



The Day Report



THE SENATE OF CANADA

WINTER 2009

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Welcome to another edition of the Day Report! I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season, and I wish each of you a healthy and prosperous 2009.

I had expected that the Senate would be back in session in September, but because of the recent events, we will not be sitting again until the end of January. This has been an historical time in Canadian Parliament, one that began three months ago with the federal election that took place in October, 2008 (one year prior to the fixed election date law!).

As a result of the October 14th election, a conservative minority government was formed led by Prime Minister Stephen Harper. At first, it seemed there was a renewed sense of cooperation between the parties in the House of Commons to work together against a major economic crisis; however, Prime Minister Harper's Economic and Fiscal Update of November 27th was universally rejected as being dishonest and partisan. It was not supported by the Liberal party which felt it was clearly not in the best interest of Canadians.

The update weakened the principle of pay equity for women, suspended the right to strike by public servants, and contained no fiscal stimulus. The Liberal party decided to explore the option of a democratic alternative government in the interest of the future economic security of Canada.

The Prime Minister of Canada must have the confi-

Happy New Year 2009!

dence of a majority of the Members of Parliament. This is an important difference between our government and that of the United States. In America, voters elect a President, while in Canada, voters elect a Member of Parliament from their riding to represent them in the House of Commons; we do not vote for a Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is the leader of the party that has been called on by the Governor General to gov-

ern Canada. If the elected Members of Parliament no longer have confidence in the Prime Minister, it is possible for him or her to be replaced provided there is another leader who does have the confidence of Parliament.

publically presenting this alternative was to give another option to the Governor General other than calling an election. The coalition vowed to vote against the update of December 8th, a vote of no-confidence in Prime Minister Harper's government. In response, Prime Minister Harper asked the Governor General to prorogue Parliament, suspending the session without dissolving it, after less than two weeks of sitting in the new Parliament.

On December 4th, the Governor General agreed to the Prime Minister's request and prorogued Parliament. Soon after, Liberal leader Stéphane Dion decided to step down immediately from his post as Leader of the Opposition. He had earlier announced his departure, but agreed to stay on until a new leader was chosen.

Parliament will reconvene at the end of January, with Michael Ignatieff as Leader of the Opposition, and Harper's government presenting their budget on January 27th. Michael Ignatieff and the Liberal party will work with Stephen Harper's government to ensure the budget is in the best interest of the economic future of Canada. However, if an agreement cannot be reached, the Liberal party will vote against the government's budget. If the government loses the budget vote, that is a matter of confidence. The Governor General will then decide whether to call a general election or, alternatively, to call upon another party (or parties) to form the government.



Senator Day with Michael Ignatieff

“The Senate, also known as the Red Chamber, is not only a place where Senators debate legislations but is also the venue for historic state ceremonies that includes the Opening of Parliament, the Speech from the Throne and the Installation of a new Governor-General.”

“The first organizational meeting on the Standing Senate Committee of National Security and Defence was held exactly 4 months before the 9/11 attacks”

What are Standing Committees?

The Senate is often called the “House of Sober Second Thought”, referring to the work of the Standing Committees that review bills passed by the House of Commons. Often, legislation has been hastily written and/or has not received thorough study in the House of Commons. It is the responsibility of the Senate Standing Committees to review and make appropriate amendments to bills before they become law. There are 17 Senate Standing Committees. After each general election, the Standing Committees are reformed. As parliament was prorogued after just two weeks, the process of reforming the Standing Committees has not yet occurred.

I have previously been involved in the Standing Committee on National Finance as the Chairperson, as well as a member of the Standing Committee on National Security and Defence, and the special committee on Anti-terrorism. I also served as the Deputy Chair of the Subcommittee on Veteran’s Affairs.

What are Parliamentary Associations and Friendship Groups?

Parliamentary Associations and Friendship Groups work to promote Canada’s interests abroad, and are composed of both Members of the House of Commons and Senators. There are 12 Parliamentary Associations and 69 Friendship Groups. I am the co-chairperson of the Canada-China Legislative Association (CCLA) which aims to promote better understanding and closer ties between Canada and China by encouraging discussion and exchange of information between both countries, as well as in promoting our common interests in Asia. In June of 2007, as co-chair of the CCLA, I had the pleasure of introducing a parliamentary delegation from China to the beautiful province of New Brunswick and the city of Saint John. This type of meeting provides abundant opportunities for our two nations to discuss topics ranging from the environment, to trade, to multiculturalism, to human rights.

I am also a member of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association, which aims to increase knowledge of the concerns of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. The NATO Parliamentary Assembly provides a forum for parliamentarians from the NATO member countries to study and discuss matters of common concern. Within the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, I am the chairperson of the Liberal Democratic Group, and chairperson of the Subcommittee on Transatlantic Security and Defence Co-operation.

Standing Committees in the Senate

- Aboriginal Peoples
- Aging (Special)
- Agriculture and Forestry
- Anti-terrorism (Special)
- Banking, Trade and Commerce
- Conflict of Interest for Senators
- Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources
- Fisheries and Oceans
- Foreign Affairs and International Trade
- Human Rights
- Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration
- Legal and Constitutional Affairs
- National Finance
- National Security and Defence
 - Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs
- Official Languages
- Rules, Procedures and Rights of parliament
- Selection Committee
- Social Affairs, Science and Technology
 - Subcommittee on Cities
 - Subcommittee on Population Health
- Transport and Communications



Senator Day with Mr. Wu Huiqing, director of the Election, Appointment and Removal Affairs Committee of Jiangxi Provincial People’s Congress at a luncheon for Chinese Delegates to Canada, November 2008.

Additionally, I am the chairperson of the Canada-Mongolia Friendship Group, and a member of several other Parliamentary Associations and Friendship Groups including the Canada-France Inter-Parliamentary Association, the Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group, the Canadian Branch of the *Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie*, and the Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, to name just a few.

A Week in the Life of Senator Day

Saturday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>6pm RCMP Veterans Meeting, Security Issues Speech</p>	<p>10am St. Joseph's Hospital Announcement</p> <p>11am Coffee Meeting with Military Representative</p> <p>2pm Anti Terrorism Committee</p>	<p>9am Auditor General's report tabled</p> <p>9:30am-11am National Finance Committee Meeting</p> <p>11am Meeting with Auditor General regarding report</p> <p>11:30am- 2pm Senate Caucus Meeting</p> <p>2pm-5pm Senate Sitting</p> <p>6pm Dinner with Chinese Ambassador</p>	<p>7am Breakfast with Canadian Egg Marketing Agency</p> <p>9am-10am Atlantic Caucus Meeting</p> <p>10am-11am National Caucus Meeting</p> <p>12pm-1:30pm Veteran's Affairs Committee Meeting</p> <p>1:30pm-4pm Senate Sitting</p> <p>6:30pm-8:30pm National Finance Committee Meeting</p>	<p>8am Breakfast on understand the "plastic brain"</p> <p>10am Fundraising Meeting with the Liberal Party</p> <p>1:30pm-4:30pm Senate Sitting</p> <p>5pm Reception with Partnership Group for Science & Engineering</p>	<p>6pm Senate Page Alumni Reception</p>
Sunday					
<p>10am Battle of the Atlantic Commemoration</p>	<p>4pm-7pm National Security & Defence Committee Meeting</p> <p>7pm Reception with the Building Trades of Canada</p>				

As you can see, Senators are not only busy representing the interests of Canadians on an international, national, regional, and provincial level through various caucus meetings, committee meetings, and association activities, but we are busy with a wide variety of social and political engagements as well. We are often asked to speak at schools, rotary clubs, special interest groups, and other public events. Although Parliament has been prorogued and Senate committees and caucuses do not sit, we are still actively participating in these and other social and political activities.

FACT:

Canada has been a military presence in Afghanistan since 2001. 2500 members of the Canadian Forces are serving as part of Joint Task Force Afghanistan, and they play a key role in the NATO-led International Security Assis-



Senator Day with Rasa Jukneviene, the Minister of National Defence of Lithuania, on a recent trip to Afghanistan with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

National Flag Day

Did you know...

- February 15 was declared National Flag Day in 1996. It marks the day in 1965 that the red and white maple leaf flag was first raised on Parliament Hill, across Canada, and at Canadian embassies around the world
- The Honourable John Matheson, Chair of the House of Commons Flag Committee chose the single maple leaf flag design submitted by Dr. George Stanley based on the flag of the Royal Military College of Canada.
- Red and white were chosen as Canada's official colours by His Majesty King George V in 1921
- In 1996 the maple tree was proclaimed as the National Arboreal Emblem of Canada.



Interact with Liberal Senators Online

The recently launched Liberal Senate Forum is an outstanding website which effectively showcases the key role that Liberal Senators play in our political and legislative process, while also enabling Canadian citizens to share their thoughts and ideas with us.

Explore the site to find out about the important issues being debated and studied, and to learn more about the role of Senators and the Senate. You will find articles recently published by Senators in newspapers, blog posts by Senators on important issues, and a number of positions of the Liberal Senate on a variety of issues that are important to Canadians.

We also invite you to use the two-way communication features to tell us what you think. Log on and share your views with us in the Ideas Forum. Topics may be directly related to the Senate and its activities, or other important political issues. We want to encourage an exchange of ideas and opinions between Liberal Senators and Canadian citizens everywhere.

Log on at www.liberalsenateforum.ca to see for yourself!

Check out Senator McCoy's website: savvysenate.ca to read an interview with Senator Day, January's 'Senator of the Month'!

*Senator Day wants
your feedback!*

*Please take a few
minutes to comment
on The Day Report, the
Senate, or any other
matter of concern.*

Contact Senator Day

Feel free to call or e-mail us anytime!

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Feedback Form

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Thank you!