



CANADA

Debates of the Senate

3rd SESSION

• 40th PARLIAMENT

• VOLUME 147

• NUMBER 56

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, October 19, 2010



THE HONOURABLE DONALD H. OLIVER
SPEAKER *PRO TEMPORE*

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

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Publications Centre: David Reeves, National Press Building, Room 926, Tel. 613-947-0609

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

THE SENATE

Tuesday, October 19, 2010

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

Prayers.

[*Translation*]

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

HEC MONTRÉAL

Hon. Leo Housakos: Honourable senators, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak today about the national historic importance of the École des hautes études commerciales.

On October 4, I had the pleasure of representing the Honourable Jim Prentice at the unveiling of a plaque commemorating the national historic importance of Montreal's École des hautes études commerciales.

This recognition is an honour that highlights the indisputable stature of this institution that has enabled its tens of thousands of graduates to contribute to building the country, while defending the right to do business in French.

A series of historic events took place in 1910: Henri Bourassa founded the newspaper *Le Devoir*. The Montreal Canadiens played their very first game. Most important, on October 4, at 11 a.m., the École des hautes études commerciales officially opened its doors to 32 courageous students, who could never have imagined how much HEC Montréal would grow. In fact, they were gaining access to a tool that would enable French Canadians to reach the economic maturity necessary for their cultural affirmation.

Because of the École des hautes études commerciales, French Canadians are now taking on the world; many of these men and women graduated from HEC Montréal and are, or have been, leaders in their fields, both in this country and abroad.

In politics, we have Jacques Hébert, Jean Campeau and Lucienne Robillard.

In the business world, we have Pierre Ducharme, the President and Chief Executive Officer of SNC-Lavalin, and Thierry Vandal, the CEO of Hydro-Québec, to name just a few.

All these careers were successful thanks to the extraordinary work that HEC Montréal has been doing for over 100 years.

We cannot forget about the next generation, which has the world at its doorstep. In an increasingly globalized society, HEC Montréal is making great strides. Its reputation goes beyond our borders, and the school is helping make Montreal, Quebec and Canada known around the world.

It is an honour for me to work with Stephen Harper's government, a government that understands the importance of our national historic sites, and that wants to make it possible for the people of Canada today and our future generations to take advantage of them.

The school certainly deserves this recognition. I offer my congratulations to the Canadian government for recognizing this fact.

[*English*]

TERRY FOX RUN

THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Hon. Elizabeth Hubley: Honourable senators, on Sunday, September 19, 2010, I joined 10,000 other participants who ran or walked across the 13-kilometre Confederation Bridge as part of the thirtieth Terry Fox Run.

In 1980, Terry Fox set out to raise money for cancer research. His 143-day marathon, covering 5,373 kilometres and six provinces, captured the hearts of Canadians and has inspired millions around the world. Over the 30 years that the annual run has been held, almost \$500 million has been raised for cancer research.

This year is the third time the Confederation Bridge has hosted the Terry Fox Run. As I had done in 1997 and in 2005, I walked the bridge this year with my daughter and her daughters — my granddaughters. Participants in the bridge run were not only from Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick, but came from places as far away as the Yukon, the United States and the United Arab Emirates. Fred Fox, Terry's older brother, also participated.

The Confederation Bridge, the longest bridge over ice-covered waters in the world, is a marvel of engineering. Walking the bridge that day with my daughter and granddaughters, and so many other participants united for one goal, I could not help but be inspired and humbled. Our 13-kilometre walk was insignificant next to the 42-kilometre trek Terry Fox averaged each day of his run.

Like most families, mine has been touched by cancer. Terry Fox's lasting legacy to Canadians has been one of hope — hope that someday cancer will be beaten once and for all.

COMMONWEALTH GAMES 2010

Hon. Vim Kochhar: Honourable senators, I am happy to report that I had the opportunity to represent the Senate of Canada at the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi.

It was nothing like we read in the newspapers. The media would have us believe that New Delhi was not ready for the games and that they might have to be cancelled.

Instead, India stunned the world by putting up incredible games — incredible for India and Indian pride, incredible for athletes and incredible for the Commonwealth movement bringing 71 countries together.

The venues were of unbelievably high standard. The athletes' village was better than any I have seen in the last 20 years. The transportation system was smooth, and security at all venues and facilities experienced no glitches.

The opening ceremonies were incredible, and the closing spectacle capped the wonderful experience. The legacy of these games will be the launching of India as a sports nation. India finished second among 71 nations, and honourable senators can imagine the pride that result generated for India.

Canadian athletes made us proud once again, winning 75 medals with 26 golds and taking fourth among 71 Commonwealth countries. I was particularly happy for my Paralympian friends, Diane Roy and Benoit Huot, who won two gold medals for us.

The Canadian delegation was headed by the Minister of State for Sports, the Honourable Gary Lunn, who provided excellent leadership for the Canadian presence during the Commonwealth Games.

We had the opportunity to visit the exhibition of Inuit Art from the Canadian Arctic. It was an exceptional showcase of 60 works, including masterpieces by Inuit artists.

This example of cultural cooperation between Canada and India allowed us to share the diversity of the Inuit culture with the people of India.

We also visited the Subway Museum, which showcased Canadian technology by Bombardier. Bombardier won the international competition to supply train cars by setting up manufacturing facilities in India with the potential to expand their operations many times over.

Our visit to the Tibetan orphanage supported by the Canadian High Commission and its employees was another highlight. It was a heart-warming experience to discover how Canadians had the opportunity to connect with India in a meaningful way.

• (1410)

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Zheng Silin, Chairman of the China-Canada Legislative Association of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China and a parliamentary delegation.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

CANADA-CHINA RELATIONS

FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Hon. Joseph A. Day: Honourable senators, further to His Honour's introduction, I, too, would like to welcome the visiting delegation from the National People's Congress. As honourable senators have heard, the Honourable Zheng Silin, Chairman of the China-Canada Legislative Association, leads the delegation.

On October 13, 1970, Canada officially recognized the People's Republic of China. In 1973, the Right Honourable Pierre Elliott Trudeau became the first prime minister to pay an official visit to China, helping to expand fledgling Canada-China relations. With the foundation of diplomatic recognition in place, the two countries turned to their economic relationship.

In 1973, Canada and China signed the Canadian-Chinese Trade Agreement, which allowed for the mutual extension of "most-favoured-nation" status. As well in 1973, a Canadian trade fair was held in Beijing that attracted over 600 Canadian officials and business leaders. It was the first such trade fair attended by then Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai.

Honourable senators, there are many events marking the special fortieth anniversary this year, and there will be many more to come. Last week, on October 13, which marked the actual day of the establishment of diplomatic relations some 40 years ago, two significant conferences took place at the Château Laurier: the second annual Canada-China Cultural Dialogue and the fortieth anniversary of the Canada-China Relations National Conference sponsored by the University of Alberta. Both conferences allowed experts in various fields to share their knowledge and insight into the current and future state of Canada-China relations.

Honourable senators, the Canada-China Legislative Association was pleased to sponsor the reception following the meetings. The Honourable Stephen Harper and Chinese Ambassador Lan Lijun were both in attendance. The Prime Minister spoke favourably of expanding relations between Canada and China.

I would like to draw the attention of honourable senators to a recent report from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. The report studies the economic partnership between Canada and China.

Honourable senators are invited to attend round table discussions this afternoon from 3:30 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. with colleagues from the National People's Congress. I hope that all honourable senators will attend Room 200 West Block to have an opportunity to participate in the discussions.

PERSONS DAY

Hon. Nicole Eaton: Honourable senators, this morning as I walked to the Senate, I paused at the Famous Five Monument of Nellie McClung, Emily Murphy, Henrietta Muir Edwards,

Louise McKinney, and Irene Parlby, who are now immortalized in bronze on Parliament Hill. Thanks to these five trailblazers who challenged the status quo, I have the privilege of speaking today as a Canadian senator.

In 1927, five women approached the Supreme Court of Canada to question whether the word “person” in section 24 of the British North America Act included women. Five weeks of debate resulted in a decision that women were not considered persons. Undaunted, the fight was only beginning for these determined women.

It took almost two more years before the Imperial Privy Council, on October 18, 1929, gave its answer to this basic question with the seemingly obvious answer:

. . . to those who would ask why the word “person” should include females, the obvious answer is: Why should it not?

The Persons Case established that Canadian women were eligible to be appointed senators. Furthermore, Canadian women had the same rights as Canadian men with respect to positions of political power.

Honourable senators, yesterday I had the honour of introducing five distinguished women to our new Governor General, His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston. His Excellency presented the women with the 2010 Governor General’s Award in commemoration of the eighty-first anniversary of the Persons Case.

Honourable senators, please join me in congratulating the five prominent individuals who were recognized yesterday: Marie Louise Fish, from Elgin, Ontario; Lucille Harper, from Pomquet, Nova Scotia; Kerline Joseph, from Delson, Quebec; Anne Michaud, from Montreal, Quebec; and Barbara Mowat, from Abbotsford, British Columbia. While diverse in their approach to the goal of gender equality, their impact on their communities and on our country has been profound.

NAVY APPRECIATION DAY

Hon. Bill Rompkey: Honourable senators, today is Navy Appreciation Day and in the gallery we have representatives of the Canadian Navy and some heroes of the Canadian Navy, who were honoured in this chamber this morning.

This year, the navy celebrates its centennial and the Navy League of Canada is not far behind. The navy really came of age in World War II. At the war’s outbreak, we had 13 ships; by the end of the war, there were 370 fighting ships for Canada and the Allies, making our navy the fourth largest and one of the finest in the world. That standard of excellence has been maintained ever since, whether as a leader in maritime security during the Gulf War, fighting piracy on the Horn of Africa or providing the relief that only sea power can bring to the disaster in Haiti.

[*Translation*]

The Navy League of Canada has supported and assisted the navy throughout its 100-year history. It has promoted maritime concerns and contributed to the development of the navy,

[Senator Eaton]

particularly through programs like the Royal Canadian Sea Cadets and the Navy League Cadet Corps. We owe the Navy League a debt of gratitude.

• (1420)

[*English*]

The navy and the Navy League not only build disciplined and trained men and women, they foster citizenship and they do this perhaps as no other national organization can.

My own experience is a case in point. I was 13 when I became a Canadian. I was 17 when I joined the Royal Canadian Naval Reserve. Those of us from Newfoundland and Labrador encountered, for the first time, this magnificent country and its people. The navy still provides that unique learning experience for thousands of Canadian young people.

The excellence of our ships and sailors will be of continuing importance, for the geopolitics of the future will be played out on the world’s oceans. The Chinese are building state-of-the-art ships; so are the Russians, Norwegians, Danes and other countries; and so, too, must Canada be ready with modern ships and sailors, for sea power delayed is sea power denied.

As we celebrate 100 years with the navy and the Navy League, let us offer our congratulations in the knowledge that in the future, as in the past, they will be Ready, Aye, Ready!

SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Hon. Catherine S. Callbeck: Honourable senators, the week of October 17 to 23 is Small Business Week in Canada. This special week celebrates the contributions and achievements of the many thousands of men and women entrepreneurs across the country who own and operate their own businesses. They are hard-working, innovative and most deserving of our support and encouragement.

These small businesses are the engine of the Canadian economy. Although small by the standards of large corporations, their impact is huge. More than 95 per cent of all businesses in Canada have fewer than 100 employees. Often, these businesses are at the leading edge of new ideas and the development of new products and processes that stimulate growth in our economy.

In my own province, small businesses account for more than 70 per cent of the labour force. Small businesses provide jobs in their communities, they offer needed goods and services, and they play a major role in the economic growth of the province.

During Small Business Week, I want to make special mention of the growing wave of women in business. In the past 15 years, there has been an increase of 50 per cent in the number of self-employed women in Canada. The number of women-owned businesses is increasing 60 per cent faster than those established by men. According to a recent report by CIBC, there are now 1 million Canadian women who own a small business.

As former vice-chair of the Prime Minister's Task Force on Women Entrepreneurs, I applaud this growing wave. The task force recognized the challenges and opportunities of women in business, and I am pleased to note the significant progress that has been made over the past decade.

Honourable senators, the men and women who own small businesses in Canada have experienced many difficulties over the past two years as a result of the global recession, and many have worked hard and are persevering during these difficult times. They are deserving of our recognition. Please join me in celebrating the vital role small businesses play in our economy.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Mrs. Betty Fox, Mr. Roland Fox and Mr. Darrell Fox. They are the parents and brother of the late Terry Fox.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Lieutenant Nicole Robichaud, Petty Officer First Class Alexander MacNeish, Leading Seaman Russell Brown, Lieutenant Commander Luc Tremblay, Leading Seaman Shawn Poirier and Master Seaman Trent Nurse.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of members of the Health Charities Coalition of Canada. They are guests of the Honourable Senator Dickson.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

STUDY ON ISSUES RELATING TO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S CURRENT AND EVOLVING POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGING FISHERIES AND OCEANS

SECOND REPORT OF FISHERIES AND OCEANS COMMITTEE—GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TABLED

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government response to the second report of the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, entitled *Controlling Canada's Arctic Waters: Role of the Canadian Coast Guard*.

STUDY ON CANADIAN SAVINGS VEHICLES

FOURTH REPORT OF BANKING, TRADE AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE TABLED

Hon. Michael A. Meighen: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce, entitled *Canadians Saving for their Future: A Secure Retirement*.

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

[*English*]

IMPORTANCE OF CANADA'S OIL SANDS

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Nicole Eaton: Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 57, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to the benefits of Canada's oil sands.

QUESTION PERIOD

HUMAN RESOURCES AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

SOCIAL HOUSING

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

On October 6, 2010, the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg sent a letter to the Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable Stephen Harper. The letter addressed the report of the Senate Subcommittee on Cities of the Standing Senate

Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. The report, released in December 2009, was called, *In from the Margins: A Call to Action on Poverty, Housing and Homelessness*.

• (1430)

The Social Planning Council of Winnipeg agrees with the conclusion of the Senate subcommittee's report. In its letter to Mr. Harper, the council highlights five specific recommendations that would be of particular benefit to reducing poverty in Manitoba.

The Social Planning Council of Winnipeg respectfully asked Mr. Harper to re-evaluate the government's position on the report's recommendations.

My question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Will the federal government consider the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg's request, and will the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg receive a written response from the Prime Minister?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): I thank the honourable senator for the question. I would also like to thank the organization for making its views known to the Prime Minister and to this chamber through the honourable senator.

Without specifically addressing the recently tabled Senate report, I will put on the record once again the activities of the government in the areas of homelessness and affordable housing.

In 2008, we renewed our Homelessness Partnering Strategy with \$1.9 billion over five years. We are currently investing in more than 1,200 projects across the country to prevent and reduce homelessness. We consulted with all levels of government and are listening to local communities and organizations such as the one the honourable senator just mentioned to identify priorities and needs beyond 2011 in order to find effective, long-term solutions to homelessness.

We have made major investments in affordable housing that are creating thousands of jobs and improving the quality of life of Canadians. With the help of the Economic Action Plan, over 8,000 projects are completed or are under way. We are providing over \$2 billion over two years to repair and build social housing, including \$600 million for housing on-reserve and in the North, \$400 million for housing for low-income seniors, and \$75 million for people with disabilities.

Our government also provides about \$1.7 billion per year across the country in support of 625,000 existing units of low- and moderate-income social housing.

Senator Chaput: Will the federal government consider the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg's request and will the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg receive a written response from the Prime Minister?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I think I answered this question before the Thanksgiving break.

The Prime Minister is serious and hard-working and he values the views of all Canadians. I have already indicated in the strategy that I have outlined that many agencies, including private and

public sector, are consulted. I would have to consult with my colleague the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development to find out whether they have met with the specific group that the honourable senator mentioned. However, I can assure honourable senators that because the Prime Minister is a hard-working, conscientious prime minister, correspondence sent to him directly is responded to.

POST-SECONDARY DATA COLLECTION— SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, this government is trying to prevent any criticism of its policies by silencing the organizations and agencies that compile information on very important spheres of our society.

The Canadian Council on Learning, which compiled and analyzed key information on education in Canada, based on OECD indicators, has become a victim of this government's policies. Earlier this year, we learned that federal funding for the CCL will cease. A few weeks ago, Dr. Paul Cappon, President and CEO of the CCL, indicated that the CCL will remain open but will once again need to reduce its activities until federal funding is reinstated. The organization's financial situation is so precarious that Dr. Cappon and his colleagues have agreed to continue working on a voluntary basis.

In an ever more competitive and global world, education is the key to our success. However, without reliable data, it is very difficult to develop a national strategy on education.

My question is simple: When will this government realize the importance of having scientifically reliable data in order to develop policies for the good of Canadians?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): I thank the honourable senator for the question. We, of course, value and take great pride in the work of our scientists and others with regard to their work on behalf of their various communities, especially in the areas of science and education.

With regard to the honourable senator's statement that the government is interfering with their right to be heard, this is absolutely not true. Government communication policy applies to all departments of governments and it is a communications policy that the government has followed since 2002. The policy has not changed. Ministers speak for the departments. I reiterate that this is a government communications policy established in the year 2002, which is eight years ago. It is the policy that was followed by the previous government and is continued by this government.

[Translation]

Senator Tardif: Honourable senators, the CCL is not the only example of this government's lack of desire to obtain trustworthy scientific data. As I said earlier, it is easier to ignore the facts when there are no trustworthy, credible and representative statistics.

In May 2010, the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development announced that the government would no longer fund the Youth in Transition Survey or the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth. However, a report

put out by the Canadian Federation of Students titled *Public Education for the Public Good* stated that these studies are the primary sources of information on who pursues post-secondary education and who is excluded from it.

Can the government leader tell us how the government intends to obtain the data provided by these two studies?

[English]

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, there are many areas on which the government collects data, including, as I listed before the Thanksgiving break, the 80-some separate surveys that are conducted voluntarily through Statistics Canada.

This is what the government is doing with regard to post-secondary education. We provided \$800 million more for post-secondary education through the CST, up 40 per cent from what was provided by the previous government, who, I might add, cut \$25 billion in transfers to the provinces, including for student funding. That was apparently how they decided to cut the deficit.

Through the Canada Student Grants Program, we have made money available through grants that students do not have to pay back, which means more access and less student debt to repay. We are providing \$250 a month to low-income and \$100 a month to middle-income students. Approximately 280,000 students benefited last year, 140,000 more than under the previous system. The Repayment Assistance Plan increases flexibility for students repaying their loans, making it easier to manage loans by ensuring an affordable repayment amount on a reasonable schedule.

Our government made post-secondary scholarships and bursaries tax-free, introduced the textbook tax credit and the tool tax credit, and provided \$87.5 million for over 1,500 master's and doctoral level scholarships. We created tens of thousands of jobs for students, including supporting student summer jobs through Career Focus, \$30 million; Pathways to Education, \$20 million; and Skills Link, \$30 million. We are providing up to \$4,000 to encourage youth to pursue skilled trades through the Apprenticeship Completion Grant and Apprenticeship Incentive Grant.

All of this is to say that we have used the resources and the data we have collected from many sources to provide increased support for our students, as I mentioned, up 40 per cent from what was provided by the previous government.

• (1440)

[Translation]

Hon. Céline Hervieux-Payette: Honourable senators, I am very happy to hear these lists, these litanies, of money being spent by a government that does not have that money. Any government that wants to do a good job of managing needs statistical data. In a modern world, it also needs to form its programs and policies on objective data. Now that the government has chosen to stop funding organizations that provide information so that it can establish its policies, how will it make its decisions? Will it be based on ideology?

[English]

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, there is a lot of information. Since I responded to the question about post-secondary education earlier, I will go back to some of the questions that Senator Tardif raised on literacy. This government is investing more than any federal government in Canadian history on literacy and skills. We have a comprehensive approach to improving literacy and essential skills to build a highly skilled workforce for the jobs of tomorrow.

We are ensuring that funding goes directly to helping those in need and that there are concrete results for our tax dollars. Our government is investing \$38 million this year through the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills at HRSDC for the development of literacy and essential skills.

We did not cancel that program. We launched a task force to advise the government on a national strategy on financial literacy. I would think the task force is out consulting people to find out what their needs are.

An Hon. Senator: We actually talk to people.

Senator LeBreton: We are investing an additional \$500 million in new labour market agreements for literacy and skills training to tens of thousands of Canadians and we are investing \$150 million in language training for new Canadians.

Senator Comeau: Unprecedented.

An Hon. Senator: That is impressive.

Hon. Jim Munson: My question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. She spoke about a communications directive going back to 2002. As director of communications for the then Prime Minister, I do not recall trying to muzzle federal scientists, even going so far as to control when and what, if anything, they could say about floods at the end of the last Ice Age.

Yesterday, the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada, the union that represents federal scientists, took the unusual step of launching a website to speak up for science, as they describe it. As they said in their press release, the recent decision to end the mandatory long-form census is the latest step in a worrying trend away from evidence-based policy making. Restrictive rules are curtailing media and public access to scientists, while cutbacks to research and monitoring limit Canada's ability to deal with serious threats and potential opportunities.

Basically, this is all about a gag order on these scientists. If one is going to have a minister or someone who is a director of communications answer these questions or be part of these questions, then why not have the federal scientists who compiled all of this information at least be seen beside a federal minister or an anonymous communications person so that one can deliver that message and have some credibility with the scientists backing one up or, perhaps, not backing one up?

Senator LeBreton: The fact is, honourable senators, we are not muzzling our scientists.

Some Hon. Senators: Oh, oh.

Senator Comeau: Unlike the previous government.

Senator LeBreton: We are proud of the work our scientists do, and we should be because we have invested significant amounts of money into research and development. I must confess, colleagues, that I was watching the CBC last night.

Some Hon. Senators: Oh, oh.

An Hon. Senator: Why would you do that?

Senator LeBreton: I had no other option.

As opposed to the mid-1990s, when there was a brain drain away from Canada, the CBC actually said that Canada was benefiting from scientists coming to Canada from around the world because of our plans.

Senator Di Nino: They actually noticed that?

Senator LeBreton: CBC has to report a fact every once in a while.

We will continue to work closely with scientists to ensure that all Canadians are aware of the great work they are doing.

Going back to the communications aspect, ministers are the primary spokespersons for federal departments and agencies and they need to be aware of the issues in the media which involve their departments. That is obvious. This is the policy that was established in 2002 and we are just following that policy. We have not changed it.

Our government is very proud of the work that is being done by our federal scientists. Obviously, our country's prosperity depends on our capacity to innovate and compete. We are investing a record \$11 billion in science and technology this year.

Much of that is to support science inside the government. We are investing \$250 million to upgrade federal labs so that we can continue to serve the needs of Canadians and make our economy stronger.

Some Hon. Senators: Oh, oh.

Senator LeBreton: For those honourable senators who are shouting, if they want proof of this they should just ask two former Liberal cabinet ministers: Allan Rock and Lloyd Axworthy.

Canada is the top science and research investor in the G7, thanks to our government's support for our universities and colleges. Despite our investments of over \$7 billion per year to encourage business research and development, Canadian business still depends less per capita on R&D innovation and commercialization than in most other industrialized countries.

There was a report out recently that businesses must start picking up their end of the bargain as well. In order to encourage business, we are launching a panel to seek advice on how our government can further improve support for business research

and development. The panel, as has been well reported and applauded, is composed of six eminent Canadians chosen for their experience in business, academia and government, as well as knowledge of R&D and innovation practices and policies. Do not say that we are not consulting and we are not consulting experts, because we are.

We deliberately asked distinguished Canadians who have had actual experience with government R&D programs to serve on this panel so that they can advise us on how federal support for R&D could be made better.

All of the panellists must comply with the Conflict of Interest Act, just in case honourable senators were wondering.

Their review will provide recommendations to the government on how we can better boost Canadian business, create jobs and bring new ideas to the marketplace for the betterment of all Canadians.

Honourable senators, I am proud of our record on science. I am equally proud of our record on research and development. It is unprecedented. We have done more in this area than any government in the history of the country.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Munson: What was the question again? I just want to make sure the Leader of the Government has time to read more of her cue cards.

It was the office of the Minister of Natural Resources, Christian Paradis, which insisted on pre-approving interviews about the study of a colossal flood that swept across northern Canada 13,000 years ago. This is a minister whose staff are under investigation for illegally blocking the release of documents under access to information. However, Mr. Paradis is not the only minister involved in this sort of muzzle up. Here is a description that John Geddes of *Macleans* encountered when researching seabirds, obviously another hot topic for the Harper government. It is up there with the Afghan detainees, I guess.

I quote Mr. Geddes, who wrote:

For instance, when Environment Minister Jim Prentice announced a \$5-million study into the feasibility of creating an Arctic marine conservation area in Lancaster Sound last year, I tried to do a few quick interviews with federal biologists who study the sound's abundant seabirds. But the bird guys told me they were required to go through an approvals process that would have prevented them from talking to me on the record quickly enough to meet my deadline for posting an item on the subject on this website that same day.

That was a journalist trying to do his job.

I ask again: Will the government stop its obstructionist tactics and let Canadians have the benefit of their tax-funded scientific research — Canadians are paying for this — on a timely basis, without fear of Big Brother or Big Sister stepping in to censor the information?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, the government is not censoring information. Obviously, a government-wide communications policy which has been in effect since 2002 is the process.

It does not matter if a journalist calls into any department. Obviously, as was also the case with the honourable senator's government, the minister is the one who is politically responsible for the department. The communications policy is simply that the minister answers for the department. This is not a policy of muzzling anyone. This is a policy that has been in effect for eight years.

It was brought into effect by the previous government under Senator Munson's beloved Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, and the government follows this communications policy to this day. There is nothing more to the matter than that.

Senator Comeau: Talk to the CBC president.

• (1450)

[Translation]

Senator Hervieux-Payette: Honourable senators, I would appreciate the guidance of His Honour the Speaker on a matter of protocol.

When the Leader of the Government in the Senate answers a question during Question Period, she addresses her colleagues around her, even though the question comes from our side of the chamber. I believe our institution has a certain protocol. I believe that the leader should answer through you or at least address us. I find it improper and disrespectful of the members of the opposition.

DELAYED ANSWERS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have the honour of presenting a delayed answer to an oral question raised by Senator Dallaire on July 6, 2010, in regard to National Defence, recognition medals for troops, as well as a delayed answer to a question raised by Senator Tardif on October 6, 2010, in regard to Agriculture and Agri-Food, support for Western cattle producers.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

RECOGNITION MEDALS FOR TROOPS

(Response to question raised by Hon. Roméo Antonius Dallaire on July 6, 2010)

The Government is grateful for the service and dedication of Canada's men and women in uniform and is committed to ensuring that they are recognized for their tremendous efforts.

Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada, announced on September 8th that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has approved the creation of the Operational Service Medal. The Medal will be awarded to Canadian

military personnel, civilians under the authority of the Canadian Forces, members of allied forces integrated within the Canadian Forces, as well as to Canadian police officers who have taken part in important missions overseas.

The creation of this general service medal will ensure that persons who serve or provide support to overseas operations other than those conducted in the presence of an armed enemy and for which no other medals are available, may be recognized for their outstanding contributions to these operations.

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

SUPPORT FOR FARMERS

(Response to question raised by Hon. Claudette Tardif on October 6, 2010)

This government has put in place Business Risk Management (BRM) programs under Growing Forward to help farmers protect their income and manage risks, including the AgriRecovery disaster relief framework which provides a coordinated process to respond rapidly when disasters strike.

This spring, a \$50 per head payment was made to cattle producers in drought-affected areas of Alberta and Saskatchewan through the Canada-Alberta and Canada-Saskatchewan Pasture Recovery Initiatives under the AgriRecovery framework. This initiative enabled producers to cover the feed costs associated with keeping their animals off of pasture land for up to six weeks. This helped avoid further damage to pasture land, and allowed the land to recover its productive capacity.

The Government is monitoring the impacts of drought and excess moisture on forage and feed availability across the Prairies to ensure that existing BRM programs continue to respond to adverse events affecting cattle producers.

BRM programs continue to assist cattle producers in the following ways:

- AgriInsurance offers insurance options for crops including forage, hay and pasture.
- AgriStability continues to provide significant levels of assistance to producers across Canada, including cattle producers in western Canada. Payments under these programs are targeted to individual financial need. Therefore, a significant portion of these funds have gone to embattled cattle producers. The AgriStability and AgriInvest programs are together expected to provide over \$1 billion to livestock producers in the 2009 and 2010 program years.
- Funds in AgriInvest accounts can be accessed at any time to cover small income declines or to make investments to help increase farm revenues.

- Recent changes to the Advance Payments Program have resulted in increased access to government-backed loans for livestock producers, and a stay of default until March 31, 2012 for advances made specifically to 2,485 cattle producers during the 2008-09 production period representing \$196 million.

Livestock producers in designated drought and excess moisture areas who sell all or part of their breeding herd are eligible to defer a portion of the sales to the following tax year through the Livestock Tax Deferral Program. It is expected that designated drought areas for 2010 will be announced shortly, and officials are now assessing areas with excess moisture and flooding to determine which should be designated areas in 2010.

The recent federal budget included a number of measures to support the beef industry, including an additional \$10 million for the \$50 million Slaughter Improvement program, \$25 million for plants processing over thirty month (OTM) cattle and \$40 million for new technologies to reduce costs or add value for specified risk material.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ENVIRONMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Mitchell calling the attention of the Senate to the relationship between the environment and human rights.

Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I am pleased to speak today to Senator Mitchell's inquiry on the environment and human rights.

Over the past few years, we have closely monitored many environmental crises. Whether they are natural occurrences or the result of human activity, these environmental crises have a direct impact on the most vulnerable people on our planet. Nonetheless, the study of the repercussions of climate change and the role of human rights is an emerging discipline.

[English]

As Senator Mitchell noted, human rights are affected by climate change today. Human rights will continue to be affected unfortunately with greater intensity in the future and with even greater intensity still if we do not act in a way that we should and provide leadership in a way that a country like Canada can provide.

In the time allotted, I am unable to address all the issues around human rights and the environment. However, I will focus on one aspect of the environment that affects everyone: access to clean water.

[Senator Comeau]

[Translation]

Whether we are rich or poor, we all need water. Unfortunately, it often seems that the poorest regions have the greatest difficulty obtaining potable water. According to the United Nations, more than 2.5 billion people do not have access to basic sanitation, and this causes the deaths of more than 1.5 million people a year.

It is estimated that a child dies every 20 seconds from a disease caused by contaminated water. In other words, during my speech, 45 children will die around the world from a virus or a bacterium, and that could have been prevented if they had had access to clean water.

That is why the WorldWatch Institute estimates that water shortage is the most underestimated global challenge of our time. By 2025, it is estimated that two thirds of humanity will not have access to water. What is more, the United Nations estimates that by 2030, more than half the population of the major urban centres will cram into slums without a water supply service or a sanitation system.

We Canadians often take our access to water for granted. It is difficult to truly understand what it means to not have access to water.

In order to better understand the situation that more than one third of the people in this world find themselves in, here is an example that shows the amount of water used by someone in a poor region, compared to the amount used by us, here in North America.

Someone living in a shantytown might have access to only 30 litres of water for their daily needs. Honourable senators, that is one-fifth of the amount of water needed to fill a North American bathtub.

[English]

As Dr. Brian Branfireun, a biology professor at the University of Western Ontario and expert in water resources, has noted, "the vast majority of people on this earth elsewhere in the world think about water availability every single day . . . we are spoiled" here in Canada.

• (1500)

[Translation]

After all, we live in a country with one of the largest reserves of drinking water in the world. But do we really? According to Maude Barlow, the former senior adviser on water issues for the UN General Assembly, it is true that at least one fifth of the world's fresh water supply is in Canada.

However, most of this water is in the Great Lakes, which supply one out of three Canadians and one out of seven Americans. Unfortunately, this water is not entirely renewable.

[English]

According to the Great Lakes Information Network, as of September 2010, the lakes were between 3 inches to 11 inches below last year's water level. There seems to have been a constant decrease in the Great Lakes water levels over the past few years. A 2007 article by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric

Administration, NOAA, states that for every inch Lake Superior drops, 529 billion gallons of water are displaced. This figure is alarming given that NOAA estimates that Lake Superior has already lost 12.7 trillion gallons of water.

Statistics Canada recently published a report indicating the following:

The water yield, which is precipitation and the melting snow and ice, declined overall by 8.5 per cent in southern Canada between 1971 and 2004.

Overall, the report estimates that the water yield is in decline by an average of 3.5 cubic kilometres a year. This figure represents the equivalent to the amount of water in Lake St. Clair near Windsor, Ontario.

The same Statistics Canada report on water indicates that renewable water resources have been dropping in Southern Canada at the annual rate of the equivalent of 1.4 million Olympic-sized swimming pools.

What could explain this continued drop in the water levels of the Great Lakes?

One explanation is that too much water is being pumped out of the lakes for human use. According to a U.S. government report, 26 million people rely on the Great Lakes as their primary source of drinking water.

According to John Sprague, author of *Great Wet North? Canada's Myth of Water Abundance*, even though the Great Lakes represent 20 per cent of the world's fresh water supply, Southern Canada has access to only 2.6 per cent of the world's renewable fresh water supply. Much of the Great Lakes water is not renewable.

The situation is even more alarming in other parts of the country. As noted in a 2005 report by the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources, "some parts of the Prairies are semi-arid." Many rivers and lakes that supply water to our towns and cities are fed by glaciers that are hundreds of kilometres away.

In my home province of Alberta, the Bow Glacier, which feeds the Bow River, a tributary of the South Saskatchewan River, is melting so rapidly that it is estimated that in 50 years the river might be dry, with only the occasional sporadic flooding. This situation undoubtedly would reduce the water levels of the South Saskatchewan River and affect the water consumption, for example, of the city of Saskatoon.

In fact, the scientific magazine *Nature* notes that in a generation or two, major cities of Canada's Western provinces, such as Calgary, Edmonton and Saskatoon, risk losing the rivers from which they obtain their water supply.

This concern was voiced by reputable scientists, including Dr. David Schindler, who testified before our Energy Committee in 2004:

Alberta is the area of greatest concern because "in addition to being an extremely arid part of the country, it is developing rapidly."

However, access to water is affected not only by the quantity but also by the quality.

[Translation]

In 2010, major Canadian cities continue to dump waste water into our country's waterways. The City of Montreal, for example, dumps 900 billion litres of waste water annually into the St. Lawrence River. Here in Ottawa, more than 900,000 cubic metres of waste water were dumped into the Ottawa River in the summer of 2006 after an equipment malfunction. The Petrie Island beach, downstream from the source of the spill, was closed to the public for 45 days for health reasons.

The situation is even more worrisome for populations in the far-off regions of our country. Think about the Inuit and First Nations who depend on the lakes and rivers of our country, not only for drinking water, but for fishing and hunting.

According to Ardith Walkem, a lawyer in British Columbia who specializes in Aboriginal law, the Inuit population in the Canadian Arctic is increasingly confronted with problems linked to water pollution. For example, the bioaccumulation of toxins such as DDT and PCBs has been increasingly detected in the water and food consumed by the Inuit population in the far north. The water cycle carries these contaminants from water sources in the south of the country.

Water contamination, ice melts and the loss of permafrost all affect the environment we live in. These effects are being felt around the world, not just in Canada.

Water is becoming an increasingly precious natural resource. Over the coming decades, the effects of climate change will change our perception of water, especially if, in the worst case scenario, this resource becomes more and more rare or even disappears from some regions.

This is why many researchers and legislators feel that access to clean water is a human right. However, this belief is not shared by all the world's leaders.

[English]

This summer, much was written on this issue as the General Assembly of the United Nations considered a resolution declaring access to clean water a human right.

The resolution came to a vote on July 28, 2010, and was adopted by a vote of 122-0. In what was seen as an historical vote, the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada, along with 38 nations, decided to abstain from the vote that adopted the resolution.

Canada's position, along with that of the other major Western countries that non-officially opposed the resolution, was highly criticized at home and abroad.

Postmedia News reported that Canada's abstention from the vote was due to questions over "sovereignty over natural water supply." However, as another Postmedia News article quoted, Canada's sovereignty over its water supply was not threatened by this resolution.

The text of the final resolution is clear, as it

. . . calls upon States and international organizations to provide financial resources, capacity-building and technology transfer, through international assistance and co-operation, in particular to developing countries, in order to scale up efforts to provide safe, clean, accessible and affordable drinking water and sanitation for all.

It is surprising and disappointing — can I have five more minutes, please?

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

• (1510)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Suzanne Fortin-Duplessis (The Hon. the Acting Speaker): Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to grant an additional five minutes?

Hon. Senators: Yes.

[*English*]

Senator Tardif: It is surprising and disappointing that Canada would not accept such a principle, especially because of our country's difficulties in providing clean water to some of its citizens. We all remember the Kashechewan evacuation of 2005, following the discovery of E. coli in the community's water supply. The community located on James Bay was again evacuated in 2006 and 2007 following threats of flooding.

A similar problem was faced by another First Nations community this summer on the same day Canada abstained from the historical UN vote. At the Constance Lake First Nations community, home to more than 900 Cree and Ojibway, a state of emergency was declared when the 30-year-old water purification facility in desperate need of upgrades was declared unable to ensure a safe water supply.

The Constance Lake community joined a list of more than 100 Aboriginal communities across Canada that are under drinking water advisories. The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, responsible for water safety on reserves, organized to have clean water trucked to the community, as well as supplying water bottles.

However, as a *Toronto Star* editorial noted, "rather than applying a Band-Aid" to this perennial affair "and proceeding at a snail's pace on the purification plant, Ottawa should have been moving at full speed to fix the problem by paying for upgrades in the treatment facility."

[Senator Tardif]

The editorial further argued that the events of Constance Lake and other Aboriginal communities might explain the reason Canada refused to vote on the resolution recognizing access to clean water as a human right. Although not binding, the resolution nonetheless gives a powerful tool to First Nation communities faced with decrepit water treatment plants to request more funding for upgrades from the federal government.

[*Translation*]

As the International Union for Conservation of Nature points out:

Human rights are formulated in terms of rights of individuals, not in terms of rights and obligations of states vis-à-vis other states as international law provisions generally do.

Thus, by making water a human right, it could not be taken away from the people. Through a rights-based approach, victims of water pollution . . . are provided with access to remedies.

So, what must we do to ensure access to clean water for all Canadians?

At the national level, the federal government must initiate consultations with the provinces, legal experts, academics and all Canadians in order to develop a plan to recognize water as a legally-binding, international, basic human right that is not merely symbolic, but can produce practical results.

This position is strongly supported by the Liberal water critic, the Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia.

We need a national water strategy. In August, the Council of the Federation endorsed the creation of a water charter with the goal of reducing consumption in Canada and ensuring water quality in rural and remote areas.

It is inconceivable that in the 21st century, there are people in this country who do not have access to clean water to meet their daily needs.

On a global level, it is crucial that the international community mobilize to ensure that the poorest people on the planet have access to clean water.

I would remind honourable senators that the Millennium Development Goals, which Canada committed to, include reducing by half the number of people without access to safe drinking water by 2015.

As for environmental protection, climate change caused by global warming will continue to increasingly affect the driest regions of our planet.

Honourable senators, it is time to take action to ensure that clean water is accessible to everyone who needs it.

Hon. Jean Lapointe: Following on that very moving speech by Senator Tardif, could I take two minutes of your time to recite the lyrics to a song I wrote three years ago about the crucial issue of water?

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to give Senator Lapointe two minutes?

Hon. Senators: Yes.

Senator Lapointe: I will read slowly for the sake of the interpreters, because this is poetry, which is not easy to translate. The lyrics to my song go as follows:

The water from the clear fountain no longer flows as it
once did
Mylène's tulips no longer smile in springtime
The forest is now a clearing
The wheat no longer makes good bread
Because the water from the clear fountain no longer flows
The pretty chickadees once came and bathed in
the fresh water
But they have flown away like angels, in search
of other springs
Man has sacrificed fresh water
For heavy water, the water of war
Factories spew their venom into the springs, polluting
the sea
If we don't do something to stop the rain of despair
Thanks to the sharks of our species, we'll have nothing
left to drink
Water is as precious as air, vital to our survival
Let us protect it all the way to the sea, our spring water,
our water of life.

(On motion of Senator Comeau, for Senator Andreychuk, debate adjourned.)

[English]

RACISM IN CANADA

INQUIRY—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Donald H. Oliver rose pursuant to notice of July 6, 2010:

That he will call the attention of the Senate to the state of Pluralism, Diversity and Racism in Canada and, in particular, to how we can develop new tools to meet the challenges of the 21st century to fight hatred and racism; to reduce the number of hate crimes; and to increase Canadians' tolerance in matters of race and religion.

He said: Honourable senators, I am honoured to rise today to speak to the inquiry I tabled on July 6 on the state of pluralism, diversity and racism in Canada and, in particular, to how we can develop new tools to meet the challenges of the 21st century to fight hatred and racism, to reduce the number of hate crimes, and to increase Canadians' tolerance in matters of race and religion.

[Translation]

Canada is a wonderful country. It is loved and respected around the world. Every time I come home from a trip abroad, I feel lucky to have been born here and privileged to live here.

• (1520)

One of the main reasons we are envied here in Canada is for our diversity, the respect we show to differences and, of course, our unique experience with multiculturalism.

However, should we be satisfied with the status quo or, should we, honourable senators, in our role of developing and adopting public policy, conduct a critical analysis of the current situation and be prepared to make recommendations to the executive branch that would promote and enhance our citizenship?

Honourable senators, Jews, Muslims and Blacks in Canada are not always treated fairly and, regrettably, they are still not accepted by mainstream Canada.

[English]

With this inquiry, it is my hope that honourable senators who participate in the debate will outline their experiences and make recommendations as to the steps that the Senate should take to ameliorate any problems of discrimination and hatred of which they are aware. In other words, honourable senators, what recommendations should the Senate provide to the Government of Canada with respect to this inquiry?

For my remaining time, I wish to outline something of Canada's history that prompted me to set down this inquiry. My outline relates to no particular group of individuals, but to Canadians generally.

Canada is a country proud of its ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. Today, more than 200 different ethnic groups call Canada home. In the 2006 Census, approximately 41.4 per cent of the overall Canadian population — estimated at more than 31 million people — declared origins other than French, British or Aboriginal.

The concept of visible minority is a key element to understanding Canada's ethnic diversity.

“Members of visible minorities” means persons, other than aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.

The 2006 Census indicated 1,172,790 Aboriginals. Today, 20 per cent of Canada's 34 million people are visible minorities. Although Canada is understandably proud of its ethnocultural mosaic, our diversity has also been a source of disturbing tension that has led on numerous occasions to racist, xenophobic and discriminatory acts aimed at certain groups. Regrettably, some of this activity is racist.

As we all know, a number of features differentiate human beings from one another. In everyday life, some individuals identify with outward features that are sometimes easily identifiable or difficult to hide — physical appearance, family name, given name, language or religion. Certain differentiating features may be more difficult to identify, such as linguistic accents, the use of certain expressions and idioms or traditional

dress. Hereditary physical differences such as hair type, skin colour or eye shape are often socially significant for some people, while other features such as eye colour or size are not.

When people pass subjective judgment on others based upon physical or cultural differences, and on that basis form opinions on the inferiority or superiority of races, this is racism. Another definition is as follows:

Racism is a system in which one group of people exercises power over another on the basis of skin colour; an implicit or explicit set of beliefs; erroneous assumptions; and actions based on an ideology of the inherent superiority of one racial group over another.

Racism is also evident in organizational or institutional structures and programs, as well as in individual thought or behavioural patterns.

Professors Carol Tator and Frances Henry describe racism as an ideology that leads to concrete actions as opposed to an abstract theory without concrete application. Racism is concretely expressed through everyday behaviour, values and institutions. The results can range from a person being excluded from a hiring program to the organized genocide of a group of individuals.

When it comes to racism, we usually tend to think about the most horrific events in human history, such as the slavery that was once practiced in the United States and Canada, or the persecution of Jewish people by the German National Socialist movement that began in the 1930s. However, racism can appear in covert, less obvious ways.

Racism can be as simple as a person not sitting next to a person from a different ethnic background on a bus; or it could be as systemic as persons from visible minorities frequently not being hired or promoted by certain employers. Racism is not always easy to identify or explain, and that is what makes combating racism so challenging.

Let me take a few moments to relate some selected examples of how racism has manifested itself throughout Canadian history. When New France was first settled, slavery was practiced by the nobility of the time, as well as by certain religious communities. Historian Marcel Trudel identified 4,185 slaves in Quebec between the second half of the 17th century and 1834. A majority of these slaves were of Native American descent and their masters were French.

Afro-Canadians were also victims of discrimination in the early development of Canada as a state, notably in the province of Nova Scotia. For instance, during the years following the American Revolution of 1776, many slaves and former slaves were brought to Canada, many settling in Nova Scotia. Those that were freed slaves still faced racial segregation by White society in housing, employment and the justice system, and their descendants have had to continue to fight for their civil and human rights up to this day. It perhaps culminated in the infamous case of Africville.

The Chinese who settled in Canada in the mid-19th century were also targeted for discrimination by the dominant culture. Chinese immigration coincided with the gold rush in British Columbia and the construction of the railway years after. Following an economic slowdown, provincial politicians tried on numerous occasions to reduce Chinese immigration in order to stem the tide of negative sentiments toward Asians. Accordingly, the Chinese Immigration Acts were passed between 1885 and 1923, and required that each person of Chinese origin entering Canada pay a head tax.

Japanese-Canadians were subjected to unfair treatment during and after the Second World War. Twelve weeks after the Japanese offensive on Pearl Harbour and Hong Kong in 1941, the Canadian government enacted the War Measures Act, in order to displace all Canadians of Japanese origin living within 160 kilometres of the Pacific Coast. At that time, the government stated that it was in the interest of national security.

The paternalism demonstrated by the Canadian state toward Aboriginal peoples has been devastating for these populations. Many Aboriginal nations and languages have disappeared. Entire communities have been displaced from their traditional lands or isolated on reserves. The residential school system, run by non-Aboriginals, was the preferred method of assimilating children to the values of the dominant White culture. The legacy of the residential school system continues to have negative repercussions in many communities across Canada as a generation lost connections with its language, culture and family.

All of these groups have been targeted and discriminated against. Recent data compiled by police services in Canada indicate that 1,036 hate crimes were committed in 2008, a 35 per cent increase over the number in 2007. It is getting worse, not better.

The three main categories of hate crimes rose between 2007 and 2008. The largest increase is in relation to hate crimes based on sexual orientation; the number of these types of crimes more than doubled between 2007 and 2008. Religiously-motivated hate crimes increased by 53 per cent. Crimes against Blacks represented the largest category of racially motivated hate crimes — 37 per cent. In 2008, there were 205 hate crimes committed against Blacks, which was an increase of 47 acts, or 30 per cent, compared with the previous year.

Anti-Semitism is still very much a reality in Canada. In 2008, the majority of religiously motivated hate crimes — 64 per cent — targeted members of the Jewish religion. This type of act has increased by 42 per cent, growing from 116 crimes in 2007 and increasing to 165 in 2008.

Muslims and Arabs in Canada have also been victims of hate-related violence, both as communities and as individuals. For example, in 2005, the Canadian Islamic Congress stated that there was a spike in hate crimes against Muslims after the events of September 11, 2001.

It is also noteworthy that extreme rightist groups exist here in Canada. These groups believe in the supremacy of the White race and their hate actions and speeches are directed at people who are Black, Jewish, Aboriginal, et cetera. These groups exploit the

anonymity of the Internet to promote their ideology. A recent report from the Council of Europe pointed out the difficulty that many countries have, including Canada, in enforcing their national laws in the fight against hate speech on the Internet.

• (1530)

What have we done in Canada to overcome these injustices?

Canada has a number of laws that seek to combat racism and discrimination. Equality rights provisions are included in the Constitution Act, 1982. In particular, they are included in section 15(1) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. There is also the Canadian Human Rights Act that prohibits an employer or service provider under federal jurisdiction from carrying out discriminatory practices against people in the enumerated prohibited grounds that include race, national or ethnic origin and colour.

Another law seeking to ameliorate the conditions of certain groups is the Employment Equity Act. The act was created to ensure employment equity in the federal public service and in the federally regulated private sector. It identifies four groups that have not been integrated effectively into the federally regulated workplace; namely, women, Aboriginal people, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities. The act calls for the Government of Canada to implement positive measures for those four groups to actively remove barriers to promote a representative public service.

Then there is the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, which recognizes the diversity of Canadians regarding race, national or ethnic origin, colour and religion as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society. It also emphasizes that the Government of Canada must be committed to a policy of multiculturalism designed to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians, while working to achieve the equality of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada.

There is also the federal Criminal Code of Canada. Offences relating to hate propaganda can be found in section 318 and section 319, and these sections continue to prohibit the incitement of hatred or the promotion of genocide. The Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights has completed extensive and good work analyzing barriers to the advancement of visible minorities in the Public Service of Canada. It is my hope that senators from that committee will outline for all honourable senators some of their findings. They are significant.

In 2005, the Government of Canada launched a national action plan entitled *A Canada for All: Canada's Action Plan Against Racism*. In the plan, the government committed to removing race-related barriers in the workplace and community, and to consult racial and ethnic groups in the development of public policy to achieve this objective.

The summary report of these consultations, entitled *Summary Report for the Engagement Sessions of the Racism Free Workplace Strategy*, provided a picture of the realities facing visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples in the workplace. The report identified that barriers and hidden or covert racism were a reality for many members of visible minorities, immigrants and Aboriginal people in the workplace. For example, participants in the study mentioned the common practice of employers screening resumé based on foreign-sounding names.

While many of the barriers identified in the report were based on cultural factors beyond questions of race such as language proficiency or recognition of foreign qualifications and education levels, the report reviewed how racism prevents many members of visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples from finding work or advancing in the workforce.

Many participants expressed the view that the problem of racism in the workplace cannot be solved without dealing first with the underlying problem of racism in Canadian society as a whole. Participants also thought that many of the employment positions given to Aboriginal peoples and members of visible minorities were temporary or contract positions, and did not provide them with indeterminate permanent employment. Furthermore, participants felt that members of these groups are not always advised about training, promotion and secondment opportunities. The report also touched on the reality that providing evidence to substantiate a discrimination complaint can be difficult and therefore discouraging, especially when making complaints regarding one's human rights is often not supported in workplace culture.

In conclusion, honourable senators, despite this diversity imperative and trend, our actual acceptance of integration and understanding of the benefits that diversity can bring has been slow in coming. This journey has not been an easy one for many countries and it is one of the most difficult challenges facing European countries today.

[Translation]

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Senator Oliver's time has run out. Is it agreed, honourable senators, to give him a few more minutes?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

[English]

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): We agree to five more minutes.

Senator Oliver: Ironically in the midst of the greatest coming together of different races in the history of humankind, the age-old human vices of intolerance and prejudice persist. Discrimination continues and racism remains. As the current Aga Khan, the spiritual leader of the Ismaili sect, a branch of Islam, noted:

People mix and mingle, side by side, to an extent that was once unimaginable. . . . the world is becoming more pluralist in fact — but it is not keeping pace in spirit.

This view is consistent with what Nobel economist Amartya Sen calls “plural monoculturalism — groups that live together side by side — but do not touch, fostering resentments based on historic grievances.”

In my view, we need to find new ways, tools and incentives to bring about a change in spirit to motivate a mindset change in our societies — to one that both understands and embraces the benefits of diversity and immigration as much-needed agents of positive change for our societies. In a nutshell, that is our situation in Canada, honourable senators. Equality is not yet a reality.

We know what the problem is. We have been charged by the Constitution to protect minorities, and by implication, to promote equality. Passing more legislation is not necessarily the answer.

I think it is time that we in the Senate, the body of sober second thought, went out and heard from people. We should call on the Senate to strike a special committee to hold public hearings to learn from Canadians, new and old, what they feel and what they want us to do so that we can develop new tools to meet the challenges of the 21st century to fight hatred and racism; to reduce the number of hate crimes; and to increase Canadians' tolerance in matters of race and religion.

Hon. Lowell Murray: I wonder whether there is sufficient time left in Senator Oliver's overtime for him to accept a question.

Senator Oliver: I would be pleased to, honourable senator.

Senator Murray: I congratulate the honourable senator on a comprehensive speech on an important subject. I draw to his attention one aspect. Has he taken note of the most recent report of the President of the Public Service Commission — a report for 2009-10? Maria Barrados came before the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance this morning to discuss that report.

One of her findings was that, of the four groups targeted by the act for special attention, recruiting and hiring to the public service, three have now been recruited in numbers greater than their proportionate workforce availability. The three of which she spoke with some satisfaction are women, Aboriginals and visible minorities. The one exception is the disabled.

I will put that information on the record and ask the honourable senator whether he has any comment or whether he shares Ms. Barrados's satisfaction. Second, I express the hope that at some point, the model now being advocated in Germany by the German chancellor, who has declared that multiculturalism has been an utter failure, is something that we

might want to reflect upon, in view of our own generally happier experience here.

Senator Oliver: I thank the honourable senator for his question. I meet regularly with Ms. Barrados and, indeed, I spent an hour and a half with her in her office as recently as three days ago. We discussed in depth the numbers from the most recent report.

I can tell honourable senators that the representation of visible minorities in what I call the "EX" or executive categories — EX-1 through EX-5, leading to deputy minister positions — is appalling; it is an embarrassment to Canada.

There are a total of 329 visible minorities in the EX category, including EX-1, out of 190,000 public servants in Canada.

• (1540)

In the EX category, the representation of visible minorities is less than 7 per cent, but visible minorities represent more than 20 per cent of today's Canadian population.

In the feeder groups to the EX categories, there are countless visible minorities. These visible minorities remain static in middle-level jobs although many of them are bilingual or trilingual, have excellent managerial skills, and hold PhDs. Many of these visible minorities have a great deal of experience; however, they remain static in their middle-level jobs. It is a problem.

Next week, I will meet with the Clerk of the Privy Council to discuss this and other problems and to make recommendations to PCO and the government to help deal with some of these systemic problems faced by visible minorities in the public service.

(On motion of Senator Losier-Cool, for Senator Poy, debate adjourned.)

(The Senate adjourned until Wednesday, October 20, 2010, at 1:30 p.m.)

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