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Wednesday, September 26, 2012

The Honourable NOËL A. KINSELLA
Speaker

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

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THE SENATE

Wednesday, September 26, 2012

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

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

THE LATE RUTH MIRIAM GOLDBLOOM, O.C., O.N.S.

Hon. Jane Cordy: Honourable senators, I am saddened to share with you the news of the passing of Ruth Goldbloom, who died on August 29. Ruth Goldbloom had long been a philanthropist in the Halifax area and contributed immensely to the community and to the preservation of immigrant history.

Ruth was born in New Waterford, Cape Breton. She was one of six children born to Rose Schwartz, a Russian immigrant to Cape Breton, who was widowed at a young age. It was from her mother that Ruth learned a strong work ethic and dedication to the community that led her to become a lifelong volunteer and fundraiser.

Ruth attended Mount Allison University and was a graduate of McGill University. During her time in Montreal, she served as a board member for several education and community groups. When she moved to Halifax in 1967, she continued these efforts and became the first woman to chair the Metro United Way Campaign.

Ruth has served as Chair of the Board of Mount Saint Vincent University, the Regent of Mount Allison University, and Chair of Dalhousie University's Annual Fund. She has been Chancellor Emeritus of the Technical University of Nova Scotia, or DalTech, a board member for the Halifax Waterfront Development Corporation, and a board member for the Foundation for Heritage and the Arts.

Honourable senators, Ruth Goldbloom has received honorary degrees from Dalhousie University, Mount Saint Vincent University, Nova Scotia Community College, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Mount Allison University, as well as the University of King's College. She has been the recipient of the Human Relations Award of the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews, the Volunteer of the Year Award of the Centre for the Advancement and Support of Education, as well as Canada's 125th Anniversary Commemorative Medal.

Her community and national service was recognized in 1992 when she was appointed a member of the Order of Canada. Subsequently, in 1997, she received the National Harmony Award, which was followed in 1999 by the Canadian Hadassah-Wizo's Women of Achievement Award. In that same year, she was named to the Honour Roll of *Maclean's* magazine. In January 2000 she was promoted to Officer within the Order of Canada and in 2001 she received the Tourism Industry of Nova Scotia Ambassador Award. The following year, she received

the Heritage Canada Foundation Achievement Award and the Queen's Jubilee Medal. In 2003, she was awarded the Association of Canadian Jewish Studies Award and in 2004, *Flare* magazine awarded her a much deserved Volunteer Award for Lifetime Achievement.

Honourable senators, in early August, Ruth and her husband Richard were honoured for their long-term support of Symphony Nova Scotia. Of all her work, what she will most be remembered for and what was dearest to her heart was her work with Pier 21. Her son, Alan, has described it as her fourth child, saying that she even requested that her funeral be in the museum that she built, but the space was too small for the more than 2,000 friends, family and dignitaries who attended the memorial service to celebrate her life. For over 20 years, Ruth was the dynamo who was integral in raising the \$16 million that it took to transform Pier 21 from an old storage shed into a national museum of immigration.

Honourable senators, Ruth Goldbloom has served as an inspiration to all Canadians and she has set a wonderful example of what it means to "give back." Please join me in sending my deepest condolences to her family and in celebrating a life well lived. Perhaps the best way to honour her is to aspire to be like her in our service to other people.

Honourable senators, if you are in Nova Scotia, drop in to the Pier 21 Museum and remember Ruth Goldbloom.

[Translation]

GRAND-PRÉ UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Hon. Rose-May Poirier: Honourable senators, on June 30, 2012, UNESCO added Grand-Pré to its list of world heritage sites. This exclusive list includes 750 sites around the world, including the Rideau Canal, the Canadian Rockies, Old Québec City, and now the Grand-Pré historic site.

Grand-Pré is widely recognized for its beautiful, unique and untouched landscapes. However, as an Acadian, and to thousands of other Acadians like me, the site represents a memorial commemorating one of the most tragic events of our history: the deportation, known as the "Grand Dérangement."

Settled in the 1680s and located near the Annapolis Valley in Nova Scotia, Grand-Pré was one of the first Canadian and first Acadian settlements. Still today, Grand-Pré continues to exist with its original settlements protected by excellent conservation practices. Acadian engineering has been crucial to maintaining the settlement. A system of tide gates that still work today was essential to the all-important annual harvests and ensured the survival of Acadians through the harsh North American winters.

• (1340)

Since 1755, the year of the Grand Dérangement, Grand-Pré has been recognized as an important memorial site for the Acadian people. Driven from their land, our Acadian ancestors had to

begin their lives over again elsewhere. Whether they found themselves in Louisiana, Quebec or New England, the dispersion of the Acadians had begun.

Despite the separation of over 12,000 Acadians, their flame was never extinguished. In 1847, Longfellow wrote an epic poem telling the story of Évangéline and her undying affection for her lover, Gabriel. The pair was separated by the deportation. Little by little, the Acadian people forged their identity around the poem and myth became reality: the Acadians would not lose hope and would return to their land, just as Évangéline would be reunited with her Gabriel.

Nearly three centuries later, the Acadian people triumphantly returned to their homeland. We will never forget this tragic and legendary past, as well as the perseverance of our ancestors. Now UNESCO is also recognizing the unique nature of Acadian history and culture.

Grand-Pré is an iconic place of remembrance where Acadians can come together to celebrate our history and our triumphant return, as one big family. I invite all honourable senators to come and join us, and enjoy the beautiful landscapes, experience an untouched historic site and celebrate this international recognition with us.

[English]

THE LATE RUTH MIRIAM GOLDBLOOM, O.C., O.N.S.

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: Honourable senators, this past August, Canada lost one of its most beloved citizens in Ruth Goldbloom when she passed away at the age of 88 after a battle with cancer.

How does one describe Ruth Goldbloom? Philanthropist, mother, dancer, Canadian, she was born Ruth Schwartz in New Waterford, Cape Breton. Like her mother Rose, Ruth was a strong leader and quickly became known for her tenacity for charity and celebrating diversity. She was quite tenacious.

Wherever she went, she would always have her tap shoes with her and give you a dance. She was always there with a smile on her face.

Honourable senators, whether it was the Izaak Walton Killam Hospital for sick children in Halifax, the United Way, Mount Saint Vincent University, or Symphony Nova Scotia, Ruth always gave 110 per cent to any project she put her mind to.

Everyone knows that Ruth's best and most famous project was Pier 21, Halifax's gateway into Canada for hundreds of thousands of immigrants who came to this country because of war or poverty or to make a better life for themselves.

Honourable senators, I remember when Ruth was raising money for the museum. She would constantly ask Prime Minister Chrétien for more money every time she saw him. She would constantly ask everyone for more money whenever she saw them. Whether it was \$20 or \$20,000, she was relentless, and rightly so, also for any other charity.

[Senator Poirier]

I was speaking at the annual meeting of the Liberal Party of Nova Scotia last year about fundraising and how important it was for all of us to give. In the middle of this Ruth got up, found a hat and went around and collected a couple of thousand dollars from everyone in the room. She just would not stop.

Ruth helped raise \$16 million over 20 years for Pier 21, which has grown from an old empty shed on Halifax waterfront into a national museum celebrating Canada's multiculturalism. She said that it is the diversity of our immigrant population that brings life to our country. I think we all agree with that.

We offer our condolences to her husband, Dr. Richard Goldbloom, her children, Alan, Barbara, David and their partners, their families, grandchildren, great grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

Ruth was a leader in the Jewish community and an accomplished philanthropist, a proud Nova Scotian and a dear friend to many. Canada has lost one of its proudest daughters.

It was my honour, along with Senator Moore, Senator Cowan and our leader, Bob Rae, to attend the memorial service held at the Cunard Centre for Ruth this summer. It had to be moved to the Cunard Centre, honourable senators, because Ruth had specifically told people she wanted her funeral to be at Pier 21. We could not fit everyone into the space available at Pier 21. There were thousands and thousands of people at the celebration, celebrating a great Canadian and a great woman.

BREAKFAST FOR LEARNING MONTH

Hon. Judith Seidman: Honourable senators, in 1992 a small group of editors at *Canadian Living* magazine made vision a reality when they established "Breakfast for Learning," a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to child nutrition. In 1994, a similar movement took place in the province of Quebec, when "Club des petits déjeuners" founder Daniel Germain started his first breakfast program in Lionel-Groulx Primary School on the south shore of Montreal. At the time, these organizations addressed an acute need. Today, that need persists.

Honourable senators, too many Canadian children have poor diets or irregular eating habits. Evidence bears this out in the case of breakfast, the meal that is most frequently skipped. In Canada, 31 per cent of elementary students and 62 per cent of secondary students do not eat a regular breakfast.

This trend exists for a variety of reasons. *Social Determinants of Health: The Canadian Facts*, published in 2010, estimates 1.1 million Canadian households experience food insecurity, defined as "the inability to have an adequate diet in terms of quality or quantity."

According to the Canadian Community Health Survey, food insecurity is more common in households with children. Studies indicate these children are more likely to experience a range of behavioural, emotional and academic problems as a result. In addition to social determinants, the plain facts reveal that many parents simply do not have time to prepare breakfast due to busy morning schedules.

School nutrition programs may be one of the simplest tools we have to improve the health of students, regardless of social, economic or environmental barriers. The beneficial results of these programs often appear in the classroom first. Teachers observe better behaviour, lower absenteeism, improved concentration and class participation.

What may be most important is that breakfast programs establish healthy eating habits early. Research shows that eating a regular, high-quality breakfast may be related to appetite and to blood sugar levels, both of which have important implications for the risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes.

After almost two decades in operation, “Breakfast for Learning” has served over 350 million meals. Despite this success, need continues to outstrip resources. In 2010 and 2011, “Breakfast for Learning” could grant only 25 per cent of the funds requested for school nutrition programs in Canada.

Honourable senators, September is “Breakfast for Learning” month. Please join me in recognizing the enduring value of these programs and the efforts of those involved.

THE LATE BRUNO JOSEPH BOBAK, C.M.

Hon. Joseph A. Day: Honourable senators, Bruno Bobak, a famed Canadian artist, died in New Brunswick this Monday at the age of 88.

Born in Poland in 1923, Bruno Bobak immigrated with his parents to Canada at the age of four in 1927. At the age of 13, he began Saturday morning art classes in Toronto, where he honed his talent and studied under Arthur Lismer of the famed Group of Seven.

In 1943, at the age of 20, he answered the call to enlist with the Canadian Forces and was sent to England to join the Allied Forces.

Bobak joined the Canadian Forces with the Royal Canadian Engineers as a sapper, but still found time to pursue his love of painting. During his service he won first prize in the 1944 Canadian Army Art Exhibition at the National Gallery here in Canada for a watercolour entitled *Cross Country Convoy*. Recognizing his talents, the Canadian Forces appointed him as one of the official war artists, the youngest in Canadian history.

During this time he submitted roughly 105 paintings to the Canadian war collection. Travelling with the 4th Canadian Armoured Division, Bobak’s depictions were both personal and historical, depicting battle scenes with a terrible beauty that only a select few can accomplish.

In his time overseas, Bobak also met and married fellow war artist Molly Lamb. After the war, they settled in Vancouver, where he won much critical acclaim for the surrealist style he developed in response to the mystical qualities of the Western Canadian landscape.

• (1350)

In 1960, Bobak and his family moved to Fredericton, New Brunswick. In 1962, he became the Director of the Arts Centre at the University of New Brunswick, a post he held from 1962 to 1988. Taken with the natural beauty of New Brunswick, he continued to draw and paint up until the time of his death, contributing to an arts show as recently as April of this year.

In 1995, both Bobak and his wife, Molly, received the Order of Canada for their respective contributions to our nation and to the world through their wonderful works of art.

With Bruno Bobak’s death, Canada has lost one of its great artists. Should honourable senators find themselves in Fredericton, I would encourage them to visit the Beaverbrook Art Gallery, home to many of Bobak’s works. Honourable senators will find themselves in awe of his raw talent and depictions of Canada and Canadians, both at war and in peace.

Honourable senators, join with me in celebrating the life and work of a great Canadian who has made a difference.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

SPEAKER OF THE SENATE

VISIT TO IRELAND AND SCOTLAND,
AUGUST 26-SEPTEMBER 1, 2011—REPORT TABLED

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, a document entitled: “Visit of the Honourable Noël A. Kinsella, Speaker of the Senate, and a Parliamentary Delegation, Ireland and Scotland, August 26 to September 1, 2011.”

Is permission granted, honourable senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

[Translation]

VISIT TO PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA,
OCTOBER 8-16, 2011—REPORT TABLED

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate, I have the honour to table a document entitled: Visit of the Speaker of the Senate and a Parliamentary Delegation, People’s Republic of China, October 8-16, 2011.

Is leave granted, honourable senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

[English]

CANADA-EUROPE PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

THIRD PART, 2012 ORDINARY SESSION
OF PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF COUNCIL
OF EUROPE, JUNE 25-29, 2012—REPORT TABLED

Hon. Percy E. Downe: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian parliamentary delegation of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association respecting its participation at the Third Part of the 2012 Ordinary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, held in Strasbourg, France, from June 25 to 29, 2012.

Honourable senators, no senators participated in this conference.

CANADA-UNITED STATES
INTER-PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

CANADIAN/AMERICAN BORDER TRADE ALLIANCE
CONFERENCE, MAY 6-8, 2012—REPORT TABLED

Hon. Janis G. Johnson: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian parliamentary delegation of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group respecting its participation at the Canadian/American Border Trade Alliance Conference, held in Ottawa, Ontario, from May 6 to 8, 2012.

WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL
MEETING, JUNE 9-12, 2012—REPORT TABLED

Hon. Janis G. Johnson: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian parliamentary delegation of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group respecting its participation at the Western Governors' Association Annual Meeting, held in Cle Elum, Washington, United States of America, from June 9 to 12, 2012.

[Translation]

CANADA-FRANCE INTERPARLIAMENTARY
ASSOCIATION

SECOND ROUND OF FRENCH LEGISLATIVE
ELECTIONS, JUNE 14-17, 2012—REPORT TABLED

Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian parliamentary delegation of the Canada-France Interparliamentary Association respecting its participation in the second round of the French legislative elections, held in Paris and Poitiers, France, from June 14-17, 2012.

[English]

QUESTION PERIOD

HUMAN RESOURCES AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE—
WORKING WHILE ON CLAIM

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: Honourable senators, according to a document I tabled in this chamber yesterday entitled *Case Studies for the New Pilot Project "Working While on Claim"*, it seems that the new rules for EI are hurting Canadians. The new EI pilot project started on August 5, 2012, and will allow individuals who receive regular, parental, fishing or compassionate care benefits to have earnings from limited employment at the same time as drawing benefits.

Let us look at an example: A daughter receiving compassionate care benefits while caring for her sick family member and who is lucky enough to get eight hours worth of work at, let us say, \$16 an hour, would have received \$480 in combined earnings and EI benefits under the old program. Under the new and improved Conservative system, she will receive \$416. That is a difference of \$64 a week. She might now have to spend less time caring for her sick family member and more time looking for work to make up for the benefits that this government has clawed back.

Would the Leader of the Government kindly explain how this is supposed to be in the best interests of that individual?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I think it is important to point out from the very beginning that we have labour shortages in this country today, and we want to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to work.

With regard to the program that the honourable senator made reference to, we really are trying to ensure that everyone who works while on EI is better off. I understand that some cases are coming to light, such as the one my honourable friend just cited. Overall, however, the new program will benefit the majority of Canadians who work while they are on claim and they will be better off.

As I mentioned to the honourable senator, I know there are some specific cases, but, generally speaking, this program is intended to allow Canadians to access the job market and to transition from Employment Insurance to the job market. Certain cases will have to be looked at individually.

Senator Mercer: I am pleased with the tone of the leader's answer because it indicates that perhaps there is flexibility and they will make some changes, which would be great. I want to remind honourable senators that I was not talking about everyone on EI; I was talking about people who were receiving monies under the parental, fishing or compassionate care benefits.

Honourable senators, this is a typical example of big city bureaucrats and fat cat Conservatives writing rules and making policies that they do not understand. They fail to realize just

how such rules affect rural Canadians, especially in Quebec and Eastern Canada. These rule makers are disconnected from the reality that many Canadians face.

Let us look at another example. A farm labourer who receives regular EI benefits and who is lucky enough to get eight hours of work at \$14 an hour, let us say, would have earned \$420 under the old system. That labourer will now earn \$364 under the new and improved Conservative system. That is a difference of \$56 a week, which is a lot of money for someone with a low income.

When Minister Finley was in Newfoundland, she told the people on EI to educate themselves about the new changes because what they were saying was wrong. The document that was tabled yesterday included specific examples of how these changes would affect people. It was not prepared by a partisan group such as the Liberal Party or the New Democratic Party, but by the Library of Parliament. Therefore, is the leader saying that the Library of Parliament is wrong or is the minister responsible wrong?

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

• (1400)

Senator LeBreton: Senator Mercer is awfully good at putting words in people's mouths. I am sure Minister Finley will appreciate the honourable senator trying to put words in her mouth, as well.

Honourable senators, let us not kid ourselves. We have labour shortages all over the country. Everyone knows that, and we are trying to transition people who are on Employment Insurance into available positions. The intent of the plan is to have people benefit. The honourable senator mentioned, and I have acknowledged, that there are some cases where that is not the case. That always happens with any broadly based program.

However, it is hard to stand here and listen to the honourable senator, because the Liberals did not want anyone to benefit from the Working While on Claim pilot project. They voted against significant funding, \$74 million, for it. In fact, the Liberals actually voted against many initiatives that we put in place to help Canadians back to work, including the Youth Employment Strategy and the EI hiring credit. For the honourable senator to stand up now, after he basically voted against all of these things, is a little bit much, but, coming from the honourable senator, it is understandable.

Senator Mercer: Honourable senators, if the minister would take that little piece of legislation and put it into a single bill and bring it before this chamber, I can guarantee support from the people on this side of the chamber. This happened because of the trickery of this government, hiding things and masking them in omnibus bills.

Here is what else happens, honourable senators. How about this poor young waitress who is on EI? She cannot find regular work, but is able to find perhaps 10 hours of work at \$12 an hour. It is still not a lot of money. Under the old system she would have a combined income of \$369.60 a week. That is not a lot of money,

honourable senators. Under the new and improved Conservative Party plan, she would have \$324, or \$45.66 less. Do honourable senators know what \$45.66 means to someone on that income?

The minister has admitted people are being poorly affected by this legislation. Will she go back to the drawing board and fix what has been done wrong?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, we brought in a new program and it is a pilot. Whatever the program is, any one of us can perhaps find people who are negatively affected.

The fact of the matter is the program is valid. The program is solid. Far more people will benefit from it. As I did acknowledge, and I think Minister Finley herself acknowledges, there are some areas where perhaps we could look at individual cases, but the program itself is valid. It was a good program, meant to improve the system. It will improve the system.

Obviously, with any pilot or new program there is the odd instance where one has to work out a few concerns. However, by and large, the program is solid and valid, and I would suggest to the honourable senator that, once the pilot project has been fully implemented, we will find a vast majority of people who have in fact benefited from it.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

EXPERIMENTAL LAKES AREA— CLOSURE OF RESEARCH FACILITY

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

The federal government announced last May that it will be ending operating funding for the Experimental Lakes Area research facility, ELA. By doing so, the government will be abandoning years of investment in research which helped ban phosphates and combat acid rain and which could help us further understand the effects of human activity on fresh water ecosystems. The council of the Rural Municipality of Taché in Lorette, Manitoba is one of the participants, and it strongly supports the research being conducted by that facility.

Consider, honourable senators, that it costs just \$2 million a year to operate, and I say "just" \$2 million to operate because \$2 million nowadays is easily spent if one thinks about the amount spent on the pavilion and the lake during the G20 summit. Therefore, considering it costs just \$2 million a year to operate, could the federal government reconsider its decision to end the operating funding?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): I believe the honourable senator asked me a similar question before we took the summer break, and I must report to her that my answer to her then remains the same now. We have made a decision. The Experimental Lakes Area will be ending as a federal facility. Our government has boosted investments in science in a way that will get results and there is all kinds of evidence of that. Therefore, the answer that I give today remains exactly the same as the one I gave previously.

Senator Chaput: Honourable senators, I understand that the Minister of the Environment acknowledged last week that the research done at ELA is invaluable, yet the government is still going ahead with this cut with the hope that other organizations will take over the management of the program.

Although the ELA can be maintained as a federal facility at a low cost, it would be difficult for universities or other academic institutions to take over the program. Why is the government willing to deprive Canadians of this important research and expertise?

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators, I think I answered that in my first answer. We are not sacrificing expertise. We have actually increased the money in our contributions to science.

An Hon. Senator: Oh, oh!

Senator LeBreton: Honourable senators can laugh, but the record shows it and, if one would like me to go through the long list again, I would be happy to do so.

The fact is, on the Experimental Lakes Area specifically, the decision of the government is the decision. We have invested significant sums in science, and these investments will of course get good results, and Canadians will not be deprived of the scientific information that we require.

Senator Chaput: I have a supplementary question. The council of the Rural Municipality of Taché passed Resolution No. 754-2012 on July 12, 2012. They have sent a copy to the Prime Minister, as well as to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the Honourable Keith Ashfield.

The resolution states the importance of ELA for the development and environmental policies and finds it extremely valuable in understanding, as an example, the entire Lake Winnipeg watershed.

Will the honourable senator please ensure the council's request is taken into consideration by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, and will they at least get an answer to the letter sent to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans?

Senator LeBreton: I thank the honourable senator for that question. Of course, I will inquire about the letter and, as she knows, the government has made many announcements with regard to Lake Winnipeg which have been very well received by environmentalists and the citizens of Canada and of Manitoba. However, with regard to the specific letter from the local organization that she cited, I will be very happy to try and track down the response.

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

PARTICIPATION AT THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Honourable Jean-Claude Rivest: Honourable senators, my question concerns Canada's foreign policy. The minister will agree with me that one of the Right Honourable Brian

Mulroney's major contributions was to allow Canada, through its foreign policy, to play a role that was much greater than its importance in the world. Now, an increasing number of Canadians are concerned about this government's foreign policy.

Honourable senators, there was the reduction in diplomatic staff in Africa, in its Commonwealth and Francophone countries, Canada's natural allies. Then there was the unconditional support for the Government of Israel. And recently, there was the closing of the Canadian embassy in Iran without consulting other western allies, and Canada's failure to obtain a seat at the Security Council.

And now we learn, honourable senators, that more than 100 heads of state are attending the annual UN General Assembly. Why did the Prime Minister of Canada, in view of his obvious problems with foreign affairs, not go to the United Nations to explain Canada's foreign policy ambitions and plans? Why did he boycott the UN General Assembly, unlike 100 of his counterparts?

• (1410)

[English]

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): With regard to the honourable senator's reference to the closing of the Canadian embassy in Iran and the expulsion of the Iranian delegation here, he may have a view, and a few people around the city may have a view, but overwhelmingly the Canadian population support the action that this government took.

The honourable senator and I obviously have different views about Canada's role in the world. I acknowledge we made great strides under the Conservative government of Prime Minister Mulroney. We have made even greater strides under the Conservative government of Stephen Harper.

The Prime Minister is not boycotting the United Nations. The fact of the matter is that we have a Minister of Foreign Affairs who has travelled all over the world in the past few months representing Canada. He will be speaking on behalf of Canada at the United Nations. This is not unusual and has happened many times in the past. I dare say that most people in the world certainly know what Canada's position is on many matters with regard to foreign affairs.

The honourable senator and I obviously hold different views. I suggest that the position that Canada has taken on many matters with regard to foreign affairs is overwhelmingly supported by the majority of Canadians.

INDUSTRY

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE STANDARDS— FOREIGN STATE-OWNED ENTERPRISES

Hon. Céline Hervieux-Payette: Honourable senators, as I am sure Madam Leader knows, the Honourable Sinclair Stevens, a former minister of the Mulroney government and architect of the Investment Canada Act, doubts that Beijing would grant Canada the same sort of buying opportunity as CNOOC seeks

in Nexen. He also states that he was against allowing foreign state-owned enterprises to acquire Canadian companies and that allowing this would cross a dangerous line.

Moreover, CNOOC's statement on corporate governance states the following:

. . . many of the corporate governance rules in the NYSE Listed Company Manual . . . do not apply to us as a "foreign private issuer" and we are permitted to follow the corporate governance practices in Hong Kong . . .

I am sure all honourable senators know the practices in Hong Kong.

. . . in lieu of most corporate governance standards contained in the NYSE Standards.

Does the leader really think the Chinese nationalization of a strategic Canadian company like Nexen, which plays a global role in the exploitation of natural resources, would be a net benefit to Canadians the way it was applied by the Honourable Sinclair Stevens?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): This question proves politics makes strange bed fellows, because I can remember when Sinclair Stevens was the great whipping boy of the Liberal Party. Now he is their great hero.

The fact is, as the honourable senator would know because she is a Privy Councillor and she would also know this from experience, there is a process in place to review this transaction and determine if it is a net benefit to Canada.

This transaction will be scrutinized very closely, and I repeat that there is a process in place to determine if such transactions are of net benefit to Canada. That is what guides the Government of Canada.

Senator Hervieux-Payette: We are not talking about buying stocks of a company on the exchange. We are talking about doing a transaction with state-owned shareholders. It is different. This is a strategic transaction that necessitates public input and further transparency from the government. An improvised decision is not to the advantage of Canadians. As the leader said, it is being carefully examined.

Will the leader agree to submit to her government the proposal for a clear mandate — and I am sure that Senator Gerstein and the members of the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce would agree — to conduct a thorough study to clarify the "net benefit" criteria of the Investment Canada Act using the requirements of the World Trade Organization as a guideline, as well as the standards of the OECD countries?

This would mean that the report of the Senate committee would be submitted to the government. The government could review the report, as the Liberal Government did in 1995 when the Bank Act was changed. That was a thorough investigation. Such an investigation is required now, considering we are talking about the future of the natural resources of this country.

Would the leader be willing to submit to cabinet and the Prime Minister the proposal that our committee would conduct a national study on this question?

Senator LeBreton: We already know that there were some changes made to the Investment Canada Act. With regard to the issue of Nexen, I have already stated the position. This matter will be looked at very carefully and, of course, no decision will be made that does not end up being of net benefit to Canada.

The honourable senator's offer on behalf of her colleagues, including the chair, of the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce, is noted. I do not have any comment on that subject at the moment.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

UNITED NATIONS—COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Hon. Jim Munson: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. The Canadian government, or the Harper government, is responsible for protecting the rights of 7 million children and youth. Later today, and again tomorrow, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child will be conducting its third official review of Canada's efforts to fulfill our obligation under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In March — a few months ago — the committee asked the Harper government to submit information on many issues prior to July 2. As of one week ago there has been nothing. Canada, once a global leader in protecting the rights of children, has not yet responded.

Where is the respect for this important international group and Canada's children?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): I thank the honourable senator and will take his question as notice.

HUMAN RIGHTS

CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER

Hon. Jim Munson: I thank the leader for taking my question as notice, but today they are asking the questions and I think they would like to have some answers.

There is a lot of talk, but there are certain facts. Compared to other developed countries, Canada has a lower rate of adoption, more children living in poverty, less invested in early childhood development, and 50 per cent of children with disabilities lack access to proper aid.

If that is not alarming enough, we are failing our Aboriginal youth in almost every aspect and doing little to protect children from violence.

Many groups in this country, including UNICEF Canada and the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children, expect this third official review to highlight serious failings and, in certain cases, outright violations of responsibility to our children.

If we look at examples, we have Ashley Smith who entered the criminal youth justice system. When she was 13 she threw apples at a mailman and was incarcerated in a youth facility, but her behaviour, linked to mental illness, led to a transfer to an adult system where, as we know, she ultimately died at the age of 18.

Then there is Omar Khadr, whose case and rights have been defended in this very chamber by Senator Dallaire.

Why have important recommendations from Canada's last review in 2003 not been implemented? Why, as we suggested then, and as Senator Andreychuk agreed with, do we not yet have a children's commissioner, at the very least?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): I thank the honourable senator. I will, as I said in my first response, find out about the report and where it is, as well as the response to the report.

Senator Munson paints a bleak picture of children in Canada, which I do not think most reasonable people would find believable.

Obviously, the case of Ashley Smith was a tragic event, which has been well aired in this place. However, to suggest that somehow or other this government and this country are not doing everything we can to improve the livelihood and the betterment of our children is one of those statements, as I said to Senator Peterson yesterday, that is just not to be believed.

• (1420)

Senator Munson: I have a further supplementary question: Why does the leader never answer the question? It is a simple question, and it was approved by our Human Rights Committee, with Senator Andreychuk and a whole bunch of us working together. We recommended, many years ago, that this country should have a children's commissioner. The question was: Why do we not yet have a children's commissioner? We had a long time to study this matter. Just answer the question.

Senator LeBreton: I will give a very good answer. Many recommendations come out of the Senate and the House of Commons. That is what they are — recommendations. The government responds to all reports of the Senate and the House of Commons and considers the recommendations. The fact that a recommendation has been made does not automatically mean it will be implemented.

It was a recommendation. All I can say to the honourable senator is that if any government implemented every recommendation that was made to it, there would be quite a hefty price tag. I do not know who would pay for it all.

Senator Munson: The Senate did great work on the Mental Health Commission, and the leader worked with Senator Kirby closely. That recommendation is financially costly but morally and ethically does not cost very much. Do our children not deserve as much respect?

Senator LeBreton: I believe that this question was asked by the honourable senator before. I believe I took it as a delayed answer. I believe we actually answered this question for him last February. Maybe he does not read his mail, but the answer we gave last February stands today.

Senator Munson: There are two issues — answering the question and implementing the recommendation — and two different answers. Why will the leader not sit down with others in her cabinet and take a serious look at this? Delayed answers and that sort of thing are hogwash. Why does she not just take a look at this serious recommendation? It came from the Senate, and maybe — just maybe — it will look good for her government.

Senator LeBreton: Again, it was a serious recommendation and serious consideration was given to it. The honourable senator was provided an answer last February.

HEALTH

FOOD SAFETY

Hon. Robert W. Peterson: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate in regard to the tainted meat situation in Alberta.

Could she advise us what remedial plans have been put in place by the meat packing plant to address this situation? Also, what changes are being made to Canada's oversight system by CFIA product testing? It is my understanding that it was the Americans that detected the E. coli tainted meat at the border and stopped the importation.

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, obviously the government is very concerned about food safety. Our consumers are our number one priority. Canadian food safety officials began containing the contaminated products on September 4. They are working diligently to stay on top of this very serious situation, and that is all I can report at the moment.

Obviously, anyone would be extremely concerned about these products, and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency is working diligently to contain the problem.

Senator Peterson: Of course it is very important, but could the leader explain why it took the agency 12 days before they put out a health alert on this issue?

Senator LeBreton: I think that there is some confusion about when the notification first came out. I cannot clarify because I do not know which version is true. All I can say is that we have very good people working at the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. Canada's food system is one of the safest — if not the safest — in the world. This situation with regard to the meat packing plant in Alberta has caused great concern not only to the government but to all of us, consumers in particular. I have faith that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency will deal with this situation and get to the bottom of it as quickly as possible.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

FRENCH EDUCATION IN NEW BRUNSWICK

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Losier-Cool, calling the attention of the Senate to the current state of French language education in New Brunswick.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, is it the understanding of the house that this matter standing in the name of Senator Robichaud remain standing in his name for the remainder of his time after Senator Poirier's speech?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Rose-May Poirier: Honourable senators, I appreciate this opportunity to speak to you today about the evolution of French-language education in New Brunswick schools.

I would like to begin by sharing a little of my own personal experience, and then I will provide an overview of the history of this issue from the deportation to the present, which is to say, the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.

I was born into a small Acadian family living in an anglophone community in east-central New Brunswick. The little town of Chatham was recently amalgamated with Newcastle to create the new City of Miramichi.

Back in the mid-1960s, there were no French schools in the region. Honourable senators, imagine a six-year-old girl, somewhat pampered by her parents, going to school for the first time in a completely unknown environment where she does not know the language. My first day of school was a little easier than my big sister Nancy's. On her first day, she knew just one English word: apple.

• (1430)

Wanting to help me, she taught me a few words in English to prepare me for this new world.

At home, it was up to my father to help us with our school work. He was a veteran of the Second World War and worked as a shoemaker, so he had been exposed to English and could help us with our homework in the evenings.

My mother, a housewife, took care of the home and the well-being of the family. I remember learning the French words for ceiling, door, chair, cat, etc. in French class, but never learning full sentences, at that time. A few years later, I was able to help my younger brother when he started school.

I am pleased to say that, since then, things have changed for the better. In 1987, Miramichi got a school and community centre to serve the French population in that region. Frankly, things

improved with the arrival of the Honourable "Little" Louis Robichaud. Louis could not hide his political ambitions from a very young age. He even signed his graduation yearbook, "Louis J. Robichaud, Premier of New Brunswick." At the age of 27, he was elected to the Legislative Assembly, representing the riding of Kent in the 1952 election. Eight years later, in 1960, he achieved his dream and became the first Acadian to be elected premier, a position he held until he was defeated in 1970.

During that decade, the premier's vision or mission was to ensure that all people of New Brunswick had equal access to education in the language of their choice. Because of the hard work of Premier Robichaud, in 1969, the Province of New Brunswick officially became a bilingual province — the only one in Canada.

Thirty years later, when he first took office, the Honourable Bernard Lord reviewed and updated Bill 88, the *Act Recognizing the Equality of the Two Official Linguistic Communities in New Brunswick*. As part of this exercise, the Lord government also ensured that a periodic review would be conducted every 10 years.

The education reform or equal opportunity program, which was initiated by "Little Louis," was supported by Richard Bennett Hatfield, who served as the Premier of New Brunswick from 1970 to 1987. During that time, the work continued under the direction of Premier Hatfield, and the cause of French education in New Brunswick grew. The New Brunswick Community College network, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, was established in 1972. Today, it has campuses in Bathurst, Campbellton, Dieppe, Edmundston and the Acadian Peninsula.

In 1978, the Université de Moncton opened its doors. After 34 years, this institution has three campuses, one in Moncton, a second in Shippagan, and a third in Edmundston. During that same period, honourable senators, the Sainte-Anne school and community centre in Fredericton opened its doors in 1978, the Samuel-de-Champlain school in Saint John welcomed its first students in 1985, and the Carrefour Beausoleil in Miramichi opened in 1987. All these schools and college and university campuses were built during the 17 years that the Honourable Richard B. Hatfield was Premier of New Brunswick.

The Franco-Acadian schools in Franco-Acadian regions of New Brunswick have been around for a long time. In fact, the first Acadian schools were established in the early 19th century, with the first one established in Saint-Basile in the northern part of the province in 1817.

The extraordinary thing about all this development in the 1970s and 1980s is that the schools were built in regions that were primarily anglophone with a fairly large francophone minority of 20 per cent or more.

Just as importantly, succeeding governments all worked to strengthen and improve New Brunswick's French and French immersion education systems. At times, the people of the province had to provide a lot of encouragement to make that happen. However, thanks to New Brunswickers' patience and dedication, we now have a good school system.

As an Acadian from New Brunswick who could not attend a French school in 1960, I find it impressive and encouraging that English-speaking parents are now demanding that their government provide access to French immersion classes for their children.

As recently as 2008, many parents demonstrated their firm belief in an early immersion system beginning in grade one. This belief was clearly demonstrated during rallies organized by anglophones following the Croll-Lee report. The report wanted to make French immersion available only to children in grades five and up. As a result, many parents invoked their status as rights holders so that they could send their children to French schools, as reported in volume three, number 34 of the weekly newspaper, *L'Étoile*.

In light of that expression of dissatisfaction, and following a judicious review, the government of the day backpedalled and introduced immersion beginning in grade three in English schools. The cultural question also has to be closely examined. If parents do not have knowledge of French, and if children do not identify with Franco-Acadian culture, our Franco-Acadian schools could become immersion schools.

Honourable senators, all of this goes to show that, in New Brunswick, when it comes to teaching French in our school systems, things have changed for the better. Still, we must keep listening to the minority Franco-Acadian population.

Seven or eight years ago, a young child with a very English-sounding last name, but with a French mother, was registered in a French school. To his parents' great surprise, the school staff questioned their decision to send their child to a French school, since their name was English.

Just recently, a francophone school celebrated its French pride. The teaching staff asked students not to speak English at home or to watch English television channels, and to only listen to French music. Imagine this young student going home and thinking that he should not speak to his father because he was English-speaking. Imagine the pain of that child and his father.

As adults, we know that the teaching staff at the school did not intend to cause friction among families. That is why we must be sensitive to the different situations that exist in homes today.

The French education system in New Brunswick is not perfect. We have made a lot of progress, but we must remain vigilant in order to protect our culture while still respecting the rights of others.

Like the Honourable Senator Losier-Cool, I would like to mention the names of some illustrious individuals, from my corner of Acadia, who I think have always had French education in New Brunswick close to their hearts. If we have made progress in the last 200 years, it is surely because of these pioneers and fathers of the Acadian renaissance of the 19th century.

First, I would like to mention the name of Monsignor Marcel François Richard. He was the youngest of 10 children of Pierre-Luc Richard, a farmer, and Marie-Tharsile Barriault. Born on

April 9, 1847, he became known over the years as the father of the Acadians. He was also an excellent builder. In addition to several churches, convents and presbyteries, among other things, he built more than 50 schools to educate his cherished Acadians.

• (1440)

Further to the first and second Acadian National Conventions, he proposed that August 15 be designated the Acadian national holiday and that the Acadian people adopt the tricolour with the papal-coloured star of Mary on the blue stripe as their flag, and he implemented these proposals. Finally, Father Richard gave us our national anthem, *Ave Maris Stella*.

Father Richard's work and devotion were key to the survival of the Acadian culture and the French language in New Brunswick. The Honourable Pascal Poirier, lawyer, public servant, author and senator, helped Marcel-François Richard.

Born on February 15, 1852 in Shediac, New Brunswick, Pascal Poirier was the twelfth and last child of farmer Simon Poirier and his wife Ozithe. Recommended to Prime Minister John A. Macdonald by Father Camille Lefebvre, Pascal Poirier accepted the position of postmaster of the House of Commons in 1872 when he was only 25 years old.

However, this did not mark the end of his ambition, since Pascal Poirier went on to become known as an author and published works entitled *L'origine des Acadiens*, *Le père Lefebvre et l'Acadie* and *Le parler franco-acadien et ses origines*.

Together, Pascal Poirier and his compatriot Marcel-François Richard are among the most important figures of the Acadian Renaissance. Pascal Poirier also attended the 1881 Acadian National Convention and helped to establish a separate national holiday for Acadians.

Pascal became a spokesperson for Acadians outside the Maritimes when he was appointed to the Senate in 1887 at the age of 38. He remained a senator until the age of 86, spending a total of 48 years in the Senate. In recognition of the Honourable Pascal Poirier's many years of service to the French language, he received a gold medal from the Alliance Française in 1929. This shows Poirier's devotion to the Acadian people.

Lastly, I would like to talk about Sir Pierre-Amand Landry, an Acadian lawyer, political figure and judge. Born on May 1, 1846, in Memramcook, New Brunswick, he was the fourth of the nine children of Amand Landry and Pélagie Caissie. His father was considered one of the leaders in Memramcook and was the first member of Acadian origin from New Brunswick elected to the Legislative Assembly.

The young Pierre-Amand Landry was the first Acadian to become a lawyer. When his father retired, Pierre-Amand ran in the provincial election and was elected on July 5, 1870, at the age of 24. His political career coincided with controversy over school reform in 1871. The *Common School Act* was passed that year and the school tax would fund only non-denominational schools.

Honourable senators, we know that, at that time, all Acadian schools in New Brunswick were denominational schools. Pierre-Amand Landry took his place in the vanguard of the struggle for Acadian rights. He was in Caraquet in 1875, at a demonstration against the school tax.

[English]

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

Senator Poirier: May I have a few more minutes?

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Five minutes is granted.

[Translation]

Senator Poirier: In 1883, Pierre-Amand Landry ran in the federal election and was elected to the House of Commons, where he defended the interests of New Brunswick's Acadians. He talked to Sir John A. Macdonald about the need to appoint an Acadian senator. Pierre-Amand Landry endorsed the candidacy of Pascal Poirier who, on March 9, 1885, became the first Acadian senator.

In my opinion, if Monsignor Marcel-François Richard is the father of the Acadians, then Pascal Poirier and Pierre-Amand Landry are definitely the godfathers.

Coming back to the 21st century, I would like to talk about another Acadian, Yvon Fontaine. Mr. Fontaine is the eighth rector of the Université de Moncton, and the first graduate of that institution to be appointed to that position. In 2007, he became the first Acadian to receive an honorary degree from the Université de Poitiers. Although Yvon Fontaine is retiring this year, I have no doubt that he will remain very active in the Acadian education system.

Lastly, I would like to mention the name of a young, very talented artist who is making a name for himself across Canada and around the world. He is well-known in the United States, France, Switzerland, Belgium, Spain, Africa and Asia. The young troubadour, singer and ambassador Christian "Kit" Goguen is a product of Acadia. Mr. Goguen graduated from the École Mgr Marcel-François-Richard in Saint-Louis-de-Kent and, in 2003, he won his first singer/songwriter award at the Gala de la chanson in Tracadie.

In 2006, he won the *Rideau-Acadie* and *Le choix du futur* awards in Moncton, New Brunswick. He has recorded a number of albums with the group Ode à l'Acadie including some songs entitled *Petitcodiac*, *Grand-Pré*, and his version of the song *The Gathering Song*, in Mi'kmaq, that talks about the collaboration that has developed between the Mi'kmaq and the Acadians. He also has a very successful solo career and has recorded with *Cirque du Soleil*. Not bad for a young Acadian from back home!

Although many wonderful things have been accomplished over the years, we cannot take our future for granted. We must

continue to come up with ways to improve education for our young people in the language of their choice. We must keep the doors of our schools open to all families interested in learning French.

With all of the great Acadians who have been appointed to the Senate, I am confident that our great Acadians of tomorrow will be up to the task of safeguarding and advancing Franco-Acadian education in New Brunswick for young children.

French education in New Brunswick has a solid foundation and is in good hands. Recently, the Alward government announced that significant funding would be allocated to the Department of Education to ensure good academic results.

(On motion of Senator Robichaud, debate adjourned.)

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO EXTEND DATE OF FINAL REPORT ON STUDY OF CBC/RADIO CANADA'S OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT AND THE BROADCASTING ACT

Hon. Maria Chaput, pursuant to notice of September 25, 2012, moved:

That notwithstanding the order of the Senate adopted on Thursday, November 17, 2011, the date for the final report of the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages in relation to its study on CBC/Radio-Canada's obligations under the *Official Languages Act* and some aspects of the *Broadcasting Act* be extended from October 31, 2012 to June 30, 2013.

(Motion agreed to.)

• (1450)

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO EXTEND DATE OF FINAL REPORT ON STUDY OF APPLICATION OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT AND RELEVANT REGULATIONS, DIRECTIVES AND REPORTS

Hon. Maria Chaput, pursuant to notice of September 25, 2012, moved:

That notwithstanding the order of the Senate adopted on Wednesday, June 22, 2011, the date for the final report of the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages in relation to its study on the application of the *Official Languages Act* and of the regulations and directives made under it be extended from September 30, 2012 to September 30, 2013.

(Motion agreed to.)

(The Senate adjourned until Thursday, September 27, 2012, at 1:30 p.m.)

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