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# The Day Report

Newsletter of Senator Joseph A. Day  
Winter 2008

Hello and welcome to my latest edition of the Day Report! Happy 2008! I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas season, and I wish each of you a healthy and prosperous 2008.



Senator Joseph A. Day, L.L.M.,  
P.Eng.

As I reflect upon the last few months, many events run through my mind. I had a wonderful summer in New Brunswick, allowing me time to reconnect with family and friends. I also had the opportunity to travel on Parliamentary engagements including a visit Afghanistan, where I saw first-hand the good work that Canadians, as part of the NATO contingent, are doing in that country.

I also travelled to St. John's, Newfoundland for the Liberal Party's annual summer caucus retreat. Such annual meetings are important for any political party, since they provide an opportunity for party members to develop policy matters and strategies for the coming fall sitting of Parliament.

I was selected to travel to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia as part of the Canadian delegation that attended the 28<sup>th</sup> annual Association of Southeast Asian Nations Inter-Parliamentary Assembly meeting in August. As an observer country, the Canadian delegation participates in discussions and exchanges with member nation delegates.

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With the prorogation of Parliament we did not return to full Chamber sittings until mid-October. Committees have had to be re-formed, and all Bills begin anew. I have been reappointed as the Chair of the Finance Committee, as Deputy Chair of the Subcommittee on Veterans' Affairs, as a member of the National Security & Defence Committee, and also as a member of the Special Committee on Anti-Terrorism. As the reselection process takes some time, most Committees have not had time to conduct many hearings nor make recommendations on legislation. I am confident that after the Christmas break, Committees will be able to proceed with their investigations into many of the important issues at hand.

*Si vous désirez recevoir ce bulletin en français, veuillez s'il vous plaît contacter mon bureau.*

If you wish to receive future editions of my newsletter in electronic format, or if you would like to have your name removed from my distribution list, please let my office know.

## The Importance of the Senate in Canadian Politics

### The Purpose of the Senate

The Senate was created in the 1867 Constitution to balance regional power. While the Maritime provinces were important, both Upper and Lower Canada (now Ontario and Quebec respectively) had much larger populations, and were, therefore, more powerful. It was agreed that there should be representation by population in the House of Commons, but in order to avoid having the populated areas controlling all decisions in Parliament, the Senate was created. The Senate can block legislation, or propose changes to it, but cannot create bills requiring spending from the public purse, or the raising of taxes.

### Equal representation

In 1867 the concept of equal representation in the Senate was based on regions (Ontario, Quebec, the Maritimes and the West), unlike the United States, which has two Senators per state. However, we currently have 24 Senators for all provinces west of Ontario, which seems out of balance. That is part of our on-going debate. It was never intended that there should be equal representation in the Senate based on individual provinces, but that the Canadian Senate should represent the interests of regions, and minority groups.

### Sober Second Thought

As many Canadians could tell you, the Senate is touted as the “House of Sober Second Thought.” *Second Thought* refers to the bills, first presented to the House of Commons, and subsequently sent to the Senate for further study. Oftentimes, this legislation has been hastily written, without much study in the House of Commons. It is the responsibility of the Senate to review and make appropriate amendments to each bill before it becomes law.

### Committee business

When legislation comes to the Senate, it is sent to the appropriate Standing Committee for review in detail. Committee work is often referred to as the Senate’s best work. We hear from a number of witnesses from various areas in society who are knowledgeable regarding the proposed legislation. Based on the evidence presented at these hearings, Senate Committees may propose amendments, which are intended to make the legislation better for all aspects of society. Committees also study public policy matters not necessarily related to a specific bill. Senate reports may encourage government action.

### Senate Studies

The Senate conducts studies on important issues in society that elected members do not often choose to review. One of the most impressive studies in recent years was the Mental Health Study, carried out by the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science & Technology. This study took two years to complete, but is today one of the best guides on the topic, and has greatly influenced how Mental Health issues are viewed in Canada and abroad.

The work of the Senate Committee on National Security & Defence is also recognized for its thoroughness. Bill C-2 was an in depth study by the National Finance Committee of the Federal Accountability Act. This was a very important study due to its mandate for government transparency. That bill had already passed in the House of Commons without amendment. The Committee, of which I was Chair at the time of the study, suggested 150 amendments, 90 of which were accepted in the final draft of the legislation.

### Did you know?

#### Representation of the Senate

- 24 from the Maritimes (10 New Brunswick, 10 Nova Scotia, 4 Prince Edward Island)
- 24 from Ontario
- 24 from Quebec
- 24 from the West (6 British Columbia, 6 Alberta, 6 Saskatchewan, 6 Manitoba)
- 9 additional seats (6 Newfoundland and Labrador, 1 Northwest Territories, 1 Yukon Territory, 1 Nunavut)

### **Cost effectiveness of the Senate**

It is important to note that Senate studies are usually much more cost effective than Judicial Inquiries. This is because the Senate is an established body equipped to conduct such studies as part of their mandate, and does not have to hire additional staff to conduct studies. Additionally, the Senate often produces results relatively quickly, making Senate Committees a very cost-effective and productive way to gain insight into any important issue at hand.

### **Senate Appointments**

Senators may be business-people, lawyers, engineers, journalists, teachers, doctors, musicians, professional athletes, retired military personnel, or from any other background. The variety of experience gives the Senate a unique flair; one that enables people from all walks of life and areas of expertise to contribute to how Canada is governed. Politicians can sometimes become so focused on the next election that they do not see all of the possible outcomes from their decisions. The Senate helps to balance this because members are usually not political by nature, and do not have to make decisions based on the next election. Thus, they can take a longer-term view of matters when making important decisions for our country.

### **Continuity and Long Term Perspective**

House of Commons tenure can be very short, as each term of parliament lasts no longer than five years. However, Senate positions are generally held for longer terms (the average term of a Senator is 11 years). This contributes to continuity and a wealth of common knowledge held in the Senate, which ultimately produces a very important collective memory. This institutional memory helps the Senate in its role of sober second thought.

The longer terms of Senators allow them to delve into Committee studies; something which Members of Parliament are unable to do due to their responsibilities within their ridings. Senate studies can take years of in-depth research and hearings to complete. Members of Parliament spend most of their time focusing on their constituents and local interests. Our Fathers of Confederation realized this, which is one of the reasons that the Senate was created as an appointed body with a regional and minority focus so as not to compete with the House of Commons.

### **International Relations**

Not only does the Senate devote time to special studies, but Senators are also very active on the international scene. Many Senators have contributed to improved relations with various countries.

Personally, I am very active in Chinese and Asian affairs, and I have a very good working relationship with high level officials from these areas. Senators Dallaire, Jaffer and Goldstein are all heavily involved in the ongoing turmoil in the Darfur region of Sudan.

Similarly, Senator Marcel Prud'homme of Quebec was recently awarded the Russian Order of Friendship from Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov for his work in furthering relations between our two countries.

#### **Did you know...**

##### **Cost of Senate Studies vs. outside inquiries**

- The Romanow Report, also known as the Royal Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada, was released in 2002 lasted one year, and cost \$14,673,067
- The Senate report on the State of the Canadian Health-Care System and the Federal Role in the System was released in 2002, took two years to complete, and cost \$394,374.

# The Day Report

## Canada Post in Afghanistan

Thanks in large part to Saint John MP Paul Zed and Saint John resident June Dobson, the Canada Post Corporation decided late in August to continue to send regular mail to Canadian Forces personnel serving abroad free of charge until the end of January 2008. Although this service does not regularly include packages, over the Christmas holidays, parcel delivery was also extended. Lawrence Cannon, Minister responsible for Canada Post, will review this service at the end of January.

I believe this service is invaluable to Canadian Forces personnel working abroad. It is a good way to boost morale amongst the troops while stationed away from home.

Member of Parliament Paul Zed has also sponsored a Private Members' Bill, Bill C-440, which, if passed would make free postal delivery to Canadian Forces personnel stationed abroad a permanent service.

If you would like to write to Minister Cannon expressing your views on this issue, please do so, free of charge, at:

The Honourable Lawrence Cannon  
Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON  
K1A 0A6

Or email him at [Cannol@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Cannol@parl.gc.ca)



Senator Day in Kabul, Afghanistan, Summer 2007



Senator Day overlooking the Belgian Military Airfield, before his visit to Afghanistan, Summer 2007

### *Fast Facts about Afghanistan As provided by the Government of Canada*

- Six million children have returned to school (35% are girls). Canadians are directly involved in helping Afghans rebuild schools that were destroyed by insurgent groups like the Taliban.
- Some 85% of Afghans now have access to basic health care, compared to roughly nine percent in 2001. Seven million children have been immunized against polio, and millions of vitamin A supplements have been delivered.
- The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has provided \$150 million towards community-based development projects, microfinance, demining and road construction. To date, over 11,400 projects have been completed nationwide.
- Through demining activities, CIDA funds have assisted in clearing over one billion square metres of land that were once filled with mines and explosives. This land is now available for Afghans to use productively for agriculture and housing.
- 2500 villages have electricity for the first time
- local governance has been strengthened through the election of 16,000 Community Development Councils in rural villages
- 6000 kilometres of road have been built or repaired
- 4.6 million Afghan refugees have returned home

I was honoured to have the opportunity to go to **Afghanistan** this summer. As Vice Chair of the NATO Defence and Security Committee, I was invited to visit the country, and to witness first hand the good work of Canadian soldiers, as well as those soldiers from other countries stationed in Afghanistan.

Canadian soldiers have been taking part in the UN-sanctioned and NATO-led mission to Afghanistan, called the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) since 2002. While the ISAF has troops across Afghanistan, Canadians have been based mainly in the southern Kandahar district. This is one of the few remaining Taliban strongholds in the country, which is one of the reasons for the high number of Canadian casualties.

Together with other NATO soldiers, Canadian troops have done an excellent job of eradicating the Taliban from all facets of Afghan life. Their presence in the country has been greatly undermined with the deployment of the ISAF, and the effects of their oppressive regime have been diminished though the reconstruction work that has been performed throughout the country.

As with any war-torn country, reconstruction is neither a quick nor easy task. However, in the few short years since Canada has deployed forces there, we have seen many improvements. I personally observed Canadian and ISAF troops conducting operations in Kandahar and Kabul. These operations seem well-managed, and the Afghan people are willing to work with our troops in securing and maintaining peace for their country. Economic activity is increasingly visible on the streets of many cities, where locals have once again begun to sell their wares. Civilians have been aiding the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) with their efforts on a more regular basis. This has led to increased trust between soldiers and civilians, which has led to better intelligence regarding Taliban locations and planned attacks.

Although major advancements have been made, some challenges remain:

- A shortage of personnel and appropriate equipment are two of the mission's biggest problems. While the ISAF are doing a good job of eradicating the Taliban from areas, there are not enough Afghani police and armed forces personnel to remain in the area once that mission has been completed. This often leads to renewed efforts of insurgents, rendering previous efforts ultimately futile.
- The ongoing problem of government corruption poses a threat to democracy.
- On a larger scale, the narcotics trade, especially that of opium, continues to plague not only Afghanistan but also her neighbours.

One of the main problems targeted by the NATO delegation with whom I travelled was the training of the Afghan National Police Force. While they are currently poorly trained, poorly equipped, and largely corrupt, their sustainability is important for the future of the country. Canadian forces are involved with training the Afghani National Police force and the Afghani National Army. It is a mission of utmost importance for Afghanistan's safety and democracy, and an important factor for the future withdrawal of NATO forces.

Canada is committed to our work in Afghanistan until February 2009 as a Battle Group force. We have made a commitment of support generally until 2011. We are currently looking to NATO to find a replacement for our nearly 3000 Battle Group forces.

This mission continues to require the efforts and resources of many countries. Regardless of our continued role in Afghanistan, we as Canadians should be proud of the role that our troops have played thus far in helping Afghan civilians regain control of their country and of their way of life.

## The Day Report

### Home Energy Grant Programs for New Brunswickers

Environmental issues are at the forefront of Canadians' minds. Conservation and improvement of energy usage are easy ways that individuals can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In my last newsletter, I outlined 10 simple ways that individuals can reduce their eco footprint. In this newsletter, I would like to share with you some of the grants available from the provincial and federal governments to homeowners who make energy conscious upgrades to their homes.

#### Home Energy Assistance Program

Low income families in New Brunswick are eligible for a rebate of \$100 if their total income is lower than \$28 000. Applications for this rebate are available at Service New Brunswick outlets, or through the Ministry of Finance. Applications are due June 30th, 2008.

#### Existing Homes Energy Efficiency Upgrades Program

This program, run by the Government of New Brunswick, provides financial assistance to homeowners who are making energy-efficient upgrades to their homes. Homes must be evaluated by an approved company, who will show you how energy is being used in your home, and who will suggest energy conscious upgrades. Once upgrades are completed, homeowners can apply for a grant of up to \$2000, which cannot exceed 20% of upgrade costs, **or** an interest free loan of \$10 000 towards the cost of home upgrades that have been recommended in your ecoENERGY evaluation.

For more information on this programme, please visit [www.energycynb.ca](http://www.energycynb.ca) or call 1-800-643-8833.



#### ecoEnergy Retrofit Grant

The ecoEnergy Retrofit Grant is a program run by the Government of Canada. For this grant, homes must have a residential energy assessment. This assessment will generate a list of possible improvements to your home. If any upgrades outlined are made within 18 months of the original assessment, the auditor can re-assess your home once the upgrades are completed, and at that time will submit an application for your Retrofit Grant on your behalf. The amount of the grant depends on the upgrades performed, and the relative impact they have on energy efficiency in your home. For more information on this program, please visit [www.ecoaction.gc.ca](http://www.ecoaction.gc.ca) or call 1-800-622-6232.

There are also many grants available to people who are building homes and will be installing energy efficient appliances. If you are building a new home, please consider using energy efficient means to do so.

## Thérèse Casgrain Volunteer Award

Is there someone special in your community? Someone always willing to lend a hand, always there when you need them? They may be eligible for the Thérèse Casgrain Volunteer Award.

Thérèse Casgrain was born in Montreal in 1896. She was politically active throughout her life, campaigning for women's suffrage in Quebec before WWI, some 30 years before the women of Quebec received their right to vote. She ran as a Liberal candidate in a federal by election, and later became a member of the social democratic Co-operation Commonwealth Federation. With this party, she was the first female leader of any Canadian political party.

Mme Casgrain founded the Quebec wing of Voice of Women, was a co-founder of the League for Human Rights, and the *Fédération des femmes du Québec*. Because of her diligent work for human rights, she was elected to the Senate by then Prime Minister Trudeau.

Throughout her career, Thérèse Casgrain was an ardent supporter of equality and social justice. She chose to defend the cause of disadvantaged members of society, to denounce social injustice and to lend a voice to those who had none. For these reasons, she embodies the spirit of Canadian Volunteerism.



Thérèse Casgrain

Nominees must meet the following requirements:

- Evidence that the spirit of volunteerism has played a significant role throughout their lifetime
- Volunteer efforts have enabled fellow Canadians to participate in the workplace and/or their communities
- They have demonstrated leadership, creativity, cooperation and hard work in advancing a social cause
- They have created effective partnerships with the public, the voluntary sector, local communities and/or governments
- They are Canadian citizens

If you know of someone in your community who you would like to nominate, please do so at [www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/community\\_partnerships/therese\\_casgrain](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/community_partnerships/therese_casgrain).

One male and one female are eligible for the award each year. Nominations must be submitted by February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008. Late submissions will be considered the following year.

## Iceland

My work with the NATO Parliamentary Association over the past few months has been very gratifying. I have had the opportunity to meet with Parliamentary Association members from many international countries, and it is always interesting to see how other countries are dealing with the international security issues that effect us all.

At our last reunion, in Reykjavik, Iceland, much of our discussion revolved around the current situations in Afghanistan, where NATO has taken on a leadership role for the United Nations in the ongoing efforts to secure peace in that troubled country. Most delegates recognize the importance of a continued presence and support to the government of Afghanistan, but are concerned about a lack of progress.

At our meetings, we also have the opportunity to inform delegates from other NATO countries of our own political situations. I take great interest in learning how Liberal or Democratic parties in other countries work, and how governments in other countries are run.

My work with the NATO Parliamentary Association has enabled me to meet with like-minded parliamentarians from across the Western hemisphere. I have made many valuable contacts that I value greatly. The topics that we discuss are very interesting to me, and I feel it is important for Canada to have representatives voicing the concerns of our citizens at such international functions.

## Did You Know: New Rules for Federal Political Donations

In 2003, the Chrétien government passed legislation placing limits of \$5000 for individual contributions to each registered political party, as well as severely restricting the political donations by corporations and unions.

The current government subsequently placed even stricter restrictions on federal political donations when it passed the *Federal Accountability Act*.

Specifically, as of January 1, 2007:

- Only citizens and permanent residents of Canada can make political donations to registered parties, registered electoral district associations, candidates, nomination contestants and leadership contestants
- Corporations, trade union and unincorporated associations may no longer make political donations
- Contributions from individuals may not exceed:
  - \$1,100 total in any calendar year to registered political parties
  - \$1,100 in total in any calendar year to the various entities of each registered political party (registered associations, nomination contestants and candidates)
  - \$1,100 to each independent candidate for a particular election
  - \$1,100 in total to the leadership contestants in a particular leadership contest

No individual can make a cash contribution exceeding \$20. A receipt must be issued for each contribution received with a value of \$20 or more.



There are also limits on how much a given political party can spend on a national campaign. These limits are based on the number of districts in which a party has a confirmed candidate. During the last federal election, the Liberal, Conservative, New Democratic and Green parties were allowed to spend the maximum amount of \$18,278,278.64. How much individual candidates can spend on their campaigns depends on their riding. But to provide one example, a candidate in Ottawa-South was allowed to spend \$83,133.92 during the previous election, whereas a candidate in Fundy Royal could spend only \$73,430.40.

Compare these figures to those of presidential elections in the United States; during the 2004 Presidential campaign, spending totalled more than \$1 billion. Much of this money came from corporate donations. For example, in the 2000 election period oil and gas companies contributed \$34 million, and tobacco companies contributed \$8 million.

The reason corporations are no longer permitted to make donations here in Canada is to limit their political influence on decision-makers. It is not difficult to see how a politician who feels beholden to oil and tobacco companies might fail to implement policies which are in the public's best interest.

Political parties now rely on the generosity of individuals to help finance their activities. If you wish to make a contribution to your party of choice, please visit the party's website and make a donation. There are currently 16 registered political parties in Canada. They include: The Liberal Party of Canada, The Conservative Party of Canada, The New Democratic Party, The Green Party, The Animal Alliance Environment Voters Party of Canada, the Bloc Québécois, the Canadian Action Party, the Christian Heritage Party of Canada, the Communist Party of Canada, the First Peoples National Party of Canada, the Libertarian Party of Canada, the Marijuana Party, the Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada, neorhino.ca, the Progressive Canadian Party, and the Western Block Party.

For more information on contribution rules, visit Elections Canada's website: [www.elections.ca](http://www.elections.ca)