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THE HONOURABLE NOËL A. KINSELLA
SPEAKER

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THE SENATE

Wednesday, June 3, 2009

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

Prayers.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, before calling for Senators' Statements, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Dan Hays, my predecessor as Speaker of the Senate of Canada; the Honourable Mabel DeWare; the Honourable Erminie Cohen; and the Honourable Alasdair Graham.

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

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

TRIBUTES

THE HONOURABLE NORMAN K. ATKINS

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I have received a notice from the Leader of the Government who requests, pursuant to rule 22(10), that the time provided for the consideration of Senators' Statements be extended today for the purpose of paying tribute to the Honourable Senator Norman Atkins, who will be retiring from the Senate on June 27, 2009.

I remind honourable senators that pursuant to the *Rules of the Senate of Canada*, each senator will be allowed only three minutes to speak and may do so only once. However, if it is agreed that we continue with our tributes to Senator Atkins into the time subsequently provided for Senators' Statements, if necessary, we would therefore have up to 30 minutes for tributes and any of the time not used for tributes would be used for other statements.

Is it agreed, honourable senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government and Minister of State (Seniors)): Honourable senators, this is one of the times when we wish we were not restricted to three minutes, because three minutes will not allow enough time to adequately pay tribute to Senator Norman Atkins.

Honourable senators, today, after 23 years of service in the Senate of Canada, we formally say goodbye to our colleague, Senator Norman Atkins, who was summoned to the Senate two days after his birthday in 1986. I remember it well.

Like so many of us here today, Senator Atkins was first exposed to the world of politics in his youth. As a teenager, his great mentor, eventual business partner and brother-in-law, Dalton Camp, recruited him to be a gofer in the 1952 New Brunswick

provincial election. This election resulted in a great victory for the Progressive Conservative party led by Hugh John Flemming who was later elected to Parliament and served in the cabinet of the Right Honourable John George Diefenbaker. For Norman, this was the beginning of a lifetime in politics, in more federal and provincial elections than he can probably count — although I bet he can count them.

All honourable senators know of his long and accomplished career behind the scenes and on the front lines of Canadian political life well before he came to this place. He served as a campaign chair for the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney in the 1984 and 1988 elections, both of which produced majority governments. He was a senior adviser, strategist and confidant to the Right Honourable Robert Lorne Stanfield and former Ontario Premier, William Davis. Few people in the history of Canadian political life share his depth of knowledge and expertise in advertising, strategic planning and communications. Before coming to the Senate, Senator Atkins was President of Camp Associates Advertising and was a director of the Institute of Canadian Advertising.

Since his appointment to the Senate of Canada in June 1986 by former Prime Minister Mulroney, Norman Atkins has been a proud representative of the people of Ontario. In over two decades, he has served as a member of numerous Senate committees, most notably on the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence and the Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs. He has been a true champion for the men and women who serve in the Armed Forces, veterans and their families. I have no doubt at all that this dedication is rooted in the pride and respect for his father George's service as a gunner in the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

• (1340)

Honourable senators, I have known Norman Atkins for a long time. I am personally grateful for his friendship, guiding hand, advice and support along the path of my own personal political career. It is no secret that in recent years we have chosen slightly different political paths, a fact that I sincerely regret. I wish we could have convinced him to be part of our large and diversified Conservative political family, but alas that was not to be. However, we have remained friends.

Senator Atkins, on behalf of your Conservative colleagues in this place and myself personally, I wish you a very happy retirement. We will indeed miss you.

Hon. James S. Cowan (Leader of the Opposition): As the Leader of the Government in the Senate has said, it is impossible to cover the contribution of our friend Norm Atkins to the public life of Canada in three minutes.

While I have known the name Norman Atkins for decades, I have come to know him as a person only in the last four years. During that relatively short time, I have come to value his advice and, above all, his friendship.

Senator Atkins cut his political teeth as a self-described “gofer” in the 1950s in New Brunswick and later in my province of Nova Scotia. He was part of Robert Stanfield’s team that came to government in 1956 — an election that brought my father to the legislature of Nova Scotia — and an end to 23 years of Liberal rule.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Cowan: I assume that response was for the election of my father.

Senator Atkins remained a key adviser and organizer for Robert Stanfield during his long career in provincial and federal politics, all the while organizing provincial campaigns in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Ontario, Newfoundland, and even Bermuda.

He also managed riding campaigns for his brother-in-law and co-conspirator, the late Dalton Camp, and leadership campaigns for Robert Stanfield, Allan Lawrence, Roy McMurtry and Larry Grossman. As Senator LeBreton pointed out, he ultimately chaired the successful national Progressive Conservative campaigns of 1984 and 1988.

His reputation as a member of the Big Blue Machine is legendary. Robert Mason Lee, in his book with the intriguing title, *One Hundred Monkeys: The Triumph of Popular Wisdom in Canadian Politics* had this to say about the 1988 campaign:

The Tories ran three-day candidate colleges in Ottawa, hosted by Norman Atkins and known as Norm’s Boot Camp. The school gave candidates the motivational boost of an evangelical retreat, the self-confidence of a Dale Carnegie course, and the sales enthusiasm of an Amway convention; all conducted with the forced bonhomie of a gathering of the Moose Lodge.

He went on to say that:

Atkins, as usual, was the heart of the Conservative campaign, privy to its inside intelligence and responsible for maintaining its strength and momentum.

A native of Montclair, New Jersey, Senator Atkins graduated from Appleby College in Oakville, Ontario and from Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. In recognition of his contributions to public service in Canada, he was awarded an honorary degree by Acadia University in 2000.

Norman Atkins was appointed to the Senate by Prime Minister Mulroney in 1986, and chaired the national caucus of the Progressive Conservative Party from 1993 to 1997. Senator Atkins has served the Senate as a member of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration, as Deputy Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence and as a member of its Veterans Affairs subcommittee.

It is well known — as Senator LeBreton pointed out — that Senator Atkins was opposed to the merger of the Progressive Conservative Party and the Canadian Alliance. In his speech to

the Senate in February 2004, Senator Atkins traced his history and involvement with the Progressive Conservative Party beginning in 1952 and deplored the actions of so many of his colleagues who abandoned the traditions of the Progressive Conservative Party to join the Conservative Party of Canada, which resulted from the merger.

While he did not rule out joining that party at some point in the future, he said that for the moment he would remain a Progressive Conservative senator. I note that nothing has transpired since that date that has persuaded him to change his original principled position.

Honourable senators, despite whatever disagreements might arise on issues of public policy between him and members of the government or the opposition, all of us recognize the sincerity with which our friend has expressed his views, and all of us have appreciated the vast experience that has informed those views.

• (1345)

Within the last several years, I can recall several instances where he has risen to urge both government and opposition to “put a little water in their wine” in order to reach a compromise solution to some vexing issue where partisanship seemed to him to have gotten the best of us. We shall miss these wise and timely interventions.

Despite his retirement from the Senate, I know he will retain an active interest in the goings-on in this place and will be available to advise whenever and wherever asked. While he certainly must have mixed feelings about leaving this great institution that has been such a large part of his life for the past 23 years, his retirement will give him more time to devote to his many other interests, which I understand will include the publication of his political memoirs, a book that is sure to be a bestseller. He will also be able to spend more time with Mary and members of his family here and in his beloved New Brunswick.

Senator Atkins, as you leave us, we thank you for all you have contributed to the public life of Canada — in the Senate and throughout the country — and we wish you a long, healthy and happy retirement.

Hon. Irving Gerstein: Honourable senators, I wish to pay tribute to Senator Norman Atkins, not only as a great servant of this place but also as my political mentor.

The 1965 federal election campaign was the start of my political career. In those days, I was a humble canvasser — not even a poll captain — knocking on doors for Dalton Camp in the Eglinton riding in Toronto. The manager of that campaign, my first commander-in-chief, was none other than Norman Atkins, who, even in 1965, was a veteran of many federal and provincial election campaigns.

Clearly, I cannot have been very good at my canvassing job, as Dalton Camp failed to get elected that year and the late Honourable Mitchell Sharp won again.

However, Norman did not cast me aside. Through the federal election campaigns of 1968, 1972, 1974, 1984 and 1988 and the Ontario PC leadership campaign of 1971, I was fortunate enough to work with this great political operator, who was a mentor and an inspiration to me both for his political wisdom and for his fundamental decency.

Honourable senators, my ability to win elections as a canvasser never much improved from that first defeat in 1965, so I began to focus whatever skills I had on raising money for the party. As I have described at other times, I have since enjoyed a long and wonderful career as a party bagman.

The campaigns on which I worked with Senator Atkins are only a small fraction of the campaigns he has fought. Norman Atkins is an old warhorse of politics and has been involved in campaigning for over 50 years. It is this contribution that I wish to chiefly record.

Whatever our political differences, honourable senators, all of us in this chamber can agree that the freedom to choose their government is the most fundamental right of the Canadian people. In all his tireless political campaigning and in his personal integrity, Norman Atkins has shown a vigorous commitment to this democratic process, which is the lifeblood of Canada.

Norman Atkins' dedication to democracy, honourable senators, is something that we should all recognize and applaud.

Thank you, Norman.

Hon. Joyce Fairbairn: Honourable senators, it is very difficult to say goodbye to a colleague who for so many years has been a friend in this chamber and an icon in the public life of this country. From my earliest days in this building in the 1960s, which is a long time ago, the name Norman Atkins was front and centre in the political life of Ontario and also the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada.

I first met Norman when I was working away in the Parliamentary Press Gallery, then as a so-called "female newsmen." That was back in the 1960s, and whenever there was an election, there he was. Be it national or provincial, in Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick or Manitoba, the mind was there and the hand was out. This fellow was at the heart of the Progressive Conservative Party. When premiers and prime ministers needed guidance and credible support, Norman was the man, along with his great friend, Dalton Camp.

• (1350)

His skill in politics is truly awesome. His openness to journalists was friendly and considerably helpful. His love for this country is second only to that for his three sons and partner Mary LeBlanc. He was viewed as a political icon within his party and was also a good friend of those who chose to take a different political path, such as the great Keith Davey, his counterpart in the Liberal Party of Canada.

Norman has been a vigorous and productive deputy chair of the Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, and the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration. He was an active member of many other

Senate committees including Finance, Banking, Defence, Foreign Affairs, and Transport; and the world rolls on.

This gentleman has a sense of humour that never ends and a knowledge of public life that is worth a special book, which he might consider writing as he leaves the Hill, in fact, I am sure he will consider writing it.

At this time in public life, it is difficult to match the history that our colleague has created and the deep friendships he has made with those who have worked with different parties. His contribution to this place will never be forgotten, and I wish him many happy years ahead with Mary and his family and his friends. May you take with you, dear friend, fond memories of this place and of a great party that contributed much to the history of this province and the country.

I will miss you, Norm, but I am happy to hear that you will still be around with us in the city of Ottawa, as well as in the special place of New Brunswick.

Hon. Michael A. Meighen: Honourable senators, this is indeed a bittersweet day for me, and I know it is for Kemp as well. I refer to him as "Kemp" because no one else has mentioned that yet. Those of you who have known Norman Kempton Atkins for many years will know that outside these precincts, in particular in New Brunswick, he is known as Kemp to everyone. I did not get to know him that early on so he has always been Norman to me but, from time to time, I call him Kemp when I am angry with him, which happens only once in a blue moon.

Senator Segal is the author of numerous publications, one of which is called *In Defence of Civility*, which must have been written about our colleague, Senator Atkins. Of all the friends and colleagues in this chamber, both past and present, I can think of few, if any, who match our colleague Senator Atkins in terms of civility. He brings to the public discourse, to his private life and to his dealings with his friends a civility that is all too rare in society today. Indeed, he truly puts a lie to the old saying, "Nice guys finish last."

Norm Atkins finished first in the innumerable fields in which he has excelled during his life. Honourable senators, I will not review the specifics as other senators have done but think of the advertising world, where he ran a large and successful operation for many years; think of the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation, where he has been a leading spokesperson for many years; think of Acadia University, where both he and his father excelled at football and where he has dealt with many of the challenges that institution has faced with his usual skill and civility; and think of New Brunswick, in particular the Robertson's Point Inter-Provincial Tennis Classic and Rough-in. Some of you may not be familiar with that well-known institution, but it was a place where plots were hatched, campaigns planned and good fellowship was to be had.

• (1355)

Things changed over the years, but one thing was always constant: Norm Atkins always won at tennis — always. It did not matter who his partner was; it did not matter, some would say, what the score was; Norman ended up with the trophy at the end, and if anyone complained, they did not get invited back.

I was not, like Senator Gerstein, under the sway of Senator Atkins in Toronto because I had the good fortune to grow up in Montreal where, as John Diefenbaker would say, only the game laws protected Tories in those days. Norman did not let that bother him. He came down to help me in the two campaigns in which I ran as a candidate in 1972 and 1974, notwithstanding that he had heavy responsibilities in Toronto and throughout Ontario.

I can say, Norman, if the truth be known, that were it not for your help, I would have lost by a heck of a lot more than 11,000 votes. We will miss you greatly.

The biggest loser today is the Senate of Canada. The Senate, for Norman, is a sacred place, almost a holy place, and a place for which he holds the greatest of affection. No doubt, when Norman speaks in a few moments, he will have something to say about this institution and the way he holds it so dearly in his own heart.

Norman, thank you for everything you have done for public life in Canada. Thank you for your friendship. Godspeed, and congratulations on bringing together the most ecumenical group I have seen in the gallery at one time.

Hon. Jim Munson: Kemp, mine is a testimony of friendship with a mentor, and it goes back a long time. It started decades ago when Dalton Camp, Finlay MacDonald, and Norm Kempton Atkins were contributing their formidable talents to many Progressive Conservative campaigns in different provincial races and the federal arena.

When Norman Atkins was creating the Big Blue Machine in Ontario, I was starting out as a young reporter. It was after I joined the National Press Club that I started hearing the Dalton stories about Norman. Then I heard more from Finlay MacDonald. The Conservative election campaign of 1984 provided me with more opportunities to observe the Big Blue Machine at its best, and Norman was running it.

No one could have predicted all those years ago that this Progressive Conservative would end up being the political mentor of a fledgling Liberal senator. Norman Atkins is my mentor in the Senate. He is my political man of wisdom. It is he to whom I go for guidance.

When I was offered the position of opposition whip, I was not sure I wanted it. I asked Norman what he thought, and he said: "It is an opportunity; grab it." Now I can blame him.

When I needed advice about my private member's bill on autism, and many other things, it was Norman who gave me the encouragement to keep fighting for this important cause. As true mentors always are, he is a living example and model. His sense of integrity and his generosity of spirit are character traits that inspire others.

Having given advice to future premiers and prime ministers, his dedication to public service and respect for institutions is a source of inspiration to those who will follow in the Senate. Our children would be wise to understand his thinking and his beliefs. The courage and grace with which he lives his daily life in the face of a difficult physical challenge illustrates his strength of character. He will continue to be my mentor.

I want to thank him.

His middle name may be Kemp or Kempton, but for those of us in the Senate, Mary, his middle name is "integrity."

Hon. Hugh Segal: Honourable senators, it is a distinct privilege to underline a few of the contributions to our politics, democracy and commerce of Senator Norman Kempton Atkins.

I first met the senator 15 years before his elevation to this place, in the 1971 general election in Ontario, where William G. Davis won a commanding Tory majority as a beacon of urbane and progressive conservatism after a successful campaign that was largely due to the organizational leadership and design of Norman Atkins as the senior campaign manager.

• (1400)

Through a series of subsequent elections, in Ontario, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador, federally, and in other provinces and even abroad in Bermuda, as has been mentioned, I saw the real Norman Atkins — a deeply human, generous and inspiring campaign leader who respected his opponents, served party leaders and the partisan cause with intensity, loyalty and determination and who mentored young partisans so that their skills might grow to reflect their intensity, aspiration and eagerness to serve.

Honourable senators, we could fill every seat in this place and in the galleries, with the young people who served their party, province and country, in elected and unelected roles because of his mentorship and inspiration. No one has more to be grateful for to Senator Atkins than the senator now on his feet. I am delighted to admit to that debt in all its didactic, developmental and emotional breadth without an ounce of hesitation. I hold him blameless in all my errors and miscalculations, but delight in giving him full credit, as he would be delighted to take, for any tiny achievement ever experienced within my past or present grasp.

Honourable senators, I wish that he had come to the end of his Senate career as a Conservative — a national party that has within it room for the Saskatchewan party members, Progressive Conservatives from all our provinces, Quebec Liberals, Action démocratique members, and even our colleagues from the old reform party. Yet, I profoundly respect his reasons for remaining with that party brand by which he was identified upon elevation here by the Governor General, upon the advice of Prime Minister Mulroney.

I have always viewed Norman Atkins as Dalton Camp's brother-in-law — carrying Dalton and so many of us on his broad back — and never the other way around.

To have worked for and with Norman Atkins in politics, business and philanthropy — and I have done all three — is to have been mentored, coached and inspired to serve a higher calling, and to do so with all one's skill and intellect. To have been in common cause in a campaign was to have understood the special Norman Atkins nexus of people, principle, communications and ideas in a special way indeed. No coach, honourable senators, ever built a team on any ice surface, football field or baseball diamond as well as Norman Atkins built his

campaign teams, campaign after campaign, in support of a better world, a better province, a better Canada, or, more latterly, a world with less disease. To have served on his teams at various times and places was one of the greatest privileges in my life.

Every party had a campaign leader in the latter part of the 20th century who was irreplaceable, seminal and emblematic of the best in campaign competence and insight. That Senator Norman Kempton Atkins of Grand Lake and Jemseg, New Brunswick, was that person for my party is beyond question. That he brought those skills to this place to serve the veterans, the members of our Armed Forces, university students, medical research, and a strong national defence, reflects the patriot, partisan, and remarkable citizen Senator Atkins will always be.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean-Claude Rivest: Honourable senators, I would like to join my colleagues in paying well-deserved tribute to our colleague, Honourable Senator Norman Atkins. Throughout his career, Senator Atkins' political involvement has exposed him to tremendous pressure from all sides, including Quebec, on the national unity issue. Norman Atkins' political thinking was in the same vein as that of Robert Stanfield, and he shared the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney's positive approach. In my opinion, it is thanks to Norman Atkins and the many Canadians like him, who are open and committed to linguistic duality and diversity in Canada, that our country is still united.

I think that Senator Atkins' personal attributes and the political and even partisan engagement he demonstrated helped strengthen our country's unity. Like all Canadians, regardless of their origins, social status or economic status, he too wanted to help build this country.

• (1405)

Norman Atkins is one of them. He is a truly great Canadian. People appreciate his participation, the quality of his work and his contribution to the Senate. Because of his commitment, he has served the public good and Canada very well.

[*English*]

Hon. Lowell Murray: Honourable senators, our friend Norman Atkins is leaving us and, as a glance at the retirement schedule will indicate, I will not be far behind him. I am sure I speak for both of us in thanking the government leadership for helping to facilitate our departures by moving our seats so close to the exit, as they did several months ago. This thoughtful gesture will not soon be forgotten.

I do not intend to speak about his exemplary commitment to his job as a senator since his arrival here 23 years ago. It is well known to colleagues. I intend to speak about that at tonight's dinner to people who, if they are like most Canadians, are lamentably ill-informed about the Senate and what goes on here.

I do want to say a word, as others have, about his remarkable contribution to our political and electoral system. It is, of course, ironic that Norman, who spent most of his adult life advancing the cause of a political party, should end his parliamentary career

[Senator Segal]

as an independent. I say that without rancour, and I hasten to add that we were never excluded; we made our own choices and we have stood by them without regret.

Norman served, as has been mentioned, the most valuable and enviable apprenticeship imaginable during the 1950s and 1960s at the side of our mutual and greatly missed friend Dalton Camp in election campaigns and at party conventions federally and, provincially, in the Atlantic provinces and in Manitoba. However, it was in Ontario, our largest province, that he came into his own.

In 1971 he took command of the provincial organization of the Progressive Conservative Party, a party that had been in power for seventeen years, through eight winning elections and under three different leaders. They were about to enter a ninth election with their fourth premier. Under Norman's organizational leadership, the party was rejuvenated and regenerated and went on to hold office for another fourteen years through four winning elections.

Much has been said and written about how Norman modernized the party organization in Ontario, introducing the latest technology and systems to an age-old democratic process. That, however, would be plumbing — good plumbing, expensive plumbing, but still plumbing — were it not for the human qualities that Norman brought to the job. His gift for friendship, his talent for bringing people together, motivating them and getting them to focus on the job at hand and on the ultimate goal, his capacity for long hours of work — these were the unique qualities that made all the difference. It was a fortuitous — I would say a perfect — match between organizer and political leader, Norman and Premier Bill Davis, a consensus-builder par excellence whose unfailingly humane and constructive approach to politics and government remains a luminous example to us all.

Norman brought his experience and personal qualities to organizational leadership in the federal party. His federal team was numerous, devoted and covered every part of every province. Some of them have made the trek to Ottawa for this occasion and are in our galleries. All of them join us in fond recollection and a salute to his phenomenal contribution.

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: Honourable senators, this is a very sad day in my short political career in the Senate. I will be losing a close friend. As I was preparing for today, I thought I would review Senator Atkins' biography. Then I wondered, why am I paying tribute to this man? He was born in the United States. I was born in Nova Scotia. He went to Acadia, the second best small university in Nova Scotia, while I went to St. Mary's — the best. He was a past president and honorary director of the Albany Club. They would not let me into the Albany Club.

• (1410)

He headed up the Progressive Conservative Party, both provincially and nationally in campaigns. I have been to only one Progressive Conservative Party meeting, and they threw me out; I was there as an observer.

He was a big supporter of Brian Mulroney, Bob Stanfield and Bill Davis. I was a big supporter of Pierre Trudeau, Jean Chrétien and Gerry Regan. He was the national campaign director during the 1984 campaign, and I was national campaign director during several other successful campaigns.

He and I could not be more unlike except in one thing — our understanding of people. The key phrase is that Norm has been a great asset to the Progressive Conservative Party and to the political process in this country, and mainly because he has been an asset to the Senate, he has been a great friend to many people.

We are different, honourable senators, but we are similar. Norm has a great respect for the political process, political parties, political organizations and for community involvement.

He has been an asset to this place, a great friend to me, and we have also forged a great friendship in our fight against diabetes. He has been an active member of the Canadian Diabetes Association, an organization of which I was at one time the executive director in Toronto. We have forged that relationship and just recently joined the diabetes caucus here, where he and I are the flies in the ointment in trying to keep people focused on the Canadian ball. He has a reason to be focused: He suffers from type 2 diabetes, and, I am proud to say, his son was the first person with type 1 diabetes to be hired as a professional firefighter in this country. Today, Senator Atkins' son is an acting captain on the City of Toronto Fire Services.

We will miss the type of fight that Senator Atkins has brought on behalf of the people with diabetes. We will miss the strength that he gave to his son to get the job done.

I will miss his advice. As Senator Munson remarked, Senator Atkins has been a true guiding light to those of us who sought his counsel. He has always been willing to give it and occasionally give us hell. I remember receiving phone calls from Norman at different times telling me where he thought we were going wrong.

My friend Senator Murray talked about the fact that they chose to remain as Progressive Conservatives, and I do want to talk about opportunities missed. It is an opportunity missed by the current government and by the current government caucus not having Norm as a member of their crew. Stephen Harper's loss was our gain.

Norman, we will miss you. I hope we will be able to stay in touch, and we look forward to many healthy years in the future.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, as agreed to earlier, tributes will be continued under Inquiries, but at this time, I call upon the Honourable Senator Atkins.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Norman K. Atkins: Your honour, honourable senators, let me begin by thanking those of you who have paid tribute to me today. Please bear with me while I deliver a few remarks, as I prepare to retire from this chamber. No doubt my comments will not do justice to the Senate and to the many men and women whom I have come to know over those years as friends and as Canadians devoted to peace, order and good governance.

• (1415)

It is a strange feeling, after many decades in the political arena, to have it officially confirmed that it is over. Oh, but how I have enjoyed almost every minute in this place that I have come to know intimately, love deeply and respect immensely, having been here for 23 years.

Some of it I would not have believed if I had not seen it for myself: for example, Senator Sparrow voting with the Progressive Conservatives to defeat the bill on the redevelopment of the Lester B. Pearson International Airport that would have denied Canadians legal recourse in the courts.

Honourable senators will know that I am not a great speech maker, as my friend Senator Banks reminds me occasionally. I know that to be the case, as so few of my colleagues have quoted my various interventions over the years. However, I should like to draw your attention to my first speech to the Senate made almost a quarter of a century ago. I said:

I have long been a student of the history of this place, its role in the political and constitutional life of our country, and the contribution it has made, is making and continues to make to Canadian public life.

Seated in this chamber, this important parliamentary arena, I have never stopped learning about the variety and the great complexities of the issues faced by Canada and its people. The Senate is a tremendous window on the nation and its problems and prospects. I have never stopped being impressed by the serious and significant work the Senate engages in to offer the Canadian public sound advice and strong public leadership.

I take great pride in having been somewhat instrumental in getting many people elected to legislatures across this country. I am humbled to have been appointed to this important house of Parliament by the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, with whom I fought two consecutive campaigns as national campaign chair and won two majority mandates.

Today I believe more strongly than ever that the founders built our distinctively Canadian system of parliamentary democracy better than they will ever know. I would like to convey my sincere appreciation to the Honourable Speaker, the officers of this chamber and to honourable senators from all sides for the support and kindness shown me since my appointment to this place. You have suffered me, not always gladly, and I appreciate it.

When I arrived here, the Senate was filled with great personalities and great contributors to Canada, such as Senator David Croll of the Senate poverty report fame. Senator Dic Doyle was here. He had been the very conscience of Canada's media as long-time editor of *The Globe and Mail*. No one could hoist another person on their own petard like Dic Doyle.

My old friend and campaign adversary Keith Davey was here. They say it is important to keep one's friends close and one's enemies closer. Maybe that is why he was so eager to be friendly when I arrived. As a result, we spent many hours together and enjoyed a very special friendship.

I learned a great deal from all of them and many others.

• (1420)

I am especially grateful for having come to know Senator John Lynch-Staunton, my former leader in the Senate. Senator Nurgitz, Senator Allan J. MacEachen, Senator Finlay MacDonald, Senator Alasdair Graham, Senator John Stewart,

Senator Erminie Cohen, Senator Staff Barootes, Senator DeWare — of New Brunswick fame — and Senator Kirby, along with many more, have all made a significant impression on me and made outstanding contributions to this nation.

I know many honourable senators understand what I speak of when I express my gratitude with being associated with such decent people dedicated to building a better Canada. Their considerable professional talents, their insights into the human condition and their political wisdom were devoted to Canada's service. This dedication is awe-inspiring.

The Senate is still filled with great people like Senator Keon. Of course, I have to express even greater appreciation to Senator Keon and to Dr. Beanlands because they have given me many more years than I ever thought I would have in this place.

Senator Joyal, Senator Carstairs, Senator Segal — I could go on, but I do not want to miss anyone and cause offense. Canada has benefited much from its tremendously talented sons and daughters who have sat in these chairs, many of whom would never have considered a role for themselves in Parliament if it were not for the distinctively Canadian parliamentary democratic tradition of an appointed Upper House.

I believe the current government, in its determination for democratic reform, is wide of the mark about their national institution. The Fathers of Confederation got it right when they created the Senate to be a chamber removed from the day-to-day "irrelevancies" that Dalton Camp used to speak about. For some, political posturing is an end in itself. I, after more than half a century in politics, still find partisanship stimulating and necessary, but it must always take second place to the national good.

Throughout my 23 years, the Senate has generally conducted itself as it was mandated to do by our Fathers of Confederation. Well done to all.

A word or two of appreciation is directed to some of my colleagues and friends for their support and guidance during my years in a small parliamentary Progressive Conservative caucus.

The ever youthful and much esteemed former Minister of Constitutional Affairs, Senator Lowell Murray, former Leader of the Government in the Senate, has a history of sound counsel, and he has been a personal friend since the mid-1950s. The only flaw that I see in Lowell is that he received his degree from St. Francis Xavier rather than Acadia.

A word of appreciation, too, for Senator Elaine McCoy, an astute and able Albertan in the Western Canadian Progressive Conservative tradition of Clark, Lougheed and Ghitter. Then there was Senator Bill Doody, who is no longer with us.

• (1425)

Throughout my public life I have always held on to the principle of loyalty, loyalty to my principles and steadfast in my commitment to them regardless of whether or not they put me into a difficult position — outside looking in, as it were.

[Senator Atkins]

There are those friends and foes who questioned my independence. The federal Progressive Conservative Party that I knew no longer exists. It represented my beliefs, and I felt that I was in the perfect position to act as a conscientious nuisance to those who had no choice to put water in their wine, if you will, and to act as "a burr in the saddle," to borrow a Western Canadian phrase, of those who had strayed too far from what works best in this enormously and beautifully complex country of ours.

I understand that not all Progressive Conservatives had that opportunity, but it was why I felt it was important for me to be an outside observer and a voice reminding this government of the past century of Canadian political party development and nation building.

I must be honest with you, honourable senators. Sometimes sitting in this chamber during some of the most convoluted discussions on arcane points of order, I spent some time, perhaps you did too, admiring the murals depicting scenes from the First World War. I, perhaps like you, consider them magnificent. They link us to our nation's past and to those who came before us, who dedicated their whole selves to important ideals. Canada's men and women in wartime and in peacetime have faced great dangers over the years to defend what is right.

Canadians have always sided with the values of freedom and those who have shouldered the responsibilities of freedom. I have been privileged to know and call friend some of those great Canadians who fulfilled those responsibilities, people like Brian Mulroney, Robert Stanfield, Bill Davis, Richard Hatfield, Peter Lougheed, Duff Roblin and Jean Charest, who held and hold leadership roles and uphold those values and responsibilities.

I also want to mention two persons who have had much to do with who I am and what I have done over the past years: First, my father, George Spicer Atkins. He was a Nova Scotian from Spencer's Island, Cumberland County. He served in uniform as a member of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 46th Queen's Battery, during the First World War at the Sommes. He was at Vimy on April 9, 1917, Passchendaele and Ypres. He was also the Commander of the Canadian Legion, Post 120 in New York during the Second World War.

My father taught me a great deal about values, ethics, loyalty to a cause and loyalty to one's beliefs. He was so proud of his country and its people; he was my greatest influence and a good man.

The second biggest influence in my life and my hero was my brother-in-law Dalton Kingsley Camp. He taught me first and foremost from the tender age of 11 to reach beyond what I thought I could achieve. He gave me my start in business and introduced me to politics — his version of it anyway. His encouragement and passion for people, for ideas and for Canada led me to organize my life in a way where I could give my full support to political candidates whose energies and ideas I believed needed to be heard, if not always win the day.

• (1430)

At this point, I should tip my hat to Roy McMurtry, who always got to be heard.

Life is all about showing up and truly involving oneself in one's community. Dalton Camp's determination to live a life of ideas and a life full of action was an inspiration to me. He once said: "Politics is made up largely of irrelevancies." I suppose that is why I was so good at it. I love a good jingle, a good tour bus, a nice beef barbeque or a baked beans supper, strawberry festival and Dixieland band.

Dalton applied his tremendous abilities and determination, and my knack for irrelevancies, to serious political candidates like Robert Stanfield. I was lucky to have been there with Dalton for much of what he was involved in — the good and the bad.

His not-always-selfless example also ensured I learned how to become a marketing and advertising executive, remain solvent and raise a growing family while doing what I could to promote men and women who had political promise.

I got my passion for Canada and passion for politics from these two men.

Honourable senators, I would be remiss if I did not mention some of the people who worked with me over the years in the political trenches; people like national directors, such as J.C. Pelletier, Pierre Fortier, Jodi White, Paul Curley, Malcolm Wickson, Jerry Lampert, John Laschinger, and others such as Harry Near, Marjory LeBreton, Allan Gregg, George Stratton, John Tory, Joan Peters, Tom MacMillan, Freddy Watson, Hugh MacAulay and Ian Fraser. That is just to mention a few. I will also add John Peloquin and Jean Bazin and our own caucus member, Pierre Claude Nolin, who were an inspiration to me because of their very evident loyalty and dedication to not only their party but to Canadian voters.

Combined with the talents of members of Parliament like Flora MacDonald, Joe Clark and Bill Jarvis, I have indeed been privileged in my work within the political realm.

I would love to mention many more, but there are just too many people who have been supportive throughout the years, both within the Senate and outside. They will all remain important to me. In fact, I have had a privileged career. I was able to use my well-honed supply chain management skills — learned as a procurement clerk, first class, in the U.S. Army — to good effect in support of a vision called "progressive conservatism." It had many adherents from Atlantic Canada to British Columbia, and many steps in between.

I have always considered myself to be a Stanfield Tory, ever since my days as a student at Acadia University. I mean that I associated myself with Stanfield in two ways: first, in terms of charisma. A 1972 *Time* magazine article suggested that "the much-abused political adjective 'charismatic' has never been applied to Robert Lorne Stanfield." I admit my charisma issue.

The second association is in terms of my political soul. Senator MacEachen once asked, "Who puts bread on the table when private markets fail to do so?" I dare say that Allan MacEachen could have easily been a Stanfield Tory. That there were and still are people like Stanfield and Camp makes it easier to retain a deep belief in party politics and a hope that sensible people will get elected to look after the less fortunate.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

• (1435)

Senator Atkins: Honourable senators, the Senate has examined many issues and acted as a brake on partisan pursuits of wayward prime ministers and all-controlling prime ministers' offices. There must be a higher purpose than partisanship.

The Senate has been a place where independent characters could pursue — with all their mind and skill — matters of great importance that had fallen by the wayside. These issues included human rights championed by Senator Kinsella, Senator Ghitter, Senator Di Nino, Senator Goldstein, Senator Andreychuk, Senator Prud'homme and Senator Pearson; the opportunities Katimavik could provide to at-risk youth by Senator Hébert; the environmental concerns long articulated by my friend Senator Spivak; or the Kirby Report, which impacted health care issues in this country and continues to do so.

One of my main concerns has long been issues related to post-secondary education, the drain on research funding and the effect of enormous student debt loads and the hardships those debt loads cause.

I want to commend the work of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, the committee I was a proud member of from the time the Senate established this standing committee in 2001. I think Senator Kenny is an outstanding chairperson and has done well. He transcends partisan politics and chaired a committee that brought forward issues that were of critical interest to Canadians. He once again raised the issue of how serious the party in power is about putting its money where its mouth is in protecting citizens from catastrophic terrorist attacks.

I remember, as will Senator Tommy Banks, Senator Wilfred Moore and others, that hardly a meeting went by when the issue of the Halifax Rifles did not come up. How thrilled Senator Michael Forestall would be now that they have been reactivated.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the contribution Senator Michael Meighen has made to veterans and issues affecting them. Some of you will remember the outstanding work of Archie Johnstone and the late Orville Phillips — we paid tribute to him recently after he passed away — when the Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs released a top-notch report entitled *Raising the Bar: Creating a New Standard in Veterans Health Care*, which included 68 recommendations. Ninety-five per cent of those 68 recommendations have been implemented.

Senators dedicate a good portion of their lives to the drudgery of committee work for the betterment of this country. These committees have been a place where great thoughts about this country — the regions, its languages, its people, its problems and its prospects have been given voice.

It is my belief that any prime minister's office would be wise to listen to the Senate and to the regions represented in this place. With the wealth of experience and knowledge available, it seems to me that it would be sensible and more cost-effective to have

senators undertake more work for inquiries on issues of oversight. Let me be clear. I am not opposed to positive change and effective reforms such as pre-study of legislation, the expanded use of the Committee of the Whole, and more research by committee travel.

I am not, and never will be, convinced that the present course of democratic reform is the right one. I believe that Canadians want senators to be accountable, effective communicators about the decisions that are made, having considered policies over the long-term and utilizing sound research.

One question that I have always used as a gauge of my time in the Senate is: Have I made a difference and has my time in the Senate contributed in some way to make the life of Canadians better?

• (1440)

That is the key to our role in this house. We are here to serve Canadians and not political parties. It is my view that we must honour the privilege of being able to serve this great country.

A point I would like to make because I feel that at times senators are somewhat ambivalent about their roles and duties as senators is that, in my view, wherever a senator goes, he or she is obligated in his or her duties to Canada. A senator represents Canada at any function, at any time. It is our duty to speak not only on behalf of the Senate but on behalf of Canadians at all times.

Honourable senators, one person's interest and role in the political life of Canada requires the care, attention, devotion, patience, and sacrifice of many others.

Thank you to the Senate officers and to the Senate team of support staff. I congratulate the Black Rod on his appointment as Canadian Secretary to the Queen. You all do such an important job. To the pages, I wish you the best of luck in your studies and hope you will make your mark in your communities.

I would also like to thank my staff, Christine Corrigan, who has been with me for many, many years. She has been a devoted and committed person, and I am not sure how I would have gotten through those years if she had not been at my side. Thanks, too, to Darlene Van Dusen, who has been with me for almost five years. I appreciate their help, especially in the last two years during my health problems. You are both dedicated public servants and good friends, and I wish you well in all of your activities.

No one mentioned it, but my partner Mary is a saint.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Atkins: Mary, I offer my thanks and love for all your understanding and support, not only of my work — sometimes my frustration with my work and my lamentations about my country — but always, with the recent trials and tribulations of my health, you have been there and I could not have done without you.

[Senator Atkins]

I am delighted that my three sons, Peter, Geoff and Mark are here with their wives, Faye, Angela and Sarah. They are in the gallery today to share this day. I am proud to have been in the service of my party in this country, and I know I was not always a source of strength for them, like they have been for me. I thank them for posterity's sake, from the bottom of my heart, for their patience and care and support throughout my time here and throughout many political campaigns. I cannot tell you how proud I am of those three boys.

I have numerous other family members also here today: My sister, Linda Camp, our family matriarch, who celebrated her 89th birthday two days ago; some of my nieces, Gail, Connie and Cherie; and my nephew, Michael Camp and his wife Daphne; and my extended LeBlanc family, Katie Lou, Jodi and Jaimie. I am very grateful to them for being here today.

• (1445)

On this emotional occasion, I would be remiss if I did not mention my brother George, who also served in the RCAF during the Second World War. Although he is not in the gallery today, he has been a source of support during some difficult times. I would also like to mention my many friends who have supported me throughout the years.

Honourable senators, I leave you with these lyrics. In the words of Mary Hopkins: "Those were the days, my friends, I thought they'd never end."

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

CANADA'S ENGAGEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN— MARCH 2009 REPORT TABLED

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the March 2009 Report to Parliament concerning Canada's engagement in Afghanistan.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

CANADA'S STATE OF TRADE—TRADE AND INVESTMENT UPDATE—2009 REPORT TABLED

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the annual report to Parliament on Canada's international trade, the 2009 update on trade and investments.

TRANSPORTATION

2008-09 ANNUAL REPORT TABLED

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 2008-09 annual report to Parliament of the Transportation Safety Board of Canada.

[*English*]

STUDY ON IMPACT AND EFFECTS OF SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

EIGHTH REPORT OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE TABLED

Hon. Wilbert J. Keon: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table the eighth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology entitled: *A Healthy, Productive Canada: A Determinant of Health Approach*.

(On motion of Senator Keon, report placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting of the Senate.)

CANADA-AFRICA PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

BILATERAL VISITS TO ALGERIA AND TUNISIA,
FEBRUARY 15-20, 2009—REPORT TABLED

Hon. A. Raynell Andreychuk: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian parliamentary delegation of the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association on the Bilateral Visits to Algeria and Tunisia, held in Algiers, Algeria and Tunis, Tunisia, from February 15 to 20, 2009.

CANADA-UNITED STATES INTER-PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

FORTY-FOURTH MEETING, MAY 15-19, 2003—
REPORT TABLED

Hon. Jerahmiel S. Grafstein: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group to the Forty-fourth Annual Meeting held in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, from May 15 to 19, 2003. It came to my attention recently that this report was not filed through inadvertence. Today, I bring it to the attention of the Senate.

• (1450)

[*Translation*]

THE HONOURABLE NORMAN K. ATKINS

MOTION TO PLACE INQUIRY ON NOTICE PAPER
FOR LATER THIS DAY ADOPTED

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rules 57(2) and 58(1)(a), I move:

That the following inquiry be placed on the Notice Paper for later this day:

“By the Honourable Senator Comeau: That he will call the attention of the Senate to the career of the Honourable Norman Atkins in the Senate and his many contributions in service to Canadians.”; and

That, notwithstanding rule 37(4), during proceedings on this inquiry, both today and at future sittings, no senator speak for more than three minutes.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Yes.

(Motion agreed to.)

[*English*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO REFER PAPERS AND EVIDENCE FROM STUDY ON ISSUES RELATED TO FOREIGN RELATIONS DURING SECOND SESSION OF THIRTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT TO STUDY ON RISE OF CHINA, INDIA AND RUSSIA IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR CANADIAN POLICY

Hon. Consiglio Di Nino: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the papers and evidence received and taken and the work accomplished by the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade on its order of reference relating to foreign relations and international trade generally during the Second Session of the Thirty-ninth Parliament be referred to the committee for the purpose of its current study on the rise of China, India and Russia in the global economy and the implications for Canadian policy.

NATIONAL FINANCE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY STATE OF PENSION SYSTEM

Hon. Art Eggleton: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance be authorized to examine the state of the pension system in Canada in view of evidence that approximately five million Canadians may not have enough savings for retirement purposes;

In particular, the Committee shall be authorized to examine:

- (a) Old Age Security/Guaranteed Income Supplement;
- (b) Canada Pension Plan/Quebec Pension Plan;
- (c) Private Savings — includes employer-sponsored pension plans, Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs), and other investments and savings;

That the study be national in scope, and include proposed solutions, with an emphasis on collaborative strategies involving federal and provincial governments; and

That the committee submit its final report no later than November 30, 2009, and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings until 180 days after the tabling of the final report.

EMERGENCY PASSPORT SERVICES

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Catherine S. Callbeck: Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 57(2), I give notice, that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to the inability of Canadians in rural and remote regions to receive timely access to emergency passport services.

[*Translation*]

FISHERIES ACT

CESSATION OF COMMERCIAL SEAL HUNT— PRESENTATION OF PETITION

Hon. Mac Harb: Honourable senators, I have the honour to present a petition signed by residents of the province of Quebec, calling on the Government of Canada to amend the Fisheries Act to end Canada's commercial seal hunt.

[*English*]

QUESTION PERIOD

NATURAL RESOURCES

SENSITIVE DOCUMENTS—POSITION OF MINISTER

Hon. Joan Fraser: Honourable senators, I have a question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. One year ago today, speaking in the other place, the Prime Minister said:

The former foreign affairs minister admitted that he left classified documents in unsecured premises. That is the reason why he tendered his resignation and I accepted it.

[Senator Eggleton]

Last night, we learned that the Minister of Natural Resources, the Honourable Lisa Raitt, left classified documents, a briefing binder, including sensitive commercial information about the nuclear industry — not a minor matter — in unsecured premises, to wit, a bureau of the CTV television network. However, we are told that she is not resigning, nor is her resignation apparently being requested.

What is the difference?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government and Minister of State (Seniors)): Honourable senators, last year, Minister Bernier submitted his resignation to the Prime Minister as a result of his own personal actions in handling sensitive government documents.

• (1455)

Minister Raitt is a hard-working minister with a tremendous grasp of the complex issues surrounding Canada's nuclear industry. The honourable senator is speculating on what the briefing book actually contained.

Minister Raitt was doing a series of media interviews surrounding the government's decision on AECL and the briefing documents contained background information for the minister. This is a serious breach; the minister has acknowledged that. However, it was not a personal breach, as was the case with former minister Bernier. The minister offered her resignation to the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister has refused her offer and corrective action has been taken.

Honourable senators, we all have staff that work for us who are responsible for handling documents. The staff member in this case has taken responsibility for leaving this document behind. This staff member offered her resignation and it was accepted.

Senator Fraser: With respect, there is an old concept called ministerial accountability. Honourable senators, I take as accurate the statements by the CTV journalists that this was the minister's own briefing binder; that it was secret; that it was numbered; that it did contain very sensitive commercial information, which CTV has decided not to broadcast. Some other outlets might not have been so kind to the government of the day.

Why does this government not hold the minister responsible when, for six days, the minister's binder had been missing?

Senator LeBreton: Obviously, honourable senators, the fact that this binder was left behind is a cause for some great concern. As CTV said this morning, they kept the document. They report that they did not release its contents earlier because they had to check with their own legal people. This is a very serious matter, and it was a serious breach. The government takes this very seriously.

As I mentioned in my first answer to the honourable senator, the background briefing binder contained all the information that the minister would need to answer questions with regard to the government's decision on AECL. As I said, the minister was in a busy round of media availability sessions to explain the

government's position on AECL. It is obvious that a certain member of her staff did not pick up the documents when the minister left the interview.

Honourable senators, there is no question that the six-day delay is a serious matter. The government does take this matter very seriously. I am sure that ministers and their staff will reflect on this situation and will review the relative procedures.

Honourable senators, I repeat: The minister is an extremely competent minister. She knows her files and she represents the government very well.

Senator Mercer: The minister does not know where they are!

Senator LeBreton: Unlike the case with former minister Bernier, Minister Raitt was out doing these interviews as part of government business. Mr. Bernier submitted his resignation because he personally carried documents and left them in an unsecure place. He had no staff with him to handle these documents.

• (1500)

In this case, Minister Raitt, a hard-working minister handling complex files with regard to AECL and the medical isotopes issue, working extremely hard with her counterparts around the world to secure the isotope supply for Canada, did the right thing. She offered her resignation and the Prime Minister decided not to accept it.

Senator Fraser: The leader's stress on Ms. Raitt's excellent performance and hard work leads one to wonder whether that is also one of the differences between this minister and the last minister.

I would ask the minister to convey to the unfortunate young woman who is carrying the can for this incident the sympathy of this side of the Senate and, to the government, a wish that in the future what is sauce for the gander will be sauce for the goose as well.

Senator LeBreton: I will resist the temptation to say that we need to take no lessons from that side on issues like this.

Senator Comeau: Say it!

Senator Cowan: I am glad you resisted it.

Senator LeBreton: Exactly; I could not resist.

All ministers in this government and in previous governments hire staff. We hope they are competent and well-trained. They are well paid. They have certain responsibilities and obligations, not only to the ministers but also to the government. Obviously, as is the case in most political organizations, whether this Conservative government or the previous Liberal government, when there is a breach like this that is obviously the responsibility of a member of the staff, that staff member submits his or her resignation and in this case it was accepted.

Senator Mercer: It is the minister's responsibility.

Senator LeBreton: It really is an unfortunate situation. The minister and the government, of course, are very concerned about it. As I said earlier, we take the matter seriously. I am quite certain that all ministers, myself included, will be double-checking all of the various procedures that we must follow with regard to government documents.

CABINET

MINISTERIAL CONFIDENCE

Hon. Sharon Carstairs: It is very interesting that the honourable senator refers to the Minister of Natural Resources as a competent minister. We have a Finance Minister who cannot count. We have a minister responsible for the Royal Canadian Mint who cannot account for precious metals. We have a Minister of Natural Resources who loses documents. Under what basis does this minister believe that her cabinet colleagues are competent?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government and Minister of State (Seniors)): Honourable senators, with regard to the Minister of Finance, the honourable senator is referring to the new projected deficit.

Senator Cordy: The \$50-billion man!

Senator LeBreton: This deficit is actually about 3.3 per cent of GDP, unlike the deficit of 8.3 per cent of GDP under the honourable senator's hero, Mr. Trudeau.

By the way, someone from the Brookings Institute in the United States reported in an article a few days ago that if the United States had a debt-to-GDP ratio like Canada's, they would be out partying.

Senator Carstairs: Thanks to the Liberal government.

Senator LeBreton: No, not thanks to the Liberal government. Coincidentally, the amount of money the Liberal government lifted out of the EI fund to reduce their deficit was about \$50 billion. In any event, the truth hurts; truth is the best defence.

With regard to the Minister of Finance, people know that we are in a worldwide economic recession. As a matter of fact, poll results issued today acknowledge that people have confidence in the Minister of Finance.

• (1505)

Even Liberal supporters have confidence in the Minister of Finance, and people know that he is working hard within Canada and with the G20 and G8 partners to manage this difficult situation.

As I indicated in the Senate the other day, obviously Canada's participation in the salvaging of General Motors is a significant part. I believe \$5.5 billion has been paid out in Employment Insurance. It is easy to see why it was necessary to adjust the deficit predictions.

With regard to the mint, an external audit is under way as to the situation at the mint. I will not comment further on that matter until we have the results of the audit.

With regard to Minister Raitt, she is, as I said, a hard-working minister with a tremendous grasp of the issues. The issue with Atomic Energy of Canada Limited and the nuclear industry in general is complicated. When Minister Raitt was appointed, she set up an advisory panel to advise her on this industry. She is an extremely hard-working minister. Obviously, the proof was in the pudding when she made her round of media events with regard to AECL. She was clear and concise in her explanations, so much so that not many people questioned what she said.

Someone made a comment about Minister Bernier. That was an entirely different matter. Minister Bernier had those materials on his person, and that was in his letter of resignation, which the Prime Minister accepted at the time.

Senator Carstairs: I read the material following the Bernier incident, and this government conducted a review. The government was so concerned about those documents that they conducted a review.

What did the review say? It said that they have taken measures to beef up ministerial security, including better training, stricter monitoring and improved measures to track briefing books.

Was the minister not given this briefing? Were her staff not given this briefing? Such incompetency, frankly, defies the imagination.

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, the dramatics notwithstanding, there was a serious issue here. Every government and minister takes every measure possible, and I am sure past governments were the same.

Minister Raitt is a new minister. She would have gone through the same briefing for ministers, and the honourable senator has been a minister, so she knows the procedure.

Obviously, something happened here, and I am sure the officials in the Privy Council Office are having a look. I cannot comment on the documents because I do not know what category they fall under.

As the honourable senator knows, having been a minister, there are cabinet documents, briefing documents and other memos that are stamped "secret" that are no longer secret. Sometimes they are secret only until they are announced. I do not know the precise details on the documents in question, but I would not use the word "incompetent" as an adjective to describe Minister Raitt. She is a competent and confident minister, a good communicator and a hard worker. She understands the issues around the nuclear industry and is a great credit to our government.

• (1510)

NATURAL RESOURCES

IDENTIFICATION OF SENSITIVE DOCUMENTS

Hon. James S. Cowan (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, perhaps the minister would take this question as notice and find an answer for us.

[Senator LeBreton]

I noticed on the television coverage last night that this particular binder had the number 8 on it. Would she inquire as to whether there is a list that identifies the numbered volumes, or the number of copies of these volumes, and the particular recipients? If so, could she tell us to whom binder number 8 was issued?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government and Minister of State (Seniors)): Honourable senators, I saw the news report last night. I get documents that are numbered. As I said in answer to Senator Carstairs, I do not have the details of these exact documents. I can only speak for myself. I will get a briefing document that will have a number on it. I and a member of my staff will attend a function. It will be my briefing book. After the meeting is over, my staff member, as I am sure is the case with other staff and ministers, picks the book up, puts it in its proper place, and leaves the event.

Again, I can only speak for myself. In that case it would have been my document, even though hired staff handle these documents. I cannot absolutely say, but I am sure in the fullness of time we will find out exactly what this document was, where it fell within the overall scheme of the type of document, and how it was handled.

Obviously, honourable senators, there was a breach. We are all human beings. We hate to think that these things happen but they do, unfortunately.

On the flip side, when an incident like this occurs, it causes other ministers and the "system" to have a look at whether proper procedures were followed or whether we should be doing something else to secure documents like this.

Senator Cowan: The most troublesome part is not so much that the document was left behind because that is bad enough. The fact that no one followed up for some six days seems to be even more troublesome. I cannot believe that this kind of time delay is contemplated in the enhanced guidelines to which Senator Carstairs is referring.

As a result of these guidelines, I would have also thought that the numbering system would have some meaning. The leader is saying that as a minister she does not accept responsibility for documents that would be signed out by members of her staff. That is what she is implying by saying that the minister does not take responsibility for this document for which apparently some staff member has taken the fall. Would she ascertain that a procedure is in place such that if I receive document number 8, then am I responsible for returning document 8? Would someone at least know who has responsibility for that document?

Senator LeBreton: So as what I am saying will not be misunderstood, I was just relating how documents are handled in my office.

Obviously, something went awry. I do not want for one moment to indicate that we do not take this matter seriously. We take it very seriously, and so does the minister. Obviously, whether it was human error or whether the system was not exactly clear or some procedure was not properly understood, I do not

have the details. However, I would be happy to come back with further details as to what the document was and where it fell within the overall scheme of things in terms of its priority and its secrecy.

ENVIRONMENT

GOVERNMENT POLICY ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Hon. Grant Mitchell: Honourable senators, waiting and seeing is probably the kindest description that I can think of for this government's climate change policy. It is profoundly frustrating and probably more accurate that this government does not have a policy and has done absolutely nothing.

• (1515)

About the time they reach their self-imposed deadline for an announcement, they extend it, as they did with the deadline for the regulations for capping emissions.

Nowhere is it more evident that Canada is falling behind, that Canadians can see that Canada is falling behind, than on the question of alternative energy production. Can the Leader of the Government in the Senate tell us why her government cannot come up with a target for renewable energy production like that in the U.S. of 25 per cent for all energy production for 2025? How difficult would that target be?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government and Minister of State (Seniors)): Obviously, the honourable senator's former government found it difficult because it had no plan at all. Our government has an environmental plan and policy that strikes the right balance with target reductions of 20 per cent from 2006 levels by 2020. We continue to develop the domestic framework for industrial greenhouse gas emissions as each major economy has promised. We will table all our climate change policy priorities at the Copenhagen conference in December, as I reported yesterday. As I also mentioned yesterday, in 2010 we will gazette the CEPA regulations to implement those policies. Those regulations will be brought into law sector by sector.

As well, the Prime Minister and President Obama have established a clean energy dialogue. This is a good initiative between the two countries. We will cooperate with our neighbours to the south on several critical energy, science and technology issues. As I have said before, honourable senators, Minister Prentice has been working with our counterparts in the United States, and, of course, around the world. He will represent the Government of Canada in Copenhagen in December of this year, at which time we will put all our energy priorities on the table, as we promised.

Senator Mitchell: For the record, honourable senators, when the leader says that the Liberals did not have a climate change program or plan of any kind, it belies the fact that her government made a big production out of cancelling those programs, so we must have had them. What we know for sure is that after three and a half years, all we have is a wait-and-see climate change program.

The leader talks about truth being the best defence. It makes me think that this government is absolutely defenceless.

Despite the fact that Canada has world-leading energy resources, less than 1 per cent of all our electricity comes from wind power. In light of that fact, why has this government allowed the funding to lapse for the ecoENERGY program that supported wind power programs and development in this country?

Senator LeBreton: For clarification, the honourable senator says it was a plan. The former government signed on to Kyoto when high officials in that government — no less an expert than Eddie Goldenberg said that in his book, and he was the chief honcho in Prime Minister Chrétien's office — signed on to it even though they knew they could not implement it.

With regard to the ecoENERGY issue, honourable senators, I know we have done significant things in this area. I cannot think of them off the top of my head at the moment, but I will take that question as notice and provide a written answer.

Senator Comeau: You didn't get it done!

Senator Mitchell: The leader seems to know more about our programs than her own. Perhaps the government should work on its own programs.

President Obama has recently announced that he will lease large tracts of U.S. coastal waters for wind and tidal power. Can the leader tell us whether the government has come up with a similar program in which we think about issues like tidal power? What will the government do about that issue and what targets do they have?

• (1520)

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, there are tidal power initiatives already under way in Nova Scotia. In terms of wind power, this is a very —

Senator Mitchell: You are not doing anything. It is getting past time.

Senator Stratton: And you did?

Senator Comeau: You didn't get it done!

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, it is so tempting to get —

Senator Stratton: You talked the talk; you didn't walk the walk!

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, it is our job. That is why we are doing something, unlike the previous government which did absolutely nothing but sign an agreement that even the honourable senator admitted was not possible to implement. Our government is doing something and I have mentioned some of the things we are doing. I did indicate to Senator Mitchell that there are many other initiatives.

Regarding the wind turbine issue, there is no question that it is a tremendous energy source, but there is a great deal of controversy, even in my own Province of Ontario where they are trying to establish wind farms. I am sure some honourable

senators are getting email communications from Canadians resisting the construction of these turbines in their areas. In my own area, not far from Ottawa, we are running into this problem.

With regard to President Obama's tidal and wind power initiative, honourable senators, I will ask the Minister of the Environment if he would provide a written answer to the honourable senator as to what kind of similar programs he is contemplating for Canada.

Hon. Gerry St. Germain: My question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. My question relates to Senator Mitchell's question to the leader. Senator Mitchell spoke about renewable energy, and that is an honourable direction in which to go. However, if we follow the Americans — though I think we should set our own agenda — and, if President Obama says that 25 per cent should be renewable energy, what would this do to the price of food?

Honourable senators, this is a critical question. I feel we have to do something about climate change, but there are alternatives that will not starve out the world as a result. These actions have already driven up the price of food.

My question is one of information and not a partisan question. It is a question of what we do that is right, and where is the balance?

Would the Leader of the Government in the Senate provide us with this study, if indeed it has been undertaken?

I understand that the leader may not have an answer now, but it is something we should take into consideration when we get into a discussion of this nature. We do not want to cut off our nose to spite our face. Would the Leader of the Government in the Senate provide us with information that would indicate just how this would influence the food chain?

Senator LeBreton: I realize we are running out of time, but as the honourable senator knows, this is a very serious issue, especially in these difficult economic times. People forget that the Economic Action Plan makes investments designed to protect the environment, stimulate the economy and transform our technologies.

In the Economic Action Plan in January, \$1 billion over five years was included for a Clean Energy Fund for pilot projects and research, including carbon capture and storage. We recently announced a hydro project in the Yukon, which is the first to be funded under the \$1 billion Green Infrastructure Fund.

• (1525)

In terms of the impact on the lives of Canadians and the state of the economy, honourable senators, I am sure that our counterparts in the United States are also mindful that we work together on a plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the issue of climate change in an organized way so as not to cause great harm to the economies of Canada or the United States.

However, I will obtain further information for honourable senators.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MARINE LIABILITY ACT FEDERAL COURTS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Housakos, seconded by the Honourable Senator Stratton, for the second reading of Bill C-7, An Act to amend the Marine Liability Act and the Federal Courts Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: Honourable senators, it is an honour for me to rise to say a few words on Bill C-7, An Act to amend the Marine Liability Act.

Honourable senators know that the purpose of this lengthy bill is to clarify and update the responsibilities of marine transport, specifically concerning passengers, industry standards and environmental protection. This bill will also implement rules to bring our laws in line with international law with respect to marine liability and security.

While I believe this bill has merit, I will make some comments on its contents, specifically concerning the protection of our environment as well as liability issues for major and minor industries and the protection of passengers.

Honourable senators, I was glad to see that major stakeholders in the marine industry were consulted to prepare this legislation. It is always a good idea to hear from those people who work in the industry and who must follow the rules that we impose on them.

Honourable senators, one of the most important intentions of Bill C-7, as I see it, is to clarify liability rules and regulations in order to provide greater environmental protection in the event of accidents that could unduly harm our marine environment. For example, in the event of an oil spill, the proposals of this bill follow the "polluter pays" principle, which is in line with international convention and does not put the onus on the taxpayer — a good idea.

Currently, it is the liability of the vessel owner, along with our inclusion in international compensation funds, to provide those areas damaged in the event of an oil spill up to \$545 million per incident. We all know that the environmental damage for these types of accidents could be much greater than that amount.

The amendments provided by Bill C-7 allow Canada to join the international Supplementary Fund Protocol. This would increase the maximum compensation for oil spill damage to \$1.5 billion. I think we can agree this change is a good one, albeit still not enough in the event of a major oil spill.

It is interesting that the funding levels for these international funds are included in the bill. The funds derive their support from levies placed on ports importing oil, not exporting oil. This provision is good for provinces like Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador that could start producing and exporting more oil in the near future, thereby becoming a beneficiary of this provision.

Honourable senators, Bill C-7 also includes such things as changing liability limits for commercial or public vessels carrying passengers, as well as regulations that require operators of commercial or public purpose vessels to maintain insurance to protect their passengers — also a good idea.

I have concerns surrounding some of the issues contained in the bill, specifically when it comes to adventure tourism activities. The industry is important for my own home province of Nova Scotia and, indeed, the whole country.

For example, one can go white-water rafting about 30 miles up the Ottawa River. This act will address some of the protection that one needs. I once went white-water rafting on the Ottawa River and was asked to sign a waiver. I had no idea whether the provider of the service had insurance, but this bill will ensure that there is some protection for everyone in this process.

• (1530)

Some expressed concern when the bill appeared before the committee in the other place, and I look forward to possibly hearing from them at our committee.

Honourable senators, one last thing I would comment on is the protection of payments to Canadian shippers. The bill seeks to create a maritime lien against foreign vessels for unpaid invoices to Canadian suppliers. In these tough economic times, this is most welcome, considering many companies in Canada require all their money in order to fulfill operating costs and not end up closing shop. Of course, being a senator from Nova Scotia and specifically from Halifax, where many people are supplying many of these ships, this is good news for my people at home.

I look forward to hearing from the minister when this bill appears before the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications, as well as officials from the department and major stakeholders in the industry. This is a fairly lengthy bill that does require some study, and I look forward to doing just that.

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

Hon. Senators: Question.

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

(Motion agreed to and bill read second time.)

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

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

(On motion of Senator Comeau, bill referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications.)

[*Translation*]

THE SENATE

MOTION TO HEAR ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATIVE
OF ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY DURING COMMITTEE
OF THE WHOLE ON JUNE 11, 2009 ADOPTED

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government),
pursuant to notice of June 2, 2009, moved:

That, when the Senate resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on Thursday, June 11, 2009, pursuant to the order adopted on March 24, 2009, to hear from First Nations witnesses for the purpose of reporting on progress made on commitments endorsed by parliamentarians of both Chambers during the year following the Government's apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools, it also hear from the President of the Native Women's Association of Canada, in addition to the witnesses already approved.

(Motion agreed to.)

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, since, earlier today we moved and adopted a motion to continue paying tribute to Senator Atkins and he is currently present, I would propose that we pay tribute to Senator Atkins now and that all other items on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* remain in the same order until tomorrow.

The Hon. the Speaker: Is it agreed, honourable senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

[*English*]

THE HONOURABLE NORMAN K. ATKINS

INQUIRY—DEBATE SUSPENDED

Hon. Michael Duffy, for Senator Comeau, rose pursuant to notice earlier this day:

That he will call the attention of the Senate to the career of the Honourable Norman Atkins in the Senate and his many contributions in service to Canadians.

He said: Honourable senators, I rise to follow my leader in this place — well, some day, perhaps — Senator Munson, who, the last time he was up, talked about how we had followed each other in our careers. I join all of those who have spoken so highly of Senator Norman Atkins today.

Like Senator Munson, I found Senator Atkins to be a particular friend of young people and, in particular, of young journalists. It was back in 1967 when Robert Lorne Stanfield, rather than take

up ski jumping, as some will recall, jumped into the race to become Conservative Party leader. I was a young reporter from Halifax, first the time in the big city of Toronto, and went to Maple Leaf Gardens to watch the show.

The giants of Canadian broadcasting at that time included Pierre Berton, Betty Kennedy, Gordon Sinclair, all of those people from CFRB in Toronto. I was the “junior junior” in that network. I was told by the oracle of the time, Arthur Harnett, that the outcome of that convention was predetermined and that the new Tory leader, when he was chosen on the Saturday, would be none other than Donald Fleming.

I was a young kid from Halifax, and Senator Finlay MacDonald, who was then not a member of this place, took me under his wing, the first spin doctor I ever met, and took me in under the grandstand at Maple Leaf Gardens, where Senator Atkins, Dalton Camp and Flora MacDonald had set up a headquarters. They had the boards there. These were the days before computers, and they tracked every single delegate. Senator MacDonald introduced me to Senator Atkins, who gave me the rundown how they tracked every single delegate, knew what that person’s first and second choices were, et cetera. I went back to the evening meeting with the CFRB crowd and was told, “That is all fine, but it will still be Donald Fleming.”

We all know how it turned out, and that was the first sign to me of the exceptional prowess in terms of political organization of Dalton K. Camp and his brother-in-law, Norman Kempton Atkins. The generosity and insight that they provided at that time to this young kid from P.E.I., who was just breaking into Halifax, continued on throughout our careers.

Today, honourable senators, as we pay tribute to this truly great Canadian, I add my voice to that of Senator Munson and those of us who were in the journalistic profession and saw what a generous, thoughtful and honest spin doctor Norman K. Atkins has been throughout his career. I wish the senator, Mary and all of the family much happiness in the years ahead. He will be missed.

Hon. Sharon Carstairs: Honourable senators, if you have been a leader of a political party, as I have been in the province of Manitoba, you are in awe of someone like Norman Atkins, who is an organizer extraordinaire. Our forte as leaders is to give speeches and enunciate policy, and if we are smart — although some of us are not — we defer to those who truly understand how elections really work. Just ask Bill Davis or Brian Mulroney or, if they were with us still, the late Richard Hatfield or the late Robert Stanfield, or countless other Progressive Conservatives from coast to coast to coast, to name the best political organizer in the country, and the name Norman Atkins would top the list.

He brought that political skill to many charitable endeavours as well. The success of the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation owes much to the time and effort of Norman Atkins.

Honourable senators, we are here this afternoon paying tribute to a man with extraordinary skill, whose talents and abilities have been dedicated to the body politic and to public endeavour. However, to say this and nothing else about Norman Atkins, while important, would be at the same time woefully inadequate because it would miss the most important aspect of Norman Atkins.

[Senator Duffy]

Norman Atkins is, plain and simply, a very fine human being.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Carstairs: He is kind and generous. He has struggled to have his health restored through hard work, but without complaint. He is a very principled man, who cares deeply about this country and has been prepared to put himself on occasion in very uncomfortable chairs because his belief in Canada takes precedence over any political or individual view he might have.

I deeply respect and admire Norman Atkins, and I will miss him very much. He clearly deserves the title “Honourable,” which he takes with him as he leaves this place because he is truly an honourable man.

• (1540)

Hon. Fred J. Dickson: Honourable senators, I am pleased to have the opportunity to pay tribute to my friend of more than 50 years. As an innocent freshman, I first met Senator Norman Atkins down at Acadia University in 1955. He was an Acadia rugby star and later a Canadian football first liner for Acadia’s Major Fred Kelley. Norman, better known as “Kemp” in his Acadia days, was rugged on the football field and most popular, I must say, with the cheerleaders; he loved to play.

Norman was always a strategic thinker. As his Acadia days attest to, he was more often at the campus cafeteria rather than in the library. I must say, he was a strategic thinker.

Honourable senators, Norman has a long personal history of political involvement, having contributed his time and energies to service of the Progressive Conservative Party at both the national and provincial levels for more than three decades. He has held senior organizational responsibilities in a number of election campaigns and has served as adviser to Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, the Right Honourable Robert L. Stanfield, former leader of the Progressive Conservative Party and to the Honourable Bill Davis, the former Premier of Ontario.

Honourable senators, it was only after I became active in politics that I really came to appreciate Norman’s many talents and leadership qualities. Norman was a national campaign chair for the 1984 and 1988 Mulroney wins. I had the pleasure of serving Norman as campaign chair in Nova Scotia and can attest to his resourcefulness and ability to come up with winning solutions, no matter how great the challenge. Needless to say, free trade was not an easy challenge to overcome.

As an aside, Norman, I take this opportunity on behalf of the Nova Scotia 1988 campaign and my friends Alan Bruce, Dave Armstrong and John Wheelock to remind you that we are still awaiting delivery of our team jackets for Brian’s win in 1988.

In the 1988 campaign, Norman, as well, I will always remember the call from you as to why we should have the Nova Scotia election prior to the federal election. I remember my answer, which I think was, “It is all about winning.” I am sure you have never forgotten the phone call and my answer.

I can assure you, Norman, that you were and still are an icon on the Acadia campus, and a tremendous supporter of the university, which bestowed upon you an honorary doctorate of civil law in 2000.

Norman, on behalf of Acadia and myself, I wish you and your family all the best in the future.

Hon. David P. Smith: Honourable senators, I rise to pay tribute to our colleague, Senator Norman Atkins. He is a person for whom I have the highest regard. He is a genuine PC to the last drop of blood in his body.

I will not repeat all of his accomplishments because they are on the record. I have always believed that Norman was very much a social, small “I” Liberal, albeit a PC lifer. However, I admit and I confess and I repent that I wanted him to be a large “L” Liberal, but I failed. I had a few feelers out to him. In a way, that is really the greatest compliment I can pay anyone. It is always better to be wanted than not wanted.

I admit on the record, we always wanted you — we just could love you and hug you. However, I really respect your lifelong commitment to the Progressive Conservative Party and to making it work, along with your insights, your savvy and your communication skills. You just have to admire all of these things.

I do not mind saying this: Senator Atkins loves the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence. There was a point at which the membership got a little tricky because of his independent status, but I stepped aside for him. I do not know if I would do it for anyone else, but I did and I am glad I did; I have never regretted that for one second.

I want to be brief, because I know a number of other people want to get on the record, but I want to mention one other thing. The personal friendship that developed between you and Senator Keith Davey could make me cry. It is a vibe about how democracy should work in a civilized country, where you have two people at the top of their respective parties who are foes, competitors — I do not like to use the word enemies — and yet that relationship was as close as it could be.

I know this first-hand because 45 years ago, I was Keith Davey’s assistant before I went to law school. He told me I could not go to law school until I took a year off and I was his assistant, getting ready for Pearson’s 1965 election.

That relationship, when I think about it, just makes me love both you guys. We will miss you, but I hope our paths will continue to cross.

Hon. Terry Stratton: I would like to start off by quoting Bette Davis, the actress, again. Senator Mercer will remember this quote. When she was older, they asked her what it was like getting old, and she said, “Growing old ain’t for sissies.” Norman, you ain’t no sissy.

There are certain decisions in life that affect you dramatically — some good, some bad. One decision that Senator Atkins did make severed our relationship of living together, sharing an apartment

in Sandy Hill. However, that was the best decision he ever made in his life, because he found Mary and fell in love, and I was not going to be the third party in that relationship.

Needless to say, I moved on; but it was the best decision of his life, and I have known Norman for a long time. Mary is his soulmate, his stabilizer, his everything.

My tribute today is not to Norman. It is to Mary, particularly to Mary, to thank her for being there for him today and in the future.

Hon. Art Eggleton: Honourable senators, Senator Segal occasionally tells a story about having once upon a time voted for a Liberal. The Liberal happens to be me, but it is not what you think; it was in a previous capacity of mine, when I was running for Mayor of Toronto. Of course, we do not wear party labels in that kind of contest.

I have never asked Senator Atkins what he did in the ballot booth, but I do know that during the time that I was Mayor of Toronto, I had his friendship, his support and his advice. Wow, what great advice to have. He was the guy with the Big Blue Machine for Bill Davis and others beyond that.

Bill Davis, I must say, is a man I greatly respect and admire. He was certainly one of the finest premiers Ontario has ever had.

I knew Norman also for his generosity to our community in Toronto, the work he did for those afflicted with diabetes, including in his own family. I remember his work with health partners, as well. His support for the dedicated men and women of the Canadian Forces was also something I appreciated in the time that I spent as Minister of National Defence.

I want to mention one other thing. Senator Atkins and I were reminiscing the other day about a project we worked on together back in 1990, which was an attempt to bring a world’s fair to Toronto. We bid on Expo 2000. Right there at the change of the millennium, what an ideal time to have this world Expo in the city of the future.

We knew we had an uphill battle because the International Exhibitions Bureau was dominated by European countries and there was a European competitor — Hanover, Germany. However, with Norm and myself and people from all levels of government and from the community, we went into it and we came awfully close.

• (1550)

We keep telling each other we lost because, at that time, Germany had not united, and East Germany and West Germany each had two votes. Guess what: We lost by one vote. Thanks to Norm and many people in the community, we came close.

Norm Atkins has that additional dimension to all the tributes you have paid to him today, and I am happy to join in that tribute to someone who has contributed a great deal to this chamber and to Canada. He is a true patriot of Canada and a true Progressive Conservative.

Hon. Elaine McCoy: Honourable senators, I am pleased to add my voice to the tributes to this man. I have struggled, obsessed really, over the last two weeks in trying to write down an eloquent

tribute to you, Senator Atkins. Not one of them seemed adequate in praise. I finally threw up my hands and said that I will speak from my heart about this wonderful man, whom I call huggable and whom I have come to love in the four years that I have known him.

When I was appointed to the Senate four years ago, it all happened quickly. I did not know what I was getting myself into. However, I talked to a colleague and friend, as I discovered later, of Norman Atkins, whose name is Ron Ghitter. Many honourable senators know Ron, who is a star in Alberta. I asked his advice on what to do. He spent hours over dinner telling me that the only way to be a senator is to be a member of a caucus. He was appalled that I had said I would be a PC because it meant that I would not be a member of a caucus.

I came back to Ottawa much troubled because Ron Ghitter, as honourable senators know, is astute and compassionate, and a man of action. He always has made a contribution to our province and the country. I sat in my seat, which was right behind Senator Atkins, and at the appropriate moment he leaned over and said, "I have just been talking to a friend of mine, Ron Ghitter. We put a bet on you. Ron Ghitter bet that within a year, you would be part of a caucus and I said, no she won't."

Norman won that bet. At the time, I thought, bloody hell, that is quite a challenge. I looked at the twinkling blue eyes and the small grin as he said that to me and I thought, I will take Senator Atkins up on his challenge and make sure he wins that bet.

However, as I came to know him, I began to realize that the challenge was much more subtle than winning a bet. Senator Atkins was inviting me to have the courage of my principles and to sit without the benefit of a caucus, notwithstanding that it is lonely; notwithstanding that the reward system of this wonderful institution is all built on party affiliation; and notwithstanding that I will never have my picture on the wall or chair a committee or have my name on a report. Senator Atkins was saying, as he has said many times: In your life, you will be tested between loyalty and principle, and you have to have the courage to take that stand.

No one has helped me to have more courage than Senator Atkins. He has taken me under his wing and told me story after story about other senators. He has helped me to learn the folkways, byways, traditions and dynamics of the Senate. He has helped me to understand what the Senate can be.

I know that Senator Atkins has been active politically for over 50 years. I also learned that he kept the theme of people alive — what they were doing and why they were doing it. The reason was always to help people, to make their lives better by reaching out to the individual, to the region or to the whole country. I learned why he was so proud of being a senator and why he continues to be proud of the Senate. He taught me how much each individual senator can contribute to this country if we grow and rise above the petty bureaucratic politics that we encounter in this institution and always have the hope, the patience and the courage to stand on our principles.

One day I sat down beside him when we were facing a vote that did not sit well with us, and I said: I hate myself. I just do not know how I could vote with our caucus on this one, because I disagree.

He paused for a minute and said: "The price of a principle is high, and sometimes you have to choose loyalty." It settled me right down. I learned in that instance to be graceful about one's principles. It is not a choice that we make for all time; it is a time-by-time, day-by-day choice. That also is a wonderful lesson to learn.

This man has become to me the epitome of what a senator can be if we have the wisdom, the compassion and the courage that he has had. We will continue to take forward the legacy that you leave us, as you have so eloquently said in your speech today, and go forward to make this wonderful country of ours the best it can be. Thank you so much, senator.

Hon. Wilfred P. Moore: Honourable senators, I rise to say a few words with respect to our colleague and my friend, the Honourable Norman K. Atkins, Doctor of Civil Law. Many of the things I wish to say have been said by other senators today. At the risk of repetition, I must first speak to Senator Atkins' understanding of the creation of the Senate of Canada, its constitutional makeup and ongoing role. His understanding and love of the Red Chamber, its independence and service to the people of Canada is likely more intense and well-founded than all but a few other senators. He has a fine appreciation of the motivation and intention of Sir John A. Macdonald and his peers when they agreed to establish this legislative chamber — the great compromise that brought the Maritime provinces into Confederation.

Born in Montclair, New Jersey, in the United States of America, Senator Atkins might be familiar with the following iconic anecdote in relation to the creation of the Senate in that country, and which he believes applies equally to the upper chamber in Canada:

One of the founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson, lodged his objection with George Washington because the Constitutional Convention had agreed to the founding of the Senate. He said: "Why is a Senate necessary?" In reply, Washington said: "Why do I pour my coffee in a saucer? To cool it. So we need the Senate."

We have heard much today about Senator Atkins' political prowess. If honourable senators wonder from whence comes his hearty competitive spirit, they should know that he hails from a long line of successful seafarers rooted in Spencer's Island, Nova Scotia. If that is not explanation enough, consider this point: His paternal grandfather, many times removed, was one William Atkins, a 25-year-old American who sailed in HMS *Victory* under Admiral Nelson at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. In gratitude for his exemplary service, the Crown granted to Landsman Atkins a large parcel of land in Guysborough County, Nova Scotia, now known as Atkins Point, on the shore of the Atlantic Ocean, where he made a home for his family and where his bodily remains are buried.

It is my opinion that Honourable Norman is the ultimate senator — a man who personifies integrity, and who actively represents minorities and his region. One group that has benefited from the work of Senator Atkins is post-secondary education, whether students, faculty or staff. He draws great energy for that work from his beloved alma mater, Acadia University, in beautiful Wolfville, Nova Scotia. He was an outstanding athlete at Acadia, where he was captain of its varsity rugby team and its first Canadian football team. That athleticism led to his induction

into the Sports Hall of Fame of the “garnet, blue and white,” following in the cleats of his dad, George “Gammy” Atkins, who was an earlier inductee.

He never relaxed his work on behalf of Acadia, having served on its board of governors and the advisory board of its business school. Those efforts were recognized by Acadia when they awarded the good senator an Honorary Doctorate in Civil Law in 2000 and again in 2007 when he received the Distinguished Alumni award.

His devotion to Acadia and his strong interest in its sports teams led to a deepening friendship between us, as I championed the cause of my school, Saint Mary’s University and her sports teams, especially when his Axemen played my Huskies. I regularly kept the Honourable Norman abreast of activities in our Atlantic

Conference, in particular during the past year when he faced some health challenges. Over that period, I often went to his home for sports and political updates, advice on numerous issues and scrumptious meals prepared by his loving mate, Mary LeBlanc.

Colleagues, when the Honourable Norman Kempton Atkins finishes his service on June 27 and leaves this place, I will miss him. However, our friendship shall remain strong, and I look forward to our continuing conversations and get-togethers. Thus, I bid him and Mary adieu, and extend to them and their families my sincere best wishes for the years ahead.

(Debate suspended.)

(The Senate adjourned until Thursday, June 4, 2009, at 1:30 p.m.)

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