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**Wednesday, March 12, 2008**



THE HONOURABLE ROSE-MARIE LOSIER-COOL  
SPEAKER *PRO TEMPORE*

## CONTENTS

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

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## THE SENATE

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

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

Prayers.

[*Translation*]

### AFGHANISTAN—FALLEN SOLDIER

#### SILENT TRIBUTE

**The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*:** Honourable senators, before we proceed, I would ask senators to rise and observe one minute of silence in tribute to Bombardier Jérémie Ouellet, who died tragically yesterday while serving his country in Afghanistan.

*Honourable senators then stood in silent tribute.*

[*English*]

### VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*:** Honourable senators, I draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Mr. Göran Lennmarker, President of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly and Mr. R. Spencer Oliver, Secretary General of the OSCE-PA.

On behalf of all senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

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[*Translation*]

## SENATORS' STATEMENTS

### QUEBEC

#### FOUR HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS—MEETING OF PARLIAMENTARIANS

**Hon. Lise Bacon:** Honourable senators, last week, in connection with the four-hundredth anniversary of the settlement of Samuel de Champlain in Quebec City in 1608, a France-Canada/Canada-France symposium, entitled “l’Empreinte de la France au Canada après 400 ans,” was held in Paris.

• (1335)

This was a first, as it was the first time Canadian and French senators and members of Parliament had gathered together in the Senate of France, along with friends from Canada and America who travelled with us to attend the symposium.

I would like to pay special tribute to Senator Joyal, who worked for over a year to plan this extremely successful symposium. My colleagues who also attended will agree with me. Historians who spoke brought back many memories of our learning Canadian history, but they also told us about events we had never heard of. I think we owe Senator Joyal a debt of gratitude for the wonderful hours we spent at this edifying symposium, which everyone enjoyed. It showed us once again what a keen interest the French, like Canadians, have in our history.

I extend thanks once again to Senator Joyal. Canadian and French parliamentarians will come together again in November in the Senate of Canada for the continuation of this symposium.

[*English*]

### ALBERTA

#### CONGRATULATIONS TO PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVES ON WINNING PROVINCIAL ELECTION

**Hon. Bert Brown:** Honourable senators, I rise to congratulate Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach and his entire Progressive Conservative team on their truly impressive victory in last week’s Alberta election. Defying several critics and naysayers, voters in the election chose “change that works for Albertans,” giving Premier Stelmach 52 per cent of the vote and 72 of 83 seats in the Alberta legislature.

All told, 28 new Progressive Conservative MLAs will be joining the government benches in Alberta. In his understated yet professional manner, Premier Stelmach confirmed in the election campaign that he is very much in tune with the values and priorities of all Albertans.

Voters, in turn, responded to his message of optimism and confidence about Alberta’s future by giving Premier Stelmach a majority mandate that is quite remarkable in its breadth and scope.

Honourable senators, it is my belief that all Albertans — whether rural or urban, from the North or the South, new to the province or more established — will benefit from the balanced and pragmatic program that Premier Stelmach has advanced. He is a man of tremendous honesty and decency, a truly thoughtful Albertan and a proud Canadian. He will play a very positive and constructive role in managing Alberta’s growth and promoting that province’s leadership position within Canada.

Honourable senators, as the Premier stated on election night, “Welcome to Alberta’s century.” I am confident that together with his entire team and all Albertans, the good Premier will be most diligent in seeing that this sentiment is fully advanced in the coming weeks, months and years.

**ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION  
IN EUROPE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY**

**Hon. Jerahmiel S. Grafstein:** Honourable senators, I want to add my words of welcome to our distinguished guests in the balcony, the President of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly, Göran Lennmarker, a distinguished member of the Swedish Parliament. He is here with the long-serving Secretary General OSCE-PA from the United States, Spencer Oliver. Our offices of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is in Copenhagen, and this organization is the largest parliamentary group in the world dedicated to human rights, economic rights, political rights and a democratic and sustainable framework. It is made up of 56 member states from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

I am delighted, as well, to note that these gentlemen are here as part of a preparatory meeting for an OSCE-PA meeting in Toronto in September, one which hopefully all senators will be able to attend.

Last night we had some interesting and positive news. Our colleague, Senator Di Nino, the distinguished vice-president of the economic committee, was unanimously elected again as the head of the Canadian delegation to the OSCE-PA. I have been privileged to serve as treasurer and now vice-president of this organization.

• (1340)

Senator Di Nino hosted a small luncheon today with some senators and members of the Commons from our respective Foreign Affairs Committees. I found it most interesting that the secretary general, Mr. Oliver, a great friend of Canada, said that one of the best ways to describe the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's work is as "an incubator for democracy." I commend our guests and their staff for coming here. We hope that Toronto will be an extraordinary experience.

As Mr. Oliver pointed out, there has been only one country since this organization was founded over a decade and a half ago to host two meetings, and that is Canada.

Welcome to Canada.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

**THE LATE COLONEL JEAN DORÉ**

**TRIBUTE TO FORMER  
GENTLEMAN USHER OF THE BLACK ROD**

**Hon. Terry Stratton:** Honourable senators, I rise to speak to the passing of the former Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, Jean Doré. He was the last Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, the title changing after a woman succeeded him. By all accounts, he was every inch a gentleman. Those who recall him know that he was indeed a gentleman.

Honourable senators, I am speaking of Colonel Jean Doré, who, on December 17, 2007, at age 79, fought and lost his final battle with cancer.

[Translation]

Colonel Doré entered the Senate unannounced. He began serving as the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, who is responsible for our security, in the midst of the noisy, fractious debate on the Goods and Services Tax.

[English]

Some in this chamber will recall that rather tumultuous time. Buzz Bourdon recently described the Colonel's experiences in *The Globe and Mail*. He said:

Debating the bill around the clock for more than a week, Liberal senators used every tactic they could think of to delay its passage. Hour after hour, day after day, Colonel Doré did his best to stay alert as the Liberals tried their best to slow the process down.

They wouldn't even let him go home for three days. He managed to shower, but he had to send for clean clothes. Finally, the bill passed, everyone breathed a sigh of relief and things went back to normal. It was a dramatic start for Col. Doré, to say the least. Now one of Parliament's most senior administrators, everything he did would be watched and analyzed.

From October 1990 until June 1997, Colonel Doré served with distinction in a position that traces its roots back to 1350 in Britain. The Black Rod is named after the ebony stick used to knock on the doors of the House of Commons chamber to gain admission to the lower house.

Colonel Doré had an extensive military background, joining Les Fusiliers Mont Royal Regiment in 1950. He served in Germany in 1952 and 1953 with the 1st Canadian Infantry Battalion.

From 1967 until 1970, he served as Lieutenant-Colonel, commanding a unit of the 22nd Regiment Militia—the highly respected Vandoos. He was later promoted to full Colonel and Commander of No. 1 Military District, Montreal.

Richard Greene, who retired as the Senate's Deputy Clerk in 1999, had this to say about Colonel Doré when he spoke to *The Globe and Mail* last month:

His stature and bearing impressed me greatly. I could tell that this was a gentleman of the old school. He was a very kind man. He helped a lot of employees monetarily in a time of crisis. He did that quietly and discreetly.

He was a gentleman indeed.

My best wishes go to the Colonel's wife, Marilyn; his brothers Hubert and Jacques; and his sister, Cecile.

[Translation]

**DEATH OF EUGEN KEDL, C.M.**

**Hon. Dennis Dawson:** Honourable senators, today I would like to pay tribute to a great Quebecer and great Canadian who passed away this weekend: Eugen Kedl, photographer and Member of the Order of Canada.

Mr. Kedl emigrated from Austria and not only loved the city, province and country that welcomed him, but made them known and loved throughout his career through his work, *Canada in a Thousand Pictures*.

He was well known for his winter photography and published a number of collections and presented a number of exhibits throughout the world. Among his best known works are *Québec vue par Kedl* and *Canada in a Thousand Pictures*.

• (1345)

Mr. Kedl received the Order of Canada and the Médaille de la ville de Québec and was truly honoured to be recognized by his adopted country. He was the unofficial, if not official, photographer of Quebec City's federalists during both referendums and he could not understand how anyone would want to destroy Canada, the country he chose to live in.

When he went on camping vacations in his trailer, he crossed Canada, camera in hand, from coast to coast. This way of visiting Canada gave him the opportunity to meet Canadians from across the country and to recognize them through his photographs.

His presence as a photographer at Quebec City's city hall, at the National Assembly and during visits by dignitaries has made his works a comprehensive visual souvenir of the past 50 years.

On a personal note, he took my first campaign photograph in 1972, during my electoral début when I was running as a candidate for the school board. He has also photographed the sister of my colleague, the honourable senator from Montreal, and Senator Jean-Claude Rivest, who was a candidate in beautiful Quebec City. I believe he took pictures of Senator Bacon and many other Quebecers in this chamber.

He later took dozens of official photographs of me and many other candidates because he believed that image was very important. The image he created of Quebec and Canada will forever be etched in our memory.

He sponsored the Grand Bal Viennois in Quebec City and introduced in the other national capital the concept of debutantes, another European influence he brought to Quebec City. The profits from that event went to the Suicide Prevention Association of Quebec, which was one of the many causes he championed in Quebec City.

Many honorable senators here will be in Quebec City this year to celebrate its four-hundredth anniversary. I recommend to then the *400 ans de passion* exhibition currently on display at the Observatoire de la Capitale. I invite them to come to our capital and pay tribute to our friend, Eugen Kedl.

[English]

#### NATIONAL ABORIGINAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS, 2008

**Hon. Lillian Eva Dyck:** Honourable senators, on Friday, March 7, I had the great pleasure of attending the fifteenth annual National Aboriginal Achievement Awards gala show in Toronto. The National Aboriginal Achievement Awards were established to encourage and celebrate excellence in the Aboriginal community.

[ Senator Dawson ]

Each year 12 recipients are recognized for their outstanding accomplishments in various careers ranging from science and technology to the arts. In addition, an award is given to an outstanding young achiever, and another award is given to someone with outstanding lifetime accomplishments. These awards are one of the highest honours that the Aboriginal community bestows upon its own achievers.

One of the award recipients was from the University of Saskatchewan. Dr. Marie Ann Battiste, a Mi'kmaq woman, received the education award. Dr. Battiste is a professor in the College of Education and Director of the Aboriginal Educational Research Centre of the University of Saskatchewan. She is also Co-director of the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre, a national centre of the Canadian Council on Learning. Dr. Battiste is an internationally known scholar in the field of Aboriginal epistemology. She has conducted award winning research and published extensively on Aboriginal ways of knowing, anti-racism and decolonization of mainstream education.

Honourable senators, in addition to honouring the achievements of Aboriginal people, the annual National Aboriginal Achievement Awards gala showcases Aboriginal musicians, singers, comedians, dancers and so on. I encourage you to watch the televised version of the gala, which will air on APTN and Global on March 22 at 8 p.m., Eastern Standard Time.

Congratulations are due to Roberta Jamieson, the Chief Executive Officer of the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation, and Jennifer Podemski, the Creative Producer, for putting on yet another wonderful gala.

• (1350)

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### CITIZENSHIP ACT

#### BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

**Hon. Hugh Segal** presented Bill S-231, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (oath of citizenship).

Bill read first time.

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

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

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## QUESTION PERIOD

### MEXICO—CASE OF BRENDA MARTIN

#### FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

##### UNITED STATES DEMOCRATIC PARTY LEADERSHIP RACE—LEAK OF DIPLOMATIC MEMORANDUM

**Hon. Céline Hervieux-Payette (Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. The Canadian interference in the American presidential campaign is very serious. At the heart of the issue is the reputation of our country and the reputation of our diplomats all over the world. Although our embassy's official line in Washington is that there is nothing more to be said, we beg to differ. It is time that Michael Wilson explained his motives when he or his officials made comments to the media in regard to alleged conversations with candidates' representatives.

My question is this: What was the Prime Minister's man in Washington trying to achieve by not answering the question afterwards?

**Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government and Secretary of State (Seniors)):** I thank the honourable senator for the question. I have answered this question before. The situation of what was or was not said with regard to Senator Obama and NAFTA is a matter of some concern to the government and to the Prime Minister. As I have mentioned and reported to this place, the matter is being looked into by senior officials in the Privy Council Office and at the Department of Foreign Affairs, and we await their response.

**Senator Hervieux-Payette:** I do not think we should discard the fact that some people call the situation "NAFTA-gate." It is important that the leader tell this chamber that the investigation announced last week by the Prime Minister will be expanded to include the role played by our Ambassador to the United States, the Honourable Mr. Wilson.

**Senator LeBreton:** I think it is unfortunate that the honourable senator missed this, but it was already stated that this investigation will include whoever the investigators wish to include, Mr. Wilson and Mr. Brodie included.

**Senator Hervieux-Payette:** To clarify for my colleague and perhaps for the leader's colleague, can the leader tell us who will define the terms of the investigation?

**Senator LeBreton:** As I have said, we do take this matter seriously. The gentleman was actually mentioned in the media today. I have his name on the tip of my tongue. This matter is being looked into by responsible members of the Privy Council Office and Foreign Affairs, and that is as it should be.

• (1355)

There have been many examples in the past, as I mentioned yesterday, where it has been reported that people have said various things with regard to our neighbours to the south. In this particular case, there seems to be some interest in it because of the presidential election campaign, but I do remind the honourable senator that a former Canadian ambassador to the United States, Mr. Chrétien, intervened directly into a presidential election.

**Senator Comeau:** There you go.

**Hon. Jane Cordy:** My question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. There have been absolutely no serious efforts by this government to help Brenda Martin. When the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Helena Guergis, was in Mexico recently, one would have thought that Brenda Martin would have been on her priority list, but what was the minister doing? She was enjoying cocktails at a reception in Guadalajara, just 20 minutes from the prison. She met with several officials, among them the Mayor of Guadalajara, who has nothing to do with the Brenda Martin file.

Surely the fact of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs visiting a Canadian prisoner in Mexico would have enormous value and send a strong message to Mexican authorities that Canada takes this matter seriously.

Helena Guergis has proven her incompetence on this file, and the Prime Minister seems to agree. The fate now rests in the hands of the Foreign Affairs minister, Maxime Bernier.

The Liberals, however, are acting fast. The Honourable Member for Pickering-Scarborough East, Dan McTeague, who is the Liberal critic for consular affairs in the other place, met with Brenda Martin for three hours in her jail cell last month. Now former Prime Minister Paul Martin has met with Mexico's Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs. Paul Martin is currently at the prison in Mexico, as we speak, meeting Brenda Martin.

The Conservatives are not standing up for Canadians. The Liberals are standing up for Canadians. Can the Leader of the Government explain why her government has failed Brenda Martin in protecting her most fundamental human rights?

**Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government and Secretary of State (Seniors)):** Honourable senators, there is no question that this is a serious matter. The government has made great efforts for quite some time now. However, this case is not something we have been working on just recently since it has had more attention in the media.

We are obviously concerned about the health and well-being of Ms. Martin. We are very concerned about her family here in Canada. The Secretary of State who was in Mexico met with various representatives of Mexico to register Canada's concerns. The Mexican justice system is puzzling. Obviously, there is concern about the fact that it has taken over two years for Ms. Martin's case to even be heard in court.

I just wish to assure the honourable senator that the government, Secretary of State Helena Guergis and Minister Bernier have made many representations. As I reported yesterday to the Senate, the Minister of Foreign Affairs has called his counterpart and has also communicated with her by letter.

**Senator Cordy:** Then perhaps I would need to question how great the efforts were when Dan McTeague was able to visit Brenda Martin, and Paul Martin is currently visiting with her, yet the minister was in Mexico, a short distance away from the prison, and could not take the time nor devote the energy, nor feel it was important enough to visit her in prison.

As the leader has said, Brenda Martin's health and well-being are of great concern to Canadians. She has become emotionally distraught. She has suffered drastic weight loss. She now weighs less than 100 pounds. She was recently put under 24-hour guard in a hospital, on suicide watch.

Helena Guergis has not had the courtesy to answer any of Ms. Martin's phone calls, pleading desperately for this government's assistance.

• (1400)

I do not think this is a great effort. Brenda Martin, a Canadian citizen, has been abandoned by this government. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Maxime Bernier, said that he will send a diplomatic note to the Mexican authorities, but will this be a diplomatic note of protest? Will the Leader of the Government in the Senate guarantee that the Minister of Foreign Affairs will lodge a formal note of protest, and not simply a flimsy letter that will delay this case even further?

**Senator LeBreton:** Honourable senators, there is no question that this is a very serious matter. Everyone is concerned about the health and well-being of Ms. Martin. However, Senator Cordy is quite incorrect when she suggests that the government has not been taking aggressive and strong actions on Ms. Martin's behalf.

With regard to the nature of the communication from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I will be happy to obtain from the minister a copy of that communication and provide it to the honourable senator.

**Hon. Joan Fraser:** Honourable senators, it would be helpful if the government could make all kinds of strong representations. No one would dispute that, and the stronger, the better. However, I still do not understand why, when Ms. Guergis was so close, she did not go to see Ms. Martin, because that is the strongest representation of all that one can make.

The Leader of the Government in the Senate will recall, I am sure, the case of Mr. William Sampson, who was imprisoned in different but equally distressing circumstances in Saudi Arabia. A few years ago, I was part of a delegation led by the Honourable Don Boudria to Riyadh for other reasons, as indeed the present minister was in Mexico for other reasons, but Mr. Boudria, who was more senior in that government than Ms. Guergis is in this one, took the time to go to visit Mr. Sampson. We were all proud that he did that because he cared, and Canadians cared, and there was no better way to send the message to the government of Saudi Arabia that indeed this country cared.

Why did a junior minister in this government not find the time nor consider it appropriate to do the same thing in the case of Ms. Martin?

**Senator LeBreton:** Senator Fraser will recall that Mr. Sampson was highly critical of the government of the day in terms of its efforts in his very difficult situation in Saudi Arabia. He was also very critical of Mr. Boudria. Although Mr. Boudria went there, Mr. Sampson was critical of the fact that he did not contribute. I believe he basically felt that Mr. Boudria accepted the Saudi line, but I would need to check the record for accuracy. I am speaking from memory. He was very critical of the government of

the day, and that is to be understood. When people are in situations such as this, they are in a terrible personal position. Obviously, it is hard for us to imagine what they are going through.

We are very concerned about Ms. Martin's health and well-being. We are very concerned about the slowness with which she is being processed through the Mexican judicial system. The government has made many representations, as have members of Parliament who happen to represent ridings where members of her family live, Secretary of State Guergis and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. All of these efforts are important and well-intentioned. We are doing everything that we can.

Secretary of State Guergis was in Mexico looking into this case. I do not know the circumstances by which the decision was made, whether personal or otherwise, to visit Ms. Martin. I am not aware of the facts as they were represented to Ms. Guergis or what the circumstances are. However, that does not take away, for a moment, from the fact that the government views this as a very serious matter, has been working on it for many months and will continue to do so.

• (1405)

**Senator Fraser:** Honourable senators, let me just say to the Leader of the Government in the Senate that it would be grossly improper for me to comment on the emotional turmoil which Mr. Sampson suffered not only during but after his ordeal. However, I can say that I spent a couple of hours with Mr. Sampson's lawyer, who was extremely appreciative of the efforts of Mr. Boudria.

**Senator LeBreton:** Honourable senators, I was not commenting on the state of these individuals. I was imagining what it must be like to be in their position. I think all of us can understand how difficult and how frustrating it must be when you are in a situation like that and you want desperately to get out of it. Obviously, you would want your government to be doing everything they can, through the proper channels, to expedite your case. That is what is being done in the case of Ms. Martin.

**Hon. Jim Munson:** Honourable senators, I do not know if the present Conservative government will like this, but in 1992 a compassionate Progressive Conservative government got me out of jail in the Forbidden City, in Beijing, after I had been doing my democratic duty as an international reporter covering some of the problems in China.

Believe it or not, that call was made by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Barbara McDougall. I would not recommend the experience and, in particular, the police in that jail. After a couple of days in the Forbidden City jail, she felt that having a Canadian in jail in China was important enough to make a call. She made the direct call and she cared enough to make that call. Subsequently, here I am in the Senate of Canada; I was released.

Why can the minister not pick up the phone and make those calls in Ms. Martin's case? Authorities respect calls from other authorities. The Progressive Conservative government did so in my case; I would hope for the same under the Conservative government for Ms. Martin.

[ Senator Cordy ]



**Senator LeBreton:** The honourable senator was a journalist. While I will not go so far as to say he was an objective journalist, he was a journalist. The fact is that would be something totally appropriate for Ms. McDougall, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, to do. At that time our government was dealing with another case where there was significant pressure put on Barbara McDougall. The Lamont and Spencer case in Brazil concerned many people in this country.

However, the honourable senator was asking why the minister does not do for Ms. Martin what Barbara McDougall did for him. The minister has done precisely that. He made the calls and he has followed up with a communiqué that I have offered to get from him and table in the house. Therefore, the minister is doing everything in the case of Ms. Martin that Barbara McDougall did for the honourable senator when he was a journalist. I remember the case because I was there. Personally, I was very concerned about Senator Munson, as a matter of fact. At that time, I was a member of the Progressive Conservative government. I am still the same person as part of the Conservative government.

• (1410)

In response to Senator Munson, I will indicate that the Minister of Foreign Affairs is making every effort, albeit that the circumstances are somewhat different. In this case, we are dealing with the judicial system in Mexico. We have expressed our great concern that someone could be detained for two years without any kind of procedure going through the Mexican judicial system.

[Translation]

## PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES

### QUEBEC AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY— LOCKHEED MARTIN CONTRACT

**Hon. Jean-Claude Rivest:** Honourable senators, I am not sure whether my question should be directed to the Leader of the Government or to our dear Minister of Public Works and Government Services. To the disappointment of Quebec's entire aerospace industry, when the Lockheed contract for Hercules aircraft was announced, the Minister of Public Works and Government Services was unable to promise that a share of contracts corresponding to the province's presence in Canada's aerospace sector, which is about 58 per cent or 59 per cent, would be awarded in Quebec.

Today, we learned that a mere 20 per cent or 25 per cent of the contracts awarded were awarded in Quebec. The president of the Quebec Aerospace Association, Jacques Saada, issued a statement in the papers asking the government to acknowledge Quebec's economic realities and to take Quebec's interests into account in awarding contracts. My question for the government is this: Is the Minister of Public Works and Government Services — or perhaps one of his colleagues — in a position to correct this situation without delay?

**Hon. Michael Fortier (Minister of Public Works and Government Services):** Honourable senators, first of all, it is much too soon to say for certain. The honourable senator may not be aware of it, but the manufacturing companies have several years to fulfill their obligations under the rules for subcontracting.

Contracts like the Lockheed Martin one involve billions of dollars, including maintenance over 20 years. I do not think I received Mr. Saada's statement. Based on what Boeing has already done — the honourable senator may not know this, but the company made investments in Quebec about a year after signing the contract for the C-17s — the company has invested a lot of money in Quebec and all over Canada at a time when there is a lot of uncertainty about manufacturing jobs. Nearly \$1.8 billion worth of contracts in the aerospace industry were announced across Canada in January, and I think that is good news.

**Senator Rivest:** Honourable senators, the good news is that I may not know any more about the aerospace industry than the minister does, but Mr. Saada is the president of the Quebec Aerospace Association, and unlike the two of us, he knows all about it. In today's papers, he said that only 20 per cent of the contracts have gone to Quebec, and that with respect to research contracts, researchers in the field are very concerned about the government's inaction.

Honourable senators, the minister is responsible for the economy of the Montreal area. He should make a greater commitment to ensure that the interests of Quebec are respected.

**Senator Fortier:** Honourable senators, my colleague should speak with Quebec's industry minister, Raymond Bachand, who actually applauded the government's policy on redistribution and the percentages of the contracts awarded by Boeing.

• (1415)

I am trying to explain how the process works. It will be a few years before Lockheed Martin will be able to fulfill all of its obligations. The contracts were just announced in January; it is very recent, so we must wait to see how many contracts will be awarded before passing judgment and before being afraid of being afraid. Be patient.

**Hon. Senators:** Oh, oh.

**Senator Fortier:** Let me finish my response. Thank you. Wait to see how many contracts will be awarded as Lockheed Martin fulfills its obligations, and then we will talk.

**Senator Rivest:** Take responsibility, Mr. Minister. Can you commit before this chamber, as a Quebecer, as the minister responsible, that Quebec will receive a share of the contracts representative of the significance of its manufacturing industry within Canada?

The honourable senator has advice for everyone else, but perhaps he should take his own advice and take responsibility.

**Senator Fortier:** Absolutely not. I am a minister of the federal government. We are responsible for ensuring that the contracts are awarded in Canada, to the Canadian aerospace industry. That is the responsibility of a responsible government that does not accept contracts, as was the case in the past, when it was not at all... Pardon me?

Madam Speaker *pro tempore*, I am trying to answer, but we have another clown here.

**The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*:** You may continue, Senator Rivest. Question Period is not over.

**Senator Rivest:** Mr. Minister, very simply, instead of —

Madam Speaker *pro tempore*, I would ask the minister to withdraw his comments.

**Hon. Senators:** Absolutely!

## ELECTIONS CANADA

### WESTMOUNT—VILLE-MARIE— ELECTION TO FILL RIDING VACANCY

**Hon. Marcel Prud'homme:** Speaking of the fear of being afraid, I will try to put a question to the minister responsible, who is a good friend. The Westmount—Ville-Marie is vacant at this time, since Ms. Robillard resigned in early January. Would it be possible for the Leader of the Government in the Senate to put some pressure on the Right Honourable Prime Minister to call a by-election as soon as possible, in order to relieve the Minister of Public Works of the agony he suffers from having to sit here with us every day?

I think the voters in Westmount—Ville-Marie would really like to be represented and the Honourable Minister of Public Works is a perfect fit for the position — he loves the area, he knows it inside out and everyone knows him. This could help improve Senate practices and restore some calm for the minister, who says he sees clowns all around him, except when he is at home.

[*English*]

**Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government and Secretary of State (Seniors)):** Honourable senators, I cannot remember when I last answered this type of question. The fact is that there was an election, and Madam Robillard won. For whatever reasons, she decided not to continue, and that created the vacancy.

With regard to my colleague, Senator Fortier has been nominated, for some 18 or 19 months, by the good folks of Vaudreuil-Soulanges; he is working in that riding. Hopefully, when the general election is called — which, I am sure we all know, he hopes is soon — he will be able to enter Parliament as the elected member for Vaudreuil-Soulanges.

With regard to the vacancy that the honourable senator referred to, I was waiting to hear him say that he was about to resign his Senate seat and run himself. In any event, I will certainly make the Prime Minister aware of the honourable senator's desire to have an elected representative of this riding in the House of Commons.

[*Translation*]

**Senator Prud'homme:** I would like to make it very clear that I have a great deal of respect for Mr. Fortier, a member of a very noble Quebec family. I know his sister, who was a Liberal minister in the Quebec government. I respect him very much and I do not like to see people stoop so low when they disagree.

I really think the minister's agony could be alleviated if he would only understand that, while Vaudreuil-Soulanges is very beautiful, it seems that, from the very beginning, the

Right Honourable Prime Minister said he wanted a minister from Montreal and if my geography is correct, Vaudreuil is not in Montreal. Montreal has its suburbs, but Vaudreuil-Soulanges, as far as I know, is not part of the Island of Montreal. I have never understood how he could better represent the interests of Montreal by running in Vaudreuil.

Perhaps the Leader of the Government in the Senate could explain this to me? Or perhaps Mr. Fortier himself could explain?

• (1420)

[*English*]

**Senator LeBreton:** Honourable senators, I do not know how much of the honourable senator's question deals with government business, but all I can say is that Senator Fortier continues to believe the word of the Liberal Party leader, Stéphane Dion, because we continue to hear that we will be having an election. We were to have an election in October, then in November, then in December and then Christmas came, so not in December. Then there was to be an election in January, then February, and now in March we will not be able to have an election because it will soon be Easter. I suppose we will not be able to have an election in April because Spring is coming, and we will not be able to have one in May because of Mother's Day. In June, it will be because of Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day and in July, it will be because of Canada Day.

The fact is, the good people of Vaudreuil-Soulanges have nominated Senator Fortier, and he has been prepared, ready, able and willing to run. We had believed what Mr. Dion was saying, but we are beginning to wonder whether or not we will be here for a good long time.

[*Translation*]

## PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES

### QUEBEC AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY— LOCKHEED MARTIN CONTRACT

**Hon. Jean-Claude Rivest:** I would like to ask the minister — who has been on many variety shows lately and that is why the term “clown” often comes to mind — to take this seriously and to make a commitment before this chamber. He did not answer my question.

As a Quebecer and minister responsible for the economy, will he promise that Quebec will obtain a fair and proportional share of this significant contract, a prize for the aerospace industry? If he cannot, what is he doing in that position? As is the case with so many economic matters, we will have to turn to Minister Cannon, who has a better understanding of Quebec's reality than the Minister of Public Works.

**Some Hon. Senators:** Oh, oh.

**The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*:** Honourable senators, Question Period is over.

• (1425)

[English]

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### INCOME TAX ACT

#### BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING— DEBATE ADJOURNED

**Hon. Wilfred P. Moore** moved second reading of Bill C-253, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (deductibility of RESP contributions).

He said: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Bill C-253, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act, deductibility of RESP contributions. I will begin by offering my congratulations to the member for Pickering-Scarborough East, Mr. Dan McTeague, for his tremendous work on this bill and his dedication to furthering the cause of post-secondary education in Canada.

Bill C-253 has caused a stir in the media over the last few days and, I think it is safe to say, its passing has caused some excitement for all families in this country who are attempting to save for their children's education. It is not often that an opportunity such as Bill C-253 comes along.

Honourable senators, this bill has its roots in the concern over the rising costs of post-secondary education and the resultant unprecedented levels of student debt. The backdrop to this bill is the fact that the situation as it exists at the moment is untenable, and getting worse. The total federal student debt is currently over \$12.8 billion.

We have heard the story here many times, honourable senators, namely that the need to balance the budget in the 1990s and to restore order to Canada's fiscal house led to unfortunate cutbacks across the board. With fewer federal funds, Canadian universities were, in turn, forced to raise fees. Since that time, student debt has grown to unprecedented levels. For example, the average tuition nationwide was \$1,464 in 1990-91, compared to \$4,347 in 2006-07, and it is climbing.

Documents from Statistics Canada and the Library of Parliament tell us that in the year 2000, graduates in bachelor's degree programs owed 76 per cent more than their counterparts in the 1990s. According to the Library of Parliament, in 1990-91, 210,798 students borrowed from the Canada Student Loans Program; in 2003-04, the number rose to 343,000, an increase of 132,000 students accessing these loans.

The amount students are borrowing is increasing steadily as well. In 1991, the average student loan was \$6,101; in 2003-04, the average outstanding loan was \$10,628. As far as default rates are concerned, they too are growing. Once again, in 1990-91, the rate of default was 20.7 per cent; in 2003-04, the default rate had risen to 25.5 per cent.

Honourable senators, these numbers can only be regarded as alarming. The debt load that our students are being forced to take on while completing a post-secondary degree is limiting access to

universities for our students. Many programs have been created in attempting to increase access as well as deal with student debt. From the Canada Student Loans Program, the Canada Education Savings Grant, the Canada Learning Bonds, the Millennium Scholarship Foundation program, to the Registered Education Savings Plan, past governments have been attentive to this file. However, the fact remains that the cost of education, and the debts associated with it, have continued to grow.

• (1430)

The RESP as it stands has had mixed results. Only about 27 per cent of Canadian families have invested in a Registered Education Savings Plan. It is our belief that, under this bill, making contributions to RESPs tax deductible will lessen the burden of those families attempting to contribute to the post-secondary education of their children.

We have heard that the government is expecting an increase in these RESP contributions under Bill C-253. That is clearly an indication of what this tax deductible incentive will mean for families. The expected increase in contributions is indicative of how this adjustment will enable families who might not have been able to contribute to the program to now take advantage of the new rules. More families will have access, and this can only be viewed as beneficial on a number of levels. Most important, this bill provides hope.

Bill C-253 will allow a yearly maximum \$5,000 tax deductible contribution to be made for each child, up to a total of \$50,000. The tax deduction — it is our hope — will be taken advantage of by families to invest whatever funds they can in their children's education. Doing so, we believe, will not only reduce the student debt load but also make less daunting the debt burden that is challenging our young people to not only apply for a university education but to remain in the program until graduation.

Under Bill C-253, an RESP is set up for a beneficiary — the student — by a subscriber — a parent, for example. Contributions can be withdrawn by either the beneficiary or the subscriber. When withdrawn by the beneficiary, the investment income is referred to as an education assistance payment, or EAP.

When withdrawn by the subscriber, in the event that the student does not or is unable to attend university, the income is referred to as an accumulated income payment, or AIP. In either case, the party who withdraws from the RESP will pay income tax at his or her then rate of taxation. Obviously, a student will typically be in a low tax bracket.

To make sure these changes do not transform RESPs into tax-deferral vehicles, withdrawals from RESPs are subject to Part X.5 penalty tax under s. 204.94 of the Income Tax Act. This technicality means that if the subscriber withdraws the accumulated income payment and he or she is not a student attending university, the accumulated income payment is taxed to the tune of an additional 20 per cent on top of the regular tax payable at that income level.

Furthermore, the education assistance payments can only be made to the student if he or she is enrolled as a full-time or part-time student at a post-secondary institution, or if the student cannot attend due to medical incapacity, or if the student is deceased.

Estimates of the cost to the federal treasury were initially reported at \$900 million on Friday of last week. By Monday of this week, another source estimated the cost to be close to \$2 billion. That is quite a leap in four days. It is funny how expensive things can get when legislation does not appeal to the government.

Let me shed a bit of light on the issue. Officials from the Department of Finance provided their numbers to the Standing Committee on Finance in the other place. Let me quote from them so we have some numbers from the government itself.

Our estimate, based on recent contributions to the RESP program, would be that it costs at least \$565 million in foregone revenue. If it were to trigger an increase of 20 per cent in the value of contributions, that amount would grow close to \$800 million. In addition, since it would reduce income for tax purposes, all provinces participating in the tax collection agreement would see their revenues reduced as well. The cost to them would be in the neighbourhood of between \$250 to \$300 million.

It would be much more constructive, for the purpose of argument, to stick to the numbers of the Department of Finance. It is interesting to note that the current RESP program comes in at about the same cost as we were talking about under Bill C-253; about \$550 million.

Honourable senators, the Minister of Finance has begun his attack on Bill C-253 by characterizing it as a bill designed to benefit the rich. I can assure honourable senators that this is not true, and it is irresponsible of the minister to portray it as such. The 2003 Human Resources and Skills Development report — and these are the latest numbers available — showed that of all households contributing to RESPs from 1998 to 2001, 25.1 per cent were in the lower two income brackets; 38.7 per cent in the middle two brackets; and 36.2 per cent were high income households. It is very important to note, honourable senators, that contrary to what the Minister of Finance is saying, 44.9 per cent of RESPs are owned by households in the bottom three income tax brackets. Thus, these changes to the Income Tax Act will only increase the amount of contributions by Canadians within all income tax brackets.

It must be noted as well that no family is required to contribute the full amount of \$5,000 per child per year, yet every family can contribute an amount affordable to them.

Bill C-253 is about more than providing an incentive for families to save for their children's education. It is a bit broader than that, in my opinion. Bill C-253 gets to the root of two different philosophies of governing. Governments should have the power to effect positive change. Governments should have a plan to effect this change. Governments should also have the resources to underwrite this change.

It is a wonderful thing for a citizen to have a few more dollars in his or her pocket, and tax cuts can do this. However, it is also important to have a government that is capable of not only promoting the public good but also enacting policies which contribute to the public good. We have a tradition in this country that has seen our federal government do just this. It is not a bad thing, as some would have you believe. Canada is held high in international opinion, in no small part due to our belief in a proactive central government.

[ Senator Moore ]

This bill is an example of a responsible opposition recognizing the importance of developing an area of society and providing the incentive to realize that development. We in this chamber need no reminder of how important post-secondary education has been, is now and will be in the future for our country. We know full well the cost and benefits of an educated population. Many of us have stood in this place and provided facts, opinions and ideas, all revolving around the central fact that post-secondary education will be the major factor in moving our economy forward. This is critical if we are to compete in a world which is becoming much more knowledge-based, and provide the innovation which betters our lives and builds a stronger Canadian society.

There are two stages in developing these policies in our Parliament. This bill has passed the first stage when it was passed in the other place on March 6. Some said Bill C-253 comes to us in some stealthy manner. To those who embrace this description, they must be reminded that this bill has been debated in the other place and passed in a manner consistent with parliamentary practice. After all, what level of surprise can there possibly be when this bill has been on the Order Paper since last year?

You will hear, honourable senators, of the disastrous effects this bill will wreak on our economy. You will hear the word "deficit," a word that has not been mentioned in this country since the Conservative governments of the 1980s and early 1990s; a word that has not been mentioned in this province since the Conservative governments of the 1990s.

As a member of Liberal governments of the past decade that were tasked to clean up that dire financial crisis in which Canada was left to mire, I do not take this country's finances lightly. I do not take them as lightly as those who would project such terms as "deficit" and "debt" upon the party that saved this country from financial calamity.

• (1440)

I agree with the Minister of Finance when he tells us that no Canadian government should place this country in a position where a deficit might be contemplated after so many years of sound fiscal management. The minister knows from experience of what he speaks. No Canadian government should ever contemplate returning to the terrible situation that occurred in the dark times of the 1980s and 1990s in Canada and Ontario, when reckless spending and even more reckless tax cuts left the nation and this province in dire straits. I agree with the Minister of Finance that there is no way that a government should be allowed to take a \$12-billion surplus and turn it into nothing. There is no way that a government should be allowed to leave the nation in such a state where \$1 billion in foregone revenue should ruin the good spending practice of those who have gone before. I agree with the Minister of Finance that there is no excuse to put this country into a situation where our federal government might find itself unable to finance a policy that would reap such benefits for Canadians and for the future.

Imagine, honourable senators, a government that might tear the federal treasury to shreds, nullify the federal spending power and then blame others for their handiwork while claiming fiscal responsibility. That would be incredible.

This government is crying poor and balking at a policy that would allow further access to post-secondary education and alleviate student debt at a price equivalent to the existing program. Canadians must be dumbstruck and wonder what has happened to our federal finances. I, for one, will be approaching our study of this bill under the greater shadow of what is beginning to take shape as an abdication of the federal spending power. We will study this bill with the due diligence that we apply to all bills that come before us. We will study this bill in a manner consistent with our responsibilities under the Constitution. No more and no less.

**The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*:** Will the honourable senator take a question?

**Senator Moore:** Yes.

**Hon. Hugh Segal:** Senator Moore spoke about the fiscal situation of the country and expressed his regrets, which he has every right to do. In the previous two-year period, a part of the change in the fiscal situation of the country, when we were awash in surpluses while the provinces did not have the fiscal capacity to meet their constitutional obligations, was fiscal equilibrium. A great deal of money that was moved from the massive flush surplus to other places went to the provinces, including the Province of Nova Scotia and others. They agreed to those transfers and said they were good for social and economic purposes for their needs. Other transfers went to reduce taxes. Which of those two initiatives taken by the government would the honourable senator disagree with most profoundly? Does the honourable senator disagree with the decision of the Government of Nova Scotia and other provincial governments to accept that fiscal transfer, which had a significant impact on the change in the federal government's fiscal circumstance while helping the provinces deal effectively with their obligations under section 92 of the Constitution of Canada?

**Senator Moore:** Honourable senators, I do not know what that question has to do with Bill C-253, except to say that it points to the degree of mismanagement of the fiscal purse in Canada. If the government leaves itself in such a position that it cannot accommodate this program, then it truly must look at what it is doing.

**Senator Segal:** Honourable senators, I want to ensure that I clearly understand the honourable senator to be saying that the decision of the Minister of Finance to pass funds from the federal surplus to provincial fiscal capacity so that they would be able to discharge their obligations under the Constitution was, in his view, the wrong thing to do with the money; and that it would have been better to have kept the money so the federal government could launch boutique federal programs in areas of provincial jurisdiction like the one he just defended. Is that a better way to manage the financial affairs of the country?

**Senator Moore:** Allow me to comment on the honourable senator's boutique remark. The federal government has been involved with education since the beginning of this country. He can look it up, as Casey Stengel would say. For the honourable senator to say that this is a boutique undertaking is not accurate. It goes right to the root of what the country will be like in the future without this investment in post-secondary education. This is a beautiful opportunity for families to contribute to education

for their children. Currently, not all families can do so. This bill will permit everyone to be able to participate. The existing program is accessible only for after-tax dollars.

The current program permits only after-tax dollars to be invested and this bill will allow pre-tax dollars to be invested that will then be deductible on their income tax returns. It should merit the support of all honourable senators.

**Senator Segal:** Honourable senators, is the honourable senator suggesting that, notwithstanding the good faith in the other place and the positive intent of the MP who sponsored the bill and the view of the Canadian Federation of Students, the National Union of Students and provincial ministers of education that this is the wrong way to spend funds, that those concerns should be set aside by this place in support of Bill C-253?

**Senator Moore:** When this bill is referred to committee, there will be an opportunity to hear from the organizations that the honourable senator mentioned and others.

**The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*:** Will the honourable senator take another question?

**Senator Moore:** Yes.

**Hon. Lillian Eva Dyck:** Honourable senators, I listened to Senator Moore's comments with great interest. I agree with him that education is a great equalizer in terms of bringing people up to a more equitable income level. I believe the honourable senator mentioned that close to 50 per cent of the families that will contribute to RESPs were in the bottom three tax brackets. From the way he said it, it sounded as though that might be the number of plans that are incorporated. Does the honourable senator have any data to indicate the size of the plans? Certainly, those people in lower income brackets will not be able to contribute as much as those in the higher income brackets. My concern with the bill is that those people with more money will have access to education to a greater degree than those with less money to contribute. In the Aboriginal community in Saskatchewan, for example, where people do not have much money, it will not provide much of an advantage. That is my greatest concern.

**Senator Moore:** I thank the honourable senator for the question. To clarify a couple of the numbers I mentioned, currently, only 27 per cent of Canadian families participate in the RESP program. As well, 44.9 per cent of the RESPs are owned by households in the bottom three tax brackets. To help give the honourable senator some comfort, as I mentioned to Senator Segal, under this program whatever a person can contribute will be deducted from their taxable income. Currently, the money contributed to an RESP is in after-tax dollars. The current program clearly favours those with more resources. This program will provide the opportunity for many more Canadians.

**Senator Dyck:** Perhaps I am not hearing the honourable senator's answer correctly but, in my view, lower income families will still be disadvantaged because they will not be able to contribute to the same extent as higher income families. It will depend on how much money one is able to put forward into an RESP. A lower income family will not be able to contribute and gain the tax benefit to the same degree as a higher income family. Certainly, lower income families will benefit but not to the same degree.

• (1450)

**Senator Moore:** What can I say to the honourable senator to give some encouragement here? Currently, those lower income families are probably not participating. This program will give them an opportunity and more encouragement to do so, as well as members of their family who might want to put funds toward a grandchild or a godchild's education program. There is an opportunity here. We will see what comes out of discussions at committee.

On motion of Senator Di Nino, debate adjourned.

## NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE

### BUDGET—STUDY ON NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY— REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Day, seconded by the Honourable Senator Robichaud, P.C., for the adoption of the fourth report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence (*budget—study on the national security policy of Canada*), presented in the Senate on March 6, 2008. —(*Honourable Senator Tkachuk*)

**Hon. David Tkachuk:** Honourable senators, I rise to comment on this budget. This subject has been discussed many times in this place, but we have not really discussed it from a public policy point of view.

When I first joined the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, I was struck with the size of its budget compared to all the committees I have been involved with in the last 15 years. It was well over \$1 million. As a matter of fact, I think the last budget that was passed was \$1.4 million. I was told, of course, that this committee does extraordinary work and therefore this budget is justified. I have been involved with the Banking Committee and the Transport and Communications Committee. I have been Chairman of the Finance Committee. I have been on the Aboriginal Committee and the Agriculture Committee. All these committees perform outstanding work from time to time. However, their budgets are much lower.

What is extraordinary about this budget? One thing that caused me many problems when we had the budget meeting was that, as deputy chair, I was not consulted about the budget. I learned of the budget at the same time as everyone else. That was different from what I had been used to, frankly. It was a strange way to do business. Of course, it seemed like it was all my fault that I was opposed to the budget in some way and did not want the budget passed at the first meeting. I first received the budget documents in an email that was distributed to everyone on the weekend, and the meeting was held on Monday.

I cannot remember the exact total of the budget, but it was over \$600,000. My arguments started with the personnel. The Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence has an assistant to the chair, for which there is a payment of \$30,000 a year. My understanding is that that is the only payment that person receives. Although I am concerned about it, I figure that if

one chair has an assistant in the office to answer correspondence and take phone calls on committee business, then all chairs should have that, or no chairs should have it. That should be a matter of policy. It should not be a matter of one chair getting an assistant to work in his or her office while they are chair because of the extraordinary load that a chairman would have. Perhaps we might want to consider public policy on a deputy chair. Perhaps a deputy chair should have someone to answer the phones for them on committee business. If the chair gets it, the deputy chair should get it too, maybe at half as much. The chair gets paid \$10,000, the deputy chair gets paid \$5,000, so maybe \$30,000 for the chair for an administrative assistant and \$15,000 for half an administrative assistance for the deputy chair.

When I came in the room, there were three clerks there — not one clerk — there were three clerks, or two clerks and two assistants. I do not know why they have an assistant. Maybe they need an assistant because the chair needs an assistant. Nonetheless, there are two clerks and two assistants.

I looked around the room and saw three people from the Library of Parliament. I have to hand it to the chair. I do not want anyone to misinterpret what I am trying to say here, because we all allowed this to happen. We all allowed it to happen, so I do not want this to be taken as criticism of the chair. There are three people from the Library — not one, not two, but three people from the Library, and almost full-time, I must say. They are on call 24 hours a day. We also pay for two military consultants.

We have quite an astounding salary budget. Everyone should check the *Journals of the Senate* from last Thursday because the information is there.

We have two consultants, and then we have a writer. We pay \$48,000 for someone to write our reports. Remember, we have three people from the Library, but we have a writer who does the writing of the reports, and we pay \$48,000 for that writer. That writer participates with some of the communication, but we also have the communications staff from the Senate who handles our communication needs because the Senate now supplies every committee with a communications person.

**Senator Goldstein:** Does the committee get a lawyer?

**Senator Tkachuk:** That is a good point that Senator Goldstein raises. The committee does not have a lawyer, but knowing how this committee operates, if it could, it would have hired one already.

There are four staff members. We have a communications person from the Senate, so that is five. We have three clerks, so that is eight. We have three people from the Library of Parliament, so we now have eleven full-time staff.

All of this is a matter of policy, because these are staff people and consultants hired directly by the committee, which no other committees would have the effrontery to do or to act upon or even place in the budget, although I hear that Senator Day may have taken my advice and put in a budget item for an assistant.

I have to be extremely careful, so I do not get infected by the same virus in that committee as others seem to have been. However, I think these issues have to be discussed in this place because this budget takes away resources from all committees.

We can ask the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration to develop a policy in order that we allocate no more than one or two people as extra staff. Remember that we are staffed by the Library of Parliament, we are supplied with clerks, and we are now supplied with a communications person to each committee from the Senate, so why are we paying double and triple time? I do not understand why this is going on.

Without being critical, I am trying to get the Senate to agree, with as much humour and without any partisanship involved. This is an issue that belongs not only to our side but belongs to other side. It belongs to the Senate. It is something that we should discuss openly because we are all chairs and deputy chairs and members of committees that struggle for resources. We all go to the same place, the same budget committee, the same Internal Economy Committee, to try to get money for the work we are trying to do.

• (1500)

Of course we proliferate. We have 18 committees now. We all draw from the same budget while we have little baby committees and subcommittees come out all the time. The money is either becoming less per committee or else we need to increase the total budget. Nonetheless, committees must be funded.

I thank the Budget Subcommittee and the Internal Economy Committee that saw fit to pass only \$167,000 of this budget because I think they became aware of some of the same problems and, therefore, they wanted to have more time to deliberate. However, we do have committee staff; we must give them notice. I think the committee was very clear that this money was to be allocated for certain items and for nothing else. That was important because there is another budget item called "promotion of reports." It was over \$60,000. Last session, the "promotion of reports" item was used to move money around. When the committee ran out of money in one place, they could move money from one place to another. When we needed to go somewhere, we took it out of "promotion of reports."

I alert all senators that this is not the way to do business. I know that the committee chairmen had to go to the Internal Economy Committee for permission to move their money around, but in my view, if the money is for something under a different item, then the committee should go back to the Internal Economy Committee for permission to have that particular item in the budget at the start.

We now have a budget item of \$60,000. Then we have the conferences. We do not know what the conferences are, necessarily, but we do have four or five. I would say to the Honourable Senator Day that I think there were five conferences with two people attending each one; is that not correct? They are decided on throughout the year as they come up. Again, this is not something I have seen in other budgets.

If we want to allocate money for senators to do in-house training regarding their particular committee, then perhaps we should have an allocation of budget items allowing people to attend conferences to learn about the subject matter relating to the committee of which they are now a member. Perhaps Senator Fairbairn could go to four or five agricultural conferences, perhaps in Berlin, Australia or South Africa, to see

how they are doing, and we should all have the possibility of that opportunity. Senator Oliver on the Transport and Communications Committee could visit Australia, the United States, Brazil or Europe. I think we could all do that. Of course, from time to time, we take an independent senator as well so that we can spread the lucre around.

In all seriousness, honourable senators, this matter has to be dealt with at the one time. I was upset when I was defeated six to one on that budget. Nonetheless, it is to be hoped that the Internal Economy Committee will do its work, and perhaps my speaking out here in this chamber will alert all honourable senators to what is happening in that committee. There is a good argument to be made that if we are to allow these kinds of expenditures, they should be made from a public policy perspective of allocating conferences per committee, or perhaps a conference budget allocated for the entire Senate, or something like that.

The way in which this budget sits now, there is a decided advantage in cash, but also in resources, being taken from the Library and the Clerk's office, which are substantially more than any other committee and, as far as I am concerned, not necessary.

With those comments, I am willing to take questions, but other than that, I thank honourable senators for putting up with me and listening to me on this matter.

**Hon. A. Raynell Andreychuk:** Honourable senators, I think the honourable senator explained his position and some of the difficulties for committees. I just want to ask a question on one comment that was made about the library staff. It was indicated that the library staff are on call to the committee 24 hours a day. Now, is that 24 hours a day, 7 days a week? I find that not only surprising but shocking. The people in the library are extremely professional, and I wonder why they would be on call 24 hours. Is that for an isolated time, or all the time? I would like clarification on that.

**Senator Tkachuk:** That was a slight exaggeration to make a point, but I want to make it very clear that the chair expects — and I use the word advisedly — the library staff to be on call five days a week, and they have met on weekends. I am only telling you that that is the way it operates. I will not go any further than that, but they are on call, and they operate very professionally, and the demands are great.

**The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*:** A few other senators have questions. Will the honourable senator agree to ask for more time, since his time has expired?

**Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government):** Five more minutes.

**The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*:** Will the senator answer one more question?

**Senator Tkachuk:** I will answer five minutes' worth.

**Hon. Roméo Antonius Dallaire:** That should take care of one question.

Because of the 24-hour-a-day availability, I thought the senator may have been mixing up the people in uniform who serve that committee extensively and those with different union rules. I acknowledge that they must be on call to meet the honorable senator's requirement.

The content changes in committees. May I provide an example of that? The Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs was a committee with a declining clientele, and the demands were evolving to an extent where, at times, we thought the department might disappear. However, we have entered a new era where the clientele is augmenting. They are now working with an entirely new group of people, which means that they have both the older veterans plus a whole new problem and charter, and so on. Certainly the honourable senator would acknowledge that some committees must look at an escalation in demand for resources in order to achieve their aim?

**Senator Tkachuk:** My point was not about the fact that these three library people were on call. My point was that, outside of these three people being on call, we have four more people hired by the committee, and they are at the call of the committee. The point I was making was not about the library staff and the fact that they work, but the fact that they were almost full-time hires, as well as these four people being full-time hires. That was my point. That is all I have to say.

**Hon. Hugh Segal:** On behalf of the class of 2005, we have just arrived, and so we see things as they have existed in the past. The honourable senator was good enough to say in his comments that this escalation in budget was not an overnight occurrence. It has taken some time, and involves both sides of the aisle.

For those of us who arrived in 2005, could the honourable senator give a brief history so that we may have a sense of how this committee became so different, so much more substantially funded and so much more greatly staffed than all of the others? Since he has been here in this chamber longer, he could perhaps give us a sense of why, for example, social and health care issues would have been less well funded than national defence, about which we all care very deeply, of course.

**Senator Tkachuk:** I cannot say what happened in the Budget Subcommittee or Internal Economy Committee since I have never sat on either of those committees. This committee, the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, I believe is only about seven or eight years old. It has not been around that long. However, I will say that their chair is a driven man. He is very aggressive, and more power to him. He was very aggressive and was able to talk the Senate into letting him have this kind of cash for his committee. I am just pointing out that I do not think that this situation should continue. Therefore, I will be very aggressive in attempting to stop what I call this foolishness of having \$1.4 million budgets and \$670,000 budgets with four full-time staff members on committee as well as the library staff, the clerks and everyone else. You walk into the room where that committee is being held, and it is ridiculous. This is the point I was trying to make. I have no idea what happened over the last seven years.

**Hon. Anne C. Cools:** I have been listening to the honourable senator with some interest and I have come to the opposite conclusion. I have come to the conclusion that the other committees are underfunded, and that the Senate as a whole is starved for resources.

[ Senator Dallaire ]

• (1510)

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

**Senator Cools:** Honourable senators, whenever any MP or any senator raises an issue that questions the government, it is an uneven match. The government has a powerful and infinite largesse, the treasury, to defeat any single individual member. When individual members work hard and can marshal the resources, I say hurrah for them, good for them.

However, I would like the honourable senator to deal with the real issue: What is the measure of the needs of our committees and the needs of our members to do their work?

I want honourable senators to know that, when I came to this place, senators had no research budgets; they shared a secretary. Senators had very few resources. That is because of the absurd development in the history of parliamentary institutions whereby government, over the past 100 years or so, grew exponentially, but the resources of members did not. It is impossible, as anyone would know, for any senator to work and to function without the proper resources.

Perhaps the honourable senator should tell us just what are the standards for the resources and what are the limits of the resources that committees should be able to expect. As far as I am concerned, Senate committees are underfunded.

**Senator Tkachuk:** The honourable senator has her view on that subject and I have mine. I think that, with any government organization, it does not matter how much money you give them, they will get busier. I am sure I could keep 100 people busy, if someone paid for it.

**The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*:** The honourable senator's time has expired.

Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**Some Hon. Senators:** On division.

Motion agreed to and report adopted, on division.

## THE ESTIMATES, 2007-08

### FINAL REPORT OF NATIONAL FINANCE COMMITTEE ON MAIN ESTIMATES ADOPTED

Leave having been given to revert to Government Business, Reports of Committees, Item No. 2:

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the tenth report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance (Final Report on Main Estimates 2007-2008), presented in the Senate on March 11, 2008.



**Hon. Joseph A. Day:** Honourable senators will note that in the Reports of Committees under Government Business, there are two reports of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance. I apologize for not being able to deal with those when we reached them on the Order Paper. I will not deal with the first one at this time, but hope to speak on that report tomorrow.

Since we are dealing with supply, I thought it prudent that perhaps I should move the adoption of the report standing in my name, number two.

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

Motion agreed to and report adopted.

### INTERNAL ECONOMY, BUDGETS AND ADMINISTRATION

#### FOURTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Furey, seconded by the Honourable Senator Cowan, for the adoption of the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration (*Senate Estimates 2008-2009*), presented in the Senate on Thursday, February 28, 2008.—(*Honourable Senator Di Nino*)

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

Motion agreed to and report adopted.

[*Translation*]

### ARTHRITIS

#### INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Comeau, calling the attention of the Senate to the debilitating nature of arthritis and its effect on all Canadians.—(*Honourable Senator Stratton*)

**Hon. Terry Stratton:** Honourable senators, I rise to speak to the inquiry by my colleague, Senator Comeau, on the debilitating nature of arthritis and its effect on all Canadians.

I listened carefully to the speakers and I learned a great deal about this illness, which strikes one in six Canadians. More than five million Canadians, including 92,000 in my city of Winnipeg, suffer from this illness.

[*English*]

Senator Comeau has given us a very clear picture of the disease itself and the cost to the people of this nation. He cited Statistics Canada figures from 1998 that put the yearly cost of work

disability from arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions at \$13.6 billion. I would like to know what that figure is today, 10 years later.

Senator Keon pointed out some of the knowledge gaps in our understanding of the disease, urging us to strengthen our resolve to support research into this disease until it is eliminated, as have some other terrible diseases in the past, such as smallpox and polio.

Through other comments as well, such as those of Senator Tardif and Senator Callbeck, we have gained a more complete understanding of the extent to which arthritis affects people, the pain through which they must suffer and the very real limitation this disease puts on their lives. Arthritis is often seen as a disease of the elderly, but it can inflict anyone at any age. In fact, three in five arthritis sufferers are under the age of 65. Approximately one in 1,000 children under the age of 16 is living with arthritis. As Senator Keon reminded us: “Age does play a role in the development and progression of the disease, and the prevalence of arthritis increases with age.”

• (1520)

Indeed, arthritis does affect one half of all Canadians over the age of 75. As our population ages, arthritis will take on a significantly higher profile than in the past. Sadly, there seems to be an inevitability about arthritis. The disease is not going away. Somehow, sufferers must learn to live through the pain and lessen the impact on their lives. They must fight a courageous battle to prevent it from gaining the upper hand.

Medication plays a role in lessening the pain and in improving mobility. This has been pointed out by previous speakers on the inquiry. However, sufferers must also rely on their attitude.

Senator Mercer quoted me with respect to Bette Davis, the film actress. He got the quote right but the words missing gave the impact. Bette Davis, as she was growing older, was interviewed. The interviewer asked her, “What is it like growing old?” Bette Davis looked the interviewer in the eye and said, “Growing old ain’t for sissies.” Truer words have never been spoken. There is an important nugget buried in Ms. Davis’ somewhat cynical comment that speaks to how we react to adversity. There are two ways to respond when faced with the difficulty of living with an extremely debilitating disease; we can roll over or fight.

I am not minimizing the pain or struggle with which people with arthritis must live and endure. The mental and physical battles that must be fought to get through the day are likely to be more than many of us would want to face unless fighting those battles has become the only way to get through.

The Arthritis Society website, [www.arthritis.ca](http://www.arthritis.ca), speaks to the heavy emotional toll that a chronic disease can have, pointing out that:

For many, a classic symptom of arthritis is depression — feelings of helplessness and isolation, lack of meaning and prolonged despondency, mood swings and emotional outbursts, sleep disorders and lack of appetite, leading to significant weight loss. As a result, some people end up abusing alcohol and drugs; they may develop a poor self-image and even lose their will to live. Some people never find their way out of this emotional tumble, and some have even entertained thoughts of suicide.

What do we do: Roll over or fight? Honourable senators, the evidence is that fighting back is the better choice.

A December 9, 2003, *New York Times* article reported on a study that tracked older sufferers for three years. It found that, in addition to medication: "... factors like self-confidence and social support also appeared to predict who was able to avoid being disabled by the arthritis." The U.S. National Institute of Arthritis, Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases stated:

Perhaps the best thing you can do for your health is to keep a positive attitude. People must decide to make the most of things when faced with the challenges of osteoarthritis. This attitude — a goodhealth mindset — doesn't just happen. It takes work, every day. And with the right attitude, you will achieve it.

As an aside, I would be curious to learn about the impact of a positive attitude on ailments in general. Perhaps at some other time Senator Keon can shed light on that based on his experience.

The Arthritis Society urges people to visit its website and: "Do not let arthritis beat you." The society encourages arthritis sufferers to respond actively to the disease and to fight the downward spiral, listing several tips to help people along the way. I have picked a few examples such as exercise. A properly-designed exercise program can decrease pain, increase flexibility and fitness and boost spirits. Not exercising may mean the loss of the use of one's joints.

Staying positive can actually help physical well-being. A positive attitude helps to minimize the stress factors that relate to flare-ups and improves the ability to cope. Following a proper diet can help to keep weight down — as many of us in this room know, that is very important — it lessens the stress on joints and optimizes health.

Think about things that bring happiness. Look for something beautiful in life. Read, listen to music and remember that distraction lessens pain. Take control of life. The Arthritis Society recommends being armed with information and learning from the experience of others in similar situations.

I suggest that it is helpful to look not only to people who have arthritis but also to those who have faced other struggles. We know these people. Look at kids in our local hospitals shrugging off debilitating ailments so they can play with their friends. There are those around us who manage to press on despite their own struggles. As a recent example, Senator Gustafson had angioplasty last Monday and was in the chamber last Tuesday. That is quite remarkable.

Honourable senators, the bottom line is this: In dealing with a difficult and chronic situation, somehow we need to maintain a positive spirit. We need to be active both mentally and physically. I leave you with a quote from Leroy "Satchel" Paige, a Hall of Fame pitcher who fought against poverty and racism on his road to success. He did not make the major leagues until his 40s, the last part of his career. He said: "Don't look back. Something might be gaining on you." I take real inspiration from that. Let us keep our eyes forward and ensure that something does not catch up to us for as long as possible.

[ Senator Stratton ]

I commend two poems for honourable senators to read. They address attitudes as we grow older. The first, *Crossing the Bar*, is by Lord Alfred Tennyson. The second, *Prospice*, is by Robert Browning. I prefer Browning's poem.

**Hon. Terry M. Mercer:** Honourable senators, I rise to speak on this inquiry on a subject that, unfortunately, is a little too near and dear to my heart, my legs, my ankles, my fingers and my elbows. Unfortunately for honourable senators on the government side — and Senator Munson, who suffers the most — arthritis does not affect my vocal cords.

Senator Stratton is quite right that positive attitude, exercise and weight loss are all very important. It is interesting talking about exercise and arthritis. Exercise is a treatment but, in many cases, also the cause. Believe it or not, many years ago I was a runner. I ran 10 kilometres a day for many years — usually because people were chasing me. Like Satchel Paige, I did not want to look back; I did not want anyone to gain on me.

The running made me physically fit at the time but, over the years, it wore down my knees to the extent that arthritis set in. There were many years when there was not one step that I took at any time of the day, no matter what medication I took, that was not painful. It got to the point where I had to have surgery; I had my knees scoped and scraped down and repaired by an orthopaedic surgeon. That lasted only a couple of years. Once you have the disease, it stays with you. You try and maintain proper weight and moderate exercise.

However, it does come back. In my case, I have had three total knee replacements because one replacement did not work. As we all know, that happened to me last year.

• (1530)

The positive attitude that Senator Stratton spoke about is important, because you cannot let these things get you down. If you let them get you down, it will do just that.

In the experience that I have gone through in the last few years with all of my knee replacements, one of the most interesting things I discovered that is missing from our health care system in most provinces is the fact that you treat the patient only in the hospital. I have become so crippled up that they had to give me a new knee; they took me into the hospital, gave me wonderful care and a new knee, gave me a moderate amount of care afterwards in the hospital, then took me to the front door and said, "Good luck, you are on your way." They gave me a list of things I should be doing and said, "By the way, you should probably do some physiotherapy."

I have been very lucky in my professional life. Everywhere I have gone, I have had a health plan that has provided me with physiotherapy. All honourable senators have a very good health plan that provides us with almost unlimited amounts of physiotherapy if we need it.

However, when they told me that, I could not help but think of the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who find themselves in the same situation. They come to the front doors of hospitals all

across this country, and having had extremely good care — having had knees or hips replaced — they are brought to the front door by the staff who say, “Good luck, and by the way, make sure you get some physiotherapy.”

Some of these people can barely afford to pay the rent, to buy groceries and the necessities of life. They can have the most positive attitude they want, but it does not do much if they are not getting quality care.

I have been fortunate for almost the past two years now to receive physiotherapy at a clinic in Ottawa from an extremely professional staff. The one physiotherapist I see a couple of times a week is extraordinarily talented and professional in how she treats me. However, I continue to think, “What about the people who do not have that service?”

As we go forward and talk about this very important inquiry, we need to decide what we will do with the knowledge we pick up as we listen to each other talk about the debilitating disease of arthritis. We need to remember that when the opportunity presents itself — those of us who will be here for a while and, in the case of my party, when we get back into power — we need to be pressing the people who are in control of health policy. The current members of the Conservative Party need to be pressing their Minister of Health to do the same thing, to give strong consideration to expanding the universality of our health care system to include physiotherapy.

The quality service I received from orthopaedic surgeons and some marvellous nurses in the hospitals I have been in because of my arthritis has been exemplary, but it has only worked and been helpful to me when I added physiotherapy to the mix. Again, I am concerned about the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who do not have access to physiotherapy.

We should consider that as we go forward in our careers in this place, and as we go forward in our careers in politics. If we can influence public policy to add physiotherapy as part of the treatment that is covered by our Medicare program, we should do that.

I thank all honourable senators for listening to this worthwhile discussion. Many others in this chamber probably have arthritis, too; and I hope, if you do, that it is much milder than some people's. My case is not as severe as many others; I consider myself very lucky. However, I also know that if I have this amount of pain, how much they must have. I sympathize with them and I think we all should.

On motion of Senator Harb, debate adjourned.

[Translation]

**The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*:** Honourable senators, pursuant to order adopted by the Senate yesterday, March 11, 2008, the sitting is suspended and will be reconvened at the call of the Chair, with a fifteen minute bell.

Honourable senators, do I have permission to leave the chair?

**Some Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

The sitting was suspended.

• (1850)

The sitting was resumed.

#### APPROPRIATION BILL NO. 4, 2007-08

##### FIRST READING

**The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*** informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-48, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008.

Bill read first time.

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

On motion of Senator Comeau, pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate on Tuesday, March 11, 2008, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading at the next sitting of the Senate.

[English]

#### APPROPRIATION BILL NO. 1, 2008-09

##### FIRST READING

**The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*** informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-49, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the financial year ending March 31, 2009.

Bill read first time.

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

On motion of Senator Comeau, pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate on Tuesday, March 11, 2008, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading at the next sitting of the Senate.

The Senate adjourned until Thursday, March 13, 2008, at 1:30 p.m.

## CONTENTS

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

	PAGE		PAGE
<b>Afghanistan—Fallen Soldier</b>		Mexico—Case of Brenda Martin.	
Silent Tribute.		Hon. Jane Cordy . . . . .	981
The Hon. the Speaker <i>pro tempore</i> . . . . .	978	Hon. Marjory LeBreton . . . . .	981
		Hon. Joan Fraser . . . . .	982
		Hon. Jim Munson . . . . .	982
<b>Visitors in the Gallery</b>		<b>Public Works and Government Services</b>	
The Hon. the Speaker <i>pro tempore</i> . . . . .	978	Quebec Aircraft Industry—Lockheed Martin Contract.	
<hr/>		Hon. Jean-Claude Rivest . . . . .	983
<b>SENATORS' STATEMENTS</b>		Hon. Michael Fortier . . . . .	983
<b>Quebec</b>		<b>Elections Canada</b>	
Four Hundredth Anniversary Celebrations—		Westmount—Ville-Marie—Election to Fill Riding Vacancy.	
Meeting of Parliamentarians.		Hon. Marcel Prud'homme . . . . .	984
Hon. Lise Bacon . . . . .	978	Hon. Marjory LeBreton . . . . .	984
<b>Alberta</b>		<b>Public Works and Government Services</b>	
Congratulations to Progressive Conservatives		Quebec Aircraft Industry—Lockheed Martin Contract.	
on Winning Provincial Election.		Hon. Jean-Claude Rivest . . . . .	984
Hon. Bert Brown . . . . .	978	<hr/>	
<b>Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe</b>		<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b>	
<b>Parliamentary Assembly</b>		<b>Income Tax Act (Bill C-253)</b>	
Hon. Jerahmiel S. Grafstein . . . . .	979	Bill to Amend—Second Reading—Debate Adjourned.	
<b>The Late Colonel Jean Doré</b>		Hon. Wilfred P. Moore . . . . .	985
Tribute to Former Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod.		Hon. Hugh Segal . . . . .	987
Hon. Terry Stratton . . . . .	979	Hon. Lillian Eva Dyck . . . . .	987
<b>Death of Eugen Kedl, C.M.</b>		<b>National Security and Defence</b>	
Hon. Dennis Dawson . . . . .	979	Budget—Study on National Security Policy—	
<b>National Aboriginal Achievement Awards, 2008</b>		Report of Committee Adopted.	
Hon. Lillian Eva Dyck . . . . .	980	Hon. David Tkachuk . . . . .	988
<hr/>		Hon. A. Raynell Andreychuk . . . . .	989
<b>ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS</b>		Hon. Gerald J. Comeau . . . . .	989
<b>Citizenship Act (Bill S-231)</b>		Hon. Roméo Antonius Dallaire . . . . .	989
Bill to Amend—First Reading.		Hon. Hugh Segal . . . . .	990
Hon. Hugh Segal . . . . .	980	Hon. Anne C. Cools . . . . .	990
<hr/>		<b>The Estimates, 2007-08</b>	
<b>QUESTION PERIOD</b>		Final Report of National Finance Committee	
<b>Foreign Affairs and International Trade</b>		on Main Estimates Adopted.	
United States Democratic Party Leadership Race—		Hon. Joseph A. Day . . . . .	991
Leak of Diplomatic Memorandum.		<b>Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration</b>	
Hon. Céline Hervieux-Payette . . . . .	981	Fourth Report of Committee Adopted . . . . .	991
Hon. Marjory LeBreton . . . . .	981	<b>Arthritis</b>	
		Inquiry—Debate Continued.	
		Hon. Terry Stratton . . . . .	991
		Hon. Terry M. Mercer . . . . .	992
		<b>Appropriation Bill No. 4, 2007-08 (Bill C-48)</b>	
		First Reading . . . . .	993
		<b>Appropriation Bill No. 1, 2008-09 (Bill C-49)</b>	
		First Reading . . . . .	993









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