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Thursday, May 18, 2006



THE HONOURABLE NOËL A. KINSELLA
SPEAKER

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THE SENATE

Thursday, May 18, 2006

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

Prayers.

THE LATE CAPTAIN NICHOLA GODDARD

SILENT TRIBUTE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, before we proceed, I ask that you rise and observe one minute of silence in memory of Captain Nichola Goddard, whose tragic death occurred yesterday while serving her country in Afghanistan.

Honourable senators then stood in silent tribute.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

HALIFAX REGIONAL HISTORICA FAIR

Hon. Jane Cordy: Honourable senators, on May 6, I had the privilege of attending the Halifax Regional Historica Fair where students presented projects on their heritage. As always when I attend these fairs, I was impressed by the level of enthusiasm and the hard work that is put into the fair by students, teachers and volunteers. I find it a great pleasure to see the young people of Nova Scotia sharing parts of their heritage. These projects are an invaluable tool, not only for the students, but also for those of us fortunate enough to be in attendance. They help each of us to gain a better understanding of our country, its history and its peoples.

I find it interesting to ask the students why they chose a particular subject for their project. Many times, a grandfather, a grandmother or other relative has influenced their choice — a grandfather who was a coal miner, a grandfather who was a lighthouse keeper, parents and grandparents who were members of a volunteer fire department. It was a delightful way to spend the afternoon.

• (1340)

The historica fairs are an effective way to get young people from across the country interested in discovering and learning about their roots.

Canada is a vast country, rich in heritage with so many stories to tell. As senators, we get to meet with people from around the world. I am always filled with a great sense of pride when those from other countries express how they hold Canada in such high regard.

Canada is a country to be very proud of, with our rich heritage, the many peoples, places and events that contribute to our national identity. The historica fairs allow students to share their heritage.

I would also like to take this opportunity to invite each of you to Halifax, Nova Scotia, from July 10 to July 17, when we will be hosting students from across the country for the National Historica Fair.

THE LATE CAPTAIN NICHOLA GODDARD

Hon. Hugh Segal: Honourable senators, I rise in sadness and respect to pay tribute to Captain Nichola Goddard, the first female Canadian Forces officer to die in combat, and the first female Canadian combat casualty since World War II.

Captain Goddard served as a combat engineer with the First Regiment of the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery while stationed outside of Kandahar, Afghanistan, and met her untimely death under enemy fire as part of Canada's operations in that region. Captain Goddard gave her life in support of our values and commitment as members of the international community.

First and foremost, our sincere condolences go to Captain Goddard's family and friends. The death of a loved one is never easy, and in these circumstances, those who love her deserve the support of all Canadians.

Second, it should be publicly noted that the bravery and courage Captain Goddard demonstrated during her lifetime is a magnificent inspiration and a testament to the service rendered by all members of our Canadian Forces.

Captain Goddard's death in service to this country is a terrible loss. While the death of any Canadian soldier is tragic, Captain Goddard's death is a timely reminder to all of us of the women members of our forces who choose to serve this country often in harm's way.

My acknowledgement to Captain Goddard also reflects my role as a senator for Kingston-Frontenac-Leeds. She was a member of the 2002 graduating class of the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston.

As any RMC graduate will say, once you arrive in Kingston for your years of education and training at the college, you immediately become an honorary de facto Kingstonian. Kingston embraces these cadets as their own.

I understand that during her years in Kingston, Captain Goddard spent a good deal of her private time volunteering in our community, most notably as a Scout leader with the Fourth Kingston Troop. She will be missed by those who benefited from her experience and her contributions in our community.

Over the next three days, honourable senators, the graduating class of 2006 of the Royal Military College will be receiving their officers' commissions and diplomas. I know that Captain Goddard's name will be repeated over and over, as well it should.

Captain Goddard's exemplary service as an officer and an accomplished woman in our military underlines the opportunities and possibilities for all members of the graduating class and all those currently in training, aspiring to be the best and the brightest, a term used in reference to Captain Goddard herself.

In Captain Nichola Goddard, Canada has lost a talented officer. Her family in Manitoba has lost an irreplaceable loved one, and an alma mater in Kingston has lost one of their own. God rest her soul.

LAW SUITS AGAINST SOFTWOOD LUMBER AGREEMENT

Hon. Pierrette Ringuette: Honourable senators, Tuesday was a sad day for our country. On that day, both the Ontario Lumber Manufacturers Association and the Ontario Forest Industries Association filed a lawsuit against the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States challenging the suspension of an extraordinary challenge notice by both governments on Friday, May 12, 2006.

• (1345)

On Tuesday, as the result of the proposed softwood agreement yet to be signed, our own Canadian forest industry had no choice but to file a lawsuit against this Tory government because this Tory government has turned its back on them and went along with the George W. Bush protectionist lumber plan.

Let me put forward a few eye-opening quotations from Tuesday. The first is from Jamie Lim, President of the Ontario Forest Industries Association:

The two federal governments have conspired to prevent Canadian private industry from finalizing a decision of a NAFTA panel for which we fought for four long years. The panel found that Canadian softwood lumber is not subsidized.

Carl Grenier of the Free Trade Lumber Council said the following:

We and everybody else in Canada connected to this issue were given to understand that Canada had to complete a framework deal by 5:00 p.m. on April 27 to avoid having the United States file an extraordinary challenge; this deadline turned out to be an elaborate charade.

Another quotation is from retired senior federal trade negotiator Mel Clark who says the agreement is "perpetual U.S. protection and it leaves the Canadian industry, its people, its communities, without hope."

Honourable senators, these are very strong words, and, as I understand them, they are the words of an industry that has been abandoned by its government. This government cannot muzzle these words. These are the words of Canadians that have supported the free trade agreement with the U.S. These are the words representing billions of dollars of investment in our Canadian economy and in jobs in rural communities. These are

the words based on the belief that the Canadian government would be there to help and protect the industry through the NAFTA agreement.

Honourable senators, these are the words of Canadian citizens that deserve to be listened to and deserve to motivate a study of this proposed softwood agreement by the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce.

SASKATCHEWAN

SASKATOON—CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS

Hon. David Tkachuk: Honourable senators, I am pleased to speak today on the occasion of my hometown's centennial celebration.

Saskatoon, formed when the villages of Nutana, Riversdale and Saskatoon came together, will be 100 years old, on May 26, 2006.

Today, we have something to celebrate. Saskatoon, for those who have not yet visited us, rests along the banks of the scenic South Saskatchewan River in the heart of the Canadian Prairies and has a proud worldwide reputation for safety, affordability and hospitality.

KPMG recently ranked Saskatoon as number one in the Midwest U.S. and Western Canada in business costs competitiveness in their study entitled *2006 Competitive Alternatives*, which compares business costs in North America, Europe and the Asia Pacific.

Moreover, this past year, Saskatoon has had an astounding growth in retail sales of nearly 15 per cent, enabling residents to enjoy a hearty growth of more than 8 per cent in after-tax disposable income, due in part to retail trade plus machinery manufacturing. In fact, during the past eight years, Saskatoon residents have averaged 4.5 per cent growth in their disposable income.

It is a beautiful city, home to more than 39 historic buildings, as well as the beautiful University of Saskatchewan, which will celebrate its centennial anniversary next year.

Saskatoon is rich in its diversity. We will be recognized next week at a press conference as the 2006 Department of Canadian Heritage's Cultural Capital of Canada for a city with a population over 125,000.

Many of you may not be aware that we are home to one of only two prime ministerial archives housed outside of the National Archives. These papers are from the irrepressible John G. Diefenbaker, former Prime Minister of Canada. The other archive houses the papers of former Prime Minister R.B. Bennett. That archive is at the University of New Brunswick.

It is a great place to come from. It is a great place to do business. It is a great place to raise a family.

• (1350)

Saskatoon's own mayor, Don Atchison, invites all of you, and he asked me to deliver the following invitation:

If you're not busy on Friday May 26, I invite Parliament and all of Canada to come to Saskatoon to join in the party as Saskatoon celebrates its 100th anniversary! Everyone is excited about our birthday, but if you miss it don't worry, we have lots of other celebrations planned throughout the year. Saskatoon's 210,000 warm and friendly residents, our beautiful riverbank, and an endless variety of festivals, concerts, and galleries are what make Saskatoon so special — it's a tradition we've had for the past 100 years. Saskatoon in 2006 — it's our time to shine!

RIGHT TO ABORTION

Hon. Lillian Eva Dyck: Honourable senators, I feel compelled to speak to the issue of a woman's right to have an abortion in view of comments made by the MP for Saskatoon-Wanuskewin last week in Ottawa following an anti-abortion gathering on Parliament Hill. Maurice Vellacott claims that women are being pressured by men to have unwanted abortions.

I quote from Mr. Vellacott's website:

Wherein men harass, badger, coerce if you will, it might be a boyfriend, it might be a partner, a husband, employer, doctor, friend, family members, but a lot of abortions that I gather women have had in this country are not so much by their own volition insofar as that they feel pressured by other circumstances around, badgered into unwanted abortions.

Mr. Vellacott's line of reasoning, honourable senators, is not logical. The problem is not that abortion is a legal, medical option that women can choose. Rather, if — and this is a big if — men are pressuring women to have abortions, then that problem should be addressed. If men really are forcing women to have unwanted abortions, then Mr. Vellacott should propose legislation to make such coercion illegal rather than trying to make abortion illegal.

Honourable senators, I trust that you will not be swayed by Mr. Vellacott's false, illogical argument that abortions must be restricted to protect women from men who force them to have an abortion. Furthermore, if there is substantive evidence that men are pressuring women into having abortions, I invite you to help find the ways and means to prevent that by proposing legislation directed to these men rather than limiting women's rights to choose abortion.

GWYN MORGAN

PARLIAMENTARY REVIEW FOR POSITION OF FEDERAL APPOINTMENTS COMMISSIONER

Hon. Gerry St. Germain: Honourable senators, I rise to condemn, on behalf of all reasonable Canadians, the public political lynching of one of our country's finest citizens, Gwyn Morgan.

[Senator Tkachuk]

Mr. Morgan's unselfish commitment to his community and to this country is not unlike the commitment made by thousands of volunteers across this nation who, with noble intentions and caring hearts, live out the finest truth of citizenship.

I know Gwyn Morgan well and have worked with him in his role as a business leader, a community leader and a national citizen contributing to the greatness of Canada.

What is citizenship, honourable senators? What are the obligations of citizens? They are obligated to give back more than they took, to step forward and to serve their country, bringing their wisdom, good judgment, enterprise, honesty and toil to the challenges of building, strengthening and celebrating the collective will of our nation's people.

Gwyn Morgan stood before a committee of the other place, not only pledging to serve in this honourable and noble way, but also putting his past exemplary record of service before Canadians as a testament to his commitment. He did it all with passion in his heart and without expectation of personal reward. He offered to serve and to make our public institutions stronger by leading them in a new direction that, through merit and not partisan patronage, would attract other honourable Canadians to serve.

Gwyn Morgan is an honourable citizen, honourable senators, in the truest sense of that term. He faced partisan operatives whose display of callousness showed how much honour they really have. He was subjected to a vicious partisan attack, with an outcome that speaks not to the noble intentions of citizenship but instead to the worst intentions of cynical partisans, and unfortunately, it commenced in this place.

• (1355)

Our country, honourable senators, is far worse off for the way in which Mr. Morgan was treated.

I sincerely hope that equally honourable citizens will not see this treatment as a reflection of the character of our people in this nation. Honourable senators, this treatment is merely an aberration from those who currently purport to serve in one of our institutions of government. Shame on them!

WORLD WAR II

ITALIAN CANADIANS INTERNED AS ENEMY ALIENS

Hon. Gerard A. Phalen: Honourable senators, can you imagine being arrested in Canada and being imprisoned without benefit of trial because of your ethnic origin? Can you imagine being interned in Canada for an average of 15.8 months? Can you imagine your family not being allowed to visit or write you for the first year of your imprisonment? Honourable senators, that was the plight of Italian Canadians interned because of the 1939 Defence of Canada Regulations. It is important we understand that not one of these 700 imprisoned Italians was ever charged with an act of sabotage or disloyalty during the war.

It is also important to understand that the same wartime regulations created the designation of "enemy alien." Over 17,000 Canadian men, women, and children, many of whom were either born here in Canada or had become Canadian citizens, were designated "enemy aliens."

These families were forced to sell their homes, businesses, and other assets to clothe and feed their families.

In 1992, the National Congress of Italian Canadians' Redress Committee held public hearings across the country. They heard from many people on what it was like to be branded an "enemy alien." They were told of the insecurity Italian Canadians felt throughout the war period, and the suspicion with which they were regarded. They were told about how Italian Canadians worried for their children and how their children grew up ashamed of their heritage and of their parents.

Honourable senators, in November of 2005, the Government of Canada signed an agreement-in-principle to highlight Italian Canadians' contributions to building Canada. As the press release said at the time:

This is a first step in articulating a shared vision for the acknowledgment, commemoration, and education of Canadians on the experience of Italian Canadians...

This agreement provided for the Acknowledgment, Commemoration and Education Program, also known as the ACE Program. The ACE Program was a three-year, \$25-million initiative, and in the February 2005 budget an initial amount of \$2.5 million was provided for the Italian Canadian communities.

Because of the election call, the Supplementary Estimates were not passed and so many of these worthwhile projects did not receive funding.

However, the current estimates provide \$10 million for the ACE Program. I know that many Italian Canadians continue to hope that their worthwhile commemorative programs will be funded by the ACE Program, and I personally look forward to seeing these commemorative projects at least begun, if not completed, in the near future.

TEAM CANADA ATLANTIC TRADE MISSION

Hon. Donald H. Oliver: Honourable senators, I rise to call your attention to a Team Canada Atlantic trade mission to Florida, which took place four days ago with the Honourable Peter MacKay. I participated in a trade fair with two premiers, other politicians and business leaders from the four Atlantic provinces under the sponsorship of Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, ACOA, which has been carrying on these missions for the business community in Atlantic Canada for several years. This trade mission was number 13. ACOA-sponsored Team Canada Atlantic missions have resulted in more than 360 Atlantic Canadian companies having more than 3,000 business contacts in the United States.

These trade missions have produced more than \$37 million in export sales. The most recent one to Miami is likely to be the most successful yet, in terms of new business contracts for Atlantic Canadian companies.

Some of the small- and medium-sized enterprises, SMEs, I spoke with told me they have increased their annual sales and revenues three and four times as a direct result of these missions.

On Tuesday at the Nova Southeastern University in Miami, I co-chaired the biotechnology round table where I provided an overview of future developments in the biotechnology sector and possible opportunities for collaboration between Atlantic Canadian and Floridian interests.

• (1400)

The highlight of that seminar was the presentation of The Scripps Research Institute, one of the United States' largest private non-profit research organizations, headquartered in La Jolla, California, which has been internationally recognized for its research in areas of immunology, molecular and cellular biology and many other fields. Their presentation caught the eye of many of our research scientists and investors from Atlantic Canada.

In conclusion, honourable senators, I believe that small- and medium-sized businesses are the lifeblood of our economy. The ACOA operation was expertly organized and professionally executed. In one word, it was impressive. The activities of ACOA have helped enlarge the markets for dozens and dozens of small- and medium-sized Atlantic Canadian businesses.

Honourable senators, I was once a strong critic of ACOA, but now that I have seen first-hand the invaluable work they are doing for the business sectors of all of our Atlantic provinces, they are only to be encouraged in these significant endeavours.

RESPECT FOR PARLIAMENT

Hon. Lowell Murray: The PMO could not resist the temptation for an ethnic photo opportunity last Friday to announce legislation that will provide easier access to citizenship for adopted children from abroad. Nevertheless, and because I like to accentuate the positive, I draw to the attention of honourable senators four other recent instances which indicate a renewal of respect for Parliament on the part of government.

On April 27, the Prime Minister came to the House of Commons to announce the Softwood Lumber Agreement with the United States. The Leader of the Opposition and spokesmen for other parties then rose in turn to voice their comments and criticisms. Similarly, on May 1, Mr. Harper announced in the Commons the appointment of a judicial inquiry into the Air India tragedy.

On May 10, the Minister of Indian Affairs announced the residential schools settlement.

On May 11, the Ministers of the Environment, of Transport and of Natural Resources took part in an opposition day debate and announced government policies relating to Kyoto and other environmental issues.

This is the way public business is supposed to be done and announced in a parliamentary democracy — in Parliament and only afterwards to various so-called stakeholders or members of the press gallery.

I am old enough to remember a time when following a federal-provincial conference or an overseas trip, Prime Ministers Diefenbaker and Pearson came directly to the House of Commons to report, and sometimes to endure quite a critical assessment of their efforts from opposition MPs.

In those days, a minister who tried to do an end run around Parliament by making an important announcement outside the House came under harsh criticism and lost respect there because of what was regarded as showboating. Governments knew they had to show respect for Parliament. Whenever possible, advance copies of any prepared statement were sent to the opposition.

[*Translation*]

As to the advisory vote held in the House of Commons on Canada's presence in Afghanistan, at least there was a precedent in 1964 when the Pearson government asked Parliament to debate and vote on a similar motion to send our soldiers to Cyprus.

Of course, Pearson insisted on his executive prerogative in the matter, as did our colleagues, Senators Dallaire and LeBreton, yesterday. Nevertheless, Parliament always has the last word because it decides whether or not to fund such deployments.

[*English*]

It is called “the power of the purse.” I urge the government to continue to announce public business in Parliament. This can only help to restore respect for the institution among the public and among parliamentarians.

In the spirit of bicameralism, copies of such statements should be tabled simultaneously in the Senate so that we may take them under advisement. In 1964, as soon as the Commons vote was held on his resolution, Prime Minister Pearson moved that the resolution be forwarded to the Senate so that their honours would be invited to join in it.

• (1405)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INFORMATION REVIEW ACT

BILL TO AMEND—REPORT OF COMMITTEE

Hon. Wilbert J. Keon, Deputy Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, presented the following report:

[Senator Murray]

Thursday, May 18, 2006

The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology has the honour to present its

THIRD REPORT

Your Committee, to which was referred Bill S-2, An Act to amend the Hazardous Materials Information Review Act has, in obedience to the Order of Reference of Thursday, May 4, 2006, examined the said Bill and now reports the same without amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

WILBERT J. KEON
Deputy Chair

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Honourable senators, when shall this bill be read the third time?

On motion of Senator Keon, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for third reading at the next sitting of the Senate.

COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

STUDY GROUP ON ADMINISTRATION OF PARLIAMENT, MAY 25-29, 2005—REPORT TABLED

Hon. Donald H. Oliver: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian Delegation of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to the Study Group on the Administration of Parliament held in Zanzibar, Tanzania from May 25 to 29, 2005.

QUESTION PERIOD

NATIONAL DEFENCE

RECRUITMENT

Hon. Daniel Hays (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government on the matter of recruiting for the Canadian Armed Forces.

In 2002, the Auditor General identified problems with military recruiting in the Department of National Defence. In her report tabled on Tuesday of this week, she said that good progress had been made by the former government since that time. She said:

National Defence has made satisfactory progress overall since 2002 in responding to our recommendations. It has improved at recruiting and retaining the numbers of people needed in its military occupations. By 2005 it had stopped the decline in the number of people trained and available for duty...

Notwithstanding this progress, the Auditor General is concerned that recruiting levels are not as high as they need to be, especially since the government plans to increase the forces by 23,000 regular and reserve personnel.

The report of the Auditor General points out that attrition rates are expected to increase over the next five to 10 years because, among other things, many active personnel are close to retirement; that it takes time to train new recruits; the recruitment process can delay enlistment from 90 days to one year; and that there is a decline in interest in young people joining the Canadian Forces.

How does the government propose to deal with these problems if it hopes to meet its objective of increasing the regular forces by 13,000 members and the reserve forces by 10,000 members?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): I thank the Honourable Senator Hays for his question. I hope that when young Canadians see an opportunity to serve in the Canadian Armed Forces, to contribute to the betterment of human rights and the rebuilding efforts in countries such as Afghanistan, they will find joining the forces to be a worthwhile and worthy career.

Expanding the Canadian Forces is a priority of the government and it committed the necessary resources in Budget 2006 to achieve this goal. I read the Auditor General's report and found it somewhat alarming to learn that of the vast number of people screened, so few of them remained in the forces because they did not see it as a long-term career. That is most unfortunate, and we will endeavour to address the issue.

- (1410)

The increased funding will allow the Canadian Armed Forces to move ahead by adding 13,000 new regular forces and 10,000 new reserve members, and the Department of National Defence will reallocate funds internally as required in order to meet these objectives.

Senator Hays: I thank the minister for the outline of proposals, including the reference to the additional resources referred to in the budget.

The Auditor General has focused on something that is challenging, so I ask the minister to comment on how the government intends to meet the challenge of attracting applicants, particularly in a tight labour market and in a market where Canadians from Aboriginal and visible minorities are becoming an increasing portion of the population. This is an area where it is absolutely essential for our recruiting exercise to be successful if our military is to reflect our country. I notice that Senator Oliver is listening; he has raised these issues on many occasions.

Will the Leader of the Government in the Senate provide us with information as to how the government intends to address this special problem of attracting the new recruits that we need?

Senator LeBreton: I thank the honourable senator for his question. I do not have a definitive answer, other than I will certainly encourage my colleagues not only in cabinet, but also in the government caucus and in the Senate caucus to try to communicate our support to Canadians, especially in light of the sad and tragic death of a woman soldier in combat. I was one of those who supported women soldiers years ago, when many people thought that women should not be in combat, that women could not participate. We now know that Captain Goddard, who was sadly killed, was an outstanding soldier.

As parliamentarians, we must help to create a climate whereby we communicate that a career in the Armed Forces is something that we support. We are very proud of people who decide on this career, instead of creating the impression that if they do make this great commitment to our country, we will not back them up.

Senator Hays: I thank the minister for that response, and I share the words of Senator Segal, which I know we all appreciated, on the loss of Captain Nichola Goddard.

The report identifies on that very issue that the male population of the age group eligible for service will increase by 7.8 per cent over the next 10 years, and women in that age group will increase by 9.2 per cent.

My question relates to the Auditor General's observation that it takes from 90 to 365 days before a recruit knows whether or not he or she is eligible for service. This issue has come before our Standing Senate Committee on Security and Defence like the immigration lineups, in terms of the role of CSIS and other agencies, this is creating an immense problem, because waiting 90 days is bad enough; waiting longer is, I am sure, one of the reasons recruits lose interest and disappear. This is a difficult problem that must be resolved.

Will the minister please advise us as to what special steps are being taken, whether the government will apply initial resources, or whatever, to resolve this difficult problem in the recruiting process?

- (1415)

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I could not agree more with the senator. Ninety or 130 days is unacceptable, just as it is unacceptable for people who wait up to a year to be accepted as immigrants to this country.

The Minister of National Defence took note of what the Auditor General reported in this regard. I believe he is taking steps, with the Chief of the Defence Staff, to put in place measures that will shorten the procedure and make the first step — the open door into recruiting — more welcoming to potential recruits. If I have any further information of anything specific that they have done on this item, I will be happy to provide that information in a delayed answer.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

SOFTWOOD LUMBER AGREEMENT— REQUEST FOR TABLING

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

Tuesday, as the result of the proposed softwood lumber agreement yet to be signed, Canadians in the forestry industry had no choice but to file a lawsuit against this Tory government, because the Tory government has turned its back on them and bowed to George W. Bush's protectionist lumber plan. Our Canadian forest industry is saying that the Tory government and the Bush government have conspired against Canadian private industry.

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

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

Senator Ringuette must move beyond what is going on south of the border and come to grips with the fact that, on the issue of softwood lumber, we came to a Canadian and to a North American resolution to this dispute, which has plagued this country and harmed our industry for years.

The framework agreement not only ensures stability and certainty for our softwood lumber industry; it provides us with an opportunity to rejuvenate and examine improvements to NAFTA. When the honourable senator's party was in government, Canadians asked them, as they have asked us as a government, to find a solution that offers protections to every region of the country and respects everyone's best interests — those of the provinces, industry and forestry workers, as well as the individuals, families and communities whose livelihoods depend on a viable forest sector.

That is the agreement Minister Emerson, Ambassador Wilson and others delivered. In the fullness of time, I believe we will realize that this deal was the best we could have gotten for Canada.

In answer to the specific question, the agreements are a work in progress. It is my understanding that partial agreements — agreements in principle — were tabled this morning in the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry.

Senator Ringuette: Honourable senators, I understand the government leader in her answer is saying that her government is always looking south of the border to resolve Canadian issues. However, Canadian issues must be resolved by Canadians.

Honourable senators, it seems that the Leader of the Government in the Senate operates in isolation from her cabinet colleagues. She has not been able to answer questions pertaining to the important proposed softwood lumber agreement for over a week now.

This question is simple. It involves a yes or no answer. Will she table in this house the document that was sent to the provinces last week, and send it for full review to our standing Senate committee?

Senator LeBreton: I thank the honourable senator for her question. I know she wants the proposed agreement to be referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce. It was tabled this morning in the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry.

[Senator Ringuette]

• (1420)

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

FIREARMS CENTRE— CUTTING OF LONG-GUN REGISTRY

Hon. Francis Fox: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate and relates to the cancellation of the gun registry program, a tactic or strategy that *La Presse* Editorial Chief André Pratte described as a terrible mistake.

In her report released earlier this week, the Auditor General of Canada indicated that, despite certain difficulties early on, the Canada Firearms Centre has corrected most of the administrative problems that it experienced in the beginning. In fact, at present, a maximum of \$25 million is allocated to registration per se. Considering the system's current well-established effectiveness — police forces have recognized the system's effectiveness, having used it for the first quarter of this year on average 6,500 times every day — and considering these facts, can the Leader of the Government in the Senate tell us why the government is prepared to abolish such an effective tool in the fight against crime? Why is the government prepared to so quickly dismiss the opinions expressed by coalitions of citizens across the country and the professional opinions of Canada's police forces?

[English]

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

First, this country and this government support the very strong gun control laws that are in place. There is still a gun registry for handguns and restricted firearms. The new Conservative government is committed to effective firearms control that targets criminals while maintaining the highest standards of public safety.

Firearms owners will still be subject to the measures that are designed to help ensure public safety, even during the amnesty period. When one applies for a licence, background safety checks will continue to be done to screen for certain criminal convictions and incidents of violent behaviour. The government is determined to strengthen measures to keep firearms out of the hands of criminals and individuals who have been prohibited from possessing them.

All applicants for PAL, possession and acquisition licences, or minor licences, must meet specific safety training standards in order to be eligible, and this safety training will continue. All firearms owners will continue to be required to store their firearms safely so as to protect public safety. Safe storage laws help to prevent accidents and possible access to firearms by persons unauthorized to possess them.

With regard to the question about the 5,000 hits a day on the registry —

Senator Fox: Six thousand five hundred.

Senator LeBreton: — this figure, for the Canadian Firearms Registry On-line, or CFRO, is misleading. Whenever a police officer accesses the Canadian Police Information Centre, or CPIC, for any reason, even for a simple matter such as checking a licence plate, automatically the hit is generated with CFRO. Therefore, it is really quite misleading to say there are 5,000 hits on the firearms registry list.

An Hon. Senator: Are you saying the police are lying?

Senator LeBreton: When the police make the inquiry it could be for anything; it could be pulling up behind the honourable senator's car and running your licence plate through a computer check and the search will automatically go to the firearms registry list.

[Translation]

Senator Fox: I thank the Leader of the Government for her answer, but I cannot share the minister's confidence in this matter. Only her side of this chamber seems to appreciate this new policy. The three opposition parties in the other place object to it. The governments of Canada's two most populous provinces object to it, and we will soon be hearing from the others.

Yesterday, Michael Bryant, Attorney General of Ontario, and Jacques Dupuis, Deputy Premier of Quebec, strenuously objected to this new policy.

• (1425)

Can the minister tell us how this government was able to unilaterally cancel this gun registration program, given that its cancellation was strongly opposed by the attorneys general of the two major provinces I just mentioned and who are responsible for the administration of justice and the daily fight against crime? These two provinces condemn the government for this decision and will make every effort to change its mind.

Can the minister also tell us if this unilateral cancellation, which runs counter to the requests of the two most populous provinces, is an example of the open federalism advocated by this government?

[English]

Senator LeBreton: If the honourable senator had in fact listened to what Minister Day said yesterday and again today with regard to statements made by the Attorneys General of Quebec and Ontario, he would know the government is drafting new legislation to replace existing legislation. It will be consulting extensively with the provinces and with the other stakeholders. After consultation, the minister will work to set up an effective firearms control system.

Of course, in the spirit of cooperation with the provincial Attorneys General, the minister intends to take into account their concerns. There is an amnesty until May 17, 2007. In the meantime, Minister Day will be working with the provinces and various stakeholders to draft the new legislation that will then be tabled.

Hon. Gerry St. Germain: I have a supplementary question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

Perhaps the honourable leader can refresh our memory. I believe that the current Prime Minister, in speeches during the last election campaign, clearly stated on numerous visits across this country, from Newfoundland to Victoria, that he would scrap the gun registry. This was his commitment, and he has never backed down from it since taking office as Prime Minister. Am I not correct?

Senator LeBreton: The honourable senator is absolutely correct.

I travelled on the campaign every single, solitary day, and in every single, solitary speech the Prime Minister talked about child care, firearms, safe communities and Senate reform. Those speeches received very loud applause each time they were delivered.

Hon. Daniel Hays (Leader of the Opposition): The response to the question of how many inquiries are made on the gun registry is consistently that it should not be given much weight because such inquiries come up as part of other inquiries. The Leader of the Government gave the example of a police officer checking the licence plate of an individual. I think it is appropriate to ask for more detail regarding that procedure.

If I am a police officer stopping someone who has committed an offence, I may want to know if that person is licensed to own long guns.

Could the honourable senator give us some detail regarding that issue? It is constantly dismissed as unimportant or irrelevant. We need more information. If there is more information available, I would appreciate it if the Leader of the Government could table it in the chamber.

Senator LeBreton: I do not suggest for a moment the gun registry issue is not relevant. The figure of 5,000 hits a day to the firearms registry is misleading. The routine check itself will go over into the firearms registry. As I mentioned in an answer a day or two ago, many police officers find the information is not complete in any event.

If the honourable senator saw the report today on the news about a huge police raid in Toronto involving the seizure of illegal guns, I doubt very much that any additional information would arise if licence plate information was entered. In addition, illegal firearms smuggled into the country would not show up on any registry.

In answer to the honourable senator's question, I would be happy to ask for a detailed breakdown of what additional information arises when an inquiry is entered into a computer by a police officer.

• (1430)

Senator Hays: I would also like an explanation of why it is characterized as less important than other inquiries being made at the same time.

Senator LeBreton: My point is only that the assertion that 5,000 hits a day are made on the registry is not entirely accurate. However, as I promised Senator Hays, I will obtain the full information for him.

Hon. Larry W. Campbell: Honourable senators, I am a former police officer. When I would get out of my car to approach someone, I wanted to know whether he or she could possibly be armed. When I did a computer search, as the leader said, various databases were accessed to advise me of what I could expect. I believe that a government that supposedly stands for law and order would want to ensure that police officers have every piece of information possible regarding occupants of vehicles.

Does the Leader of the Government and the government understand how important it is to know whether a person has access to a firearm, be it a long barrel or a handgun?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I would absolutely want our police to have that kind of information.

Senator St. Germain: A good policeman always presumes there is a gun.

Some Hon. Senators: Oh, oh!

Senator Campbell: That is a municipal policeman speaking, not a Mountie.

Some Hon. Senators: Oh, oh!

Senator LeBreton: I will not get into a sandlot debate.

As Senator Campbell knows, the government is committed to the issue of gun crimes — guns entering our country illegally and random shootings on our streets. That is a situation we cannot live with, which is why we want to increase mandatory minimum sentences for crimes committed with guns.

As a law-abiding citizen who has great respect for the police, I would want officers to have every tool possible to keep our citizens safe.

Hon. Lorna Milne: Honourable senators, the Minister of Public Safety announced yesterday that the annual budget for the Canadian Firearms Program will be reduced by \$10 million. In

addition, the government plans to introduce legislation that removes the requirement to register non-restricted firearms. According to *The Globe and Mail* this morning, the government said this move will render records on 90 per cent of all guns that are now registered obsolete but will only reduce the registry's budget by 12 per cent.

While I understand that Canadians will continue to be required to store their firearms safely, as the Leader of the Government keeps pointing out, would she not feel more secure if police officers knew where these non-restricted firearms were located, as is the case under the existing law, or does she support the proposed changes introduced by the Minister of Public Safety because she feels Canadians are impervious to the damage that a non-restricted firearm can do? I remind the Leader of the Government that that is 90 per cent of all guns now registered.

Senator LeBreton: I will take that question as notice.

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Honourable senators, it being 2:30 p.m., pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate, we must now adjourn. However, before proceeding to adjournment, I would like to inform honourable senators that they are asked to enter the House of Commons through the foyer and to take their places before 2:40 p.m. today to hear the speech by the Prime Minister of Australia, the Honourable John Howard.

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I move that all remaining items stand in their place on the Order Paper until the next sitting.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

The Senate adjourned until Tuesday, May 30, 2006, at 2 p.m.

APPENDIX**Address****of****the Honourable John Howard****Prime Minister of Australia****to****both Houses of Parliament****in the****House of Commons Chamber, Ottawa****on****Thursday, May 18, 2006**

*The Honourable John Howard and Mrs. Howard were welcomed
by the Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada,
by the Honourable Noël Kinsella, Speaker of the Senate,
and by the Honourable Peter Milliken, Speaker of the House of Commons.*

APPENDIX

Pursuant to the motion adopted by the Senate on May 17, 2006

The Honourable John Howard
Prime Minister of Australia

Address to Members of the Senate and the House of Commons:

[English]

Hon. Peter Milliken (Speaker of the House of Commons): Order, please. I call upon the Right Hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker of the Senate, Mr. Speaker of the House of Commons, Members of Parliament, Senators, Chief Justice, honoured guests, ladies and gentlemen, it is a great privilege to welcome to Parliament today the Prime Minister of Australia and his wife, the Hon. John Howard and Janette.

As anyone who has taken the flight can attest, Canada and Australia are not exactly close neighbours. We are thousands of kilometres apart, in different hemispheres, and on opposite sides of the equator. Yet despite the great distance between our two countries, we share remarkable similarities in many respects.

[Translation]

Canada and Australia would not be the countries they are today without the cultural and other contributions of their aboriginal peoples. Our respective first nations were joined by waves of immigrants, people who came to Canada and Australia for a better life for themselves and their children.

Our two countries are characterized by their natural beauty and their hard and often merciless wilderness. The land, whether it be the arid Australian outback or the rocky Canadian Shield, has played a defining role in shaping our respective national characters. It has left both our peoples a legacy of independence and determination.

[English]

Politically, we share an enduring affinity to the Crown and a commitment to a federal system of government. Over the years Australians and Canadians have travelled and lived among each other.

In Prime Minister Howard's home city of Sydney, communities such as Canada Bay and streets with names such as Marceau Drive serve as reminders of the Canadians who moved to Australia after the rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada. Toronto, New South Wales was named in honour of Edward "Ned" Hanlon of Toronto, Ontario, a champion rower and the most internationally known Canadian of his era.

Perhaps most importantly, both of our countries have on many occasions stood shoulder to shoulder standing up for right when right needed to be defended.

I think particularly of the two world wars and the Korean conflict where our troops fought together to defend freedom and promote the ideals of human rights and democracy.

Our shared commitment to these values continues to this day, where for instance, Canada and Australia are actively contributing to the effort to bring peace, stability, and hope to millions of people in Afghanistan.

[Translation]

Clearly, our two countries have much in common and much to be proud of: freedom, democracy, the rule of law, values that millions of people around the world can only dream of, values that we should never take for granted, values that the peoples of Canada and Australia ask their elected representatives to uphold.

[English]

Prime Minister Howard is a principled leader with vision, a vision of a strong Australia that honours its past while embracing its future, a vision of an Australia in which opportunities are available to all through a strong economy that works for all Australians, and a vision of Australia that punches above its weight on the international stage.

Under his decisive leadership, Australia has become all of these things. Today Australia is a confident nation that simultaneously embraces its historic national symbols while welcoming people from all over the world.

Australia is also a prosperous nation. Under the Prime Minister's watch, taxes have gone down while productivity has gone up, unemployment has gone down while GDP has gone up, new jobs have been created in record numbers, and more and more Australians own their own homes. This is certainly a record of which to be proud.

As announced by his treasurer just last month, Prime Minister Howard's government has now paid down the country's net debt, an amazing accomplishment considering that when he took office the debt stood at almost \$100 billion in 1996.

[Translation]

Lastly, under the Prime Minister's leadership, Australia has consolidated its position as an international leader. Whether preserving human rights in East Timor, taking part in the global fight against terrorism or exercising strong regional and international leadership, as it did after the devastating tsunami in December 2004, Australia bravely defends the values it holds dear: democracy, human rights and a safer world for future generations. This government and all Canadians share these values.

[*English*]

In closing, as a new Prime Minister, I would like to express my warm admiration for Prime Minister Howard, my appreciation for his wise counsel, and offer him my sincerest congratulations for the outstanding work he has done since assuming office a decade ago. It is a record of laudable achievement and not bad for someone who leads a party called Liberal.

Through his leadership, Prime Minister Howard is moving his country forward, building a stronger Australia for all Australians, an Australia that works cooperatively with its allies, including Canada.

[*Translation*]

Without further ado, ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to introduce a man who has always been and, I am sure, will always be a loyal friend to Canada: the Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon. John Howard.

[*English*]

Hon. John Howard (Prime Minister of Australia): Mr. Speaker, Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition and hon. members of both Houses of the Canadian Parliament, can I first say how deeply honoured I am at the privilege of addressing this joint sitting of the two Houses of the Parliament of Canada.

I am told that the only previous occasion on which an Australian Prime Minister spoke to such a sitting was in 1944 when one of my Labour predecessors John Curtin, on a visit to North America during the war, was extended that great honour and privilege. I do want to therefore say that I regard it as a great personal honour and also a great honour to my country, Australia.

As your Prime Minister has said, the ties of history and of common practice between Australia and Canada are very great indeed.

Both of our nations owe much to those nations of Europe that gave institutions and values, and formation to our societies, to Great Britain, to France, to Ireland and to other nations of Europe.

Both of us, of course, are nations of immigrants, not only from Europe and the Middle East, but in the case of both of our countries in more recent years from Asia. Indeed, the constituency or riding that I represent in Sydney has an ethnic Chinese enrollment of between 10% and 15% and the contribution being made to the modern vibrancy of Australia by immigration from Asia has been one of the many things that have made Australia a confident, outward looking nation in the 21st century.

We are, as the Prime Minister said, kindred nations. We are both, in a sense, children of the enlightenment, that period of rational inquiry, progress and modernity which burst out of Europe but indeed found some of its more fertile acceptance in the nations of the new world.

We share many values. We share the Westminster tradition of parliamentary democracy. We are both federations, Canada coming together in 1867 and Australia in 1901.

We have shared many sacrifices in war. We remember the sacrifice of Australians and Canadians, particularly in those terrible battles of World War I at Passchendaele and elsewhere, and in World War II, it will ever be to the credit of Canada, Australia and Great Britain, and a small band of countries that stood together alone against the tyranny and horror of Nazi Germany for one whole year when all appeared to be lost.

Of course, during World War II, many thousands of Australian airmen trained in Canada, one of them was an uncle of mine from Petersham in Sydney. He fell in love, and wooed and married a girl from Calgary. It is a link that is replicated in thousands of Australian families.

Since then, of course, we have fought together in Korea, the Middle East, East Timor, and now together in response to the new and dangerous threat of terrorism in Afghanistan.

I pay tribute to the enormous contribution of the Canadian nation to the effort in Afghanistan, and I mourn the loss and the sadness of Canadian families in recent days.

We, of course, are nations that have a lot of history in common.

Perhaps if I could characterize our relationship I would put it this way. We have much in common but not as much to do with each other as we should. We have even followed different sporting paths. For reasons that have always escaped my comprehension and understanding, Canadians never embraced cricket. And ice hockey is not widely played in Australia. On that subject, can I congratulate the Edmonton Oilers on reaching the semi-finals. I wish them well as they do battle with those other teams from south of the border.

The fact that perhaps we have not had as much to do with each other as we should have is a function of geography, as the Prime Minister mentioned. I think, hon. members, that the challenges of the world in the first bit of the 21st century are really going to change that because many of those challenges, I believe, if they are to be effectively responded to, will bring Canada and Australia together as never before in common purpose.

Globalization presents to the world the most enormous opportunities. Those countries that pull down their trade barriers and open their economies and embrace globalization are the economies that will thrive and succeed. In that context, let Canada and Australia work together to do what we can as like-minded nations on the subject to bring about a successful conclusion of the Doha trade round.

Australia and Canada have interests in common at Doha. Not only have we legitimate national interests in common, but we have a legitimate interest in seeing barriers broken down so that the poorer nations of the world that rely so heavily on rural exports can gain access to markets that are closed to them at present.

There has in the context of Doha been a very generous offer made by the United States, one that went beyond many expectations of that country. That offer must be reciprocated, and if it is not reciprocated, then the prospects of a breakthrough in agricultural trade will be lost because the possibility of obtaining another authorization from the American Congress for a new trade mandate is very, very dim indeed. We only have a matter of weeks to bring about a successful momentum in relation to Doha, and greater pressure must be applied to the Europeans and to other countries such as Japan, Brazil and India that are not seeing the opportunities that can be embraced in this latest negotiation.

Another area where I believe because of our common interests that Canada and Australia can work together is in the area of climate change. Australia, as you know, did not join Kyoto, not because we are opposed to cutting greenhouse gas emissions. Indeed, we committed ourselves to reach the target set for Australia by Kyoto and we believe that we will achieve that target. But we do not believe that the greenhouse gas challenge and the environmental challenges that Kyoto was meant to address can indeed be accomplished, or overcome rather, unless there is a full involvement of the major polluting nations of the world, the United States, China and India.

It is because of that that Australia has become part of the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate, a partnership that brings together the United States, Japan, Indonesia, China and Korea. It is a partnership that seeks not only to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but to bring together the drive toward that and economic development.

In the energy area, which is of course allied to climate change, Canada and Australia have much in common. We are the holders of the largest uranium reserves in the world. Both of us must work together in relation to the recently proposed global nuclear energy partnership which seeks, laudably, to control proliferation, but we must, as the holders of these vast uranium reserves, ensure that that particular partnership does not work against the interests of countries such as Canada and Australia.

Honourable members, for the first time in history, the centre of gravity of the world's middle class is shifting from Europe and North America to Asia, in a sense from the Atlantic to the Pacific. In a few years' time, there will be 400 million to 800 million middle class people in China and India. It represents a historic shift in the experience of the world and will have a profound and lasting impact on the economic growth and economic development of the world.

We as two outward looking nations should not fear this in any way. In fact, this development presents unique opportunities to both of our nations, opportunities that our outward looking societies, if we fully embrace it, can bring great benefit to our citizens. This change in this development uniquely, I believe, suits the type of societies that Australia and Canada represent.

These are some of the opportunities of the early years of the 21st century. They are opportunities for nations such as Canada and Australia that are built on an approach to individual liberty and freedom and an approach to society that sees the worth of a

person not according to that person's race, nationality, religion or social background, but according to that person's character and commitment to the well-being of his and her fellow citizens.

It presents to our two nations imbued with those principles, opportunities that together I believe our two countries can embrace. They are the opportunities of the early years of the 21st century, but inevitably there are the brutal challenges of the early years of the 21st century. None of course is greater than the threat of terrorism, this new menace that knows no borders, that knows no morality, that knows no rationality, and defies in terms of ordinary behaviour, predictability.

Terrorists oppose us not because of what we have done. They oppose us because of who we are and what we believe in. Terrorism will not be defeated by nuancing our foreign policy. Terrorism will not be defeated by rolling ourselves into a small ball, going into a corner and imagining that somehow or other we will escape notice.

My own country, according to all of our intelligence advice, was in fact a target for terrorism even before the 11th of September, 2001. The greatest loss of Australian lives in a terrorist attack at Bali in 2002 in fact occurred before the coalition military operation in Iraq.

Terrorism will only be defeated by a combination of strong intelligence, military action where appropriate, and importantly, the spread of democracy particularly among Islamic countries.

In that last context, no nation is more important than Australia's nearest neighbour and most populous Muslim country in the world, Indonesia. Indonesia, in the last eight years, has undergone a remarkable transition, a transition that draws less comment and less respect than perhaps it deserves. In eight years it has gone from a military dictatorship to the third largest democracy in the world.

What is at stake with countries like Indonesia, but also Pakistan, which is also under moderate Islamic leadership, is fundamental to whether we succeed or fail in the fight against terrorism because if democratic moderate Islam can succeed in the Islamic world, that will act as a powerful and enduring antidote to the menace of terrorism in those societies.

So, in dealing with terrorism of course we need strong and timely intelligence. I note with pride the decades of close collaboration between the intelligence services of Australia and the intelligence services of Canada. However, it needs a combination of strong intelligence, military resolve and the spread of democracy.

None of us should imagine that we are immune from domestic terrorist attacks. We had a timely wake-up call in Australia in the last months of 2005 when some 22 Australians were charged with certain terrorist offences and quite a large number of those were people who had been born in Australia and had grown up in our country.

Just as the people of Great Britain were shocked by the backgrounds and the experiences of those responsible for the London attacks of July 2005, many Australians have found it difficult to believe that something like that could happen in their country.

While I am on the subject of terrorism I would like to say something about Iraq. I know that in relation to Iraq, Australia and Canada took different paths and it is not my point here today to dwell on that. I simply want to applaud the bravery and courage of the 8 million people of Iraq who defied terrorism and physical intimidation to cast their ballots on three occasions in a democratic election.

We, in Canada and Australia, who are used to voting in tranquil circumstances, whatever the passion of political rhetoric might be, should take pause to salute such an extraordinary act of courage and bravery.

In conclusion I would like to say something about the role of the United States in the affairs of the world. Australia, as everyone knows, is an unapologetic friend and ally of the United States. We do not always agree. We have not in the past, we do not now on certain issues and we will not in the future, but I have always taken the view, and the majority of my fellow countrymen the same, that the United States has been a remarkable power for good in the world and that the decency and hope that the power and purpose of the United States represents to the world is something that we should deeply appreciate.

The values for which the United States stands are the values for which Canada and Australia stand. They are values of spreading democracy, of individual liberty and of a society where free enterprise is the principal economic driver, but also a society where the less fortunate should be protected by a decent social security safety net. They are values that I know members on both sides of this House, as, indeed, on both sides of the Houses of the Australian Parliament, share in common.

For those around the world who would want to see a reduced American role in the affairs of our globe, I have some quiet advice, and that is, be careful what you wish for, because a retreating America will leave a more vulnerable world. It will leave the world more exposed to terrorism and it will leave a more fragile and indeed dangerous world.

Mr. Speaker and honourable members, as I said at the commencement of my remarks, you have done me a great honour. To be invited to address the Parliament of a great nation such as Canada, a nation with which we have shared so much in the past and with values we hold so much in common, is for me, a veteran of 32 years of membership in the Australian Parliament, a tremendous honour.

Mr. Prime Minister, I know that I will not be departing in any way from the bipartisan traditions of being a guest in your country in wishing you well in the early months of your prime ministership. I remember the early months of my prime ministership in 1996. I know that there will be some on that side of the House who may not wish for you an emulation of the period of time that I have been in government, but I can say, Prime Minister, that you have brought to your office great vigour, great vitality and a commitment to do some new and different things in Canada.

You lead a minority government, an interesting experience, I am sure, and one that thankfully I have not had to cope with. I do not think I could. I do wish you well, but very importantly,

through you, I bring to this Parliament the good wishes of not only the Parliament of Australia but also the people of Australia.

We do believe in the same things, we Australians and Canadians. We are people who do share so much common history and common experience. In the new challenges and opportunities of the 21st century, I believe that with that shared history and experience there is more indeed that we can do in the future, not only for the betterment of the people of Australia and the people of Canada, but for the betterment of all the peoples of the world. Thank you indeed.

[Applause]

Hon. Noël Kinsella (Speaker of the Senate): Mr. Speaker, Prime Minister Howard, Prime Minister, honourable senators and members of the House of Commons, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen: On behalf of all parliamentarians and all those assembled, I am honoured, Prime Minister, to express our gratitude for your visit and to thank you for addressing this joint session with such clarity and eloquence. Your words here today remind us of the depth of our shared values and of the importance of defending those values.

Prime Minister, that you would visit Ottawa when the tulips are in bloom might have some of the historians in this chamber recalling that at one time the name “New Holland” was associated with Australia.

[Translation]

Mr. Prime Minister, as you said, the last time an Australian Prime Minister addressed a joint session of Canada’s Parliament was in June 1944, a year before the end of the second world war, during which 39,000 Australians and 45,000 Canadians lost their lives. Today, it is all too easy to take for granted the freedom we have thanks to their sacrifice.

Two generations have passed since the end of the war, and our two countries have evolved in that time. Our development has been parallel, and our respective current situations are astonishingly similar.

During the 1950s, we undertook ambitious national construction programs to build the infrastructure for our modern societies. Since the 1960s, our societies have welcomed waves of immigrants, as I mentioned, from all over the world. They brought with them a variety of ideas and talents. They helped create the dynamic societies we live in today.

In fact, Australia and Canada are among the most diverse, dynamic and prosperous countries in the world.

[English]

Prime Minister, we must not forget that the reason our forward-looking societies are so successful is that they are based on the same fundamental values that our predecessors fought for, values, as you have mentioned, that we continue to defend in places such as Afghanistan. Most important, Prime Minister, again as you have mentioned, we share the precious heritage of parliamentary government. We have each grown our parliaments, recording changes whether great or small, and always with the practice of freedom as our beacon.

[*Translation*]

Like a huge extended family, Australians and Canadians have forged strong ties. We visit each other, enjoy each other's films, music and literature, and exchange ideas and goods with each other. When we meet, we recognize in each other a familiar set of ideas.

[*English*]

Prime Minister, by your words and your deeds, you have reaffirmed the lasting ties between our two great countries. Your address today at this joint session of the Parliament of Canada has resonated with the members of both Houses. Our members are attentive to your message and your words, which are unabashedly and refreshingly open to the world of 2006. We share with you, Mr. Prime Minister, the contemporary thirst for the inherent goodness of nature and culture and are unafraid of dialogue with human kind, irrespective of ethnicity, gender, political ideology or creed.

Allow me, therefore, Prime Minister, to once again thank you for having expressed your thoughts so clearly, and on behalf of all present, we wish you Godspeed.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Peter Milliken (Speaker of the House of Commons): Prime Minister Howard, Mrs. Howard, Prime Minister Harper, Mrs. Harper, Madam Chief Justice, Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Kinsella, members of the diplomatic corps, honourable senators, honourable members, ladies and gentlemen.

[*English*]

Prime Minister Howard, on behalf of all the members of the Canadian House of Commons, indeed, all the pollies in the room, and I understand that is an Australian term for politicians, I want to thank you for having addressed us here today. It is apparent from your address that you have through the years perfected the orating skills that served you so well in your days at Canterbury Boys High School, where I understand that in your final year you took part in a radio show. Apparently, a tape of the show survives and in it you demonstrate an early ability to think very quickly on your feet, trading unscripted humour with the experienced host and delighting the audience. This skill is doubtless one of the reasons why you were first elected member for Bennelong in 1974, and have just celebrated your tenth anniversary as Prime Minister of Australia.

[*Translation*]

Last August, I had the honour of leading a parliamentary delegation to Australia, aptly named the "Lucky Country", and

there we met our counterparts in the Senate and the House of Representatives, as well as colleagues in the Parliament of New South Wales and of the Legislative Assembly of Victoria. As you would expect, these meetings were both enjoyable and productive. After all, Canada and Australia share many attributes, from the vastness of our respective lands to the political system inherited from the British tradition of parliamentary democracy. We also enjoy close defence relations, having fought side by side in two world wars and during the Korean War, as the Prime Minister mentioned.

[*English*]

But while we are ever mindful of our shared history, I believe the friendship that exist between our two countries now rests on our shared present. Although your address to Parliament today was certainly a very special event, it is also but one of the myriad contacts that take place between Canada and Australia.

Not only are our nations regularly involved in formal economic, cultural, technological and, indeed, parliamentary exchanges, we also like to stay in touch on a much more basic level. We are constantly listening to each other's music, watching each other's television programs and visiting one another.

A recent newspaper headline for an article on the Canadian-Australian friendship asked the question, "Separated at Birth?", which speaks of the bond that Canadians feel for Australians. Vast countries both, yes, and a similar political system, but a whole lot more. Tuktoyaktuk and Toowoomba, Cutknife and Indented Head, these towns could be located in either country. Barbecuing, sports, mosquitoes, the amber fluid, which I understand is also known as beer, these are ties that indeed bind us as well as an easy going nature, a certain irreverence and a keen sense of the ridiculous.

Because we share this outlook on life with Australians, my colleagues and I always felt at home while visiting your country, even though we were half a world away. We will always remember the warmth of the welcome we received in Oz, and I hope, Prime Minister, that you feel equally at home when you are here with us.

[*Translation*]

In closing, please accept my thanks, on behalf of all Members of the House of Commons, for having addressed us today. We hope that you return soon for another Canadian visit, and we wish you Godspeed as you make the long journey to your other home.

Thank you.

[*Applause*]

**THE SENATE OF CANADA
PROGRESS OF LEGISLATION**

(indicates the status of a bill by showing the date on which each stage has been completed)

(1st Session, 39th Parliament)

Thursday, May 18, 2006

*(*Where royal assent is signified by written declaration, the Act is deemed to be assented to on the day on which the two Houses of Parliament have been notified of the declaration.)*

**GOVERNMENT BILLS
(SENATE)**

No.	Title	1 st	2 nd	Committee	Report	Amend	3 rd	R.A.	Chap.
S-2	An Act to amend the Hazardous Materials Information Review Act	06/04/25	06/05/04	Social Affairs, Science and Technology	06/05/18	0			
S-3	An Act to amend the National Defence Act, the Criminal Code, the Sex Offender Information Registration Act and the Criminal Records Act	06/04/25							

**GOVERNMENT BILLS
(HOUSE OF COMMONS)**

No.	Title	1 st	2 nd	Committee	Report	Amend	3 rd	R.A.	Chap.
C-4	An Act to amend An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and the Income Tax Act	06/05/02	06/05/03	Legal and Constitutional Affairs	06/05/04	0	06/05/09	06/05/11	1/06
C-8	An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 2007 (<i>Appropriation Act No. 1, 2006-2007</i>)	06/05/04	06/05/09	—	—	—	06/05/10	06/05/11	2/06

COMMONS PUBLIC BILLS

No.	Title	1 st	2 nd	Committee	Report	Amend	3 rd	R.A.	Chap.

SENATE PUBLIC BILLS

No.	Title	1 st	2 nd	Committee	Report	Amend	3 rd	R.A.	Chap.
S-201	An Act to amend the Public Service Employment Act (elimination of bureaucratic patronage and geographic criteria in appointment processes) (Sen. Ringuette)	06/04/05							
S-202	An Act to repeal legislation that has not come into force within ten years of receiving royal assent (Sen. Banks)	06/04/05							

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S-213	An Act to amend the Criminal Code (cruelty to animals) (Sen. Bryden)	06/04/26							
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