuant to notice of May 16, 2006, moved:

That the Special Senate Committee on the Anti-terrorism Act be empowered, in accordance with rule 95(3), to meet on Monday, May 29, 2006, even though the Senate may then be adjourned for a period exceeding one week.

He said: Honourable senators, I am ready to reply to any questions that my colleagues may have, but I believe that this motion is self-explanatory. It is a question of hearing one or two ministers. We do not know yet at what time we will listen to them, but with the permission of this chamber, we will do so on May 29.

Hon. Fernand Robichaud: Honourable senators, have we not already adopted a motion to that effect?

Senator Nolin: I do not know the answer to that question.

Hon. Joan Fraser (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, if memory serves me, the motion we adopted does not apply to special committees, and this is a special committee.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

[*English*]

THE SENATE

MOTION TO URGE GOVERNMENT TO PROMOTE SMOKE-FREE WORKPLACES AND PUBLIC AREAS— DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Mac Harb, pursuant to notice of May 16, 2006, moved:

That the Senate takes note that tobacco smoking continues to cause an estimated 45,000 Canadian deaths and to cost our economy up to \$15 billion each year;

That the Senate notes that current federal legislation allows for ventilation options and smoking rooms in workplaces under federal jurisdiction even though they do not provide full protection from second-hand smoke and

that full protection from second-hand smoke can only be achieved through the creation of workplaces and public places that are completely free of tobacco smoke;

That the Senate urges the Government of Canada to pass legislation to ensure that all enclosed workplaces and public places under its jurisdiction are smoke-free;

That the Senate ask the Government of Canada to call upon each province and territory that has not yet done so to enact comprehensive smoke-free legislation; and

That a message be sent to the House of Commons requesting that House to unite with the Senate for the above purpose.

He said: Honourable senators, I am honoured to rise today to ask for your support for a motion that will update legislation protecting Canadians from the dangers of second-hand smoke. I thank Senator Keon for seconding this motion.

Specifically, we ask the federal government to put in place an effective, nation-wide prohibition on the use of ignited tobacco products in enclosed places and workplaces under its jurisdiction.

In Canada, public health and occupational health and safety are shared responsibilities between federal and provincial and territorial governments, with some of these responsibilities passed down to the municipalities. For this reason, the motion also calls on provincial and territorial governments who have not yet provided adequate protection for their citizens to do so.

Honourable senators, I ask you to imagine with me for a moment that the year is 1985, and we are here in the Senate chamber preparing to participate in the business of the day. In these historic chambers, not much has changed since 1985. Other than the width of the ties and the length of the skirts, much is the same. Certainly, the predominance of Liberal senators is the same. What is not the same is the air that you are breathing. As some esteemed colleagues will remember, until the late 1980s, smoking was commonplace in the offices, hallways and meeting rooms here on Parliament Hill.

[*Translation*]

There is no doubt in my mind that making the Parliamentary Precinct smoke-free was the right thing to do. Indeed, I think most of us would agree that making all of Canada's enclosed workplaces and public places smoke-free is the right thing to do.

Currently, Canada's federal Non-smokers' Health Act controls the use of tobacco in federal buildings and on federal property or federally managed lands. This includes places of work and business such as financial institutions, airports, airplanes, interprovincial trains, and telecommunications facilities.

[*English*]

Unfortunately, honourable senators, this 20-year-old occupational health and safety legislation, and its regulations, still permits designated smoking rooms or smoking areas in many of these federally regulated workplaces and public places. This outdated legislation puts Canadians and their health at risk.

• (1530)

Let us consider for a moment that smoking is the single most serious public health problem in Canada, killing more Canadians than car accidents, murders, suicide and alcohol combined. Smoking results in 45,000 deaths every year in Canada. Tragically, thousands of those deaths are non-smokers who die from smoke-related lung cancer or heart disease.

The evidence about the risk of passive smoking is too compelling to ignore. Honourable senators may be surprised to learn that second-hand smoke is even more toxic than smoke inhaled directly because it is completely unfiltered. Second-hand smoke contains 4,000 chemical compounds, at least 50 of which cause or promote cancer. The United States Environmental Protection Agency has declared second-hand smoke a Class A carcinogen. "Class A" means there is literally no known safe level of exposure.

Highly respected organizations such as Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada, the Canadian Cancer Society, the Canadian Coalition for Action on Tobacco, and the Canadian Global Forum on Tobacco Control, are calling for a nation-wide ban on second-hand smoke.

In 2004, Ireland became the first country in the world to go smoke-free. Ireland was followed by Norway, New Zealand, Bhutan and Scotland. As many as 20 countries are currently working towards smoke-free enclosed workplaces and public places.

[*Translation*]

Protecting people who are involuntarily exposed to environmental tobacco smoke in enclosed workplaces and public places must be a top priority for every government in every jurisdiction in Canada.

Federal, provincial and territorial ministers of health are committed to working together to reduce tobacco consumption in Canada. Smoke-free work and public places are necessary elements of that commitment.

Many of you will know that Canada was one of the early ratifiers of the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control which we passed in November 2004. As party to this convention, we agreed to abide by article 8, which states:

Each Party shall adopt and implement in areas of existing national jurisdiction as determined by national law and actively promote at other jurisdictional levels, the adoption and implementation or effective legislative, executive, administrative and/or other measures, providing for protection from exposure to tobacco smoke in indoor workplaces, public transport, indoor public places and, as appropriate, other public places.

[*English*]

For the most part, honourable senators, Canada is well on its way to meeting these requirements. To quote the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control monitoring report, published in February 2006:

[Senator Harb]

All levels of government in Canada have given political and financial support to tobacco control initiatives. These strategies have led to significant reduction in tobacco use in recent years.

Smoking rates in Canada are dropping, down to 20 per cent in 2005, and the number of young people starting to smoke, while still high, is decreasing as well. We must take our tobacco control strategy to the next level, to build on these successes.

Honourable senators, the city we call home, at least part-time these days, is smoke-free. Ottawa banned smoking in all enclosed workplaces or public places almost five years ago. Many come from cities or towns that have taken similar actions to prevent the dangers of second-hand smoke from affecting workers and innocent Canadians.

It is important to note that smoke-free policies do more than protect workers. These policies help to reduce overall smoking behaviour. They generate increased awareness about tobacco issues and they change the way people think about smoking.

There is a momentum building now in jurisdictions across Canada to create and maintain smoke-free spaces. Currently, 27 per cent of Canadians are living in communities where provincial, territorial or municipal law protects the public from second-hand smoke exposures in public places, including bars and restaurants.

By January 1, 2007, 80 per cent of Canadians will have this level of protection, but unfortunately, 20 per cent will not, and an unacceptable number of these unprotected workers fall under federal jurisdiction.

While most federal workers are protected from second-hand smoke through Treasury Board policies, or because their employers respect existing provincial or municipal bans on smoking at work, others are not so lucky. There is less protection in some federally-regulated facilities, such as airports, than in municipalities in which they are located.

Honourable senators, one need go no further than the Ottawa International Airport. As I stated earlier, Ottawa has been completely smoke-free since 2001. A glaring exception is the airport, because it is under federal jurisdiction for matters of occupational health and safety. There are two smoking rooms at the Ottawa airport. Even when the new Ontario law comes into force on May 31, 2006, there will still be smoking rooms at the airport and at other airports across Canada. They are all under federal jurisdiction. We need legislative action to ban smoking in airports and all other locations under federal jurisdiction.

The federal government must bring its own legislation up to the higher standards being set by other jurisdictions. It will be necessary to revise the Non-smokers' Health Act and/or the Canada Labour Code to prohibit smoking in all federally-regulated indoor workplaces and public places.

[*Translation*]

The Yukon, Alberta, British Columbia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Saskatchewan also need to increase the level of protection from second-hand smoke to prohibit smoking in all workplaces and public places under their jurisdiction. We should encourage them to do so.

I would like to add, honourable senators, that legislative change, when it comes, must take into consideration the cultural significance of tobacco in the lives of Aboriginal Canadians and its ceremonial role in cultural and spiritual practices.

Health Canada has done a first-rate job providing resources and information on smoke-free work and public spaces. It has also been diligently spreading the word about the dangers of tobacco products and second-hand smoke in our society.

[*English*]

Most honourable senators will be familiar with the courageous champion of the Smoke-Free Canada campaign, Heather Crowe. Her face has been on television advertisements and her story written about in the newspapers. She is a life-long non-smoker who is dying from lung cancer after a career spent working as a waitress in smoke-filled restaurants.

When I mentioned to Ms. Crowe that we would be discussing this motion in the Senate, she responded by saying:

It gave me a big lift to know that you will table a motion in the Senate to make all workplaces and public places smoke-free. A lot of progress has been made but many Canadians are still not protected from second-hand smoke

at work. I want to be the last person to die from second-hand smoke at work. Your motion will help make my wish come true.

Honourable senators, individuals such as Ms. Heather Crowe, groups such as Physicians for a Smoke-free Canada and international organizations such as the World Health Organization are calling on us to close the loopholes and to clear the air for non-smokers in our country.

I ask honourable senators to support this motion to ensure that the necessary steps are taken to obtain federal smoke-free legislation in Canada. There is no reason not to proceed with this initiative and more than 32 million good reasons why we should. Believe me, we will all breathe easier when this motion passes.

Honourable senators, I put this motion before you with the support of my esteemed colleague, Senator Keon, in the hope we can concur with it quickly and thereby send a message to the other place asking them to unite with us to ensure that Canada's workplaces and public places are truly smoke-free.

On motion of Senator Tkachuk, debate adjourned.

The Senate adjourned until Thursday, May 18, 2006, at 1:30 p.m.

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