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THE HONOURABLE LORNA MILNE

Inquiry—Debate Concluded

Speech by:

The Honourable Claudette Tardif

Monday, December 14, 2009

THE SENATE

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INQUIRY—DEBATE CONCLUDED

Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) rose pursuant to notice of December 9, 2009:

That she will call the attention of the Senate to the career of the Honourable Senator Milne in the Senate and her many contributions in service to Canadians.

She said: Honourable senators, unfortunately, time last week did not permit all of those who wished to pay tribute to Senator Milne to speak. Therefore, I am pleased to speak to this inquiry.

It is with much sadness that I give this tribute to my honourable colleague, Senator Milne, whose presence in this chamber, in committee and in meetings will be sorely missed. Senator Milne's integrity, tenacity and strength have been an inspiration to me and I have always appreciated her wise counsel and support in my role as Deputy Leader. Her continued support in the participation and preparation of Question Period has been much appreciated on this side, though perhaps less so on the other side of the chamber.

Many issues have been brought to the attention of our fellow senators through her contributions in Senate Question Period, issues that, in her mind, did not always receive the consideration she felt was required from a government mandated to lead and assist all Canadians — for example, issues pertaining to veterans, lost Canadians, physically and mentally challenged Canadians, the seal hunt, the environment and access to information.

One of Senator Milne's many attributes is the ability to take complex social and political issues and make them relevant to the Canadian public.

Senator Milne has routinely brought forward issues affecting Canadians inside the Senate Chamber for debate. For example, who can forget the countless instances where she stood in this chamber presenting petition after petition on behalf of Canadians regarding the issue of preserving access to the Canadian census.

In committee, Senator Milne was known for getting to the heart of complex issues that were studied and debated in the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, of which she was a member and chair for many years, as well as in the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources.

She was always a knowledgeable and dedicated advocate of those who were less fortunate in our society.

As a senator from southern Ontario, she always felt an obligation to the agricultural community of southwestern Ontario. Her work on getting hemp to be a legalized crop has been an ongoing process since her appointment in the 1990s. I hope some of our esteemed colleagues will take over this issue and continue her excellent work.

Lorna, I wish to convey my congratulations to you on your outstanding career. My very best wishes to you, your husband, Ross, and your family in this new chapter of your life.