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THE HONOURABLE NOËL A. KINSELLA
SPEAKER

Honourable senators, malaria is a deadly disease affecting millions worldwide, so many of whom are children. It is also a disease that can be prevented and treated with so little effort — a bed net for prevention and, for those infected, a cost of \$3 to treat and provide medication for a child suffering with malaria.

Honourable senators, funding for prevention and treatment of malaria has increased tenfold according to Roll Back Malaria, the global malaria partnership, but more needs to be done to eradicate this most eradicable disease. I urge all honourable senators to participate and encourage your areas of Senate representation to do the same.

This evening at 6 p.m., in Room 256-S, a group of young Kingston actors, The Not So Amateur Amateurs, will perform about the work of the Canadian Red Cross, the Buy-a-Net malaria prevention group, and Spread the Net, and their efforts to control malaria. I invite honourable senators to join them in their attempts to spread the word and to join Senator Jaffer in her remarkable leadership on this issue.

[Translation]

Hon. Lucie Pépin: Honourable senators, last Friday, Princess Astrid of Belgium and Professor Coll-Seck, the Executive Director of Roll Back Malaria, visited Parliament.

That visit, co-organized by Senator Jaffer, aimed to raise awareness of malaria.

Every year, 500 million people contract this disease, which is transmitted by mosquitoes, and one million people die from it. Malaria is the leading cause of death in children under the age of five in sub-Saharan Africa. Somewhere in the world, a child dies of malaria every 30 seconds.

Pregnant women are another vulnerable group. They are four times more likely to contract malaria.

Children who were exposed to malaria in the womb are at risk of more serious diseases transmitted through the infected placenta. They have weakened immune systems and they may suffer from growth deficiencies and delays in cognitive development.

Like Princess Astrid, I would like to see malaria on the G8 agenda for child and maternal health in June.

We must act quickly, because every moment we waste costs another life, even though every malaria-related death is preventable.

This infectious disease is controllable and treatable. Sleeping under mosquito nets treated with anti-malarial insecticide can decrease infant mortality worldwide.

Quick and universal access to treatment would eliminate even more deaths. Preventive treatment during pregnancy can significantly decrease the number of premature and stillborn babies.

• (1410)

Effective preventive measures and treatments exist, but access is often a problem. Malaria primarily affects people in rural areas who have few ways to protect themselves from mosquitoes and very limited access to treatment once infected.

A number of stakeholders are working to make malaria prevention measures and treatment available and affordable. I would like to recognize the work of Senator Jaffer, who supports these efforts.

Honourable senators, April 25 is World Malaria Day, a day that gives us a chance to make a difference. I invite everyone to learn more about this disease. I am sure that Senator Jaffer will be pleased to share much more information.

If you can, support the work of organizations like Roll Back Malaria to make malaria a thing of the past.

[English]

CANADA FOUNDATION FOR INNOVATION

Hon. Wilbert J. Keon: Honourable senators, the Canada Foundation for Innovation, known as CFI, is an independent corporation created by the Government of Canada to fund research infrastructure. The mandate of the CFI is to strengthen the capacity of Canadian universities, colleges, research hospitals and non-profit research institutions to carry out cutting-edge research and technology development that benefits Canada.

Since the creation of the CFI in 1997, its investments, totalling \$4.5 billion as of March 31, 2009, have led to groundbreaking discoveries across the spectrum of disciplines. Whether focused on health, natural resources and energy, information and communications technology, the environment or social science, research facilitated by CFI-funded infrastructure is recognized for its world-class excellence.

Studies have shown that foundations are an important and effective instrument for the Government of Canada in the delivery of research and education programs, where expert knowledge, partnerships, multi-year funding, long-term planning and independent merit review are critical.

The arm's-length nature of the foundation model allows organizations such as the CFI to address challenges in a highly effective, non-partisan manner. By working with institutions, the CFI ensures that applications for funding are based on solid institutional strategic research plans.

Although the CFI is not alone in supporting innovations in Canada, it is the only national organization used in providing the infrastructure required to conduct high quality research in all fields of investigation.

Recently, an evaluation of the CFI was conducted by an independent third-party international review panel. The Government of Canada is pleased to announce that following an overall performance evaluation and the value-for-money audit

of Canada's Foundation for Innovation, the independent international review panel has declared that CFI is the most successful research funding organization of its kind in the world. Our government is proud of the CFI's accomplishment. We recognize that in the global economy, knowledge, research and innovation are at the heart of economic growth and success. That is why the current government has provided over \$1.34 billion to CFI since 2006.

We congratulate the CFI and wish it continued success in its work. We also congratulate Dr. Eliot Phillipson, who is retiring as president after a very successful reign.

NATIONAL VICTIMS OF CRIME AWARENESS WEEK

Hon. Bob Runciman: Honourable senators, I rise today during National Victims of Crime Awareness Week to draw attention to a problem that puts the safety of our children at risk and leaves organizations that work with children in a vulnerable situation. I am referring to the National Parole Board's rubber-stamping of pardons for those with criminal convictions, even when those convictions are for sexual offences.

We read today that Karla Homolka will be eligible to apply for a pardon in a few short months from now.

According to *The Globe and Mail*, nearly all of the sexual offenders who apply for pardons in Canada are granted one by the parole board. Over the past two years, only 41 of 1,554 sex offenders had their applications rejected. Honourable senators, along with many other Canadians, I was shocked to read these statistics.

There are many reasons why forgiveness is commendable and why a pardon may be appropriate. Who wants to see a young person's future constrained by a prank that left him or her with a criminal record? However, I am not talking about the teenager who finds that a criminal conviction for a youthful indiscretion dashes his or her future dreams. No, this is a case of pardons being issued for serial sexual predators. I share Prime Minister Harper's disgust with this practice and I am encouraged that Public Safety Minister Vic Toews has promised to put a stop to it. There has been some media criticism of the government's haste in this matter, but there is good reason to act quickly — the protection of our children. In fact, more needs to be done because, unfortunately, stopping future pardons to sexual predators will not solve the problem alone. According to the RCMP, there are nearly 15,000 pardoned sex offenders out in our communities.

What can we do to ensure organizations that work with children or other vulnerable people can identify sexual offenders when they are screening volunteers? Some churches and volunteer groups have stopped screening for potential pardoned sex offenders because stricter enforcement of the rules on police searches is making it impossible for them to weed out sexual offenders who have received pardons.

As it stands, the way the rules are written and are being enforced, only the individual being screened can request a vulnerable sector search, which would reveal a pardoned sex offence. Honourable senators, that is unacceptable.

[Senator Keon]

There is a relatively simple solution to this problem. If the existing rules, either in legislation or regulation, do not allow organizations to screen for sexual offenders who have received pardons, then we must change the rules. Our primary focus must be on keeping the most vulnerable members of our society out of harm's way. We have the ability to fix this problem, and it is our responsibility to do so.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of delegates from Buy-a-Net, Spread the Net of the Canadian Red Cross, and the performance group, The Not So Amateur Amateurs, and their director, Ms. Kristine Harvey.

They are guests of the Honourable Senator Jaffer.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[Translation]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

NATIONAL DEFENCE

CANADIAN FORCES PROVOST MARSHAL— 2008 ANNUAL REPORT TABLED

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Canadian Forces Provost Marshal Annual Report 2008.

MILITARY POLICE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION— 2009 ANNUAL REPORT TABLED

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 2009 Annual Report of the Military Police Complaints Commission.

CANADIAN FORCES GRIEVANCE BOARD— 2009 ANNUAL REPORT TABLED

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 2009 Annual Report of the Canadian Forces Grievance Board.