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TRIBUTES

The Honourable Tommy Banks

Statement by:

The Honourable Vivienne Poy

Tuesday, December 13, 2011

THE SENATE

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THE HONOURABLE TOMMY BANKS

Hon. Vivienne Poy: Honourable senators, it is a great pleasure for me to pay tribute to the Honourable Tommy Banks, a man who has won the respect and affection of many throughout his long and varied career.

As we all know, Senator Banks is a Canadian icon, as has been mentioned repeatedly.

He had his own television show on CBC for many years, and he has had a long career as a noted jazzman, conductor and composer.

Senators appointed in recent years would not have known that here on the Hill we had the pleasure of hearing him play on the piano at the Senate fashion shows, which used to be held to raise funds for the United Way. Remember that?

Senator Banks was not a career politician. As we all know, this diversity of our members is what makes the Senate of Canada special. Many of us are here because we represent our communities and our regions, and Tommy Banks is devoted to his province of Alberta.

Because of that, he has often moved across party lines, as mentioned earlier, by using common sense to make decisions. For

that reason, I knew I could depend on him to co-sponsor my bill to amend the national anthem to include all Canadians. When I reintroduced it for the second time early in the new millennium, he checked the rhythm, and it was okay.

• (1500)

Senator Banks agreed with me that since the original *O Canada*, penned by Sir Robert Stanley Weir in 1908, was inclusive of both genders, and since women were equally important in nation building, there was absolutely no reason that the later version could not be amended in the 21st century to reflect its original intent.

That was Bill S-3, introduced in October 2002, which was approved unanimously by the Social Affairs Committee, but then Parliament prorogued.

I thank Senator Banks for his support.

The fact that Austria's national anthem has just been changed to include daughters, as Australia's was many years ago, reminded me of Senator Banks. We both know that the day will come when our national anthem will include all of us.

Thank you, Tommy, for your great contributions to the Senate of Canada over many years. I wish you great happiness in your retirement. May your music continue forever.