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THE HONOURABLE NOËL A. KINSELLA
SPEAKER

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THE SENATE

Wednesday, March 24, 2010

The Senate met at 2 p.m., the Speaker in the chair.

Prayers.

THE SENATE

MR. MARK AUDCENT—
RECOGNITION AS TABLE OFFICER

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I draw to your attention that today is the first occasion that Mr. Mark Audcent is serving as a reading clerk at the table. Honourable senators will recall that Mr. Audcent, as commissioner for the taking of oaths, has been at the table before, most recently on the occasion of the swearing in of new senators.

Mr. Audcent has been a member of the Law Society of Alberta since 1976. He started his career with the Senate in 1982 as Assistant Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel. He is our present Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel, appointed by decision of the Senate on September 25, 1996.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome Mr. Audcent to the table.

It is no secret that the Board of Control's water levels policy is flawed. The International Joint Commission has been aware of the situation for decades, which is one reason that it informed the Canadian and U.S. governments in 1999 that a new policy is needed. A five-year \$20 million study that wrapped up in 2005 was followed by nearly two years of consultation. Members of the public made it clear that they want a water levels policy that more closely conforms to the natural flow of the river. Such a policy would be better for the environment, boaters, residents who live along the river and tourism.

The International Joint Commission, after yet more discussion, is now backing a plan that respects the natural flow of the river and, I believe, better meets the needs of residents and businesses, but nothing has happened. No final decision has been made. Millions of dollars have been spent and more than a decade has passed. Another round of talks is now being undertaken by a working group of government officials.

Meanwhile, the people who live in the Thousand Islands — one of this country's most beautiful regions — and all along the majestic St. Lawrence River continue to lose faith in government. However, I say better late than never and call on the International Joint Commission to adopt a water levels policy that conforms to the natural flow of the river and respects the interests of the people of Eastern Ontario. We have spent too much money and wasted too much time studying this issue. It is time to act.

[Translation]

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY

Hon. Bob Runciman: Honourable senators, I draw your attention to a situation that is hobbling small businesses, hindering residents from using and enjoying their property, and severely damaging the struggling tourism industry of Eastern Ontario. This problem could be rectified without cost to taxpayers. I refer to the regulation of water levels in the Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River system. All that is required to rectify the problem is action by the International Joint Commission.

Since the completion of the St. Lawrence Seaway, water levels have been regulated by the International St. Lawrence River Board of Control. It has been obvious for decades that the system does not work and that the plan in place reduces levels too quickly and by too much in the Ontario and New York State section of the St. Lawrence River in the late summer.

This rapid reduction in water levels each August leaves some docks and boathouses inaccessible. It shortens the recreational boating season by as much as one third. It is yet another blow to an area that is heavily dependent on seasonal tourism and is struggling economically. It is also condemned by environmental groups.

ADULT LEARNERS' WEEK

Hon. Maria Chaput: Honourable senators, this year's Adult Learners' Week in Canada is taking place from March 20 to 26. This is a time to remind ourselves about the literacy and learning challenges facing a considerable number of adults. Many adults are rising to the challenges and are tackling them with courage and tenacity. We must acknowledge their efforts.

However, there are still too many adult Canadians who do not have the knowledge or basic skills needed in a rapidly changing world. The International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey showed that 42 per cent of all working-age Canadian adults have a hard time functioning in a society and knowledge-based economy like ours. They have a hard time understanding what they read, but the situation with francophones in Canada is even more worrisome. Fifty-six per cent of adults whose first language is French have a hard time understanding what they read, compared to 39 per cent among adults whose first language is English.

As one learner at the International Conference on Adult Education, held in Brazil in December 2009, noted:

We, the learners are taking risks in our everyday lives; it is time for our governments to take some risks and recognize the need for lifelong learning.

It is time to highlight the importance of adult learning and literacy. With the support of our federal government, we can work together to raise the profile of adult learners and to promote lifelong learning. Lifelong learning is certainly something to celebrate.

VIOLENCE AND THE ILLEGAL DRUG TRADE

Hon. Pierre Claude Nolin: Honourable senators, according to a new scientific review released yesterday, Canada's war on drugs has failed to curb the illicit drug trade. Proposed legal interventions to disrupt the drug market will have no effect on drug supply and may actually boost rates of drug-related violence.

Drs. Evan Wood and Thomas Kerr, two researchers with the Urban Health Research Initiative, a program of the British Columbia Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS, conducted a broad and systematic review of all available English-language scientific literature to examine the impacts of drug law enforcement on drug market violence.

The literature review identified 15 international studies examining the impact of drug law enforcement on violence.

Contrary to the prevailing belief that drug law enforcement reduces violence, 87 per cent of the studies observed that drug law enforcement was associated with increasing levels of drug market violence.

According to Dr. Wood:

Widespread drug-related violence in places like Mexico and the U.S., as well as the gun violence we are increasingly seeing on Canadian streets, appear to be directly attributable to drug prohibition.

Prohibition drives up the value of these substances astronomically, thereby creating lucrative markets exploited by organized crime. Any disruption of these markets through drug law enforcement seems to have the perverse effect of creating financial opportunities for organized crime groups, and gun violence often ensues.

This review of the scientific literature, honourable senators, notes that drug prohibition has created a massive global illicit drug market with an estimated annual value of \$320 billion U.S.

• (1410)

Several of the studies reviewed suggested that violence stems from power vacuums created by the removal of key players from the illicit drug market by law enforcement.

As police use increasingly sophisticated methods to disrupt drug distribution networks, levels of drug-related violence are on the rise.

I see that my time is up. It goes without saying that this is an important matter to me and later I will draw your attention to the very interesting conclusions of this study.

[Senator Chaput]

LE DEVOIR

CONGRATULATIONS ON ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY

Hon. Serge Joyal: Honourable senators, the year 2010 marks the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the daily newspaper *Le Devoir*. This is something to be celebrated, especially because it is one of only two newspapers established by former federal MPs that are still in business. The other is *The Globe*, known today as *The Globe and Mail*, which was established in 1844 by George Brown, who was a member of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada and became a senator in 1873.

The nationalist convictions of Henri Bourassa are well known: he firmly believed that Canada's military and foreign affairs policies should be distinct from those of Great Britain. He was, in some ways, ahead of his time. In 1931, the *Statute of Westminster* recognized the independence of the dominions and today, Canada is a completely sovereign nation, as Bourassa had wished in his time.

Bourassa's convictions about the future of the country led him to resign from the House of Commons and establish a newspaper to promote Canadian nationalistic thought. *Le Devoir* defined itself as a Catholic, nationalistic and independent newspaper.

Bourassa had an enormous influence on the people of his time. Bourassa edited the newspaper until 1932 even though his opinions on society were not always in step with the times.

Today, *Le Devoir* is a newspaper with a first-rate design, as evidenced by many awards won in recent years. It has embraced the transition to digital media without losing money, which is no small feat. *Le Devoir* has carved a special niche for itself among our media and its future is assured by its financial well-being.

However that is not all. *Le Devoir* enjoys a unique place within this country's public debate. The point of view of its editorial page is well known, as are those of other French-language newspapers, a healthy sign in a free and democratic society. Debate is always better served when opposing points of view on the future of the country are expressed using clear language and logical arguments.

Le Devoir prides itself on the fact that it opens its pages to opinions that differ from those expressed on the editorial page, and this definitely contributes to the vitality of our democracy.

The management and journalists at *Le Devoir* are extremely professional. Their approach to current events demonstrates their thorough familiarity with political culture, and they carefully express points of view that exemplify experience, reflection and thorough analysis. I should also point out that the newspaper's cultural pages are unique in this country.

Perhaps most important of all is the quality of the French language that is used by *Le Devoir*, which is what its founder wanted. That is the institution's most brilliant crown jewel. In a communication world that favours text messages and pronunciation spelling, there is a tendency to sacrifice nuance in favour of convoluted forms. As a result, the quality of the language tends to take a back seat to technology and the very essence of the language is degenerating.

I cannot emphasize enough that the quality of the French written in the pages of *Le Devoir* is exemplary. Its editorial writers, columnists and reporters express themselves beautifully in nuanced and elegant French. Long live *Le Devoir* and congratulations to the entire team.

[English]

THE LATE A. GARNET BROWN THE LATE DON VALARDO

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: Honourable senators, these past few months, we in Nova Scotia have lost talented politicians, loving family members and trusted friends. Indeed, two of my good friends, Don Valardo and Garnie Brown, have left us behind.

A. Garnet Brown was a highly successful businessman, politician and friend. Not only did he and his father found Atlantic Canada's largest food brokerage, A.G. Brown and Sons Ltd., but he was also co-founder of Halifax Cablevision, and founder and director of Dartmouth Cable Television.

Honourable senators, Garnie served as Liberal Member of the Legislative Assembly in Nova Scotia for nine years, serving in various capacities in the government of Gerald Regan. He was also an accomplished athlete in his youth. In fact, he was signed by the Brooklyn Dodgers and played in their farm system for a couple of years.

Honourable senators, Don Valardo also passed away recently. Don, a former alderman in Dartmouth, was a tireless volunteer for the Liberal Party.

Although originally from New Brunswick, Don moved to Dartmouth in 1963 and never looked back. He was active in provincial politics and was a former riding president for the Dartmouth North Liberals.

In the business world, Don owned several pubs, including Ship Victory, in Dartmouth. As a community volunteer, Don was engaged in several organizations, including the Dartmouth Sportsplex Commission and the United Way.

I offer my condolences to Garnie's wife Betty and to Don's wife Dawn and their children and families.

Honourable senators, both men had larger-than-life personalities with a history of success to prove it. We honour their significant impact not only in the Liberal Party but for all Nova Scotians.

PURPLE DAY

Hon. Elizabeth Hubley: Honourable senators, epilepsy is one of the most common neurological disorders, affecting an estimated 50 million people worldwide, about 1 per cent of the general population. That is more than multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy and Parkinson's disease combined. Approximately 300,000 Canadians have epilepsy.

In 2008, 11-year-old Cassidy Meagan of Nova Scotia founded Purple Day with the help of the Epilepsy Association of Nova Scotia. This year, Purple Day is Friday, March 26, and people around the globe are invited to wear purple to bring awareness to epilepsy.

Epilepsy is characterized by recurrent seizures. Although approximately one in ten people will experience at least one seizure during their life, a single seizure is not epilepsy.

Epilepsy can be present at any age, although its onset is most often in childhood or in later years of life. Seizures can be controlled through medications, surgery and diet; and complementary therapies such as yoga, massage therapy, meditation, aromatherapy and acupuncture have proven effective in seizure control in some individuals.

I invite honourable senators to join me in wearing purple on Friday to bring awareness to epilepsy and epilepsy research.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

THE ESTIMATES, 2009-10

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (C)—SECOND REPORT OF NATIONAL FINANCE COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Joseph A. Day, Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, presented the following report:

Wednesday, March 24, 2010

The Standing Senate Committee on National Finance has the honour to present its

SECOND REPORT

Your committee, to which were referred the Supplementary Estimates (C), 2009-2010, has, in obedience to the order of reference of Tuesday, March 9, 2010, examined the said Estimates and herewith presents its report.

Respectfully submitted,

JOSEPH A. DAY
Chair

(For text of report, see today's Journals of the Senate, Appendix, p. 136.)

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this report be taken into consideration?

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

• (1420)

APPROPRIATION BILL NO. 5, 2009-10

FIRST READING

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-6, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the financial year ending March 31, 2010.

(Bill read first time.)

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

[*Translation*]

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, there have been discussions with my colleagues opposite and, in order to accommodate one of our senators, I move that the bill be placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading at the next sitting of the Senate.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(On motion of Senator Comeau, notwithstanding rule 57(1)(f), bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading at the next sitting of the Senate.)

APPROPRIATION BILL NO. 1, 2010-11

FIRST READING

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-7, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the financial year ending March 31, 2011.

(Bill read first time.)

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

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, there have been discussions with my colleagues opposite and, in order to accommodate one of our senators, I move that the bill be placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading at the next sitting of the Senate.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(On motion of Senator Comeau, notwithstanding rule 57(1)(f), bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading at the next sitting of the Senate.)

BANKRUPTCY AND INSOLVENCY ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Pierrette Ringuette presented Bill S-214, An Act to amend the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act and other Acts (unfunded pension plan liabilities).

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Linda Frum presented Bill S-215, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (suicide bombings).

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY ISSUES RELATING TO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S CURRENT AND EVOLVING POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGING FISHERIES AND OCEANS AND REFER PAPERS AND EVIDENCE SINCE FIRST SESSION OF THIRTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT

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

That the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans be authorized to examine and to report on issues relating to the federal government's current and evolving policy framework for managing Canada's fisheries and oceans;

That the papers and evidence received and taken and work accomplished by the committee on this subject since the beginning of the First Session of the Thirty-ninth Parliament be referred to the committee;

That the committee report from time to time to the Senate but no later than June 30, 2011, and that the Committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings until December 31, 2011.

QUESTION PERIOD

ATLANTIC CANADA OPPORTUNITIES AGENCY

ATLANTIC GATEWAY STRATEGY

Hon. James S. Cowan (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, in October 2007, the federal government recognized the potential for the Atlantic Gateway to significantly impact that region's economy. At that time, the Atlantic Gateway Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Transport Canada, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and the four Atlantic provinces. As a result, the Atlantic Gateway Federal-Provincial Officials Committee was created with a mandate to:

Develop an Atlantic Gateway strategy that will benefit the Atlantic region and Canada; identify the first projects to be delivered; and develop and implement a work plan.

The committee duly presented Ottawa with the federal-provincial Atlantic Gateway strategy, which was to come into effect last October.

More than six months have passed since that implementation deadline and no announcement has been made. When will the government finally adopt the Atlantic Gateway strategy?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): I thank the honourable senator for his question. Senator Cowan is quite right. The Atlantic Gateway is an important part of the country's plans going forward. I will take Senator Cowan's question as notice as to its status with regard to any announcements.

As the honourable senator knows, programs such as the Atlantic Gateway involve three levels of government. I will be happy to ask for an update regarding when this project can go forward.

Senator Cowan: I thank the leader for that undertaking.

I want to be clear that there have been a number of expenditures made out of the fund and a number of projects have been funded. However, I think what is missing is an understanding as to whether there is a clear, strategic focus to these various investments, notably in the infrastructure field, which is important to Canada, but particularly important in Atlantic Canada.

Would the leader, when she is gathering the information, please provide a list of the projects that have been supported, a list of the projects for which funding commitments have been made, and an indication as to what funds have actually been spent?

Senator LeBreton: I will certainly do my best to provide that information.

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: Honourable senators, I wish to follow up on Senator Cowan's line of questions on the Atlantic Gateway.

When we studied containerization in the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications, we heard of the lack of leadership at all levels in coordinating a vision for the Atlantic Gateway.

Who, indeed, are the federal players? We have John Baird, the Minister of Transport; Peter Van Loan, the Minister of International Trade; Keith Ashfield, the Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, ACOA, and the Atlantic Gateway; and Rob Merrifield the Minister of State for Transport. This is a large list of cabinet ministers. Can the leader tell us what discussions are being held among this group to take the Atlantic Gateway from a vision to a reality?

Senator LeBreton: I wish to thank the honourable senator for his question. All members of the government are aware that a project such as the Atlantic Gateway involves several different departments and ministers, and the honourable senator listed a number of them. Keith Ashfield, the Minister responsible for ACOA, has taken over the lead on the Atlantic Gateway file.

Honourable senators, as I have indicated, I will make every effort to provide the honourable senator with the most updated information that I can on the status of the Atlantic Gateway.

• (1430)

Senator Mercer: I thank the leader for that. We do not want to be paranoid in Atlantic Canada, but when the government talked about the Pacific Gateway, things were done fairly quickly. The focus was on the Port of Vancouver and its problems, which lead to the federal government investing large amounts of money in the Port of Prince Rupert. That port is now operational and servicing the West Coast, which is very important.

We have agreement from the four Atlantic Provinces on the gateway project. However, it seems that we will never see the plan. We see only continued announcements of old money and money that has been spent. Several councils, authorities and ports are waiting for federal leadership, not to mention communities and workers that could have jobs. For example, the Port of Halifax is certainly not operating anywhere near its capacity.

Since it appears there is no plan, can the Leader of the Government in the Senate tell us if there is any effort by even one minister to provide guidance to all the groups involved in trying to get the gateway file moving forward? Who is in charge and who is taking leadership on this file?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, in his question, Senator Mercer asked me about a plan and then said there is no plan.

There is a plan. I already indicated the minister who has taken the lead on the Atlantic Gateway file. There are the four provinces in Atlantic Canada, unlike the situation in British Columbia where it was basically one provincial government, the federal government and one municipal government involved. In the case of the Atlantic Gateway, we have New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador involved.

In order not to feed Senator Mercer's paranoia, the minister who has the lead on this file is Minister Ashfield. He is very competent and has cabinet experience in Atlantic Canada. Given where he is from, he is obviously focused on issues of Atlantic Canada. I have every faith that the information the honourable senator has requested is readily available. It is simply a matter of me asking for it.

Senator Mercer: I thank the minister for her answer. The minister should know that the Pacific Gateway involved more than British Columbia. If she were to look at the agreement, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba were consulted and involved in the planning, particularly for the development of Prince Rupert. The rail lines to be developed had to come to British Columbia through those other provinces and they played an important part of the transportation network in Western Canada.

I have been involved with this file for the six years I have been in the Senate and I am trying to figure out how to get it moving forward. The frustration is that we have a port in Halifax that is up, running and ready to go, and two other ports in Nova Scotia anxious to develop, but we do not seem to be getting anywhere. I am interested to know what Minister Van Loan is doing on the international trade side of the equation.

We need people to market the East Coast ports of the Atlantic Gateway as they now exist while we develop the newer Atlantic Gateway.

A prime example of the problems is that the Port of Halifax has one person on the ground in the subcontinent and the Port of Savannah has 12. It does not take much to figure out there is a problem here. This is why I want to see the Atlantic Gateway up and running as quickly as possible and the money being spent in the right way. We should be promoting the Port of Halifax and, indeed, the Port of Sydney, if it comes to be, as well as the Melford project and the Strait of Canso.

Minister, we need to find a way to get this project moving more quickly.

Senator LeBreton: Prince Rupert is in British Columbia and I am well aware of the importance of that port to the shipment of grain. Everyone factored into that decision.

With regard to various Atlantic Gateway projects, as I indicated, several levels of government are involved and we had changes of government in the midst of negotiations in some cases. Minister Van Loan, as Minister of International Trade, has a role. All ministers do, but one minister is responsible for overall coordination of the Atlantic Gateway, Minister Keith Ashfield. As I indicated, I will be happy to provide an update as soon as possible.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

RECOGNITION FOR CANADIAN VETERANS OF BOMBER COMMAND

Hon. Michael A. Meighen: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. The minister will undoubtedly recall the unanimous passage of a motion by the Senate on June 19, 2008 calling for the awarding of an appropriate recognition for Canadians who flew with Bomber Command out of the United Kingdom during World War II. Since that time, I have had informal indications that the file was moving forward but, regrettably, nothing more.

Given that all those who flew or who were among the crew of Bomber Command are of an advanced age, could the Leader of the Government indicate what concrete steps the government

has taken and/or will she consult with her colleagues in cabinet to expedite an appropriate — and, may I say, highly deserved — recognition of these genuine Canadian heroes?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, Bomber Command played a great and historic role in Canada's efforts in World War II. A close member of my father's family was part of Bomber Command and was killed during the war.

The government is aware of the unanimous recommendation of the Senate and believes in its importance. Over the last while, officials have been working as quickly as possible and are mindful of the Senate resolution to explore an appropriate way to properly recognize the heroism of these individuals. Hopefully, the question of Senator Meighen will spur me and them to get moving on this, as I am well aware that some of these people are quite elderly.

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

BUDGET 2010

Hon. Jim Munson: Honourable senators, my question is directed to the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Last evening, the President of the Treasury Board, Minister Day, testified at the Finance Committee and explained how government departments are being asked to hold the line on budgets and expenditures.

However, the Privy Council Office, the department for which the Prime Minister is directly responsible, is estimated to have increased its budget by almost 22 per cent, or more than \$13 million. We must assume that such an obvious and large contradiction in policy is due to extreme need and circumstances. Would the minister please tell us why the PCO urgently needs this money and what it will be used for?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I believe I responded to this question in the past. The budget for the Privy Council Office is directly related to the hosting of the G8 and G20 summits in Canada this year. Therefore, it is in the budget for this year.

Senator Munson: Honourable senators, at the same time government is asking in the Speech from the Throne for restraint, we see this increase. The minister said last week that the Minister of Finance and the President of the Treasury Board intend to ask each department to manage their respective departmental budgets, but that is as far as she has gone.

My question is, basically, what the money will be used for in the interest of being open, accountable and transparent. We should know how that additional \$13 million will be spent. Is the Prime Minister exempt from this practice?

Senator LeBreton: If honourable senators were to look over recent years — and I think there have been news reports of this — the Prime Minister's Office and the Privy Council Office have actually reduced their budgets. When that story came out, we were accused of not having a vision and, therefore, not needing the money. This is the kind of nonsense with which we put up.

Senator Munson would clearly be aware of this, as he was a member of the Prime Minister's staff and worked closely with the Privy Council Office. I believe he was in one of those positions when the Prime Minister and the government hosted the G8 summit in Kananaskis.

• (1440)

I would probably have to explain to many people the various budgetary requirements involved in hosting the world and, in this case, Canada is hosting not only the G8 but also the G20 meetings. I should not have to explain this to Senator Munson because he was in the Prime Minister's Office and would understand exactly the extra expenses that are required to act as host to these meetings.

Senator Munson: The minister uses the word "nonsense," and that answer is a wee bit of nonsense in its own right. The minister is telling me, then, in terms of the clear facts, that the \$13 million will be used around the upcoming meetings. Can the leader tell me if the \$13 million will be used for communications and so on? I am just asking for facts.

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, it is obvious that the Prime Minister and all ministers of the government have been careful with the taxpayers' dollars in a host of areas.

It is a legitimate question, and the Privy Council Office, specifically in their budgeting, is accounting for the expenses that will be necessary for Canada to host the G8 and G20 meetings.

Honourable senators, I will seek further information for the honourable senator to quell any concerns he may have that this money is not being put to good use, although I can assure him it will be.

Senator Munson: Honourable senators, I want to thank the minister for that answer. She has become more specific and I appreciate that.

Hon. Joseph A. Day: Honourable senators, I have been on a project for some time to request that the government divide Privy Council Office from the Prime Minister's Office in the Main Estimates.

It is difficult to answer a question like the question posed by Senator Munson. It is difficult to answer such a question on the subject of increases in the Prime Minister's Office and the increases in the Privy Council Office when we see only the global number in the Main Estimates.

Could the Leader of the Government in the Senate help us in having that particular entry in the Main Estimates divided so that we can answer those questions for ourselves in the future?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I will pass on the honourable senator's suggestion. We have ministers of the Crown, and the Privy Council Office is like any other department of government, such as the Department of National Defence, under the Minister of National Defence. There is a significant role for the minister's office within the department.

The honourable senator states that I was not aware that he had suggested this change in the past, but the fact is that he has been in a position to occupy and work with the Privy Council more than we have. This has never been a problem in the past, but suddenly it is a problem for Senator Day. The PCO is a department of the Prime Minister's Office, and I will be happy to pass along Senator Day's suggestion.

PUBLIC SAFETY

OVERCROWDING IN PRISONS

Hon. Joan Fraser: Honourable senators, as we all know, the passage of successive bills that increase minimum prison terms for various offences will increase the prison population in Canada. The Minister of Public Safety has confirmed that there are no plans, at least at the moment, for the construction of new prisons and that the increased prison population will be accommodated in new facilities, which, as I understand the minister, means trailers or other semi-temporary accommodations within existing prisons, or by double bunking.

As of last fall, 10 per cent of the inmates in federal prisons were already double bunked. Federal prisons, I remind the minister, are those where one goes when serving a sentence of two years or more; they are not short-term accommodations.

My question to the leader is how many more prisoners will be double bunking and for how long?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, obviously, the government believes that it is in the interest of our communities to incarcerate those people who have been convicted of serious crimes. It is in the interest of our public safety to ensure that these people do not roam the streets.

With regard to the senator's question about double bunking, I am sure some correctional institutions in the country are facing accommodation problems, but, again, the government will take the necessary steps to ensure that dangerous criminals who have caused great harm are taken off our streets.

Our criminal justice legislation strives to deal with situations to keep law-abiding, hard-working Canadians safe and keep separated the people who abuse those law-abiding citizens. Obviously, this will create some situations where some prisons will face accommodation problems.

However, if people realize that when they are convicted of a serious crime they will not be immediately released to house arrest, they may not want to stay in these prisons.

Senator Fraser: Honourable senators, my question was not about the advisability of the government's "tough on crime" policies. That is a separate discussion.

My question was about the actual physical impact of those policies on the prison system.

Correctional Service Canada's Commissioner's Directive No. 550 says, "single occupancy accommodation is the most desirable and correctionally appropriate method of housing offenders," and it also says that, as a consequence, "... all new and replacement accommodation shall be designed for single occupancy."

The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, which Canada has endorsed, says in rule 9 that "... each prisoner shall occupy by night a cell or room by him/herself."

It is not desirable to have two prisoners in a cell or a room.

The Correctional Investigator has confirmed that "... overcrowding in prison can lead to increased levels of tensions and violence and can jeopardize the safety of staff, inmates and visitors." I assume, honourable senators, that double bunking under the principles I just read constitutes overcrowding.

In spite of all that the minister said recently that, in his view, double bunking is "... not something that is inappropriate or illegal or unconstitutional or violates international standards." He went on to say, "... quite frankly, I think in many cases it is appropriate." Minister Toews said in a later passage that, in his view, double bunking "meets all appropriate standards."

Could the minister explain to us just which standards the Minister for Public Safety is using when he makes those statements?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, obviously, we want to create a situation in our penal institutions whereby serious offenders are, first, incarcerated and, second, have access to programs and situations that lend themselves to rehabilitation. I do wish that the same concern could be expressed for the victims of these people instead of worrying about whether they share prison accommodations.

• (1450)

Senator Fraser: Honourable senators, that was an irrelevant comment by the minister. If she is worried about victims, I refer her to the numerous studies noting that most prisoners eventually come out of prison, and that it is presumably desirable for the future of society in general that they be encouraged to rehabilitate themselves and given every facility to do so while in prison for our own safety in the future.

Senator LeBreton: I think I answered the question. Obviously, our Canadian prison systems are dealing with serious criminal offences. There are many good reasons why people are incarcerated. We have a situation where people who should be incarcerated are often roaming around on our streets, or they are arrested, charged and then released back into the public.

The Correctional Service of Canada and the Minister of Public Safety are well aware of their obligations, first and foremost, to law-abiding Canadian citizens. They are also aware of their obligation, as much as possible, that people who are incarcerated be in a system whereby, hopefully, once they are released from penitentiaries, they return to mainstream society and not re-offend, although many people have doubt about the success rate there.

The Correctional Service of Canada and the Minister of Public Safety are well aware of their responsibilities and the necessity to run our correctional institutions properly. However, again, I emphasize that they are also well aware of their responsibility to keep Canadians safe in their own communities and to ensure the victims of these criminals will not be confronted with the individual again before the person has served his or her proper sentence.

INDIAN AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

FIRST NATIONS UNIVERSITY OF CANADA

Hon. Lillian Eva Dyck: Honourable senators, my question is directed to the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

Now that the Saskatchewan government, through the Minister of Advanced Education, has announced it is putting its \$5.2 million back on the table for First Nations University of Canada to provide greater accountability to taxpayers, will the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development also restore \$7.2 million in funding to First Nations University?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I am aware that First Nations University has now submitted a new proposal to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Like any responsible minister, Minister Strahl will of course take this new proposal into consideration, but I think it is premature to presuppose what decision he will make, based on the information he has.

Senator Dyck: Honourable senators, I want to provide information that perhaps, through the leader's offices, she can convey to the minister.

Not only are the faculty, students and staff at risk, but also the additional research dollars that are brought into the university through its faculty. For instance, I have learned that Dr. Carrie Bourassa, who is a member of the science department at First Nations University, has brought in over \$4 million in funding over the last five to six years. Most recently, she brought into the university \$150,000 worth of grants through the Canadian Foundation for Innovation. If this institution is not up and running, that money will be lost. Faculty members are bringing money into the economy, so the university is definitely an economic asset.

Will the minister take that information to Minister Strahl?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, we learned today that the university has come back to the minister with a proposal. Obviously, the minister, being a responsible minister, is more than happy to take that proposal into consideration.

The honourable senator speaks of people bringing money into the university. As honourable senators know, within the last little while, money was missing from a scholarship program designed to help the students. That is the problem. This is a complex issue. There are many problems with this particular university, but since the province and First Nations University have submitted a new proposal to try to deal with these issues, obviously it is incumbent upon the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to take into consideration their new proposal.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BANKING, TRADE AND COMMERCE

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY CANADIAN SAVINGS VEHICLES

Hon. Michael A. Meighen pursuant to notice of March 23, 2010, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce undertake a study of:

- the extent to which Canadians are saving in Tax-Free Savings Accounts and registered retirement savings plans;
- federal measures that might be taken to increase the use of these savings vehicles as well as the fiscal cost of increased use; and
- ways in which savings in these vehicles might be protected.

That the Committee submit its final report no later than June 30 2010, and that the Committee retain until September 30, 2010 all powers necessary to publicize its findings.

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

(Motion agreed to.)

[*Translation*]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY APPLICATION OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT AND RELEVANT REGULATIONS, DIRECTIVES AND REPORTS AND REFER PAPERS AND EVIDENCE SINCE FIRST SESSION OF THIRTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT

Hon. Maria Chaput, pursuant to notice of March 23, 2010, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages be authorized to study and to report on

the application of the *Official Languages Act* and of the regulations and directives made under it, within those institutions subject to the Act;

That the Committee be authorized to study the state of the implementation of Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*, particularly the action taken by federal institutions following the amendments to the Act in November 2005;

That the Committee be authorized to study the extent to which the Olympic and Paralympic Games, and in particular the opening ceremony, reflected Canada's linguistic duality and to examine the report of the Commissioner of Official Languages on this matter;

That the Committee be authorized to study the realities of English-speaking communities in Quebec, particularly the various aspects affecting their development and vitality (e.g., community development, education, youth, arts and culture, health);

That the Committee be authorized to study the reports and documents of the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, the President of the Treasury Board, and the Commissioner of Official Languages, and any other subject concerning official languages;

That the documents received, evidence heard and business accomplished on this subject by the Committee since the beginning of the first session of the 39th Parliament be referred to the Committee;

That the Committee report from time to time to the Senate but no later than December 31, 2010, and that the Committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings until June 30, 2011.

(Motion agreed to.)

(The Senate adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.)

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