

in an international forum. The international francophone community is the richer for the membership of this community. In return, the new member has acquired solid allies in its daily struggle against assimilation and its efforts to affirm its existence and its identity. For the French-speaking community in the Americas, the addition of Nova Scotia to the AIPLF enhances the dialogue among French-speaking communities in Canada and increases the impact of the "Francophonie" in the Americas and throughout the world.

Our meetings in Halifax focused on three themes that had been previously agreed on. At these meetings, however, parliamentarians agreed that the Canadian language situation, now that the expected ratification of Meech Lake was only a few months away, required an exchange of views. As a result, one period was dedicated to this very topical issue which was discussed during a debate in which reason, emotion and sometimes passion were very much in evidence.

Parliamentarians took part in a general discussion of the activities and future prospects of the AIPLF's Americas Region. Francophone youth in the Americas was the subject of a worthwhile debate. It was recommended that young people be consulted more often and be involved in our discussions in order to provide for a dynamic future membership. The issues of bilingualism and the future of francophone communities in the Americas gave rise to some animated and enlightening debate.

The visit to Halifax and southwestern Nova Scotia helped many participants discover the Acadian community of that province. For several, it was a revelation. To be sure, the situation of that community is not an easy one, but the pride of those people and their firm desire to live in French is cause for rejoicing, especially since francophones have recently been granted various services in French and a department, headed by a francophone, now has a mandate to develop those services.

In short, honourable senators, the Canadian delegation to this Seventh Assembly of the Americas Region of the AIPLF came back very pleased with its stay in the Acadian part of Nova Scotia and much better informed. It considers these meetings to have been a great success and thanks the Nova Scotian authorities and the Acadian community for their warm and friendly welcome.

So I take great pleasure in tabling the detailed report in both official languages. Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I table these two reports. Thank you for your kind attention.

On motion of Senator Bolduc for Senator Asselin, debate adjourned.

● (1700)

[English]

## PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

### OFFICIAL VISIT OF SPEAKER OF THE SENATE

**Hon. Guy Charbonneau, Speaker of the Senate**, rose, pursuant to notice of Tuesday, December 13, 1989:

[Senator David]

That he will call the attention of the Senate to his official visit to the People's Republic of Bulgaria from June 13 to 15, 1989.

He said: Honourable senators, I have the pleasure to report on the visit undertaken by my wife and myself to the People's Republic of Bulgaria during the period June 13 to 15 of this year, in response to an invitation from the President of the National Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Stanko Todorov.

An invitation to visit had been extended two years ago by Mr. Todorov's predecessor in office, but circumstances had precluded a visit at that time. Mr. Todorov's invitation to visit at this time was therefore welcomed, as it would afford opportunities to initiate closer contacts with Bulgarian legislators and to discuss with them and with members of the government the relations between our two countries and the implementation of the programs of political and economic restructuring that that country is undertaking.

[Translation]

Bulgaria has been a member of the United Nations since 1955 and participates in some of its specialized agencies. It is also a member of the Warsaw Pact and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. In 1966, Canada and Bulgaria established diplomatic relations and although these relations have been limited for political and geographical reasons, our two countries consult each other regularly. Official visits have been few but honourable senators no doubt remember that a Canadian parliamentary delegation went to Sofia in September 1988 for the interparliamentary conference.

The visit included two days of meetings in the capital, Sofia, and a one-day bus trip to Plovdiv, where an internationally famous trade fair in which some Canadian companies participate is held.

[English]

Our hosts, President and Mrs. Todorov, welcomed us very warmly on our arrival on the afternoon of June 12, hosted a luncheon in our honour on June 13, and made themselves available to meet with us on other occasions. In addition, we were welcomed and accompanied during parts of the program by Mr. Petar Vutov, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Group of the National Assembly, and Mrs. Vutov, to both of whom we are grateful for enlarging our understanding of issues affecting Bulgaria's political, social and cultural life. We were assisted throughout the program by the Canadian Ambassador accredited to Bulgaria, Mr. Terence C. Bacon, the resident ambassador in Belgrade, and by members of his staff, Mr. Charles Larabie and Mr. Philip Hahn. We very much appreciated their advice and help.

A substantial program of high level meetings took place, all of which were marked by exchanges that were both frank and cordial, very much in the spirit of the new East-West détente and the movements towards economic and political liberalization which Canadians have been encouraged to note in the Soviet Union and parts of eastern Europe. There was ample opportunity to discuss and promote Canadian interests in