

THE SENATE

Tuesday, November 28, 1995

The Senate met at 2:00 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.

Prayers.

VISITORS IN GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I should like to draw your attention to the presence of a distinguished group in our gallery today. I refer to a parliamentary delegation from Romania.

[*Translation*]

I am pleased to present to you the leader of the group, Mr. Valeanu, a member of the Romanian parliament and the chairman of its foreign affairs commission, as well as vice-president of the Romania-Canada Parliamentary Friendship Group. Accompanying him are a number of members and senators from the Romanian parliament, as well as the Romanian chargé d'affaires in Canada.

[*English*]

We welcome you to our gallery and to our country.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

PAGES EXCHANGE PROGRAM WITH HOUSE OF COMMONS

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I should like to introduce to you two House of Commons pages who have been selected to participate in the exchange program with the Senate for the week of November 20 to 24.

[*Translation*]

Julie Bazinet of Sudbury, Ontario is studying at the Faculty of Commerce, University of Ottawa.

[*English*]

Jeremy LeBlanc is studying political science at the University of Ottawa and is originally from Eastern Passage, Nova Scotia.

We welcome both of you to the Senate.

SENATOR'S STATEMENT

UNITED NATIONS

PERMANENT SECRETARIAT ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
TO BE LOCATED IN MONTREAL

Hon. Peter Bosa: Honourable senators, a few days ago we were delighted to learn that the Permanent Secretariat of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity will be located in the city of Montreal. The Government of Canada had made an official offer to have Montreal selected, and the Conference of the Parties to the Convention voted in favour of Canada at a meeting in Jakarta earlier this month.

Four cities were proposed: Geneva, Madrid, Nairobi and Montreal. We faced stiff competition, but the Canadian bid, which was supported by three levels of government, was a strong one. Canada has a solid scientific, technological and industrial base, and a wealth of experience and expertise in this area of biological diversity.

The successful conclusion of this bid was the result of hard work in many quarters. The preparation of the proposal itself took cooperation and planning by officials in the federal, provincial and municipal governments. Then there was the big sales job undertaken by officials, diplomats and politicians.

One of the reasons I am raising this subject today is to speak about the role of the Inter-Parliamentary Union as a forum where we can promote Canadian interests. Earlier this fall, I informed honourable senators of a special session of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations which was held at the United Nations headquarters in New York at the end of August. This event was attended by 253 parliamentarians from 74 countries.

The timing of this IPU conference was especially propitious, for we used this occasion to speak to our colleagues from other countries about the advantages of locating the permanent secretariat in Montreal. The Deputy Leader of our delegation, Mr. Maurice Dumas, MP for Argenteuil-Papineau, and I divided the workload, with Mr. Dumas meeting the leaders of the francophone delegations while I spoke to the others. This special meeting, which brought us all together for three days, provided us with the opportunity to speak to other delegates and to advance the Canadian bid.

I can tell honourable senators from first-hand experience that the Canadian proposal was well received by other parliamentarians, and several asked for further details about our bid. I should like to pay tribute to the tremendous staff of our mission in New York who assisted us throughout this exercise.