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(HANSARD)

Wednesday, February 24, 2016

The Honourable GEORGE J. FUREY
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Wednesday, February 24, 2016

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

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

TRIBUTES

THE HONOURABLE MARIA CHAPUT

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, pursuant to the motion adopted by this house on Thursday, February 18, 2016, the time provided for the consideration of Senators' Statements will be extended today for the purpose of paying tribute to the Honourable Senator Maria Chaput, who has resigned from the Senate effective February 29, 2016.

I would like to remind honourable senators that, pursuant to our Rules, each senator will be allowed only three minutes and may speak only once.

Is it agreed that we continue our tributes to Senator Chaput under Senators' Statements?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

The Hon. the Speaker: We will therefore have the balance of the 30 minutes for tributes, not including the time allotted for Senator Chaput's response. Any time remaining after tributes would be used for other statements.

Is it agreed, honourable senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

The Hon. the Speaker: Let us now pay tribute to the Honourable Senator Maria Chaput, who is retiring on February 29, 2016.

[*English*]

Hon. James S. Cowan (Leader of the Senate Liberals): Honourable senators, I rise to pay tribute to our colleague and my friend, Senator Maria Chaput, as she takes leave of us and of this place.

The English writer Penelope Lively wrote: "Language tethers us to the world; without it we have spin like atoms."

That understanding — that language is much more than words, that a community's language cannot be severed from the community, that our language is who we are, what binds our past and our future — that is the catalyst that has defined and driven Senator Chaput throughout her life. The result was that

she became a leader, a champion of minority language rights and especially of the rights of francophone minorities in Manitoba and across Canada.

These rights were not easily won. On June 5, 2012, Senator Chaput delivered a very moving, often personal speech here in the chamber. The topic was education in minority languages. She spoke about the difficult history of the Franco-Manitoban community, the feeling through generations of, in her words, "... a sense of injustice and the desire to reject oppression." As she said, "... Manitoba took a long time to make things right."

She spoke about the battles she had to engage in as a mother so that her children could attend school in their native tongue, of the hope that permeated her community when Canada adopted the Charter and, as she has spoken of repeatedly in this chamber, the financial challenge involved in upholding those rights and the critical role played by the Court Challenges Program.

She concluded her speech describing how very far her community had travelled. Her grandchildren attended those schools whose very existence she had fought for so hard and so strenuously. They speak French freely and without reservation. They read books of great Franco-Manitoban authors and sing songs of Franco-Manitoban artists. Perhaps the greatest victory was that they and their parents take it almost for granted; this is their normal.

In December 2002, Maria Chaput broke another barrier when Prime Minister Jean Chrétien appointed her to the Senate to become the first Franco-Manitoban woman to sit in this chamber.

She brought a wealth of diverse experience to the Senate. She was Executive Director of the Franco-Manitoban Cultural Centre; Deputy Director of the Franco-Manitoban Society; Director of Francofonds, a charitable foundation that supports and promotes the development of Manitoba's French-speaking community. She was the first female president of the Caisse Financial Group in Manitoba. She was Vice-President of the University of Saint-Boniface Board of Governors, where they now award a bursary in her name. For eight years, she owned and managed a consulting firm that provided services to community organizations and various departments at both the federal and provincial levels.

But of course, beyond even all that experience was her passion to defend the rights of minorities. That is a role that we all know has a long history here in the Senate. Few have claimed that mantle so strongly and with as much determination as Senator Chaput. She's harnessed facts, history and a strong moral compass to defend the language and cultural rights of minorities across Canada, and especially, of course, of francophone minorities. She's launched powerful debates in the Senate, speaking on inquiries ranging from the lost Court Challenges Program, to the Senate's role in protecting minorities, to the critical role of francophone minority newspapers. She proposed legislation — repeatedly, if necessary. Bill S-209, which is now before the chamber, is Senator Chaput's fourth attempt to amend the Official Languages Act to ensure it meets the needs of francophone minority communities today.

She served as Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages. Under Senator Chaput's leadership, the committee tabled a number of thoughtful, comprehensive and, I believe, influential reports covering a wide array of topics, including bilingualism at Air Canada; linguistic duality at the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games; francophone arts and culture in a minority setting; the vitality of Quebec's English-speaking communities; and the report entitled *Internet, New Media and Social Media: Respect for Language Rights!*

Colleagues, with her deep knowledge of and dedication to her community, Senator Chaput has been an impressive advocate for her region here in the Senate and an effective ambassador for the Senate in her community.

Not surprisingly, Senator Chaput has received numerous prestigious awards for her work, including in 2011 the French Légion d'honneur, France's highest distinction, awarded to recognize the battles Senator Chaput led for the francophone communities in Canada. She was also awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Medal; the Ordre des francophones d'Amérique, the Western Canadian francophone leaders award; and the Société franco-manitobaine's Prix Riel, recognizing her then 33 years of dedication to the Franco-Manitoban community. And those are just a very few of the many awards she has received over her career.

• (1410)

Last week we heard Senator Mercer remark upon Senator Chaput's heckling skills. I believe it was Martin Luther King Jr. who said, "Almost always, the creative dedicated minority has made the world better." While Senator Chaput has embraced her position as a minority, whether it is as a Western francophone woman or as a polite heckler amongst the minority opposition benches, I think we unanimously agree she has made the world better.

Maria, I know you will be looking forward to enjoying a quieter life than you've had here and to spending more time with your three daughters and four granddaughters. It's well deserved. On behalf of all Canadians, and especially on behalf of all your colleagues that you leave behind here in the Senate, thank you for your hard work. You'll be missed. My very best wishes go to you and your family over the next stage of your rich and satisfying career.

[Translation]

Hon. Claude Carignan (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, today, we bid farewell to our honourable colleague Senator Maria Chaput. She is leaving the Red Chamber after 13 years of dedicated public service. When she was appointed in 2002, our honourable colleague had already dedicated much of her life to public service, and I have no doubt that that will continue after she leaves the Senate.

Honourable colleagues, what I would like to focus on in remembering Senator Chaput's invaluable contribution today is her legacy as a steadfast defender of the rights of francophone minority communities in Canada.

To put things into perspective, it is important to mention that Senator Chaput went to school in a Grey Nuns convent in a French-speaking community in Manitoba, at a time when it was illegal to teach French in Manitoba schools. Senator Chaput has recounted that, and I quote, "When the provincial school inspector was in the neighbourhood, we had to hide our French books."

Perhaps that is when she found the French-language cause or when it found her, a most enthusiastic defender.

Official language minority communities have changed a lot since then. I think it is fair to say that many of the improvements that have been made are due to Senator Chaput's tireless efforts. She has strived, with much determination, to improve the lives of francophones in Manitoba and across Canada. What is more, she is the first Franco-Manitoban woman to serve in the Senate.

Since the Senate has a constitutional mandate to protect, defend and promote minority rights, Senator Chaput's mission has been a bipartisan one. Our political parties have worked hard together to ensure respect and protection for both of Canada's official languages, from 1969 — when the Official Languages Act was passed, under a Liberal government — to 1988, when the Conservative government reviewed the act in order to ensure the full implementation of the linguistic rights guaranteed under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Senator Chaput has received countless awards from all over Canada and elsewhere in the world for championing French language minority rights.

Senator Chaput made us recognize how important it is that Quebec be a strong defender of francophone minority community rights across Canada. Francophone communities are shrinking relative to other communities, so their voices may not resonate as loudly.

Language rights have come a long way in Canada, helping communities to retain their identity and survive, much like the right to French-language education, which a young Senator Chaput rallied for. As the senator has said, efforts to advocate for francophone minority communities are not, I quote, "... an obligation, an imposition or a concession, but [a huge asset and] a central part of Canadian identity."

Two large linguistic communities coexisting — it's a little like two big political parties coexisting in the Senate.

Before I finish my tribute, I would like to reveal one of Senator Chaput's hidden flaws. Her sober, thoughtful and composed demeanour conceals a real Liberal partisan political animal. She would never have given up her seat under a Conservative government, but she is leaving it to a Liberal Prime Minister. In this respect, Senator Chaput's departure may very well contribute to a less partisan Senate.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Carignan: Dear colleague, it has been an honour and a privilege to sit with you in this august Senate chamber. I wish you excellent health, and I know that your three daughters and four

granddaughters will reap the benefits of some extra time with you. I am sure we will hear about the accomplishments you and your husband, Louis, continue to achieve together as you advocate for the rights of official language minorities side by side.

You will be missed here. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Claudette Tardif: Honourable senators, I'm pleased to rise today to pay tribute to our dear colleague, the Honourable Maria Chaput.

Dear colleague, I want to congratulate you on your 13-year parliamentary career in this chamber. Your genuine commitment to serving our country has been evident.

You courageously and steadfastly promoted linguistic duality in Canada and fought for respect for both official languages, English and French. You made a point of instilling the values that are important to you in your work and initiatives. It has been a lifelong commitment for you to assert language rights and promote official language minority communities.

I was fortunate enough to see first-hand how you understand the issues facing francophone minority communities and to see how you were able to get everyone to agree on important topics as a member and chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages. You earned the respect and esteem of all senators.

Under your leadership, from 2006 to 2013, the committee carried out relevant studies that addressed the real needs of official language minority communities. I cannot name them all, but I will share two of them: *Francophone Arts and Culture : Living Life to its Fullest in Minority Settings* and *Internet, New media and Social Media : Respect for Language Rights!*

Your Bill S-209, An Act to amend the Official Languages Act (communications with and services to the public), introduced for the fourth time in the Senate, is proof of your great determination to bring the act in line with the new social realities and demographics of official language minority communities.

You are an excellent warrior and a magnificent unifying force. Franco-Manitobans hold you in high regard, as do all associations and organizations that represent official language minority communities. You've helped bring the Senate closer to these communities.

Dear colleague, you are a person of integrity who is dedicated, committed and determined, and you always show respect for others. Thank you for everything you have done for your community, for your colleagues, and for Canada. Your contribution and devotion to la Francophonie are invaluable. Dear Maria, I want to express my deep admiration for your dedication and my sincere affection for you.

• (1420)

Honourable senators, I am sad to see an exceptional colleague and friend leave this place. I will miss you, Maria. I wish you a

[Senator Carignan]

very happy retirement with Louis, and your children and grandchildren.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[English]

Hon. Donald Neil Plett: Colleagues, it is my pleasure to rise today to pay tribute to a fellow Manitoban and a remarkable senator, Maria Chaput. I met Madam Chaput for the first time when I was appointed to the Senate seven years ago. Before that, I had only known her by reputation as an outstanding advocate for the improvement of francophone life in Manitoba, specifically in the school divisions and the Francophonie financial sector.

Senator Chaput comes from a small French community about the same size as the Mennonite community I was raised in and only about nine miles from where I grew up. While my relationship with Senator Chaput did not begin until I came to the Senate, my relationship with her family began many years prior. In fact, her brother André and I campaigned together extensively for the Conservatives.

Senator Cowan: Every family's got a black sheep.

Senator Plett: And I largely fault her brother Maurice for the many aches and pains I have in my back and neck from the days we played hockey against each other. Later in life, we put our hockey rivalry aside and the three of us curled together on the same curling team in the town of Ste. Anne.

Senator Chaput's appointment to the Senate clearly exemplifies how merit-based appointments under our current system truly are appropriate.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Plett: Her achievements in supporting the French-speaking community in Manitoba, and indeed in Canada, are unmatched. Senator Chaput has many talents. Some, however, are not as well known as others. How many senators in this chamber know that she is able to analyze handwriting? Yes, it's true. She is able to detect a person's traits simply by reviewing their handwriting.

Some Hon. Senators: Oh, oh.

Senator Plett: I am happy that any written communication that I have had with Senator Chaput has been by email.

We in the Senate all know Senator Chaput as an elegant woman, with a lovely smile and never a hair out of place. However, she and I come from the same type of community and stories are passed around. As is tradition in southeastern Manitoba, many of us head across the border to Grand Forks for some rest and relaxation. As the story goes, on one of these trips a few years ago Senator Chaput spent the afternoon in a hair salon having her hair done. As expected, she looked lovely. I don't know what they were serving in the salon, but on her way to show off her new hairdo to her friends, she slipped and fell into the swimming pool at the hotel. Lesson learned: Don't have your hair done until after you've gone swimming.

Last week, Senator Mercer said he considered Senator Chaput a student of his, one that he was trying to coach in the ancient art of heckling. While I am sad that Senator Chaput's journey in the Senate is cut short, the silver lining is that Senator Mercer's influence will not be able to rub off on her any longer. However, we all know that Senator Chaput has far too much class and grace to ever become a menacing heckler.

I am disappointed that our time together in the Senate could not have been longer. However, as a colleague and friend I would like to thank Senator Chaput for the grace and sincerity with which she approached her work in the Senate. As a Manitoban, I want to thank her for all she did for the community. I'm sure she will continue to advance the cause of official language minority communities in Canada.

I wish Senator Chaput, Louis and their family all the best as they embark on this next chapter in their lives. I sincerely hope that, through our work, we will cross paths many times in the future. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Joan Fraser (Deputy Leader of the Senate Liberals): What can I say about Maria Chaput? The first word that comes to mind when I think about her is "kindness." She is such a kind woman. She is a tenacious woman. Other senators talked about her Bill S-209. Take heart, Maria. We'll get there.

She is loyal to her Franco-Manitoban community, loyal to her colleagues, loyal to her party, and loyal to the major causes she defended her entire life. She is a woman of integrity and courage. She is very courageous and kind, as I said.

She can be somewhat self-effacing with her soft voice and her subdued style, but that hardly conceals her iron will. She owes her success in defending her causes in part to that iron will and in part to her extraordinary capacity, her determination, to work hard and work effectively. She is much more effective at getting things done than most. She does not waste time with idle talk; she focuses on the task at hand, and that's how she succeeds.

[*English*]

She is a person of great sympathy. It was under her chairmanship that the Official Languages Committee of the Senate, for the first time in its existence, did a detailed study of the situation of English Quebecers. It was a thorough study, a good study, for which my community and Senator Seidman's community was and is very grateful. It's not a subject that most members of francophone minorities would have found particularly close to their hearts. They have their problems, we have ours, and their hearts are with their communities. I'll never forget when one day we had finished hearing by video conference a witness from northern Quebec talking about the situation of anglophones in the tiny village where she lived. At the conclusion of the proceedings, Senator Chaput had tears in her eyes.

[*Translation*]

We are going to miss her. Someone was telling me just today that it takes a great deal of wisdom to effectively protect linguistic minorities. She was very wise. We thank her for everything she did.

Maria, Louis and the entire family, we wish you much happiness and thank you so much.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Céline Hervieux-Payette: I almost feel like calling you "my dear little sister," because I felt as though we were sisters when we sat on the powerful Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, which has reviewed all government spending for many years. I can tell everyone who was not on this committee that Maria would arrive with her neatly written notes — in the handwriting also taught to me by the nuns — and she would always do a thorough job. Her pointed questions and analyses did not make life easy for the public servants and the ministers who appeared before our committee. I can tell you that she was there to protect Canadians' interests and to ensure that the money was spent appropriately. I very much enjoyed the experience.

• (1430)

Maria, I must tell you that every time I think of your name, I always think of Maria Chapdelaine. Don't laugh, for the first syllable of both last names is the same, "Cha," as in Chapdelaine and Chaput. That image always comes to mind, even though your personalities are nothing alike. The image I have of Maria Chapdelaine, since we learned about that character in French class — or at least we did in Quebec and I imagine the same was true in Manitoba — is the image of the women who marked our history. It is the image of a woman who, ultimately, decided to break ranks. I think that is what we will remember most about you. You were never afraid to stand up and stand out. For you, being part of a minority never meant you had to submit. Instead, you said, "I am proud of my minority. I am proud of my language." That was always obvious, and that is likely what continued to inspire you all these years.

[*English*]

Dear English friends, I can tell you that when you are a minority, which you are not often except for those speaking English in Quebec, talk to them and learn about how they feel. They have the same feeling that we have in the rest of Canada. Of course Maria is living in the province where French Canadians had to go to the Supreme Court to address the treatment of those in their community and get the system changed.

[*Translation*]

It is people like Maria — not Chapdelaine, but Chaput — who made it possible for French Canadians originally from France to eventually prevail.

However, the history of the French question in Manitoba is much sadder than in other parts of Canada. I too hope that Bill S-209 becomes law. Maria worked very closely with Stéphane Dion to introduce a policy. We all hoped that this policy would be implemented one day.

I would also like to say that, in addition to her work on the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, she was also an excellent teammate. I think the people of Manitoba owe her a debt of gratitude and heartfelt thanks for everything she has done for them. All things considered, I am not saying that those efforts

were intended for Quebec, but when the French fact is strong in the rest of Canada, it is also strong in Quebec. On behalf of everyone, thank you.

I was very happy to have the opportunity to work with you. I wish you all the best in your new life. Like me, you have three daughters, and we are always so pleased to be able to spend time with them. Best of luck, Maria!

Hon. Pierrette Ringuette: Honourable senators, more than 13 years ago, I had the honour of being sworn in in this place on the same day as Senator Maria Chaput. Notwithstanding the difference in our characters, Maria the “humble diplomat” and Pierrette the “agitator,” I am sure that former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien was proud to simultaneously appoint two francophone women from minority communities, one from the east and the other from the west.

Maria devoted her heart and soul to our francophone communities within the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages and in this chamber. I so admired her very, very sweet patience when she asked excellent questions about francophone rights and got answers such as:

[*English*]

You people, you people!

[*Translation*]

— from the leader of the government. Maria, despite such insulting answers, you remained calm and kept asking your questions and pursuing your initiatives like the amazing woman you are. Your dedication to your work on Bill S-209, which you introduced for the fourth time, is a testament to your tenacious commitment to serving francophone minority communities.

Your husband’s health problems and now your own are the reasons behind your early retirement. My dear Maria, we will miss you very much. Rest assured that your initiatives and your devotion to the francophone cause will always be part of our debates and will serve as a model to future generations. Your smile, gentle personality and friendship will forever remain in our hearts.

I wish you many wonderful years with your husband, Louis, your children and your grandchildren. Long live la Francophonie and long may you live, dear Maria. Thank you.

Hon. Diane Bellemare: Dear Senator Chaput, I want to start off by saying that I was sad when I heard you would be leaving us early. Your consistent presence at the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance had become so reassuring for me. We spent so many hours together there, especially during debates on budget implementation bills.

I recently reread your response to Honourable Senator Nolin’s inquiry calling the attention of the Senate to its role in protecting minorities. Not only does your speech illustrate your excellent understanding of our Senate, but it captures the essence of your work here, which is exactly what I would like to highlight today.

[Senator Hervieux-Payette]

As everyone has mentioned, as the first Franco-Manitoban woman in the Senate, you have defended the French fact in Canada since 2002. During every committee meeting, be it the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages or other committees, you always did a brilliant job of representing your francophone community and our language, French. You did so in this chamber too, with your impeccable use of the French language. Not only did you represent the Franco-Manitoban minority you come from, but you also contributed to bilingualism and a strong francophone identity in Parliament and in Canada.

Your desire to promote French did not stop at the doors of this chamber. You also contributed to the vitality of the language of Molière well beyond the Senate. Recently, in February 2015, you advocated for francophone newspapers in minority communities by filing a complaint with the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

Lastly, I would like to add that, as a senator, you were a paragon and defender of the four founding principles of our Constitution as set out by the Supreme Court, and you reminded us of the importance of those principles during your inquiry into the role of the Senate. Those principles are federalism, respect for the rule of law, democracy and protection of minorities. You represented your region admirably, studied the bills that came before us thoroughly, and protected the minority that you come from.

My dear Senator Chaput, I wish you all the best in your retirement. I thank you so very much for all your valuable work in the Senate. I wish you many years of good health, so you can fully enjoy spending more time with your family. Lastly, I sincerely hope that the Prime Minister appoints another woman who will continue — and just as remarkably well — the important work you have done to protect the francophone minority in Manitoba. Whoever she is, she will have big shoes to fill.

It was a pleasure and an honour to have known you, dear senator. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Joseph A. Day: Honourable colleagues, it is with mixed emotions that I rise today to address the chamber. I say “mixed” because, like many of you today, I am sad to see Senator Chaput leave the Senate, but at the same time, I was very proud and delighted to have the privilege of serving alongside Senator Chaput for the past 14 years in this wonderful institution.

• (1440)

Throughout her career, the honourable senator proudly represented francophones and was a formidable ambassador who defended the linguistic rights of francophone minorities and ensured that they had a voice at the heart of our democracy in Canada.

Dear Senator Chaput, your passion, perseverance and commitment to francophone communities are obvious. As evidence, you attempted to amend the Official Languages Act three times. Although you did not succeed, you persevered and

came back this year with a fourth bill to amend this same legislation. Your dedication and tenacity, even today, continue to make a difference and are truly inspiring.

Senator Chaput is also recognized for her diplomatic skills, as shown by the following story. In the 1990s, Senator Chaput was the executive director of the Centre culturel franco-manitobain in St. Boniface. One evening, after receiving a complaint that the Daniel Lavoie concert was too loud, the senator decided to play detective. She investigated whether the noise was really as loud as the complainant had said. Just imagine the future senator slowly moving unnoticed under the balcony of the house to listen to the music coming from the cultural centre before sneaking away. As a result of her investigation, the Senator decided that the music was not being played too loud and resolved the dispute to the satisfaction of both parties. It was by engaging in these practical activities that she perfected her diplomatic skills. My sincere congratulations.

I am proud to have served with Senator Chaput on the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance. Once, she pointed out to me that she enjoyed being part of that committee because it helped her gain a better understanding of how the government works, which in turn enabled her to better serve her community.

Senator, it is a great honour to have served with you in the Senate and in committee. Thank you for all that you have done and continue to do for Manitoba and for Canada. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Paul E. McIntyre: Senator Chaput, we were sad to learn just recently that you will be leaving the Senate early.

Over the past few years, I have had the privilege of working with you on the Official Languages Committee. You have always been and continue to be a staunch defender of the rights of francophones living in minority communities. That is your legacy.

I will always think of you as a determined, tenacious and courageous woman of character. May good fortune continue to smile on you, to keep you safe and healthy for many years to come. Happy retirement, Senator Chaput.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[English]

Hon. Jane Cordy: Honourable senators, I rise today to add my sentiments and well wishes to our colleague and friend, Senator Maria Chaput.

When she was appointed to the Senate in December 2002, Senator Chaput had already established herself as a leader and business woman in the francophone financial sector. She is the first Franco-Manitoban woman to be appointed to this chamber and has done much throughout her time here to support her community and to encourage pride and interest in her culture and in her language. She has made great strides in trying to improve francophone life in Manitoba and across Canada.

For her work, Senator Chaput has received many awards, including, in 1975, the Prix du journal *La Liberté* as a francophone woman of action; the Prix Radio-Canada as

Manitoba's outstanding francophone in 1987; and in 1989, the Prix Réseau for being a driving force in the cultural sector. Additionally, she received the Société franco-manitobaine's Prix Riel for her dedication and for being a role model in her community. In 2002, she was awarded the Western Canada Francophone leaders award, and notably, in 2011, the Légion d'Honneur, the highest distinction of the Government of France in recognition of her work on behalf of francophone communities in Canada.

I am delighted to have had the privilege of working with Senator Chaput in committees, in particular the Social Affairs, Science and Technology Committee. Her input was always reasoned and greatly appreciated.

Of her time in the Senate, Senator Chaput has said, "I've always been the kind of person who really wants to do my work the way it should be done." She has said that a good senator has to have strong values, believe in the good of Canadians, listen and be able to work with other parties. She, of course, exemplifies those qualities. She has taken much pride in having involved Manitoban communities and minorities over the past 13 years and in the work she has done in bringing the Senate closer to the people.

Despite the seriousness with which Senator Chaput does her job, I am sure you have all noticed the twinkle in her eye. Maria has a wonderful sense of humour; and yes, I would agree with Senator Mercer that her heckling skills have improved considerably under his guidance. And yes, Senator Plett, she is very partisan, but I don't think that's a bad thing.

Maria, today we celebrate you and we thank you for all that you have done. Take care and best wishes to you and your family. We will miss you.

[Translation]

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

Hon. Maria Chaput: Honourable senators, thank you for your kind words. You have been most generous. I will never forget what a privilege it has been to be part of this noble institution. It has been a very unique and educational experience that I wish every Canadian could share.

When I agreed to serve my country and arrived in the Senate of Canada as a senator for Manitoba for the first time in December of 2002, I promised myself that I would always appreciate the beauty of my workplace, the architecture, the paintings, the sculptures and the history of this beautiful Canadian Parliament; that I would never forget where I came from and why I had been appointed to the Senate; and that I would continue to stand up for the interests of francophones in minority communities, since that has always been part of my DNA. It is part of who I am, my heart and soul.

I must tell you that I am so grateful today. Thank you, dear colleagues, honourable senators, for being so willing to work with me, and for your understanding, generosity and respect.

I will always have fond memories of you and of the friendships we've made here. The Senate is so important to all of us, and you

will be in my thoughts. I know that the reform will be successful, because you are all working together.

• (1450)

[English]

My sincere thanks to all senators. Thank you for the pleasure of your company in the Senate and at committees.

[Translation]

I want to thank the staff of the Senate — each and every one of you who works for the Senate and for committees, and also the support staff. You have always been there for us senators, and your help is invaluable. I could always count on you. Thank you for your kindness, your smiles and your professionalism.

I want to say a special thank you, with much affection, to my own staff, Suzanne Belliveau and Vrouyr Makalian, who are here today. We made a terrific team and nothing could stop us. We were always on the same wavelength. Imagine an Armenian, an Acadian and a Franco-Manitoban. What a beautiful example of Canadian diversity. Suzanne and Vrouyr, thank you for your friendship and support. It's mostly thanks to the two of you that I stand here today feeling that I can say "mission accomplished."

I want to thank my husband Louis and my daughters and granddaughters. My family stood by my side on this great adventure, and now it is my turn to actively participate in their lives and support them.

I can sincerely say that, in my 13 years in the Senate, I never once lost sight of the Senate's true mission and of my serious responsibility as senator to serve the interests of and speak on behalf of Canadians, particularly on behalf of minority groups.

Like some of you, I know that I made many parliamentarians and Canadians aware of the reality facing linguistic minority communities. I was able to connect these communities with the Senate and show them how important this institution is.

[English]

I know that senators can and do make a difference in the lives of all Canadians.

[Translation]

I also learned to understand the backrooms of the machinery of government. Yes, I said "understand" even though I still have a hard time accepting what we call partisan motivation. I am partisan to a point, but for me the party line is secondary to the needs and well-being of the communities. That is how I feel and those are my deepest convictions.

[English]

I sincerely did my best to represent Canadians' interests in the upper chamber, and I thank you for your help.

[Translation]

Thanks to all of you and your help, I am leaving with my head held high, but with a twinge of regret. I loved my 13 years in the Senate where I met some extraordinary people I won't soon

[Senator Chaput]

forget. My life and that of my family have been, and will forever be, enriched by this experience.

I am truly leaving with a sense of calm and serenity as I begin a new stage in my life at home in Manitoba. As one of my dearest friends said, I am starting a new chapter in my life. Thank you very much.

[English]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

CANADA-UNITED STATES INTER-PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

CANADIAN/AMERICAN BORDER TRADE ALLIANCE CONFERENCE, OCTOBER 4-6, 2015—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 Washington, D.C., United States of America, from October 4 to 6, 2015.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOUTHERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION, OCTOBER 15-16, 2015—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 Annual Meeting of the Southern Governors' Association, held in St. Louis, Missouri, United States of America, from October 15 to 16, 2015.

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AMEND THE *RULES OF THE SENATE* BY ADDING THE STANDING SENATE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE, COMMUNICATIONS AND HERITAGE AND RENAMING THE STANDING SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Hon. Janis G. Johnson: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the *Rules of the Senate* be amended by:

1. deleting the word "and" at the end of rule 12-3(2)(e) in the English version;
2. replacing the period at the end of rule 12-3(2)(f) by the following:

“; and

(g) the Standing Senate Committee on Culture, Communications and Heritage, nine Senators.”;

• (1500)

3. replacing rule 12-7(6) by the following:

“Transport

12-7. (6) the Standing Senate Committee on Transport, to which may be referred matters relating to transport generally, including:

- (a) transport by any means,
 - (b) tourist traffic,
 - (c) common carriers, and
 - (d) navigation, shipping and navigable waters.”;
4. deleting rule 12-7(9)(a) and re-lettering rules 12-7(9)(b) to (i) as 12-7(9)(a) to (h);
5. deleting the word “and” at the end of rule 12-7(15) in the English version;
6. replacing the period at the end of rule 12-7(16) by the following:

“; and

Culture, Communications and Heritage

12-7. (17) the Standing Senate Committee on Culture, Communications and Heritage, to which may be referred matters relating to culture, communications and heritage generally.”; and

7. by updating all cross references in the Rules, including the lists of exceptions, accordingly; and

That the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications as it existed before the adoption of this motion continue as the Standing Senate Committee on Transport.

PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Thanh Hai Ngo: Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to the hostile behavior of the People’s Republic of China in the escalating territorial claim dispute in the South China Sea.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE

SPEAKER’S RULING

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I am prepared to rule on the Question of Privilege raised by Senator Wallace on January 26. His concern focused on the second report of the Committee of Selection, presented to the Senate on December 9, 2015, and adopted the following day. The report recommended the members of the various standing committees. Senator Wallace’s question of privilege was motivated by the fact that the report only recommended two independent senators to serve on these committees. This, he argued, denied him and other independent senators the right to participate in an essential parliamentary function. In his view, the independent senators are, consequently, prevented from fully contributing to the Senate’s role as a legislative chamber of sober second thought.

[Translation]

Senator Wallace characterized this limitation on independent senators as unreasonable, unfair, inequitable and discriminatory; this is an affront to Parliament. He rejected the current system for establishing and managing committee memberships, in which the two whips play a key role. Several senators who intervened later shared at least some of Senator Wallace’s concerns.

[English]

Other senator, however, were not convinced that Senator Wallace’s grievance amounted to a question of privilege. Senator Fraser, for example, provided references to various parliamentary authorities in arguing that the current practices are actually well established and quite normal. She also suggested that the most important role for senators is in the Senate chamber itself, not in committees. In addition, Senator Fraser explained how the Senate has the right to organize its work as it sees fit, and has established the present system for dealing with committee memberships. Senator Joyal later underscored this point, while also emphasizing the importance of debate in shaping the outcome of parliamentary business. Debate allows all senators to contribute to the final decision reached by the Senate, and, he argued, it would be preferable to deal with Senator Wallace’s complaint through a motion rather than rely on a question of privilege.

[Translation]

Senators Baker, McCoy, Smith (*Cobourg*), Cools, Dyck and Ringuette also participated in debate, and I thank all of them. Allowing all senators an opportunity to contribute to committees is an issue on which senators obviously have strong views. Even those interveners who did not think there was a question of privilege sympathized with Senator Wallace.

[English]

As Speaker, my role at this stage is to evaluate the issue in terms of the four criteria of rule 13-2(1), all of which must be met for a

prima facie case of privilege to be established. That rule indicates that:

. . . a question of privilege must:

- (a) be raised at the earliest opportunity;
- (b) be a matter that directly concerns the privileges of the Senate, any of its committees or any Senator;
- (c) be raised to correct a grave and serious breach; and
- (d) be raised to seek a genuine remedy that the Senate has the power to provide and for which no other parliamentary process is reasonably available.

[*Translation*]

In terms of the first criterion, the contested report was presented to the Senate on Wednesday, December 9, 2015. The Selection Committee's recommendations about committee members were known to all senators from that time. A senator could have initiated the process for a question of privilege on the following day, which would have been the earliest opportunity. Therefore, the first criterion is not met.

The second and third criteria can generally be evaluated together, since they are so closely interconnected.

[*English*]

Senators are familiar with the definition, from Appendix I of our Rules. Privilege is "[t]he rights, powers and immunities enjoyed by each house collectively, and by members of each house individually, without which they could not discharge their functions, and which exceed those possessed by other bodies or individuals." The privileges of individual members do not exist in a vacuum. They exist so that we can perform our role as members of the Senate. Our privileges as individuals cannot trump those of the Senate itself. As stated in *Erskine May*, at page 203 of the 24th edition, "Fundamentally . . . it is only as a means to the effective discharge of the collective functions of the House that the individual privileges are enjoyed by Members." *Senate Procedure in Practice* makes the same point at page 224, when it notes that "Privilege belongs properly to the assembly or house as a collective."

With this question of privilege, Senator Wallace is arguing that the Committee of Selection's report was a breach of privilege, even though the Senate actually adopted the report. So the senator is claiming that the Senate breached its own privileges or the privileges of individual members. To repeat, these privileges exist to serve the institution itself. The Senate's decisions cannot breach the Senate's privileges. Neither the second nor the third criterion has therefore been met.

In relation to the final criterion, Senator Wallace has indicated a willingness to move a motion to seek an effective remedy. We should, however, also consider the requirement that it must be established that "no other parliamentary process is reasonably available" to deal with the matter. In this case, there were and are alternate processes to deal with the issues senators have noted about the way in which senators are named to committees and

how memberships are managed. Under rule 12-14, any senator can attend and participate in the work of the Selection Committee and any other committee, except the Ethics and Conflict of Interest Committee. In this particular case, when the Selection Committee's report was before the Senate, Senator McCoy proposed that it be returned to the committee. Other senators could also have moved amendments, and the Senate could have rejected the report if dissatisfied with its contents. Even now, after the adoption of the report, other remedies are still available. A senator could, for example, move a substantive motion, after notice, to amend relevant provisions in the Rules or to adjust the memberships of some or all committees. Accordingly, the fourth criterion has not been met.

Although Senator Wallace has raised a concern shared by many colleagues, an analysis of the question in terms of parliamentary procedure leads to the conclusion that there is no prima facie case of privilege. This being said, my decision in no way precludes either Senator Wallace or other honourable senators from seeking to address this important matter through other mechanisms. As has already been noted, many colleagues share a wish to find ways to allow independent senators to contribute fully to every aspect of our work. It is within the power of the Senate to adapt its Rules and practices as it sees fit to take into account the increasing number of independent senators in our Chamber.

Hon. Wilfred P. Moore: Honourable senators, in light of the ruling that His Honour just made, I move, with leave of the Senate —

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Moore, are you making a motion?

Senator Moore: Yes.

The Hon. the Speaker: I think you have to seek leave to do that, Senator Moore, at this stage.

Senator Moore: May I have leave of the chamber to move a motion?

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

Some Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): May I ask Senator Moore what it is before we grant leave? I'm curious what it is.

Senator Moore: Basically to refer the matter to the Rules Committee, senator, so that this can be looked at with a view to possibly changing it.

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

Some Hon. Senators: No.

Some Hon. Senators: Agreed.

The Hon. the Speaker: No? I hear no. Leave is not granted.

[The Hon. the Speaker]

• (1510)

CRIMINAL CODE

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING— DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Bob Runciman moved second reading of Bill S-217, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (detention in custody).

He said: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak at second reading of Bill S-217, An Act to amend the Criminal Code. This bill is modest in its scope, but I believe it has the potential to save lives.

It was drafted in response to the cold-blooded murder of RCMP Constable Dave Wynn and the wounding of Auxiliary Constable Derek Bond in Edmonton in January of last year by a violent repeat offender. The offender, Shawn Rehn, should never have been released on bail four months earlier. Unfortunately he was released, he failed to appear in court, and he committed more crimes before finally killing Constable Wynn, wounding Constable Bond and subsequently killing himself.

I believe Bill S-217 would have the potential to deal with this situation. Before discussing the bill, I'd like to summarize the facts of this horrendous case, starting with the criminal background of the offender.

Shawn Rehn was troubled from an early age and was convicted of assault at age 15. He was just 34 when he died, but he faced literally hundreds of charges as an adult. His criminal record contained 55 convictions: thefts, break-ins, assault, weapons offences and numerous convictions for failing to appear in court. He served a number of jail terms and was twice sentenced to federal penitentiary.

At the time of his death he was facing 29 charges, according to the *Edmonton Journal*, 13 of them related to ignoring court orders and failing to appear in court. In short, I think it's fair to say he had a complete and utter disregard for the law, for those who enforce it and for his fellow citizens in general.

As to why Mr. Rehn was on the street and in the position to do harm, we have to go back to September 4, 2014, in provincial court in Edmonton.

Shawn Rehn had been arrested the previous day on several charges, including possession of a prohibited weapon. There was also an outstanding warrant for charges from the previous year. The default position in our criminal justice system is that accused who are awaiting trial are released unless detention in custody is justified by certain grounds: where the detention is necessary to ensure the accused's attendance in court; where the detention is necessary for the protection or safety of the public; and where the detention is necessary to maintain confidence in the administration of justice.

In the case of Shawn Rehn, it's quite clear his detention would be justified under any of these grounds, but Rehn was released on \$4,500 bail. Not one word was spoken about his lengthy criminal record. Not one word was spoken about his tendency to ignore

court orders. I've read the transcript of the bail hearing, and there appears to have been no consideration given to keeping him in custody.

The Criminal Code, under section 518, gives authority to the prosecutor to lead evidence of the accused's criminal record, including convictions for failing to appear in court or breaching court orders. That wasn't done in this case. Rehn was released and, as could have been expected, failed to appear in court.

Fast-forward to the early morning of Saturday, January 17 of last year, when RCMP Constable Dave Wynn was checking vehicle licence plates in the parking lot of the Apex Casino. He found plates on a truck that didn't match the vehicle, and a subsequent check of the vehicle identification number revealed the truck had been stolen. Constables Wynn and Bond went inside the casino. They checked security video footage and spotted a suspect who would turn out to be Shawn Rehn. Walking through the casino they saw Rehn, who ran off when he saw the police officers approaching him. As he was running away, Rehn pulled out a gun, turned and fired, hitting Bond in the arm and torso, and then shooting Constable Wynn in the head.

Constable Wynn died a few days later in the hospital. Rehn's body was found nearby, with police concluding he had committed suicide. Constable Dave Wynn was only 42 when he was killed. He left behind a wife and three sons.

I'm sure all honourable senators will agree this was a horrible tragedy, but I also believe it was a preventable one, and this is where Bill S-217 comes in.

This bill, in clause 2, would amend paragraph 518(1)(c) of the Criminal Code to replace the word "may" with the word "shall." The effect of this is to require the prosecutor to lead evidence of the accused's criminal record, of his failure to attend court or obey court orders in the past, and of other criminal charges on which he is awaiting trial.

We know this was not done when Shawn Rehn appeared in court in September 2014. Although I can't say with certainty, I believe that, had the justice of the peace been aware of Mr. Rehn's extensive criminal record and of his complete disregard of court orders, she would not have agreed to his release on bail. We know now that Rehn's release cost Constable Wynn his life.

This bill, in clause 1, would also add to the criteria under which detention of an accused is justified. It would do so by adding to paragraph 515(10)(c) of the code. Specifically, it would add two things to the grounds under which detention in custody may be justified: the fact that the accused has failed to appear in court in the past; and that he or she has previously been convicted of a criminal offence; or has been charged with, and is awaiting trial on, another criminal offence.

The bill does one other thing. It amends the sentencing provisions under section 719 to ensure the judge, when granting credit for time spent in pre-trial custody, considers the reasons the accused was kept in custody.

Honourable senators may be aware that a member of the other place Michael Cooper, who now represents the riding in which this tragedy occurred, intends to introduce a similar bill.

Mr. Cooper and I decided independently of each other to introduce our bills, but we have since met and are devoted to the same goal: ensuring this becomes law.

I believe the Senate has the ability to put partisan differences aside and get behind a good idea. We've done it before, and I'm confident we can do it again to move this bill forward in a timely manner.

Bill S-217 imposes no extraordinary burden on prosecutors, nor does it constrain judges in any way. It merely ensures that information that is readily available to the prosecutor is put before the judge. It ensures that the judge is aware of the facts before he or she makes a decision.

That wasn't done in the Rehn case. A mistake was made and Constable Dave Wynn paid for that mistake with his life. Bill S-217 is designed to ensure that mistake doesn't happen again.

I ask for your support of this legislation. Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Fraser, debate adjourned.)

(The sitting of the Senate was suspended.)

(The sitting of the Senate was resumed.)

• (1530)

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, it being 3:30 p.m., and pursuant to the order adopted this Tuesday, the Senate will proceed to Question Period. I wish to advise you that pursuant to the order adopted on December 10, 2015, the Honourable Harjit Singh Sajjan, P.C., M.P., Minister of National Defence, is with us today to take part in proceedings by responding to questions. As was the case last week, I would ask colleagues to limit themselves to one question and, if necessary, at most one supplementary question. This will allow as many senators as possible to take part in Question Period.

Welcome, Minister Sajjan.

[Translation]

QUESTION PERIOD

Pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate on December 10, 2015, to receive a Minister of the Crown, the Honourable Harjit Singh Sajjan, the Minister of National Defence, appeared before honourable senators during Question Period.

[Senator Runciman]

MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

WAR AGAINST DAESH

Hon. Claude Carignan (Leader of the Opposition): Minister, thank you for accepting our invitation today.

Last November, French President François Hollande called the atrocities committed by Daesh acts of war. What's more, the French magazine *Le Point* ran a headline that read "*Notre guerre*," or "Our War." In December, the American Defence Secretary stated, "We are at war."

France and the United States, our historic allies, are at war with Daesh. As a veteran of the conflict in Afghanistan, you will understand my question. It was asked today in the House of Commons, and you did not answer it, minister. It is a question that all Canadians are asking.

Minister, is Canada at war, yes or no?

[English]

Hon. Harjit Singh Sajjan, P.C., M.P., Minister of National Defence: Honourable senators, I want to thank you for this wonderful opportunity to allow me to come here and take your questions.

You asked a very important question. "War" is not an easy word to use, nor should we ever look at that. I've been in the war against the Taliban, in direct combat. I've fired at the enemy. I've had them fire at me. I've seen my soldiers killed and taken off the battlefield; and I've taken my wounded. I do know the difficulties.

Honourable senator, my definition of "war" when I look at it is how I've been raised in Canada to see, on Remembrance Day, World War I and World War II. You see the absolute enormity and atrocity of those wars, when entire nations had to come together, the industry, the people and the recruiting, to move forward. The reason I don't use that word against this fight is that we are not there, because that's my mentality of honouring that memory.

However, regardless of the word that we use, there are actions against, whether it's fighting against the Taliban or fighting against Daesh now; it's no different. We will use every resource necessary in cooperation with our coalition partners to defeat them. We will do it in a manner not where I or a certain person or another politician decides on how to defeat it as the military. Even when I was in uniform, you look at how you defeat the enemy. The military advice that I rely on is from our senior general, General Vance.

When it comes to dealing with Daesh, there is no difference between what our troops did in World War I or World War II or even in Korea — the tenacity they brought to the table — or the tenacity of what we did in Afghanistan. There is no difference to what we're doing now. We're dealing with a threat that has to be defeated, and it has to be defeated vigorously. This is why I don't use the word "war" in this case, because my definition of "war" is as a nation. Now as the Minister of National Defence, if I use that word, in my mind it is almost like dishonouring the memory of World War I and World War II. When you visit battlefields, as

most of you have done, that's the definition I use. But there is no difference in terms of the action and how we're going to defeat Daesh. It's an atrocity that has to be dealt with in the most severe manner.

DEFENCE STRATEGY

Hon. Joseph A. Day: Mr. Minister, thank you very much for being with us today. My question relates to the mandate letter that you, as a minister, are required to agree to in being appointed minister, as I understand it. It's a very informative document that is almost a new defence policy in itself. One may read through it, which I have done on a number of occasions.

• (1540)

I'd like to refer you, in particular, to a bullet on the third page that says:

Conduct an open and transparent review process to create a new defence strategy for Canada, replacing the now-outdated Canada First Defence Strategy.

My first question is whether you've started any initiative in that regard. I recognize there are many different initiatives here, but have you started anything with respect to the open and transparent review process that you could tell us about?

Hon. Harjit Singh Sajjan, P.C., M.P., Minister of National Defence: Honourable senators, that is a great question. One of my three priorities is the defence review. We have started the planning framework of how we're going to conduct this. I wanted to make sure that we took the time to figure out how, because if the end result is going to be a credible defence review we need to make sure we get this right, and the "how" is so important.

My staff has been working diligently. I have had updated briefings, and we have made adjustments to make sure all Canadians, stakeholders, parliamentarians — all of you — have a credible voice in the defence review.

I'll give you an example of a few things on the defence review. Some of the staples will never change. The priority of defence for Canada will always remain. The expeditionary work that we do with our coalition partners will remain. Our commitment to NORAD and NATO will always be there.

But we need to realign our defence review within Foreign Affairs and the whole security umbrella; we can't do it in isolation. That's why it's so important to get the "how" right. We also need to make sure that we work with and consult our coalition partners, because we operate on a daily basis with them.

When this defence review is completed, with the public in mind, members of Parliament are links to the ridings. They will have direct access, and there will be mechanisms in place. When I present the plan for this, there will be a clear mapping of how it will be done.

I look forward to all of your input. I know the committees that you have will allow you to do the independent work that you do. I look forward to some of the work that you will bring to this defence review.

Rest assured that this is one of my top priorities, because we need to get this right. It will help us align, not just our current force structure in terms of personnel but how we need to align it for the future and, more importantly, how we align our procurement strategy with this as well. That will be extremely important in making sure our number one asset, which is our personnel, gets the right capabilities when we, as a government, send them on missions around the world.

Thank you.

Senator Day: Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. I just wanted to confirm that you were aware of the work that our National Security and Defence Committee has done over the years. There have been a lot of very good reports. We have called for a review of defence strategy on a number of occasions.

We're anxious that the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence or the Senate as a whole, depending on the manner in which you structure the review, have a part in the review and offer its assistance in whatever manner you feel we can.

Mr. Sajjan: Absolutely, yes. You will have a direct role as part of the defence review. I can't say it more clearly than that.

Senator Day: Thank you very much.

CONFLICT IN YEMEN—MILITARY CONTRACTORS IN LIBYA

Hon. Daniel Lang: Mr. Minister, with all due respect, in respect to the situation in the Middle East, Daesh has declared war on the Western world, and I think that's an unequivocal decision they've taken.

Set that aside. In view of the difficulty of operating in the Middle East and the risk to our military personnel, can you update this house and tell us if any members of the Canadian military or Department of National Defence contractors are involved in the Yemen conflict today?

Also, could you update this house and tell us if there are any Canadian military or Department of National Defence contractors directly or indirectly involved in Libya?

Hon. Harjit Singh Sajjan, P.C., M.P., Minister of National Defence: Honourable senators, regarding Yemen, we have no footprint in that region.

Our involvement in Libya is that we're at the early stages of discussion in terms of understanding that current threat. As Minister Dion has stated, and I agree with him — as do many of my counterparts at NATO — there needs to be a political structure in place.

We're at the early stages of our involvement with Libya. As you know, we had a significant involvement in the past. As a responsible coalition partner we are part of the discussion, and there will be ongoing discussions. Decisions will then be made about the type of capacity we will be involved with.

RUSSIA—NATO COMMITMENTS

Hon. A. Raynell Andreychuk: Thank you, minister, for appearing before the Senate today.

You're well aware of Russia's illegal actions in Ukraine, the indiscriminate bombings in Syria, the hybrid warfare, the aggressive taunts against the Baltic States, the massive disinformation campaign — these all show no signs of abating by Russia. The Secretary-General of NATO Jens Stoltenberg stated at the recent Munich Security Meeting that Russia's actions are destabilizing the European security order, and I might say Canada's as well. He stated that security starts with resolve.

You indicated just minutes ago that you will use every means to fight threats. Working towards the Warsaw summit, will you be recommending an increase to our military expenditures to properly equip and resource our forces and work towards the NATO-set target of 2 per cent of GDP in defence spending, as some of our allies are starting to do?

Hon. Harjit Singh Sajjan, P.C., M.P., Minister of National Defence: Thank you for that very informed question. Your knowledge base on the discussion is very deep.

The destabilization effect that Russia holds and the secretary-general's statement was right after NATO, so I knew exactly what he was going to state. However, I disagree in that what Canada is doing is actually quite the opposite. We are actually at the leading front of working with NATO in support of our allies. We still have approximately 200 personnel in the Ukraine. We have HMCS *Fredericton* in the Mediterranean. We have approximately 200 troops in Poland. We're looking at other options, as well, as we move towards Warsaw.

We are committed to making sure that the planned increases in our funding remain in place. The discussion that I had when it comes to funding is that you can have the right type of money there, but if it's not put into the right capability then your impact to achieve what you want is limited. Canada, very fortunately, has certain capabilities that we've always invested in and certain capabilities that, regrettably, I can't speak about at this moment because of the security nature of it.

We are actively involved with many aspects of making sure the Russian aggression is abated. So we are there.

We also have to ask ourselves the question: What is the main aim of making sure Russian is out of Crimea and Ukraine and de-escalating the situation? We have to think broadly. The military is one piece of the capability. Then we have to look at the whole aspect of it, because at the end of the day the people of Ukraine, with all the atrocities committed upon them, the people want security. It's up to all of us, with all the tools in the tool shed, to come up with a solution and bring security to that region.

Senator Andreychuk: My question was: Will we be increasing from where we are now to the 2 per cent target that has been set by NATO?

Mr. Sajjan: Sorry, I thought I answered the question. The planned increases will remain. We can't make a decision that goes

up to 2 per cent. We are committed to making sure that the increases happen.

The military needs predictability in the funding model. If it's low, high — you can't plan procurement that way.

• (1550)

By having sustained increases in your budget — for example, the one that's in my mandate letter will be in the budget — as the future goes on, as the fiscal situation changes, there will be opportunity, hopefully, to increase it. But we are committed, as a government, to making sure the planned increases remain every single year and to moving towards a better model that can help to equip our forces even better.

MILITARY PROCUREMENT

Hon. Grant Mitchell: Minister, military procurement has been a continuing issue. It certainly hasn't been a partisan issue. It seems to have equally confounded and plagued both past Liberal and Conservative governments. While you've certainly also been preoccupied by many pressing issues since you've taken this job on, have you had the chance to consider procurement processes and perhaps give some thought to how they might be done more efficiently?

Hon. Harjit Singh Sajjan, P.C., M.P., Minister of National Defence: Thank you for that question. As I stated, defence review is one of my priorities. Procurement is the other priority. I'm very fortunate that my staff has been able to multi-task, and we've been working very diligently on the procurement file because our national shipbuilding strategy is extremely important. Our navy needs our ships. It is a great program that can also help industry here in Canada.

I'll be honest with you. Our procurement system is not providing capabilities to our members in the timely manner that we need it to, so we are committed to looking at making it more efficient. I work very closely with the Minister of Public Works and Procurement on all matters. We actually, in some cases, have joint briefing, so we can actually reduce time. Plus, we're trying to identify all of the steps in procurement, and there are so many. We're trying to figure out where the redundant steps are. As we move forward and try to look at fixing the procurement system, which we will eventually, we have to keep in mind that we still have to do procurement at the same time.

You're kind of doing everything while you're running. It is working well. We have been able to increase efficiency in certain aspects of our procurement, and, hopefully, we'll be able to announce that in the near future. But it is essential that we get this procurement system right because, ultimately, we need to be able to equip our men and women when we send them into harm's way.

CANADIAN RANGERS

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: Minister, as a senator from Canada's Arctic Coast, I am concerned with the steady and significant military infrastructure buildup in the Russian Arctic, which I'm sure you're aware of. Your mandate letter echoes

recommendations made by two Senate committees to expand the Canadian Rangers to protect Canadian Arctic sovereignty and assist in search and rescue.

When will we see the increase in the size of the Canadian Rangers and by how many?

Hon. Harjit Singh Sajjan, P.C., M.P., Minister of National Defence: Our government is committed to sovereignty in the Arctic. The Rangers play a critical role. It's not just the number of the increase; we also need to equip them well. Even before the defence review, we are looking at increasing. Right now, I am going through an informal review of recruiting, of making sure that the recruiting system can support what we need. So the numbers will increase. I don't have the exact number just yet because I want to make sure that I have the proper briefings from my staff on that. When I do, it will be part of the defence review. If not, I'm happy to provide the numbers as soon as I get them.

I also want to expand. When you look at the Arctic, it's even beyond the Rangers. NORAD plays a very important role in this. I visited NORAD and spoke with the commander directly. As part of the defence review, we need to take a look at this unique binational relationship with the U.S, which is NORAD, and how we're going to suit the needs 10, 20, 30 years from now. We need to look at what type of potential infrastructure we need, what type of equipment we need and how we support our personnel. Also, it's not just defence. There are many other aspects of the Arctic. We need to be involved with the other departments, whether it's Fisheries and Oceans or some of the other departments that will be operating with the Minister of Science as well.

We want to take a full approach to this so that we have a much more cohesive approach for the Arctic that is even beyond just military, but it is one of the aspects that our defence review will look at in detail.

Senator Patterson: A supplementary: Speaking of equipment, I wonder if the government will consider expanding the Rangers' mandate to allow them to operate in the marine environment, rather than just on land, so that it will support the operation of the Arctic offshore patrol vessels and also assist in marine oil spill and search and rescue.

Mr. Sajjan: Your Honour, that's a unique idea that has come up. I hope, as part of the defence review, you can actually put that in there so that we can do a much more thorough analysis on that. I can't, obviously, say yes, but I think this will be something we can take a look at as part of the defence review and integrating some of our capability, whether it's going to be working with the Coast Guard, with our military or even within the RCMP as well.

[Translation]

IRAQ—GRIFFON HELICOPTERS

Hon. Nicole Eaton: It has been confirmed that Canada will be deploying four Griffon helicopters from the Royal Canadian Air Force to northern Iraq to support the growing number of Canadian army trainers. Our troops will be at increased risk since close air support is fundamentally more dangerous than having our CF-18s conduct airstrikes on fighting positions.

Minister, will our allies protect our troops or will the Griffon helicopters be armed? Why does your motion not mention the fact that these helicopters are being deployed?

[English]

Hon. Harjit Singh Sajjan, P.C., M.P., Minister of National Defence: Your Honour, as to the Griffon helicopters that we mentioned, it was in the technical brief. It laid out exactly all the capabilities that we will be eventually deploying. I'll get back to the helicopters in a second.

When you work as part of a coalition, you have a full spectrum of capability at your disposal. So, whether it's in Afghanistan or even our troops right now, when you call for an airstrike, it's not that you call Canadian aircraft to come to support you. It's whatever is in the sky at that time. Whether it's planned or dynamic targeting, they will respond. There was an incident in December where there was an attack, and our F-18s did support. One F-18 did provide the support, but two French Mirages also came. It doesn't matter which aircraft. I could easily just have said, "Wait a minute; two French Mirages came." A more important aspect of this is that the coalition has full-spectrum capability for all our troops.

As to the Griffon helicopters, the reason they're being deployed at a time when the military commanders choose when they need to go in is for them to have the flexibility for themselves, because as a threat, where we're at, it does evolve. We need to be able to predict where the threat may go. Even though it hasn't increased to the threat level of where we were in Afghanistan — where we lost most of our troops in Afghanistan was with improvised explosive devices — I'd rather have deployed these assets early so that the commanders on the ground have the flexibility to be able to transport their personnel and their equipment from A to B, because the distance that they will be operating in is going to be a little bit more. It's also very interesting. The area that we're operating in is very close to the front lines. However, there's also a functioning, well-off city of Erbil and the other areas. So the helicopters will operate within those parameters, not beyond the front line. This is strictly for our personnel, for the safety of our personnel, emergency evacuation and transportation of our equipment.

RECRUITMENT—DIVERSITY

Hon. Don Meredith: Minister, welcome to the Senate. The face of Canada has changed with respect to our diverse communities, and we see that there's been a decrease in the number of recruits to the reserves. I'm wondering what your plan is with respect to recruiting, especially our young people who are again facing high unemployment across our provinces. What is your department's plan in recruiting those individuals to particular career opportunities within the military?

• (1600)

Hon. Harjit Singh Sajjan, P.C., M.P., Minister of National Defence: That's a very important question because, as I stated, our most precious asset or capability is our personnel. Recruiting our personnel from across Canada is a priority. When you reduce the ability to recruit and then you want to ramp up again, it takes time. At the time, we had to slow down recruiting and now we're

seeing the impact of it. Now that we need to increase our numbers, it takes a little time for the machinery to kick in and catch up.

We need to also make sure that all Canadians have an opportunity to decide, whether it's from a diversity perspective, or considering that Canadians, whether they're from the East Coast or the West Coast, think a little differently. There are different economic situations as well. We need to be able to cater that message to Canadians in a way that the interpretation is the same, so that everybody has an equal opportunity to make an informed decision to join the Canadian military.

We need to take an active step on this. We need to get better at it. The recruiting system has gotten better, and it does need to be better because the processing time is still too long, in my opinion. We're working hard to fix some of those pieces. Unfortunately, there are certain pieces you cannot just take out because we want to make sure we get the best recruits, as well. As I stated, we want to make sure we have the best Canadians to wear the uniform. It doesn't matter what type of equipment you have; the Canadian mindset to me, having served alongside them, is unique, but we need to take steps to increase our recruiting and improve our outreach to all Canadians. Thank you.

BOLD EAGLE PROGRAM

Hon. Lillian Eva Dyck: I was wondering if the minister could tell us whether he was aware of the Bold Eagle Program, which is essentially a way of helping to recruit and to supply indigenous youth with summer employment and leadership training. If so, are there any plans to enhance that program?

Hon. Harjit Singh Sajjan, P.C., M.P., Minister of National Defence: I'm very familiar with the Bold Eagle Program, actually; I have been since it first came out. When I was in uniform, one of my former soldiers, a master warrant officer, was one of the first to help revamp the program. He's from a First Nations community himself.

We not only need to increase it; we need to have much more active engagement, including from myself. I want to reach out because there's a rich history there. As the former lieutenant governor of B.C. stated — he's also chief of, I believe, the First Nation community from Chilliwack — the Bold Eagle Program has brought back the warrior spirit in the community. We do need to reach out, especially with all the difficulty and challenges that some of the First Nations youth face. What a wonderful opportunity we have to be able to give them an opportunity to be in uniform and remind them of the wonderful history some of their predecessors have had.

Tommy Prince is one example, as is that one person I was talking about, Master Warrant Officer Leblanc (Ret). I must tell you his story. He was a corporal, and he was arrested for assault; he was always getting into trouble. One day I had to pick my team for a competition and he said, "Sir, can I be a part of it?" I said, "Come on, I don't know." He said, "Sir, give me a chance." I said, "Okay, fine, read this, and I'm going to test you in a week."

Not only did he do everything, but because I gave him that confidence, he excelled so much. He was awarded the Order of Military Merit. He's an award-winning author. He had two

deployments to Afghanistan. He's not a reservist any longer, he's also a conservation officer.

When you give someone an opportunity, they can succeed and they will add value to a nation, as retired Master Warrant Officer Leblanc (Ret) has done for us.

CF-18 AIRCRAFT

Hon. Denise Batters: Minister, the Trudeau government has never provided Canadians with a coherent reason why we are pulling our CF-18s out of Syria. One reason given by Prime Minister Trudeau was that we want to focus on where we do things "very, very well." Minister, when I heard that answer, I thought of all the pilots trained at 15 Wing Moose Jaw, home of the NATO Flight Training Centre. Minister, all Canadians think we fly fighter jets very well. Why doesn't the Trudeau government think our world-class Canadian pilots are up to par?

Hon. Harjit Singh Sajjan, P.C., M.P., Minister of National Defence: I would consider any Canadian pilot among the best of the best. We have many people wanting to be fighter pilots. I was one of them, but not everyone gets to that stage. Because of our numbers, we get to pick the absolute best.

There is absolutely no question that our Canadian pilots, whether they're flying an F18, a Griffon, or a Chinook for search and rescue, are the best.

With regard to the CF-18s and the mission, we as politicians have to be careful of saying what capability can work. We have to allow the military commanders to decide what is best. I took that approach; my military advice comes from General Vance. We had one year of a mission where air strikes were important because the enemy was out in the open. The enemy learns from what we do, as we learn from them.

There is a considerable amount of coalition effort with regard to air strikes, but what they needed was the intelligence capability as the enemy gets smarter. They work within populations.

Canada has a tremendous amount of experience because we have worked in the most volatile areas in Afghanistan. The evolution of the mission, and eventually the goal of defeating ISIL, is moving toward success on the ground.

As the Iraqi security forces take cities, the U.S. was already there for a significant amount of time. We need to be able to train the Iraqi security forces, because if you realize how the problem happened in the first place, they weren't able to hold ground, and Daesh was able to take over.

As we re-take those cities, keep in mind we need to leave troops on the ground in the cities as you go to the next one. You need to train a significant number of troops to be able to have an eventual defeat. You cannot defeat an enemy like this from the air, so we have adjusted our mission to be more suited towards defeat of Daesh alongside our coalition partners, making sure a critical piece in the north, where we're at, remains stable, and that we have trained the right security force, not just external, but internal as well. As the Iraqi security forces make their way up, coming up to Mosul, we will be very close to that line.

It's part of a wider plan to make sure of the eventual defeat of ISIL. I am not talking about our CF-18s or air strikes or dropping bombs. I am talking about the defeat of the enemy, which is Daesh. The only way we can do this is by making sure that we train the Iraqi security forces to be able to hold their ground, and, more importantly, to keep the ground and the gains after the defeat is complete. When they can maintain the stability in that nation, then we can work on the political piece as well to keep the entire region stable.

[Translation]

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, the time for Question Period has expired.

[English]

I'm certain, colleagues, that you will want to join me in thanking Minister Sajjan for joining us today. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

The Hon. the Speaker: As well, Minister Sajjan, we hope to see you again if the opportunity arises. We hope you will pass the word to your colleagues that coming to the Senate is not such a bad experience.

Thank you very much, minister.

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, it being past 4 p.m., pursuant to the order adopted on February 4, 2016, I declare the Senate continued until Thursday, February 25, 2016, at 1:30 p.m., the Senate so decreeing.

(The Senate adjourned until Thursday, February 25, 2016, at 1:30 p.m.)

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