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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, March 9, 2016

The Honourable GEORGE J. FUREY
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Wednesday, March 9, 2016

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

Prayers.

[*Translation*]

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

THE HONOURABLE CLAUDETTE TARDIF

CONGRATULATIONS ON FRENCH LEGION OF HONOUR

Hon. Mobina S.B. Jaffer: Honourable senators, I had the privilege of attending the ceremony during which the Honourable Senator Claudette Tardif was presented with the insignia of Officer of the Legion of Honour. I would like to begin my statement by congratulating the senator on this well-deserved honour.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Jaffer: You have been representing francophones outside Quebec ever since you arrived in the Senate.

Your knowledge and lifelong devotion to French allow Franco-Canadians in minority communities to have a voice in this chamber.

Your voice has helped a group win recognition of its importance and its rightful place within a bilingual nation.

You have also lent that voice to the standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, as well as the Canadian branch of the Canada-France Interparliamentary Association.

That brings me to all the hard work you have done in the Senate, which was a natural follow-up to your professional life.

Before being appointed to the Senate, you were already a committed advocate for French. I would like to share an excerpt from the speech Senator Tardif delivered during the ceremony:

The desire to teach and promote the French language to my fellow Albertans was deeply rooted in me, whether I was encouraging anglophones and francophiles to learn French as a second language or lobbying and establishing French-language schools.

Your arrival at the Senate only fuelled your convictions and reinforced how important the French language and Canada's bilingual culture were to you. For that I thank you, because you

helped me discover a facet of the Franco-Canadian reality and you very much motivated me to make an extra effort to improve my French.

It is because of your dedication and generosity that I am congratulating you in the language of Molière today.

[*English*]

Senator Tardif, the biggest honour you received that evening was from your two adorable grandchildren. The absolute pride and love they exhibited for their grandmother Claudette was the biggest honour you received that evening.

[*Translation*]

Once again, congratulations! I am very proud to have you as a colleague.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[*English*]

VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Constable Jean-Claude Marcoux. Senators will know Constable Marcoux more familiarly as "JC."

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

JEAN-CLAUDE MARCOUX

SENATE PROTECTIVE SERVICE OFFICER

Hon. Vernon White: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak about the actions of one of our fine constabulary, whom we appreciate every day.

On September 16, 2014, Constable JC Marcoux, who was at the time a Senate Protective Service officer, while on his rounds in and around the downtown area near Parliament, came across and heard a crash. He saw at 181 Queen Street, the office of the CBC, a man with a sledgehammer striking the windows of the CBC storefront. No, it was not Senator Housakos, looking for information on Peter Mansbridge's salary.

Constable Marcoux noticed there was a woman with a carriage and another woman in the immediate area where the windows were broken. He stopped, got out of his vehicle and approached

the man to ask him to stop what he was doing. The man did not respond. Constable Marcoux asked people around to call 911, wrestled the man to the ground and cuffed him, fearing he might harm someone. He remained at the scene until the Ottawa police arrived and assisted them in the arrest of the individual, who has since been charged and convicted. The constable received accolades from those involved, including the Crown, police and the judge.

Honourable senators, please join me in saluting the great job Constable Marcoux did on that day and continues to do every day on the Hill.

**THE HONOURABLE ROMÉO ANTONIUS DALLAIRE,
O.C., C.M.M., G.O.Q.**

**VETERAN TRAINERS TO ERADICATE
THE USE OF CHILD SOLDIERS**

Hon. Joseph A. Day: Honourable senators, our veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces are an invaluable source of expertise and knowledge that we must cherish, preserve and use whenever possible. One of our findings during the Veterans Affairs Subcommittee's study on operational stress injuries was that many of our soldiers are wondering what they could be doing after leaving service with the Armed Forces.

Part of the answer to this question lies in a program entitled the Veteran Trainers to Eradicate the Use of Child Soldiers, known as VTECS, launched in February of this year by our former colleague Senator Dallaire and his colleagues in the Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative at Dalhousie University, in partnership with Wounded Warriors Canada.

This program provides a unique opportunity for veterans to acquire an understanding of the skills, knowledge and attitudes required of security sector participants so that they can legally, humanely and effectively interact with child soldiers in domestic and foreign operational areas. It will also allow our veterans to further develop their academic skills while acquiring or strengthening their skills as facilitators and instructors. This program will also assist veterans in transitioning from military to civilian life and finding meaningful employment.

The program is centred at Dalhousie University in Halifax. To make the program more accessible to all our veterans, there will be no tuition fees. They will also receive return travel while in Halifax and campus accommodation — all provided free of charge.

The program includes courses on global policing, children in armed conflict, world politics, training the trainer and weekly seminars with guest speakers on related issues.

The successful graduates of the program have the opportunity to join the Dallaire Initiative either here in Canada or in other countries of the world.

• (1410)

Colleagues, this is a great opportunity for our veterans, for Canada and for the world. Our veterans will be pursuing their education after their military service, which will allow them to expand their knowledge and expertise so as to continue their service to Canada as civilians, thereby serving the world at large.

This academic program is uniquely designed for our veterans. It is my hope that in the future other similar academic programs will be specifically designed for our veterans — programs which will help our veterans smoothly and efficiently transition from military to civilian life.

Colleagues, we can help by encouraging veterans we know to apply through Dalhousie University's online application. Applications for this year's program are currently under way.

Honourable senators, I join with you in congratulating former general and Senator Roméo Dallaire for this initiative of serving both the veterans of Canada and child soldiers of the world.

ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

Hon. Céline Hervieux-Payette: Honourable senators, I speak today in the wake of the recent deficit announcement. You all know that Prime Minister Trudeau did pledge to run deficits during the last election. Last month Finance Minister Bill Morneau revealed that Canada's deficit will be larger than expected and it will grow as more spending details are confirmed. I'm speaking to ensure that there is some clarity on this issue. This must be done to avoid mixing up the facts with convenient political fiction.

To begin, the current deficit of \$18 billion does include the tax changes. However, for the most part, the government is still running on last year's budget, meaning the last Conservative budget, which is the true culprit for the current situation. I'm not talking about the budget; I'm talking about the Conservatives.

For the past few years, you heard me ask questions about the economic direction chosen by the last government, and I did warn you about their strategy.

What I believe we should do is to think about Canada's past mistakes to plan a better future for our children and grandchildren. Now Canada is a G7 economy and we have vast amounts of natural resources. Many of us have lived through several resource booms and busts. By now, we should all know that there is no such thing as a sustainable commodity boom. Building an economic strategy on top of these cycles is known as the "resource curse." What I am advocating is that we consider the benefits of a diversified economy capable of absorbing these price swings.

To begin, let's acknowledge that although our natural resources are very important, they are neither the largest sector nor our largest export. Canada's economy is actually a service economy, with both 80 per cent of Canada's GDP and employment

occurring in the service sectors. Manufactured goods still represent Canada's largest export category, yet too many Canadians believe our priority focus should be placed on commodities and oil, sectors that pit us against emerging and developing markets and also between Canadians.

Our labour market ranks amongst the world's most educated according to the OECD. Our technologies have been used the world over, yet our productivity lags. The current account balance is showing a growing deficit. It is evident that for Canada to emerge prosperous again, we are going to need a lot more than new trade deals.

To the south, we have the United States, where the Federal Reserve feels confident enough in American prospects to justify raising their interest rate. This is because the Obama administration took the long road and performed the structural reforms necessary to ensure that the American economy could compete and thrive in the 21st century. The Americans did not bet on commodities. They instead bet on innovation, technology, health care, education and other areas.

To do better is to champion the situation. Canada is not only in need of new policy —

[*Translation*]

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Senator, your time is up.

Senator Hervieux-Payette: I'm sorry, but my colleagues had permission to speak for a few extra minutes. I'm sure I can finish my two sentences.

An Hon. Senator: That's not nice.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Your time is up.

Senator Hervieux-Payette: I'm sorry, but my colleagues were allowed to continue their speeches.

[*English*]

An Hon. Senator: Order!

Senator Hervieux-Payette: Never mind, "Order!" I have the same rights as the others!

THE HONOURABLE MAURIL BÉLANGER

Hon. Jim Munson: Your Honour, I don't have any notes because it's too emotional to sit down and write notes on what I'm going to speak about.

Moments ago in the other house, and in the Hall of Honour, I witnessed history in watching our colleague from the House of Commons, Member of Parliament Mauril Bélanger, walking with the crowds four deep on either side, cheering him as he used his walker to walk into the House of Commons to be the honorary Speaker.

Honourable senators, Mauril Bélanger is a great friend of ours and he's my friend. I wanted to stand here for a couple of minutes to talk about his strength, determination, bravery and how he lives in the moment with ALS. He is living the moment.

[Senator Hervieux-Payette]

Senator Andreychuk and I, along with other colleagues from the house, were in Africa last week. We went to South Africa. We went to Namibia. That's 20,000 miles to and from here. Mauril Bélanger, along with Senator Andreychuk, is co-founder of the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association. He was determined to go — a man who can't speak, but he has his own voice. To see him walking through Heathrow Airport and to see him flying from Ottawa to Heathrow, to Johannesburg, to Windhoek, Namibia, to Cape Town, to Johannesburg, to Heathrow and then back here — can you imagine that? When you sometimes feel upset about something, watch this man with his incredible bravery, determination and courage carry out his daily duties as a parliamentarian. He is Member of Parliament for Ottawa—Vanier and it is his constituents that matter the most to him. There are a lot of new African Canadians who live in Vanier, right here, next door to the house that we work in.

I want to reflect on a gentleman who has still so much work to do. He's still full of hope. That's what he has, because that's what you have to have.

If you stop for a moment tonight and you're watching the news and you see this courageous figure walking through the Hall of Honour, mark my words, it will be a moment you won't forget. It's a moment I won't forget.

I would like to say so much more. He is a fighter for minority rights in Ontario. He is a proud Franco-Ontarian. He was a minister. He fought for co-ops. And, guess what: He would have been Speaker. Today, as I speak here, he is the Speaker in the other chamber. I applaud him, and I wish you would do the same thing.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

CRIMINAL CODE

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Céline Hervieux-Payette introduced Bill S-220, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (international fraud).

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

• (1420)

[English]

ENERGY, THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE EFFECTS OF TRANSITIONING TO A LOW CARBON ECONOMY

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

That the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources be authorized to examine and report on the effects of transitioning to a low carbon economy, as required to meet the Government of Canada's announced targets for greenhouse gas emission reductions. Recognizing the role of energy production, distribution and consumption in Canada, the committee shall be authorized to:

- (a) identify and report on the impact transitioning to a low carbon economy will have on energy end users, including Canadian households and businesses;
- (b) identify and report on the most viable way the following sectors - electricity, oil and gas, transportation, buildings and trade-exposed energy intensive industries - can contribute to a low carbon economy in meeting Canada's emission targets;
- (c) examine and report on cross-sector issues and undertake case studies, if necessary, on specific programs or initiatives aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- (d) identify areas of concern and make any necessary recommendations to the federal government that will help achieve greenhouse gas emission targets in a manner that is sustainable, affordable, efficient, equitable and achievable.

That the committee submit interim reports on identified sectors, cross-sector issues and case studies and submit its final report no later than September 30, 2017, and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings until 180 days after the tabling of the final report.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING— DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Chaput, seconded by the Honourable Senator Moore, for the second reading of Bill S-209, An

Act to amend the Official Languages Act (communications with and services to the public).

Hon. Ghislain Maltais: Honourable senators, I have two reasons for speaking to Bill S-209. The first is to pay tribute to the sponsor of the bill, the Honourable Senator Chaput. She was extraordinarily dedicated to the French language and francophone minorities, not only in her province, but everywhere in Canada.

Senator Chaput spent much of her political career and public life defending this language she so loved. Every time she addressed a committee or this chamber, she made a point of speaking in her mother tongue.

Canada passed legislation that establishes French and English as the country's two official languages. Each one of us is very proud of our mother tongue. It a source of pride, and our country allows us the choice of using either one of these two languages in federal committees. That has been our right for decades, and it cannot be called into question.

Senator Chaput was a crusader for the French language in her community, but she also showcased it everywhere else. Her courage was recognized in every francophone community from Atlantic Canada to the Yukon, including in Quebec, central Canada and British Columbia, because she was driven by that faith and passion. She believed that Canada was a land where the two languages, the two founding nations, were equal, and she was determined to spread that belief.

Of course, legislating on language matters, honourable senators, is like lighting a match under a powder keg; it is explosive. There is nothing more sensitive in any country than language. I am speaking from experience. As a parliamentarian for many years in Quebec, I saw every possible conflict. We lost friendships and suffered the loss of knowledge that was very important to Quebec, because we had to legislate on language matters sooner or later. Whether it was Bill 63, Bill 22, Bill 101, Bill 78 or Bill 86, we had to go against the Supreme Court. I recall when the Quebec National Assembly was forced to apply the "notwithstanding" clause to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms because we had been ordered by the Supreme Court to modify public signage.

We live in a country governed by the rule of law, and we are bound by it, but that is not always easy. All Quebecers, anglophones and francophones alike, will not forget anytime soon. We managed to reach a *modus vivendi* by guaranteeing both languages their rightful place. Quebec's anglophones have not been decimated, not by any stretch. They have their schools, their own school boards, colleges and universities, and the same goes for health care. It is not always perfect, and we are the first to acknowledge that. However, perfection does not exist in this lowly world, and we are trying to give all anglophones in Quebec equal opportunity.

On the North Shore, where I'm from, half of the riding is made up of anglophone villages where there is not a single francophone. We live in harmony because we want to get along. Legislating on language contradicts our values.

Although I understand Senator Chaput's intention in introducing this bill, I am wondering whether it is applicable. Is it a matter of money? No, it is a matter of will.

[Translation]

That will must first come from our Parliament, whether it be the Senate or the House of Commons. Parliamentarians have clearly expressed their will over the past 25 or 30 years, and the law is clear. However, enforcing the law is a whole different story and it is not easy.

• (1430)

We must also not forget, honourable senators, that the provinces have responsibilities. They have francophone affairs secretariats, except Quebec, which has an anglophone affairs office. The provinces therefore have responsibilities. It is up to us, as parliamentarians, as either members of the House of Commons or senators here in this chamber, to ensure that the provinces uphold their laws. I am thinking about New Brunswick and about what happened in the Yukon, where the Supreme Court overturned the decision. The provincial governments have a responsibility to the federal government. They are part of the Canadian Confederation. They are an integral part of Canada. They are subject to the bilingualism legislation and therefore have a responsibility to enforce it.

Each of us has a role to play. I understand the spirit of Senator Chaput's bill. However, legally, it will be difficult to implement.

In committee, I asked judges what would constitute a sufficient number of people for the law to apply. No one — neither the Commissioner of Official Languages nor the experts or the former Supreme Court judges we heard from — was able to put a number to the word "sufficient." Is it one, two, 100, 1,000? No one could say. If we cannot agree on how many people are legally required for the Official Languages Act to apply, it will be difficult to enforce the legislation. It will require goodwill and courage.

I commend Senator Chaput on her work. I imagine that the bill will be studied in committee. We will hear from more witnesses as we try to improve the bill. Above all, we'll try to ensure that the bill does not cause problems elsewhere, all while ensuring that francophones outside Quebec, francophones in a minority situation across the country, have access to services in French. We will ensure that anglophones who are in a minority situation in our country have access to services in their mother tongue.

Honourable senators, I invite you to think about this, since we will need all your knowledge and your goodwill, regardless of which language you speak. We'll need you if we want Canada to be a bilingual country and all Canadians to have access to services in their mother tongue.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES OF CANADA BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Serge Joyal moved second reading of Bill S-212, An Act for the advancement of the aboriginal languages of Canada and to recognize and respect aboriginal language rights.

[Senator Maltais]

He said: Honourable senators, I move the adjournment of the debate for the remainder of my time.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(On motion of Senator Joyal, debate adjourned.)

[English]

DIVORCE ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING— DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Anne C. Cools moved second reading of Bill S-202, An Act to amend the Divorce Act (shared parenting plans).

She said: Honourable senators, I move the adjournment of the debate for the remainder of my time.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(On motion of Senator Cools, debate adjourned.)

STUDY ON THE INCREASING INCIDENCE OF OBESITY

SECOND REPORT OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE AND REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE— DEBATE ADJOURNED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the second report of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, entitled *Obesity in Canada: A Whole-of-Society Approach for a Healthier Canada*, deposited with the Clerk of the Senate on March 1, 2016.

Hon. Kelvin Kenneth Ogilvie: Honourable senators, I move:

That the second report of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, tabled with the Clerk of the Senate on Tuesday, March 1, 2016, be adopted and that, pursuant to rule 12-24(1), the Senate request a complete and detailed response from the government, with the Minister of Health being identified as minister responsible for responding to the report, in consultation with the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs.

He said: Honourable senators, following yesterday's Question Period, I will give an overview of our report today and be prepared to respond to any questions. I know my colleague Senator Eggleton will be following up with specific issues in his speech on this issue. I will address the outline of the report and, as I said, be glad to answer any further questions at this time.

I would like to acknowledge the role of the committee members in developing this report. They made a tremendous contribution throughout, and we can all be very proud of the committee's activity overall.

I would also like to recognize the two clerks, Jessica Richardson, who was with us throughout the actual conduct of the hearings of the report; and Keli Hogan, who has taken over subsequently. We sometimes underestimate the role of the clerks in managing the witness schedules, arranging them, managing the time frame and helping us with the organizational structure of our committee activities.

I also want to pay particular thanks to Mélisa Leclerc and her new team from our newly revamped Communications Directorate. It was quite a wonderful experience, and I think your acknowledgement is a tribute to them.

I also want to acknowledge our analyst, Sonya Norris. She is simply an outstanding individual in all respects with regard to the background and writing of our reports. She's a real pleasure to work with, a total professional, and we have been extremely fortunate to have her as the analyst for this and other reports in our committee.

In terms of the basis of our study and the report, I would like to make certain we understand that the issue of obesity in Canada is a whole-of-society issue that doesn't arise from one single, little issue. It arises over a long period of time due to the nature of our societal structure, our societal behaviour and our individual habits throughout.

Over the past decades, changes in the way we operate have brought about a considerable change in the amount of physical activity we get in our normal daily habits. The structure of our suburbs and housing developments is very different from the way we once lived. They are generally without sidewalks, and they're generally without any place you would want to walk to anyway. They don't have any services, and they don't have any community interest areas, so all that normal activity is gone. Plus, you have to drive a considerable distance to get to the places that you want to go.

• (1440)

When we look as well at the activities in our communities for youth, there are no vacant lots anymore where we hung out as kids and played every sport possible and were generally active, and to which we rode our bicycles. Those don't exist. And worse, our school system has eliminated any possible sign of activity. Show any enthusiasm and you're dosed with Ritalin. There's no such thing as a free-range child anymore, and this is in a society that values free range in everything else. The fact that kids simply don't move around on their own and gain natural activity is an enormous detriment.

Not only that, but in most cases they're bused for up to an hour and a half each way to get to a school where there's no activity whatsoever, and then they return on a bus. And then, what we do when we get back from work or school is watch one sort of screen or another. So our lifestyles and the structure of our society conspire against us. They have created and incorporated what we call — and it's not an original term — the obesogenic environment that we operate in, which is conducive to simply gaining weight and, ultimately, obesity.

It's clear, then, that there's no magic wand to change this and reverse it, but that does not mean we shouldn't address the issue. What we attempted to do in our report is identify those things that we are capable of addressing. As I'll note in a moment, we have got to start with our youth, because if we can change the

culture of our youth and the nature of their activity, we will not only let them go on to a much greater and more successful life, but they will have a much greater tendency to avoid gaining weight as they move through the various stages of their lives.

This is a major societal issue. I'm not going to read all the recommendations, but I am going to read recommendation one, because I think it encompasses the importance of this to all of society:

The committee recommends that the federal government, in partnership with the provinces and territories and in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, create and implement a National Campaign to Combat Obesity, which includes goals, timelines and annual progress reports.

It would include such things as a public awareness campaign and healthy eating based on tested, simple messaging on meal preparation and enjoyment, reduced consumption of processed foods, and so on.

This begins to address one of the issues. There's a great deal of emphasis in our report on healthy eating and the way we deal with managing our food consumption. You cannot outrun a bad diet through exercise. It's not possible to turn around the effects of a bad diet by exercising. Exercising is important even if you have a bad diet, but you're not going to overcome all of the effects of a bad diet in a normal lifestyle with exercise. It will overtake you.

So the major recommendation that we have in here, throughout, is to concentrate on simple foods and freshly prepared meals, and avoid hyper-processed foods.

As well, we have a number of recommendations dealing with children. We've got to start with children; we've got to get them active, but we also have to avoid, and try as best we can to prevent, advertising directly to children.

The Supreme Court of Canada has said that advertising directly to children is inherently manipulative and is essentially the legalized tricking of children. That sums it up, I think, as well as we possibly could.

We have a number of other recommendations in there. I discussed the issue of taxation on sugar yesterday, and we have recommendations for our food guide. One of the things that I'd like to clarify, because apparently it's misunderstood by at least one of our senators and one of our members of Parliament, is our recommendation that, in a new food guide, there be a panel composed of people with all kinds of expertise to advise the minister, but it should not and must not contain industry representatives.

I'd like to point out to the two critics who have referred to this particular recommendation to look at our Senate committees. We consult with everyone. We consulted with industry on this report, but industry is not on our committee. You cannot have conflict of interest in a committee that recommends directly to a minister, and that's true in this house and in the house across.

I hope that those persons will now understand the meaning of this. We expect that the committee advising the minister will have looked into all the aspects of food health and content in recommending advice to the minister.

I mentioned yesterday that we want to see standardization of package labelling, and simple symbols to indicate very quickly to consumers the value of particular foodstuffs. We have a number of recommendations with regard to active living. Again, I'm going to come back to the idea of free-range children. We've got to give them the opportunity to play and be active on an ongoing, uninterrupted basis. Even organized sports do not give them the same impact at all. Testimony before our committee clearly tells us that in organized sports, much of the time is spent sitting on the bench waiting for your turn to go out for a minute or two in a period of time. We need real, free activity of our youth, and we've made a number of recommendations to government as to how to stimulate that, and how to encourage parents to have their children be active and get involved. We have also recommended a number of ways to, perhaps, review existing tax credits to make certain they're effective, and to revise them as necessary to make them beneficial.

I also want to remind us that on the issue of food, we've got to find ways to ensure society, including communities that are not affluent, has access to good, nutritious food so that people can avoid foods that are not nutritious.

Finally, I think I'd like to comment on another of our recommendations. We hear there may be new major government infrastructure programs. We have strongly recommended that, whenever funding through new infrastructure is evolved around communities, the government take into consideration the whole community when approving funding in these areas, and that active living be considered in the development of new programs and new communities in our country.

Honourable senators, I will, of course, be prepared to continue to answer questions on this, but I also look forward to my colleagues' comments on this report, which will further elucidate the nature of this report. Thank you very much.

(On motion of Senator Eggleton, debate adjourned.)

• (1450)

INTERNAL ECONOMY, BUDGETS AND ADMINISTRATION

THIRD REPORT OF COMMITTEE— DEBATE ADJOURNED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the third report of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration (Senate budget for 2016-2017), presented in the Senate on February 25, 2016.

Hon. Leo Housakos moved the adoption of the report.

He said: Honourable senators, as Chair of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration, I'm pleased to present you with the Senate's Main Estimates for 2016-17. The report marks the result of a comprehensive review performed by the Subcommittee on the Senate Estimates.

The subcommittee was given a twofold mandate for the 2016-17 budgetary process. Their first objective was to review and confirm the mandates of the various directorates in the Senate

administration; second, there was a review for the subcommittee to initiate a zero-based budgeting process for the 2016-17 Main Estimates.

Every directorate was required to appear before the subcommittee, and every budget proposal was carefully reviewed. There were several meetings during which budget information, analysis and reports were presented for review and discussion. The Subcommittee on the Senate Estimates recommended a proposed total budget of \$90,115,308, up from \$88,747,958 in the previous fiscal year. This translates into a 1.54 per cent total budget increase.

Given the lengthy period of financial restrictions the Senate has experienced and the increased pressure for initiatives to address the recommendations from the report of the Auditor General, a few additional cost savings were identified during the process. Resources have been allocated to ensure proper funding for the Senate's priorities, resulting in an overall increase of approximately \$1.4 million.

There are two types of budgets within the Senate's overall resource envelope: statutory and voted. The primary difference is that any shortfall in statutory budgets at year end would be covered by the Treasury Board. The significant changes being proposed for each category of the budgets are a net increase of \$123,000 in the statutory budget as a result of the Senate's basic and additional allowance and pensions, which increased by \$481,000, and the employee benefits plan, which decreased by \$358,000.

As for the voted budget, while there's an increase of \$1.2 million, it must be noted that the Senate's Main Estimates for 2015-16 have been reduced significantly to account for the reduced number of senators, as well as the impact on activities during an election year.

Budgets that had been reduced temporarily and are being reinstated are senators' research and office expenses, which include funding for annual salary increases and adjustments to the whips' budgets, for a net increase of \$1.4 million, and Senate committee budgets. The increase of \$1.2 million to the budget was to reinstate funding for committees to the level of 2015-16.

Other significant changes include termination of the temporary funding provided in the 2015-16 budget to host the 24th Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum, a decrease of \$327,000; and Senate administration salaries and operating budgets increase, including transfer of most security services to the new Parliamentary Protective Service, a net decrease of \$1 million.

In closing, I wish to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Subcommittee on the Senate Estimates who did an amazing job in conducting such an in-depth review, as well as my colleagues on the committee, the Senate administration and senators' staff for their work on the Senate Main Estimates for the upcoming 2016-17 fiscal year. I would urge all honourable senators to support the adoption of this report.

Hon. Wilfred P. Moore: Will the senator accept a question?

Senator Housakos: Yes.

Senator Moore: First of all, I want to thank you for the email that you sent out on March 2 drawing the attention of all of us to the story that was on “Global National” television on February 25. You mentioned that there were misleading and inaccurate facts in that story, and that you indeed engaged legal counsel to correct that information.

I’m not clear what information was inaccurate. The letter doesn’t say what it was that they were reporting on that was not factual.

For the record, could you tell us what those items were?

Senator Housakos: Offhand I don’t have all the information. I don’t want to speak off the top of my head. I’d be more than happy to send out the details, line item by line item, to all senators in response to your question. I’ve been dealing with a number of news stories over the last few days, and I don’t want to cross-communicate some of the issues.

It was a story by Global that was aired on television regarding some issues that the Senate had put forward, which we thought were completely erroneous, from A to Z, in that story. We took the unprecedented step of serving Global News, the anchor and the head office with a lawyer’s letter. There was a retraction. They took the unprecedented step of actually retracting their video and correcting some of the information.

I don’t want to get into the specific elements of that information and mislead the house. If you would be kind enough to give me a few hours, I’ll have my office send out to all senators the breakdown of the detailed erroneous information in that story, and also highlight the corrections made.

Senator Moore: Is it your intention to send us the letter which has the details in it?

Senator Housakos: I’d be more than happy to send the lawyer’s letter that specified all the particular corrections requested.

Senator Moore: In the report that I have a copy of here from Global, they talk about additional monies being set aside for the new government leader. Are those monies in the budget which you’ve tabled, or are they to come later as additional funds?

Senator Housakos: In the news story there was an indication, as you referred to, that the second caucus in the chamber was receiving funding and that the officers were getting top-up salaries, for example, within the budget that was allocated by Internal Economy in the Senate. This, as we all know, is inaccurate. That is one example.

In the budgets allocated to both caucuses, especially to the second caucus in the chamber, there is no top-up for leadership salaries; they are just operating budgets that are made available to the caucus for research and other day-to-day operations required.

That was one of the clarifications that we made, amongst others, and we will continue to push back whenever news outlets publish erroneous information with regard to the chamber.

Senator Moore: With regard to the additional \$425,000 which will be available to the new government leader, and we heard two weeks ago at the Rules Committee meeting that there is to be a deputy as well, are those monies provided for in the budget that you’ve tabled today?

Senator Housakos: Yes, they are. Internal Economy has made provisions depending on what the government decides to do, and if they name a government leader, deputy government leader or leadership. We have made provisions in the current budget for them to be recognized as a caucus, if they have five members, and to make sure they have adequate budgeting as per the model we have for this year.

Senator Moore: This is a small point, but nevertheless a bit of a traditional one. In the past it was the Leader of the Government in the Senate, and this time I understand the title is styled as “representative of the government in the Senate.” Normally that office comes with a car and driver if they want it. Is that covered in your budget? Is that provided for?

Senator Housakos: Again, we tried to deal with all hypothetical possibilities. There is no car allocated in this current budget set-up as there has been in the past. But again, keep in mind, honourable senators, that PCO can provide all additional funds to the government leadership in the Senate, as they have on many occasions in the past.

• (1500)

It was pretty difficult for us to really come to a determination. As we all know, there’s been a lot of speculation around this town about what the government is going to do in regard to the title these new senators will have and what role they will have. So it was rather difficult for us to be as precise as we would have liked to be.

Unfortunately, we live in uncharted times right now with this new government, which has not given clear guidance, but we have taken the step to make sure there is an adequate budget available for a caucus of five or more, depending on how many are named and the time frame in which they’re named.

In terms of a car, no, a car has not been allocated. However, I believe the former Leader of the Government in the Senate, Senator Carignan, in the last budgetary fiscal year did not have a car allocated to him either.

Senator Moore: I have a supplementary. In an article from Global News, the headline says “EXCLUSIVE: Three Senate staffers get extra severance pay.” What’s that about?

Senator Housakos: After the last federal election, with the changes that needed to happen in leadership offices and the Speaker’s office, there was a transfer of roles between the Leader of the Government in the Senate who took over the opposition side and the leadership of the opposition that went over to the government side. Adjustments had to be made. People had to be let go at various offices of the leadership.

There was a severance package that was established in the Senate that we did not think was adequate. It was essentially a two-week severance package, and we want to make sure that the

severance packages for employees of leadership offices, when there is a transition in government and change, are a little more fair and reflective of some of the minimum requirements that the federal and Ontario labour laws require. So we took a decision in Internal Economy that the severance packages would be consistent with the severance packages of ministers' offices.

Senator Moore: So staff who were let go, as you explained, received severance packages based on a minister's level?

Senator Housakos: It was a package that was determined to be equitable to what ministers do on the other side. It would be a four- to six-month severance package; that is what is being referred to.

Senator Moore: So you're saying that the staff received a severance based on a ministerial severance?

Senator Housakos: In Internal Economy, we created a severance package that was consistent and equal to what ministers do on the House of Commons side. For the Speaker's office, it is consistent to what the Speaker does on the House of Commons.

Senator Moore: So is there a set basis or formula for severance, or is this something that's now being developed?

I'm asking this question because we're dealing with taxpayers' money, and what your committee is doing in secret washes over us in public. I just want to make sure we're doing the right thing here.

Senator Housakos: First of all, Senator Moore, the decisions were not secret. As you all know, Internal Economy takes decisions that are published and made public very quickly in the Public Accounts.

This decision was in reaction to a rule that was in place for a long time that provided for a severance package that was clearly inadequate in the eyes of the law. If you look at Ontario and Canadian federal labour laws, two weeks' severance for individuals who have worked in the Leader of the Government's office in the Senate or the Leader of the Opposition's office in the Senate, for the number of years these employees in question were working, needed to be treated with some fairness. We needed to make adjustments.

Indeed, the decision was taken because of the urgent timeline we had and the fact that the rules that were in place were clearly inadequate. I don't think any labour lawyer in the country would have found our previous severance package for leadership offices to be adequate.

We decided to equate them to what the Privy Council finds appropriate for ministers' offices. In the case of the Speaker's office going forward, we made an equitable judgment that we would do the same thing that the Speaker in the House of Commons does. Internal Economy made those changes, and those rules apply and are permanent.

I will reiterate that the decisions were done in accordance to the rule where Internal Economy is very much transparent. We take these decisions publicly, and then we post them in the Public Accounts as expeditiously as possible.

Senator Moore: Just one more supplementary, if I could.

I'm thinking about the government's approach to the Senate, and it's clear to me that they're not going to expect to have the same staffing among the leadership in the Senate. They're going to have their leader and deputy leader, styled as they worded it. I anticipate that caucuses will be formed — maybe regional; I don't know what.

But my concern is the funding for those caucuses. Are we anticipating a change in the rules so that they will be properly funded? If that's the case, have you thought about the funding for those caucuses?

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Housakos, your time has expired. Are you asking for more time?

Senator Housakos: Will the chamber offer five more minutes?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Housakos: Senator Moore, you're speculating. All of us can speculate what the government will do. We've heard little clarity so far in the direction they want to take.

Recently we've had the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons here before a committee in the Senate. In that same hearing where he answered questions, he gave two different answers to a very specific question: Are you going to have a government leader in the Senate? He said, "We will have a government leader in the Senate." Subsequent to that, he answered another question saying, "Well, it will be a government representative in a style of a government leader."

Until Internal Economy gets some clarity from the government in terms of these new independent senators and if they will seek recognition as a caucus — because, as we know, we have rules in this chamber about recognizing caucus members. Everything has a point in time. The first point is to see if they do seek caucus status, and then see what direction the government gives these new merit-appointed independent senators.

Once we understand and have some clarity of where the government wants to go, we will be more than happy to make sure they're adequately funded. We all have one interest in common: to make this place work effectively and efficiently.

Hon. Percy E. Downe: Senator Housakos, I want to thank the subcommittee for their hard work. I know how detailed their study was to produce this report.

Since they have done their work, there's been a change. We don't always copy the House of Commons, but we like to see what they're doing because they're another chamber in the Canadian Parliament. I read in the media that individual MPs' office budgets have increased by 20 per cent. I assume your committee will be taking that into consideration for next year.

Senator Housakos: Like you, Senator Downe, I saw 20 per cent across the board for MPs' expenses, not just for office budgets but living expenses. We'll have to review and make sure that the Senate and senators are adequately funded in order to do our jobs independently and efficiently, as well.

We haven't looked at it yet, but you're a member of Internal Economy, and I can assure you that we will be tackling that issue shortly.

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: Senator Housakos, I want to go back to something you said earlier about your planning for the government leader or the representative of the government in the Senate, and the deputy. You budgeted for that.

I'm curious. We've been operating a bit in the dark here. Did the committee take the initiative to contact the Prime Minister's Office, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons or someone else of authority over there to say we're putting together a budget, so give us an idea of what you want and what you anticipate when you get here? Or has the committee done what the rest of us have done — operate on speculation and hearsay?

Senator Housakos: Well, Senator Mercer, it's a little bit of both. We've been dealing with speculation and hearsay, and to the best of our ability we've come up with a formula. As you all know if you follow the Public Accounts, the budgeting for caucuses is dependent on the number of senators each caucus has. The budget will fluctuate depending on the number of caucus members. The more caucus members they have, the larger the budget is.

• (1510)

We've taken steps, in consultation with leadership on both sides, to make sure that adequate funds are available for that bare minimum five-member caucus and leadership that we're waiting for with such eagerness in this chamber. Again, all governments in the past have topped up whatever Senate budgets are available through PCO funding when it comes to ministers in the Senate and leadership of the government in the Senate; so they have that flexibility and authority as well.

Senator Mercer: In anticipation of other caucuses being formed — and Senator Moore made reference to other caucuses that may be formed by a now-large group of independents who may decide to get together as there are more than five of them — and the requirement that some funding be related to caucuses affiliated with a political party, has there been any discussion to remove that requirement — caucuses of like interest not necessarily affiliated with a political party? We don't get elected here, so we don't need a political party to get here. I recognize the irony in my comment.

Yes, I know how I got here and I know the political party had a lot to do with it, but I'm talking about the future because things have changed here. Has there been any discussion or thought by the committee about that?

Senator Housakos: I would have loved to answer that one.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Housakos, your time has expired and there are some who wish to ask more questions. It's entirely up to you whether you want to ask the chamber for another five minutes.

Senator Housakos: Honourable senators, I've already had five, but I will be more than happy to ask for another five.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Housakos: I thank Senator Mercer for the question. Times have not really changed, Senator Mercer. From what I understand, we still have an Elections Act and the Parliament of Canada Act. And we still have a Constitution in this country. All institutions, when they change, do so within the governance rules that allow them to make those changes.

I dare to differ with your premise that the path to this chamber isn't a political party. The primary responsibility of this chamber is the development of policy and legislation. Policy and legislation stem from our British parliamentary system with political parties. That's where policy conventions begin. That's where policy ideas are born. From there they go to the Canadian public and to the electorate. From there they go to the House of Commons and to these chambers. Then, the chamber of sober second thought engages in that policy making.

I understand that a number of our colleagues don't appreciate the fundamental basis of our British parliamentary system and the roles that political parties play. However, you can't diminish that role because there's a reason that we allow senators to go to caucuses when a political party they represent has a convention. Every idea that gets to this floor for legislative discussion started at some political party's convention. It didn't start at some bar amongst independent parliamentarians who talked about making changes to laws, with all due respect.

Right now we're looking for some clarity from this government. I hope this government respects the governance of this country, its tradition and history. In terms of your fundamental question of have we looked at this, I do not think it is incumbent upon the Internal Economy Committee to change the rules of this institution. If the appropriate committees want to look at reviewing and changing the traditions of a senator's designation and what rules are required to be respected in order to be recognized as a caucus, then we have the appropriate committees to do so.

In the meantime, the rules are clear: You need to have at least five senators who make a caucus and those five senators have to be members of a political party that is recognized by Elections Canada. Internal Economy will continue to work within those rules until we deem it necessary to change them.

Hon. Pierrette Ringuette: I have a few brief questions, and I hope I will get a few brief answers.

When did the three persons in the severance case on which you were questioned earlier quit? Were they fired or was their contract terminated? That is a very important issue. Can you tell us when that happened?

Senator Housakos: Well, it happened a few weeks after the election campaign. There were a number of changes in Senator Carignan's office. I don't know the details of when they were let go, obviously, but I assume there weren't the necessary budgets available. A number of changes were made in his office after the election, as there were in the Speaker's office. As it turns out, a number of employees in the outgoing Speaker's office were

placed in other jobs within the Senate. The three in Senator Carignan's office were terminated. As a result, they were entitled to severance. According to previous rules, the two-week severance did not even comply with the federal labour law.

Senator Ringuette: When you're talking about the outgoing Speaker, you are talking about your position and the people that were under you directly when you were Speaker.

I don't recall anyone in this chamber having the title of "minister." I don't know why a person working under your directive, as the former Speaker of this chamber, would have more responsibility or work more hours and have more entitlement than the people who work for me in my office.

I certainly would like to have full justification as to why this major, unprecedented discrepancy in treatment.

Some Hon. Senators: Question.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Housakos, your time has expired.

(On motion of Senator Baker, debate adjourned.)

PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DYING

FIRST REPORT OF SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE— DEBATE ADJOURNED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the first report of the Special Joint Committee on Physician-Assisted Dying, entitled *Medical Assistance in Dying: A Patient-Centred Approach*, deposited with the Clerk of the Senate on February 25, 2016.

Hon. Kelvin Kenneth Ogilvie: Honourable colleagues, I want to provide you with background on the report referred to on the Order Paper and remind you that that report of the committee was provided to the government for advice as requested by both Houses of Parliament. I'll comment on the general nature of the committee's activity.

I want all members of this chamber to know how proud I was to be there with the four other senators who served on this committee, Senator Cowan, Senator Joyal, Senator Nancy Ruth and Senator Seidman. Their contributions to this extremely difficult and challenging request by Parliament were remarkable. Their leadership was admired by all members of the committee. I was extremely proud to be part of that group.

• (1520)

As you would expect of a committee given this time frame and the significance of the issue, everyone worked extremely hard. I want to acknowledge our clerks: Shaila Anwar, a clerk from the Senate; and Cynara Corbin, who was the clerk from the House of Commons. I also want to acknowledge our analysts, whose remarkable skill in writing went a long way to helping us deal with the draft documents as we went forward: Julia Nicol, Marlisa Tiedemann, and Sonya Norris.

[Senator Housakos]

The staff of all the senators involved worked extremely hard to support us throughout this process. I want to acknowledge my co-chair, Mr. Robert Oliphant, and what a pleasure it was to work with him, and I want to acknowledge all the members of Parliament on the committee.

I will tell you from a personal point of view it was an extreme privilege to be asked by the Senate to take part in this enormously important project. I also want to tell you that the committee as a whole worked together in a spirit of openness and respect, and I think the way the senators brought their positions to the committee went a long way to influencing the temper of the entire committee's activity.

The challenge that was placed upon the committee to complete this task was significant. The first meeting of the committee was held on January 18, and the last formal meeting was held on February 18. We submitted the draft simultaneously in both chambers as requested on February 25. The total number of hours of hearings was nearly 37: nearly 22 hours of public hearings and almost 15 hours of in camera hearings. The number of witnesses was 61. Those witnesses were individuals and those representing organizations, clearly important to our study, who represented tremendous numbers of Canadians in each of their jurisdictions.

Given the time required for drafting and redrafting the report, translation and retranslation, and the final approval process and simultaneous reporting in the house, I think it was a remarkable achievement by my colleagues on the committee.

The report contains 21 recommendations. I won't go through all of them today, but I will tell you that they dealt with all the important issues in the request from the houses of Parliament which dealt with the Supreme Court decision — the so-called *Carter* decision — and I want to read that to you. I want to remind members of the chamber that we weren't dealing with an imaginary concept. We were dealing with giving advice to government on a decision of the Supreme Court. In other words, physician-assisted dying, as it was called at the time, is in force and will go forward without direction if we did not respond and give the government advice that it could use in developing legislation to give Canadians guidance in how this would go forward.

The Supreme Court decision, in essence, refers to "... a competent adult person who (1) clearly consents to the termination of life and (2) has a grievous and irremediable medical condition . . . that causes enduring suffering that is intolerable to the individual in the circumstances of his or her condition."

Honourable colleagues, that was what the committee was charged with: providing advice to government as to how it could develop legislation to ensure that Canadians were fairly treated within the rights and requirements provided by the Supreme Court decision.

The issues covered, all the way from the general issue of the nature of the terminology in the Supreme Court motion, include the meaning of informed consent, the issue of overall age, issues of advanced request and the question of who is eligible. The latter is the so-called residence requirement. Does the person have to reside in Canada or can people come in from outside to avail themselves of this?

The process required looking at conscientious objection; the question of how individuals would be assessed; who should provide the medical assistance; protection to be provided for those involved in medical aid and dying; a waiting and reflection period between the first request for approval and a second request to authorize it to go forward; and the prior review as a possibility and a consideration.

There were ancillary considerations, like making certain that insurance policies stayed in vigour and that those involved in the process are protected from subsequent charges. We looked at the issues of oversight, data collection, and so on.

Because of the issues that arose throughout the course of our study, we made specific recommendations that were outside our formal request from Parliament. They fell into the areas of support for indigenous peoples and communities, palliative care, the mental health issue and dementia.

The committee carried out its study, and on February 18, the report was adopted. The committee also agreed to attaching a differing opinion submitted by three members of the committee. You will see four names listed, but two of them represent one position. They added the person who substituted for one of them, but it's really three voting persons on that report. Also, it was recommended that a supplementary opinion submitted by the NDP be attached to the report. All of this was done in a spirit of complete openness within the committee.

Colleagues, this is something that charges every single one of us and every single Canadian to think extremely deeply about all these issues. I want to assure you that your committee gave it the fullest and most thorough consideration possible, with all the evidence available to it from around the world and within our own country. I am extremely proud of the results of this committee.

Thank you very much.

Hon. James S. Cowan (Leader of the Senate Liberals): I would like to move the adjournment of debate on Senator Ogilvie's motion.

Senator Ogilvie: Senator Cowan referred to my "motion." It is not a motion. I want to make sure the record keeps that clear.

Senator Cowan: I apologize.

(On motion of Senator Cowan, debate adjourned.)

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): On a matter of house business, honourable senators, I ask for leave, notwithstanding the order adopted yesterday, that the start of Question Period be delayed to await the arrival of Minister Jim Carr, who has been delayed in the House of Commons.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

RULES, PROCEDURES AND THE RIGHTS OF PARLIAMENT

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY CASE OF PRIVILEGE RELATING TO THE LEAKS OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT ON THE AUDIT OF THE SENATE

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Hervieux-Payette, P.C., seconded by the Honourable Senator Fraser:

That this case of privilege, relating to the leaks of the Auditor General's report on the audit of the Senate, be referred to the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament for an independent inquiry be ordered and a report publicly released without delay.

Hon. Céline Hervieux-Payette: Honourable senators, you are all aware of, and familiar with, the issue, so I won't make a speech. We all understand it, and it would be appropriate to refer it to the Rules Committee so that it can start its work as soon as possible. I would urge the adoption of this motion.

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

Hon. Senators: Question!

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

• (1530)

[Translation]

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Chaput, calling the attention of the Senate to the Program to Support Linguistic Rights, the importance of ensuring public financing of court actions that seek to create a fair and just society and to the urgent need for the federal government to re-establish the Court Challenges Program.

Hon. Ghislain Maltais: Honourable senators, I move the adjournment of the debate for the remainder of my time.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(On motion of Senator Maltais, debate adjourned.)

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STRATEGY TO FACILITATE THE TRANSPORT OF CRUDE OIL TO EASTERN CANADIAN REFINERIES AND TO PORTS ON THE EAST AND WEST COASTS OF CANADA

Hon. Dennis Dawson, pursuant to notice of March 8, 2016, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications be authorized to examine and report on the development of a strategy to facilitate the transport of crude oil to eastern Canadian refineries and to ports on the East and West coasts of Canada;

That the committee also examine how to share the risks and benefits as broadly as possible throughout the country; and

That the committee report to the Senate no later than June 30, 2016, and that it retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings until 180 days after the tabling of the final report.

He said: Honourable senators, I move the motion standing in my name.

Hon. Joan Fraser (Deputy Leader of the Senate Liberals): Senator Dawson, would you take a question?

Senator Dawson: It would be my pleasure.

Senator Fraser: Thank you. I would like to ask my usual question. Is the committee expecting to incur any extraordinary expenses, such as travel-related expenses?

Senator Dawson: We haven't yet produced a detailed budget, but we do believe that people should have the opportunity to speak to the issue. We are planning to go meet with people who are experts on this.

[*English*]

Senator Fraser: I will take that as an answer on Motion No. 68 but, on Motion No. 67, the same question.

Senator Dawson: We adopted Motion No. 67 before, but I can answer the question. The same applies.

Senator Fraser: We didn't adopt it.

The Hon. the Speaker: No, Senator Dawson we're on Motion No. 67.

Senator Dawson: Sorry about that.

Senator Fraser: To repeat myself, the same question.

Senator Dawson: Same answer.

Senator Fraser: Alberta?

Hon. Jane Cordy: Looking at Motion No. 67, I see Motion No. 68 has a reporting date of March 30, but Motion No. 67 has a reporting date of June 30, along with a number of other committees that are reporting on June 30.

We know the excellent job that the communications team did on the wonderful report on obesity because it was tabled at a less busy time. However, if you have 15 reports all due at the end of June, it becomes more challenging for communications. Could you work on finishing either before or after that date?

Senator Dawson: I plead guilty, senator, and I will certainly propose that the committee change the date so that we can get the most coverage on these issues. I think part of what we're doing has to be heard and seen by the Canadian public. Having all the reports come out on June 30 is not a good idea. I, of all people, should know better than to propose June 30.

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

(Motion agreed to.)

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY THE REGULATORY AND TECHNICAL ISSUES RELATED TO THE DEPLOYMENT OF CONNECTED AND AUTOMATED VEHICLES

Hon. Dennis Dawson, pursuant to notice of March 8, 2016, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications be authorized to examine and report on the regulatory and technical issues related to the deployment of connected and automated vehicles. In particular, the study would consider the long-term implications and challenges of these technologies, such as the impacts on privacy, energy, land use, transportation demand and employment; and

That the committee report to the Senate no later than March 30, 2017, and that it retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings until 180 days after the tabling of the final report.

He said: Honourable senators, I move the motion standing in my name.

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

Hon. Senators: Yes.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

INQUIRY—DEBATE SUSPENDED

Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer rose pursuant to notice of December 9, 2015:

That she will call the attention of the Senate to the human rights implications of climate change, and how it will affect the most vulnerable in Canada and the world by threatening their right to food, water, health, adequate shelter, life, and self-determination.

She said: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak on an inquiry on the impact of climate change on human rights.

[English]

Typically discussions around climate change revolve around the economy, environment and science. These are all necessary conversations, but more and more information from these fears demands that we ask the question: How will this impact us as humans?

[Translation]

Some studies have been done already, including by the Pentagon, which called climate change a security issue, and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which found multiple links between climate change and how its effects stand to violate human rights, particularly the rights of people already living in poverty.

[English]

According to the United Nations, there are six major ways in which the effects of climate change will violate human rights. The rights at risk are the right to water, food, adequate shelter, health, life and self-determination. I would like to reflect on these in a little more detail so that we understand what is truly at risk.

The first is the right to water. Water is fundamental for life, yet one in ten people lack access to safe water, and one in three people lack access to a toilet. More people have mobile phones than toilets.

According to the World Economic Forum in January 2015, the water crisis is the number one global risk based on impact to society. Floods, droughts, changes in temperature and extreme fluctuations are already creating challenges for so many people in the world. This will result in increased water scarcity, contamination and spread of diseases.

[Translation]

In our world today, nearly one billion people already lack access to safe drinking water, and 2.5 billion lack access to adequate sanitation. Climate change is only going to make weather conditions more volatile and threaten more people's rights to safe water.

[English]

The second, right to food, requires all-around attention and constant protection of four major areas of concern: food production, food access, food utilization and nutrition. These will all be affected by and put under greater threat by climate change.

According to the World Bank, 702 million people still live in extreme poverty. According to *The State of Food Insecurity in the World*, 793 million people are undernourished. These numbers come after two decades of tireless work by humanitarian workers who lifted 200 million people out of hunger, so they are seen as numbers of progress, but over the next two decades the effects of climate change can threaten to reverse the work that has been done to combat the threats to the right to food and make the situation a lot worse for millions of people around the world.

• (1540)

This crisis will see its most significant impacts in rural Africa, but it will also have profound effects here in Canada. Shifts in landforms will change the processes by which our northern communities access their food. Trails will shift due to weather fluctuations, and new transportation will have to be accommodated.

This will have very real effects for Canadians and the global community. Food scarcity is already a battle we are struggling to win. Climate change is increasing the challenges against us in this fight.

[Translation]

The third is the right to health. Climate change is not commonly linked to how it will affect our health or our right to health. Some organizations are already trying to promote awareness of this. Physicians for Global Survival stated, and I quote:

[English]

Although few people are aware of the impact climate change may have on their health, the health effects are serious and widespread. Disease, injury and death can result from climate-induced natural disasters, heat-related illness, pest- and waterborne diseases, air and water pollution and damage to crops and drinking water sources.

Children, the poor, the elderly, and those with a weak or impaired immune system are especially vulnerable.

What could this look like? To understand this, we do not have to look any further than what is already occurring. The *UN Chronicle* looked at the impact of climate change on health and noted that as early as 2000, the World Health Organization attributed 2.4 per cent of worldwide diarrhea and 6 per cent of

malaria cases to climate change. The first large-scale quantifiable impacts on human health are likely to be changes to the geographic range and seasonality of some infectious diseases, including vector-borne infections such as malaria and dengue fever, and food-borne infections such as salmonella, which will peak in the warmest months.

We have also begun to identify as climate change casualties the victims of extreme weather events, such as the 27,000 deaths associated with abnormally high temperatures in Europe in the summer of 2003. However, the future public health consequences loom even larger.

[Translation]

The fourth is the right to adequate housing. Extreme weather events have already resulted in the displacement of thousands of people. The numbers are going to climb, and fast. The threat of mass displacement is so high that the United Nations has already begun referring to climate refugees.

[English]

Those who think this will be a crisis only in sub-Saharan Africa are deeply mistaken. This will also impact adequate housing in Canada. As the current refugee crisis is demonstrating, these situations impact the entire world. The global community will be forced to respond, and, as with any event we have seen that has resulted in catastrophe, the best approach is the one that reduces the possible damages in the first place.

Fifth, the right to life. Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to life —

The Hon. the Speaker: Excuse me, Senator Jaffer. I regret that I must interrupt you. The minister has arrived. Of course, you will be given the balance of your time to finish your remarks at the next sitting.

(Debate suspended.)

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, pursuant to the order adopted this Tuesday, the Senate will proceed now to Question Period. I wish to advise honourable senators that the Honourable James Gordon Carr, P.C., M.P., Minister of Natural Resources, is with us today to take part in proceedings by responding to questions relating to his ministerial responsibilities.

As was the case last week, I would ask honourable senators 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 to the minister.

[Senator Jaffer]

QUESTION PERIOD

Pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate on December 10, 2015, to receive a Minister of the Crown, the Honourable James Gordon Carr, the Minister of Natural Resources appeared before Honourable senators during Question Period.

Hon. James Gordon Carr, P.C., M.P., Minister of Natural Resources: Thank you.

[Translation]

MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Hon. Claude Carignan (Leader of the Opposition): Minister, thank you for being here today. The Canada-U.S. Softwood Lumber Agreement expired in 2015, and the forestry industry is very important to the economies of the Atlantic provinces, Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia. On Tuesday, the Minister of Foreign Affairs told *La Presse* that he wanted the renewed agreement to be, and I quote:

... at least as good as the last one, if not better . . .

Canadians completely agree with Minister Stéphane Dion's statement. Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Stéphane Dion are both headed to Washington this week. Minister, can you confirm that the Prime Minister will stand up for Canadians' interests and insist that President Obama sign a better softwood lumber agreement as soon as possible?

[English]

Hon. James Gordon Carr, P.C., M.P., Minister of Natural Resources: Senator, I will begin by telling you how honoured I am to be with you in this chamber this afternoon. I have lived my entire adult life with admiration and respect for the work that you do, and not only because of your important constitutional authority and responsibility, but because —

Senator Carignan: Excuse me, Your Honour. The mic is not working, so the interpretation is not coming through.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Cowan, perhaps you would be kind enough to offer the solution that you had for the last time we had technical difficulties.

Hon. James S. Cowan: I am happy to make the same offer that was made to your predecessor, minister, to sit on the traditional side of the government.

• (1550)

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable colleagues, due to the confusion with our technical problems, we will reset the time for Question Period.

Mr. Carr: Thank you.

It has even more significance that I'm now standing at this place, because I was saying that throughout my entire adult life, I have respected and admired the work of this chamber, not only because of your constitutional authority and the good work you have done historically and will continue to do, but because I actually edited the memoirs of Duff Roblin, who was my political mentor.

Many of you will know he was the Progressive Conservative Premier of Manitoba between 1958 and 1967. He was appointed to this chamber by the Right Honourable Pierre Trudeau. He became government leader in the cabinet of the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney. Duff Roblin, to me, was the quintessential public person. He taught me about respect for institutions, for democracy and for our role as legislators and parliamentarians. So I'm honoured to be with you this afternoon. Thank you for the invitation.

Senator Carignan, I would be very surprised if softwood lumber did not come up in conversation between the American President and the Prime Minister. This is a very delicate negotiation. As you know, it is the responsibility of the Minister of International Trade, but as the Minister of Natural Resources, with a responsibility for forestry, we play a supportive role. I'm keenly interested in this negotiation.

As you know, the agreement expired on October 16, I believe, and we are now in the midst of the one-year period. Negotiations will begin in earnest soon enough.

The interests across the country are not the same, as senators will know. We also know that it tends to be a negotiation that picks up speed toward the end, when minds are more focused and concentrated. It's a very important negotiation for Canada, and I'm sure that the Prime Minister is even more keenly aware of that than I am.

ENERGY EAST PIPELINE

Hon. James S. Cowan (Leader of the Senate Liberals): Welcome, minister. Your colleague, Minister Dion, was here a few weeks ago. Senator Joyal, who would occupy the seat next to you were he here, pressed him on the arms deal with Saudi Arabia. The minister responded by saying that the deal would go ahead as planned, despite the government's strong objection to Saudi Arabia's terrible human rights record.

Not only are we going to continue to sell military equipment to Saudi Arabia, but we're also continuing to buy their oil in preference to oil from our own producers.

Last year, refiners from Quebec, Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador and New Brunswick imported approximately 650,000 barrels a day from countries like Saudi Arabia, while Western Canada produces, as you well know, much more oil than it needs or can use.

Your government recently announced a nine-month extension of the evaluation process for the already 18-month Energy East regulatory process.

If the Energy East pipeline would reduce our reliance on foreign oil, and if emissions that were cut back as a result of the pipeline were to be offset by those generated from the production and

transportation of imported oil, and if your government so deplores the human rights record of Saudi Arabia, from whom we continue to import so much oil, why not move more quickly on the evaluation of the Energy East pipeline?

Hon. James Gordon Carr, P.C., M.P., Minister of Natural Resources: Senator, it's among the principal responsibilities of the Government of Canada to move our natural resources to market sustainably, and that is the goal that has been announced by the Prime Minister. It's in my mandate letter.

It has also been in virtually every answer to questions that have been posed to me in the House of Commons. By the way, there have been many questions, from many different perspectives and points of view. In fact, one day I had four different perspectives: one from the Conservatives, one from the NDP, one from the Bloc and one from Madam May.

In a way, that is a microcosm of the issue we face: We have to develop a consensus in the country about how we move our natural resources. We have been unable to establish that consensus because the regulatory process does not carry the confidence of Canadians.

I think it would be a mistake for us, given the objective I have just articulated, to use the same process that didn't work.

So we're amending the process; we're amending the process by adding some more time — not an unconscionable, undue delay — but we believe a delay that's necessary to do several things, most importantly to meaningfully consult indigenous communities, because we have both a constitutional and a moral obligation to do so.

Second, we have to assess greenhouse gas emissions at a time when climate change and the international agreement on climate change, signed by 195 nations in Paris, is part of the new reality of economic development and environmental sustainability. We say that you cannot talk about economic growth separate from environmental sustainability.

It's our objective to put a process in place that will carry the confidence of Canadians, so that an objective that you and I share can be met. That is our intention.

We have already begun serious consultations. We have already sent out messages through round-table conversations that we have hosted in Halifax, Winnipeg, Vancouver, Calgary and Toronto, around which there were leaders from the environmental community, indigenous leaders, industry leaders and government — all around the table at the same time, talking about the same thing.

This has not been what has characterized our discussion and debate over eight major energy projects in Canada for the last number of years. I think that's one of the reasons we have not been able to get major approvals and major construction of pipelines to tidewater — namely, because it hasn't carried that public confidence that we seek to obtain. That's our goal. That's the process that we're implementing now.

So I think we have a common objective. We're going to work hard to get there.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Percy Mockler: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Considering the minister's reply to Senator Cowan's question, I believe it would be appropriate to ask him the following question.

[*English*]

In reading your mandate letter, I have to tell you that I have a surprise for you. I like your mandate letter — well, at least there are parts of it that I like.

Minister, Energy East is recognized as a nation-building and secure energy project, and there's no doubt we both agree that it will be decisions made based on scientific facts and confidence in science.

Let us talk about who supports Energy East: the Liberal premier of my province of New Brunswick, Premier Gallant; leaders of over 60 municipalities; the Saskatchewan Party premier, including the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, representing over 475 local governments; and the NDP premier and minister from Alberta.

Minister, the only party not supporting Energy East is the Trudeau Liberal government. As a matter of fact, the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick passed unanimously a motion declaring support for the Energy East pipeline.

• (1600)

As a senator from New Brunswick, I can tell you that Energy East will fuel a faltering economy and provide much-needed jobs for Atlantic Canada. With this, minister, will this government green-light Energy East if we do look at science-based evidence?

Mr. Carr: Senator, I had the pleasure of being in New Brunswick very recently. As you know, the entire cabinet retreated for two days at St. Andrews, and it was a magnificent two days. We had a party and a community event in the arena that night. It was very moving, because people came up to us and said, "We remember the night in 1973 when the first Prime Minister Trudeau came to our community, and we have pictures from when we were five years old that are still on the fridge." I said, "You know, 50 years from now there will be pictures on the fridge, too, but they will be of your children." So there was a generational symmetry there.

I also had the pleasure of spending a day in Saint John. Believe me, the message was very clear from many New Brunswickers about their support for Energy East. At the same time, I think many New Brunswickers know that major projects such as this one will have to go through a regulatory process that carries the confidence of the Canadian people in order for it to become a reality and that we have introduced a series of measures we are optimistic will get us to that point. If we don't adopt those measures and the new process, we're certain that it won't carry the confidence of Canadians.

That is our objective. Those are the principles that will govern us, including the importance of science-based evidence, a measurement and assessment of greenhouse gas emissions, meaningful consultations with indigenous Canadians and, importantly, that no proponent will have to go back to square one in the process. We know, and I know, as someone who, for 16 years, had the pleasure of being president of the Business Council of Manitoba, that predictability and certainty are absolutely essential for those in industry and for investors.

We understand that, and we're working as expeditiously as we think is reasonable under the circumstances, again, to reach a conclusion that you and I would share.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

Hon. Nancy Green Raine: Honourable minister, the government needs to be sure that science is the backbone of our environmental review process, but it must not get distracted by activists intent on disrupting the economy. Our natural resources — all the projects — are well-regulated to protect the environment while delivering huge social benefits to Canadians. It is simply wrong-headed to allow projects to be delayed or blocked by groups opposed to business and industry when there is no real science behind their fear-mongering. The squeaky wheel is getting heard regardless of the impacts on Canada's economic well-being.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's current visit to Washington has him attending two events hosted by an American group that's unabashedly anti-oil sands, one that has called for the oil to be left in the ground. The Prime Minister's actions are irresponsible and offensive to the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who are employed in our oil industry. It also sends a poor signal to potential investors in Canada's natural resources.

Can the minister tell us why the Trudeau government would agree to be wined and dined by anti-oil groups while thousands of Canadians have lost their jobs and their homes and are feeling desperately alienated from your government?

Hon. James Gordon Carr, P.C., M.P., Minister of Natural Resources: Senator, it was about a year ago when the leader of the Liberal Party visited Washington and met with this same group and said that he supported the Keystone XL pipeline.

The attitude of this government is that we can learn from people who have a different point of view. We have been consulting Canadians meaningfully now on this project and there will not be 100 per cent of Canadians who agree with the ultimate decision that we take. We know that there will be opponents along the line and there will be opponents at the end of the day.

It's our job as a government to be accountable, politically, for the decision we ultimately take. We will be as persuasive as we can be that the process that we follow is one that most Canadians believe to be a fair one. I can assure you that those decisions will not be driven by people on the margins — and we know that they exist on all sides of the political debate. There are people who

don't want anything built for any reason, at any time, period. There are other people who want it built tomorrow without any regulatory review.

We think that there are an awful lot of Canadians in between who think that there's probably a better way to approach the issue and a better way to get to the desired result. That's the course that we've chosen to follow.

ENERGY EAST PIPELINE

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: Minister, welcome. Congratulations on your election and appointment.

Energy East and the pipeline is a serious issue. It's one that those of us from the East Coast take extremely seriously — not only our colleagues in New Brunswick, but those of us in Nova Scotia, as well. The economy of Eastern Canada is being dramatically affected by this. We have a lot of people who have been shuttling back and forth between Alberta for years now, working on the oil sands in Alberta, coming back home and contributing to our economy. They have now come home, are staying home and are unemployed.

The issue of unemployment is one that we need to address carefully as we talk about the Energy East program.

You've talked about the need for delay. I appreciate the fact that the government wants to take its time and make sure all the Ts are crossed and the Is are dotted, that the Aboriginal people have been consulted and that we have appeased the Mayor of Montreal to a certain extent, but it comes down to the other fundamental role that the government has talked about in the election campaign, job creation. It seems to me that what's happening with the Energy East is that the refineries in Quebec and Atlantic Canada import about 80 per cent of the oil that they use, with the remaining 20 per cent coming from the offshore in Newfoundland and Labrador.

It seems to me that when you have a Canadian oil and natural gas industry that accounts for more than 450,000 direct and indirect Canadian jobs, that this is an opportunity for the government to establish a timeline. I'm not suggesting you do it tomorrow, because I understand you have some Ts to cross and Is to dot. But you ought to establish a timeline that it is reasonable and manageable so that a decision can be made to move forward with the Energy East Pipeline as quickly as possible so that we can get the pipeline built, generate the jobs building the pipeline and also help our colleagues in Western Canada get their oil to market. Because it doesn't make any sense to me that a country as rich in oil and gas as we are continues to import gas from places like Saudi Arabia and Venezuela.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. James Gordon Carr, P.C., M.P., Minister of Natural Resources: Senator, as you know, in this business there are some things over which you have some control, other things over which you have a little bit of control and many things over which you have no control. The price of oil is one of the things over which we have no control.

That is not to say that, as a government, we don't have a responsibility to be mindful of the consequences of low commodity prices on families and individuals. We do.

Senator, when we were in New Brunswick at that retreat, there was a layoff announced at a mine that was in the midst of taking potash out. The consequence of that was that several hundred jobs were lost in a very small town in New Brunswick. You know what I'm talking about. It was Sussex, yes.

• (1610)

We were absolutely devastated by the impact that had on that community, as we are for the tens of thousands of jobs lost in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador. We understand that this low moment in commodity prices is having a real impact on individuals, and we also know that the Government of Canada has an important role to play to work with others to try and soften that blow. We have fiscal measures and formulas for cases such as this that can advance dollars to the affected regions. We have other ways in which we can use government instruments to soften the blow. At the same time, we have to understand that we want to prepare the oil and gas sector and natural resource industries for when commodity prices go up, and we can see a rational transition over time to reduced reliance on fossil fuels and more reliance on renewable sources of energy and green technology.

You know that the Prime Minister, along with 19 other world leaders, signed Mission Innovation, an international agreement in Paris at the margins of COP21, which commits those nations to doubling their investment in innovation and new technologies. That is obliging very important countries around the world, including Canada, the United States, Mexico, the U.K., France, China, Australia and South Korea, who are now saying that they will work together with entrepreneurs, including Bill Gates. He is leading the charge to put private funds together with public sector investment to help us move towards that transition.

We know that this is a moment in which it's difficult to talk about the long-term, when there is such short-term pain. We, as a government, have the responsibility to concentrate on both.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST LNG

Hon. Richard Neufeld: Minister, the Prime Minister said the government would base its decisions on science when considering approving resource development projects, as you have said here also.

As you know, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency recently concluded that the \$36 billion Pacific NorthWest liquefied natural gas project is not likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects. Taking into account the implementation of the key mitigation measures, clearly the many benefits of this project — economic, environmental and social — outweigh all the risks. The proponent, PETRONAS, is standing by with a shovel-ready project to invest \$36 billion of private funds to create thousands of skilled, family-supporting jobs and billions in royalty and tax revenues to government. Most importantly, not one government dollar needs to be invested to do that.

Does the Trudeau government have confidence in its own experts? Will it approve the Pacific NorthWest LNG project in light of the agency's positive findings and the huge benefits to our society?

Hon. James Gordon Carr, P.C., M.P., Minister of Natural Resources: Senator, as you know, we are now in that period where the public is responding to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency's report. The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change will be in a position to assess all of the information. I believe the date is March 21 or March 22 — it's within a few days of that — and if she determines there are significant environmental impacts, it will be referred to the cabinet for a decision. That is the process, and we're in the midst of it now.

I understand that the proponent has also made particular interventions in light of the CEAA report that will have to be considered, but the Government of Canada will be loyal to the schedule, the timetable and the measurements by which this very important project will ultimately be determined to proceed or not.

PIPELINE PROJECTS

Hon. Douglas Black: Minister Carr, I'm asking you this question as a senator from Alberta.

Last week at the first ministers' meeting in Vancouver, the Prime Minister and the premiers, as you well know, agreed on the "... urgency of moving Canada's resources to market in responsible, timely, predictable and sustainable ways ...". That is absolutely laudable and something that we all support.

But as you well know, Canadian oil currently only has one customer. While the price of oil is low, and while we agree you certainly don't control that, the result of that is we are getting the lowest price in the world for our oil today.

The economy in Alberta, as you well know, has shed 100,000 or more jobs. EI claims are up. The demand on social services has soared, and there is a dramatic fall in government revenue in Edmonton, Ottawa, St. John's and Regina.

This, to me, and certainly to Albertans, demonstrates the critical importance of energy access to markets, as I know you will agree.

Minister, we very much appreciate you being here, but I'm hoping today that you will tell Albertans and all Canadians that you will personally commit to do all in your power to ensure that a pipeline will be built from Alberta to both Canada's East and West Coasts on a priority basis.

Hon. James Gordon Carr, P.C., M.P., Minister of Natural Resources: Senator, it's good to see you in this environment. We have known each other for many years and have met in a variety of places and situations. I want to personally thank you for your support of certain directions that the government has announced it intends to take, consistent, by the way, with that quote from the Vancouver declaration. I think it was a very important thing for

the first ministers to say, because it indicates there is an urgent and common objective to get resources to market expeditiously and sustainably.

I can commit to Albertans and to all Canadians, because we don't think this is an issue that should pit one region of the country against another, one sector against another sector, or one group another group. These are national projects, and, actually, it's not always helpful when politicians paint this very serious and difficult situation as a partisan one. It's not seen by us as a partisan issue.

To us, it is an important nation-building exercise that's going to require goodwill, consensus and, beyond anything else, the faith to get to where we want to be as expressed in the declaration you quoted.

What I can say to Albertans and to all Canadians is that we're dealing with the objective, and we're doing what we think is the best way to get there, for which we will ultimately be held accountable by the Canadian people.

ENERGY EAST PIPELINE

Hon. Betty Unger: Minister Carr, I'm repeating what the Prime Minister said in your mandate letter that "... our prosperity has been built on our natural resources." He also said that "... your overarching goal will be to ensure that our resource sector remains a source of jobs, prosperity, and opportunity ...".

As an Albertan, I find these statements encouraging, Mr. Minister, but your failure to act on them is depressing. Nothing the Trudeau government is doing has resulted in any increase in either the production or marketing of our natural resources. If the Trudeau government truly believes, as many of us in this place do, that our prosperity has been built on our natural resources, do you accept that the Energy East project is essential to the economy of Canada? Will your government commit to expeditiously approving this project?

Hon. James Gordon Carr, P.C., M.P., Minister of Natural Resources: Senator, we know that 20 per cent of Canada's GDP is driven by the natural resource sector. We know that it always has been and will continue to be an engine of economic growth and of job creation. By the way, it is not confined to oil and gas.

I spent the last couple of days in Toronto at the most important and largest mining convention in the world. The Prospectors & Developers Association of Canada hosted 20,000 delegates in Toronto, and they're optimists. The miners are optimistic, and a little dose of optimism every now and again in this business is not a bad thing.

• (1620)

I was pleased to learn from executives, investors and miners all over the world that they look to Canada for leadership in sustainable development practices. We have 450 Canadian projects on the continent of Africa alone. The mining sector in Canada will continue to be a source of prosperity and so will the oil and gas sectors. And yes, I am committed to the objectives in the mandate letter from the Prime Minister. I spend virtually all my time doing my best to get us there and I won't stop.

[*Translation*]

DEVELOPMENT OF RESOURCES

Hon. Claude Carignan (Leader of the Opposition): Minister, I am pleased with your answer. Up to this point, I thought I was listening to the Minister of the Environment rather than the Minister of Natural Resources.

You mentioned the convention in Toronto, and I would simply like to remind you that, on the same day, Prime Minister Trudeau went to the Toronto Zoo, which is about 20 minutes down the road from the convention site, to play with the pandas.

Does the Prime Minister share your views on natural resources and the importance of developing them?

[*English*]

Hon. James Gordon Carr, P.C., M.P., Minister of Natural Resources: Senator, I'm sure there are very few issues about which the Prime Minister and I disagree. The Prime Minister says publicly all the time that he believes one of his principal responsibilities is to get our natural resources to market sustainably. By the way, senator, if I'm sounding like the Minister of the Environment, that's the new world.

You cannot talk about economic growth without environmental sustainability at the same time. That is why when these principles were announced on January 27 they were announced at a news conference by the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change and the Minister of Natural Resources. It was the first time anyone could remember, at least in recent history, two ministers of any government being in the same place talking about the same thing at the same time, working towards a common objective. You would also find that if the Minister of the Environment were in this place, and I'm sure some day she'll be invited, her answer to this question would be the same as mine. We must do both at the same time if we are going to succeed together.

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

I am sure all honourable senators will join me in thanking Minister Carr for being with us today. This has been a very helpful and rewarding exercise.

(The Senate adjourned until Thursday, March 10, 2016, at 1:30 p.m.)

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