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(HANSARD)

Tuesday, June 29, 2021

The Honourable GEORGE J. FUREY,
Speaker

CONTENTS

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THE SENATE

Tuesday, June 29, 2021

The Senate met at 2 p.m., the Speaker in the chair.

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

CHIEF WAYNE CHRISTIAN

Hon. Mary Jane McCallum: Honourable senators, I recently had the privilege of hearing Chief Wayne Christian speak at a conference on Indigenous matters. He is chief of the Splatsin First Nation in B.C. and a tribal chief of the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council. These are excerpts from his speech:

> Those little ones . . . . They whispered 'They found us.' Those 3 words echoed around the world. . . . The discovery has opened up all that we know as Indigenous People of how this country has treated us. How their laws — the legislative genocide — is perpetrated against our People. . . . Our People were not treated as human. They were treated as pagan and savages based on the Doctrine of Discovery. [It was] decreed also that the land was empty – terra nullius. Consequently, what these little ones show is this is the result of Canada's policy: to kill the Indian in the child, and to kill the child.
>
> For those of you that are non-indigenous but are allies . . . it hit your heart because they are children. You have to remember that the survivors were children. They were like those little ones. They got out. They lived. And so remember that when you see a survivor; see them as that little child that was sent to this place by the law of this country. And how important it is that you hold them up. And don't place a lot of burden on them to educate you, because that's not their job – they have enough going on. Your job is to find out for yourself the true history of this country and to do something about it. . . . because that's what's going to make a difference.
>
> It is important when we honour [these children], we think forward: what next – what do we do as individuals, what do we do as families, what do we do as communities, what do we do as a nation?
>
> It is a time when we need to be one. There is only one earth. And truly there is only one human species. We may have different colour skin, we may have different cultures, but all of us are human. We are one in that way, so we need to come together as one. And change the narrative for Canada, and change the narrative around the world.
>
> The time of the lone wolf is over. We are the ones we have been waiting for.

Thank you.

INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

Hon. Kim Pate: Honourable senators, before we rise for the summer, I want to express appreciation and gratitude to the individuals who work to support us in our offices and the chamber, in committees and, in particular, since the onset of this pandemic, online.

To all of you who work in chamber operations and committees, information services, communications, translation, protective services, the Library of Parliament, property and services, the Black Rod's office and the page team, thank you to each and every one of you for all you are and all you do to support us and keep the Senate running, particularly during these challenging times.

I also want to thank the inspirational young Indigenous leaders from throughout Turtle Island who met with the Aboriginal Peoples Committee yesterday in a virtual round table marking National Indigenous History Month.

I started yesterday morning at an observance at 5 a.m. for the young people whom Senator McCallum just spoke about. I was honoured and humbled to meet Sarah Hanson, Crystal Martin-Lapenskie, Shaun McLeod, Sabrina Ricker and Brett Sparrow, who spoke to us about their experiences, their work in pursuit of justice and equality, and challenged us to work collaboratively to further their identified priorities for the Senate.

They included the ongoing legacies of residential schools, including ongoing assimilation through the foster care system and challenges of finding a community of support; the over-representation of Indigenous peoples both as victims of crime and as prisoners as a result of colonialism and discrimination, as well as the importance of drug decriminalization and record expungement as part of redressing long-standing injustices; the pandemic of racism and inadequate care within the health care system; and the need for adequate and accessible cultural, personal and funding support for Indigenous youth to pursue careers as health care providers; and the imperative of dismantling discriminatory systems that require people to leave their communities to receive basic care and ensure access to socio-economic equity, particularly for those in the North.

These inspirational youth reminded us that redressing Canada's history of colonialism requires decolonizing — not merely Indigenizing — systems and processes. They rightly demand equality and they deserve it now.

Honourable colleagues, let us do our part to realize the aspirations and expectations of these amazing Indigenous leaders. *Meegwetch*. Thank you.

LEGISLATIVE WORK OF THE SENATE

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

Hon. Mary Coyle: Honourable senators, Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote:

> Cultivate the habit of being grateful for every good thing that comes to you, and to give thanks continuously. And because all things have contributed to your advancement, you should include all things in your gratitude."

According to Albert Einstein:

> There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.

Honourable colleagues, when I look back over the past intense and challenging year of living and working with all of you through this wildly unpredictable time of the global COVID-19 pandemic, I marvel at the miracle of what has been accomplished and where we find ourselves today. If you will allow me, I would like to take this opportunity to express gratitude for all who have contributed to the remarkable progress our Senate Chamber and we as individuals have been able to achieve during this turbulent pandemic chapter.

I would like to start by sincerely thanking my staff team, Lili-Anne Delage Larson, Jess Mace and Sarah Marquis, for your steadfast dedication and your many positive contributions to our work on behalf of Canadians. I would also like to thank and honour the staff of all senators, the staff of our Senate groups and caucuses, the staff of our Senate Administration, our Chamber Operations gurus, our Committees staff, the Library of Parliament team, our interpreters and translators, our technical wizards, our valued security and custodial staff, our pages, the Usher of the Black Rod and everyone who has professionally and generously risen to the many challenges of this past year and managed to bring remarkable success to our collective Senate efforts.

• (1410)

Colleagues, since we were all thrown into the maelstrom of this pandemic last March, we have managed to pass 37 bills. Hopefully, by the end of the night, we may have added a further two. This, dear Senate colleagues, is a credit to your unwavering commitment and exemplary work. Our Speaker, Senator Furey, and our Speaker pro tempore, Senator Ringuette, deserve gold stars for managing to calmly shepherd us successfully through the thick and thin of hybrid Senate realities.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the leadership, heroism and brilliance of those protecting and caring for our health and the health of all Canadians.

As I conclude this homage, I leave you with the words of Marcel Proust:

> Let us be grateful to the people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom.

Colleagues, I wish all of you a wonderful summer blossoming with those you love, in those places you love. Thank you. *Wela'lioq*

QUESTION PERIOD

PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY

NATIONAL MICROBIOLOGY LABORATORY

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Senator Gold, I have a final question for the session. I'm sure, all summer long, you will miss the questions that we have been asking you.

My question today, leader, is about an article in the *National Post* where they recently reported that one of the scientists fired from the National Microbiology Laboratory is named on two separate patents filed in Beijing in collaboration with a Chinese government scientist.

The Public Servants Inventions Act states that public servants cannot file for a patent outside of Canada without receiving written consent from the appropriate minister.

When the Prime Minister was asked about this in the other place last Wednesday, he said:

> . . . I also saw that troubling news this morning, so I asked the minister to follow up and figure out exactly what happened.

I don't know why he wouldn't have just asked the minister, "Why did you approve this?"

Leader, it has been almost a week since the Prime Minister made this comment. Was the Trudeau government aware of these patents? Yes or no?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. I don't know. The Prime Minister answered as he did, and I have no further information, senator. I regret that I don't know the answer to your question.

Senator Plett: This happened a week ago. Today, you have no idea. You would have thought that maybe you would know this question might be coming to you and you would have had an answer for us by now.

An Hon. Senator: That's not how it works.

Senator Plett: I'm sorry that you expect us to tell you ahead of time what we're going to ask you, so you can prepare your answers.

Leader, in response to the questions about the security breach at the Winnipeg lab, you have often referred to the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians. That committee, leader, as you well know, is not a committee of Parliament. That committee reports to the Prime Minister, and it

cannot publish its findings without direct authorization of the Prime Minister. In this instance, it is being deliberately used by the Trudeau government to avoid accountability.

Again, leader, I have a question that, if you didn't, you should have anticipated. Your government has done everything in its power to avoid revealing what happened at the last lab, including the most recent news about the patents. Which minister gave their consent for this collaboration as required by law, leader, when did this occur and why was this approved?

Senator Gold: I can only repeat — and I know that you're disappointed I didn't anticipate the question, but I did not — that I don't have the answer.

With regard to your other comments, I would simply say that the Government of Canada is proud of the work that the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians is doing, and it is a historic and innovative initiative to ensure that parliamentarians who have been properly cleared for security have access to information that they otherwise would not have. It's serving Canada well.

NATURAL RESOURCES

CARBON TAX

Hon. Larry W. Smith: Honourable senators, I have a question for Senator Gold.

In February 2020, during Question Period, I raised concerns that Canada may not meet its Paris climate targets under a federal carbon levy of $50 per tonne of greenhouse gases. You assured the chamber that the government was committed to its carbon pricing plan of ". . . a maximum of $50 per tonne from the year 2022 onwards."

However, this month, in its first comprehensive assessment of Canada's carbon pricing systems since their implementation, Environment and Climate Change Canada suggested:

> . . . that the current level of carbon pricing contained in these projections is insufficient to reduce emissions in line with Canada's Paris Agreement commitment . . . .

Senator Gold, how long did the government know that the $50 price target was insufficient? Why did they maintain that it would not increase above $50 beyond 2022?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Senator Smith, thank you for your question.

The government has always been clear that putting a price on carbon, a price on pollution, is one, but only one, of the many tools that Canada and any sensible country would need to put in place in order to bring ourselves to net zero.

The government remains committed to achieving net zero by 2050 and to that end has introduced — and we are in the process of debating — a historic legislation in Bill C-12 that will provide the framework, the accountability and the measures to ensure that we get on track and stay on track to achieve, if not to exceed, those targets.

Senator Smith: Senator Gold, in 2019, at the summit of carbon pricing, former environment minister Catherine McKenna, when speaking on Canada's climate plan, said:

> Ours is using carbon pricing because it's the most efficient way to reduce emissions, but also to make life affordable for folks. . . .

The government itself is now saying we will not meet our targets unless the carbon tax increases, making life less affordable for Canadians.

Senator Gold, at what cost will the government meet its Paris climate targets? Have there been calculations — obviously, there must have been — and will it be higher than the $170 per tonne that the Prime Minister announced in December? I think it's important that we have some degree of clarity of thought so that, as citizens, we can understand what we'll be facing.

Senator Gold: Let me make two comments, and thank you for your question.

• (1420)

First of all, as this chamber well knows, the carbon pricing regime that is in place has, as one of its central features, the return to citizens' pocketbooks amounts of money equal to or even greater perhaps, in some cases, than the carbon tax they're paying.

The second point, and it disappoints me to have to say this yet again, is that carbon pricing is but one of many tools that any sensible environmental program will put in place. The fixation amongst some on carbon pricing alone, as if that is the only element in this government's environmental strategy, is misleading to Canadians and does not do justice to the work that we have to do collectively to transition to a more sustainable not only economy and society, but indeed, planet.

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

CANADA DISABILITY BENEFIT

Hon. Chantal Petitclerc: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate.

Senator Gold, allow me to thank you and your team for the work you do in this chamber.

Senator Plett and Senator Martin recently reminded us that people with disabilities, despite their serious needs and the barriers they face, are still not always the first to receive help from the Government of Canada. We've seen this during the pandemic.

I'd like to continue in the same vein and draw your attention to a recent Angus Reid survey of Canadians on the promise of a new Canadian disability benefit that would better serve people with disabilities.

We know that Budget 2021 provides for at least three years of consultations before this new benefit can be implemented. In my opinion, that's too long.

As a matter of fact, Jewelles Smith, of the Council of Canadians with Disabilities, had this to say:

> . . . our community often feels that we are in an endless consultation loop . . . . We always seem to be a community in waiting.

She is not alone. Indeed, 74% of respondents to the Angus Reid survey also find the timeline to be too slow.

Senator Gold, we also know that, in addition to the three years of consultations, even more time will be needed to implement the benefit. Why will the consultations last three years? Why will they take so long? Couldn't the consultation period be shortened?

[*English*]

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Before I answer, there is a very high and unacceptable feedback or pitch in the chamber. Whether it's an alarm or something, I would ask that someone look into this.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Gold, thank you very much for bringing that to our attention. I am now hearing it myself. We'll pause for a moment until we figure out what it is.

(The sitting of the Senate was suspended.)

(The sitting of the Senate was resumed.)

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I'm now being told that the problem has been resolved, so the sitting is resumed.

Senator Gold, if you wish to continue with the answer to Senator Petitclerc's question.

[*Translation*]

Senator Gold: Thank you, senator, for your question and for the notice you gave me.

First, I'd like to point out that the government remains committed to the principle behind the Nothing Without Us strategy, and that's why it initiated a consultation process to develop the first disability inclusion plan.

I certainly understand the frustration and opinion expressed in the letter and reflected in the survey that you mentioned.

That being said, the consultations are not just important; they are essential in order to respect the rights and interests of people with disabilities and the jurisdictions of the provinces and territories, who have a key role to play in this regard. The action plan is one of the commitments that the government made in the Speech from the Throne and it will include the following elements: a robust employment strategy, a better process to determine eligibility for government disability programs and benefits, and a new disability benefit modelled after the Guaranteed Income Supplement.

I was told that it will take time to develop the action plan, including the disability benefit that I mentioned, because, as I also mentioned, the government promised to work with the provinces and territories, as well as the community of persons with disabilities, to ensure that this benefit is designed around their actual needs.

Senator Petitclerc: Senator Gold, I would urge you to stress the importance of this because, as you and I both saw from the survey results, half the respondents with a disability doubt this bill will come to anything. Will you convey that message to the government to make sure it knows that the community of people living with a disability doubt the government will follow through on its strategy?

Senator Gold: Absolutely. I will pass on those concerns, and I appreciate both your dedication to this cause and your kind words about my team. Thank you.

[*English*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

CANADA-CHINA RELATIONS

Hon. David Richards: Honourable senators, my question is for the Government Representative in the Senate, Senator Gold.

Senator, it has been over 900 days in a gulag for two men while we, at times, use their names to support our points of view on how to handle China. They must feel very gratified that we do this.

I will ask again: Do we have any information on the two Michaels' mental and physical shape and their access to medical or any other treatment as they sit inside a prison while their counterpart in Canada waves at the crowd, choreographed and smiling?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question and for raising the plight of our citizens.

I can only tell this chamber that all efforts continue to be made. We're working closely with our allies directly and as best we can to get information about their condition and, more importantly, to secure their release.

Senator Richards: Senator Gold, you know that we've been through a crisis here in Canada and we've been disparaged quite a bit in the last few years, but Canada is the only country that the two Michaels have. They do not have another country, allied or not.

Will there be any updates during the summer about what is going on once the Senate rises? Parliament has already adjourned. Or will they be forgotten, as they seem to be?

Senator Gold: Well, colleague, they are not forgotten and their cause is not forgotten. Although the House of Commons has risen and we may soon rise as well, please rest assured that all efforts continue to be made to secure their release and that news of any progress will no doubt be communicated, though not in this chamber, to Canadians. Let's hope that there is good news as soon as possible.

• (1430)

CANADIAN HERITAGE

CANADA DAY 2021

Hon. Wanda Elaine Thomas Bernard: Honourable senators, my question is for the Government Representative in the Senate.

Senator Gold, in the last few weeks we have witnessed the increasing number of unmarked graves of Indigenous children found at sites of former residential schools in Canada. Those confirmed deaths are further proof of the genocide committed by the Canadian government and the Catholic Church and uncovered by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Indigenous peoples are grieving in the wake of those horrific discoveries. We grieve with them.

On National Indigenous Peoples Day last week, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said they would ". . . continue to work to do better so Indigenous peoples across this country feel safe and respected . . . ." It is contradictory to go ahead with Canada Day celebrations during this time of immense grief. Many municipalities, including the Halifax Regional Municipality, have recognized that this is not a time for celebration and have cancelled this year's celebrations to honour those children, their families and their communities.

Senator Gold, will the government show leadership and create space for Indigenous healing and reconciliation by pausing the rollout of Canada Day celebrations?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question, senator.

Acknowledging the harm that has been perpetrated against Indigenous peoples is an essential first step on the path toward reconciliation. In that regard, as the Prime Minister has said, the government invites everyone to take time on Canada Day to learn about the knowledge, struggles and perspectives of Canada's many different communities to both reflect and honour the reality that our history and identity were shaped by First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

The government is, of course, aware of calls to scale back or pause Canada Day celebrations, as the honourable senator suggests, but for the time being there will be some Canada Day activities. They'll be hosted virtually so that those who want to participate can do so safely from their homes.

But, as the Prime Minister has said, Canadians should also respect those who choose not to celebrate this year.

I also note, colleagues, that, thanks to the recent passage of Bill C-5, starting this year every September 30 will be the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to honour survivors, their families and communities, and to ensure that public commemoration of the legacy and history of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process.

I will conclude by saying that Canada is a vast, diverse country. We are a marvellous country, but we are a work-in-progress.

On behalf of the Government of Canada, I encourage all of us to use the time to reflect on all that we need to learn and come to grips with in terms of our history. Canada is a country with a past that we must confront, but it has a future that we must build together.

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu: My question is for Senator Gold.

As you know, Senator Gold, I have raised the subject of the catastrophic management of the military sexual misconduct file by the Minister of National Defence, Harjit Sajjan, and the Prime Minister eight times since March 16. Weeks and months have gone by, and you still haven't given me a clear answer about concrete measures the Trudeau government plans to implement, other than hiring yet another judge to produce yet another report that may not even be tabled for another two years.

I would like to read two excerpts from an article in this morning's *National Post* that speak volumes about this scandal:

[*English*]

> The concept of ministerial responsibility has been absent.

[*Translation*]

The National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces Ombudsman said that.

Here's another excerpt from the article that I find even more troubling, and I quote:

[*English*]

> That was a remarkably strong and clear message, aimed right at Sajjan. Lick —

— the military ombudsman —

> — who said the misconduct scandal is turning into a tragedy for members of the armed forces, has directly told the public that Sajjan is an obstacle to doing better.

[*Translation*]

In light of all the questions I've been asking you for the past two or three months, all the public revelations of events that jeopardize the safety of the 16,000 women in the Armed Forces, a report that was never implemented, another report that will be only partially implemented and a Canadian Victims Bill of Rights that you have not implemented, should the Minister of National Defence not step down in order to protect these women and ensure their safety once and for all?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. There are many issues, challenges and problems within the armed forces; the situation facing victims is deplorable and serious.

I can only repeat what I have already said several times. The government has taken concrete action — including the work I mentioned the last time you asked about this — to implement a process to create regulations for the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights.

Hiring Lieutenant-General Carignan, accepting the recommendations of the report by Justice Morris Fish and allocating funding in Budget 2021 are all important measures. The government will continue to work to make the structural and cultural changes needed within the Canadian Armed Forces to better protect the women and men who serve us.

Senator Boisvenu: Senator Gold, the Minister of National Defence is not only responsible for defending the country, he must also defend the 16,000 women working in the Armed Forces and, in particular, defend the rights of victims in the Armed Forces.

You gave an evasive answer once again. Those are measures that you may perhaps implement over time. However, my question was very concrete: What are you going to do in the coming months to ensure that victims of sexual assault in the Armed Forces can count on an independent complaints process?

More to the point, if your daughter, wife or cousin were in the Armed Forces and became a victim, would you accept this government's passive attitude towards this file?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question. This government is not being passive. Many things are happening, including the implementation of the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights and the recommendations I mentioned. I fully understand the frustration and disappointment of the women who are victims of this unhealthy culture, but cultural and structural changes take time.

I do understand your question, but I can't accept the premise that the government is doing nothing.

The government is doing what it has to do, and that is going to take time. Like all senators in this chamber, I hope its efforts will bear fruit.

[*English*]

NATURAL RESOURCES

SUPPORT FOR ENERGY SECTOR

Hon. Leo Housakos: Honourable senators, my question is for the government leader in the Senate.

Yesterday, my colleague Senator Martin reminded you of another one of the government's broken and failed promises from the 2019 election: the one to support the energy sector and energy workers with the introduction of a just transition act. Senator Gold, you blamed your government's failure to deliver on that promise on the fact that we're in a minority Parliament, which I find bizarre. The truth is, in this minority Parliament, your government has put out debts, deficits and spending in record amounts, and we have passed them in the House and the Senate as if we were in a Formula 1 race, with no impediment to the government when it comes to dealing with the COVID crisis.

• (1440)

Senator Gold, why won't you admit that your government just doesn't care about the energy sector? It's clear. Just admit that the promises were nothing more than electoral posturing, similar to what you're doing now by blaming the minority Parliament for your shortcomings.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Neither personally nor as representative of the government will I admit to things that are not true. The government cares about the energy sector; our prosperity has depended upon, and will continue to depend upon, a healthy energy sector.

On the second point, with regard to my answer to our honourable colleague, I was referring to a specific piece of legislation. I was not blaming a minority government nor hiding behind it. I was simply stating what I thought would be an obvious point. In the middle of a pandemic and on top of the changing priorities that necessarily had to be adopted — as you correctly point out, and the government is grateful for the support of parties in the other place and for all groups and senators in this place — I was simply pointing out that certain legislative initiatives may have had to be delayed or put on the back burner, including help for the energy sector and those who work in it, because other priorities had to take precedence.

Senator Housakos: Government leader, I didn't expect you to admit it because this government doesn't take accountability for very much, as we know.

Senator Gold, as mentioned, this Parliament hasn't stopped you from getting money out the door at super speeds. It also didn't stop you from introducing bills in the other place at the last minute, if for no other reason than to get them in the window for nice pre-election posturing. For example, Bill C-36, tabled on the final sitting day of the House of Commons, and the disability benefit the day before. But the just transition act has been dropped altogether. Will you just admit that your government

doesn't care about the energy sector and that it thinks it doesn't need votes from Western Canada, and that's it and that's all when it comes to your government's priorities?

Senator Gold: The answer is no. I should probably stop there, so I will.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

NATIONAL REOPENING PLAN

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question is also for the government leader in the Senate. Yesterday, a survey released by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business confirmed that consumers across our country have been spending less at their local businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic and more online and at big-box stores. Despite restrictions lifting across many provinces, small businesses are still having a tough time making ends meet. While almost three quarters of small businesses in Canada have reopened, only half of them are fully staffed and just 39% are making normal sales.

Small businesses need the Government of Canada to bring forward a clear plan to safely reopen our economy in areas of its own federal jurisdiction, especially the border. Senator Gold, why is the Trudeau government refusing to provide this plan to Canadians?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. I'm going to try to unpack the elements of it, colleague. Small businesses are not only important to our economy, but they're important to our day-to-day lives as citizens, members of communities and neighbourhoods. It is clear that they have struggled and suffered because of lockdowns. Dare I remind us that these are provincially and municipally enforced lockdowns that have made it impossible for Canadians to shop where they used to shop and have driven sales online? The issue of small businesses and their reopening is a matter that is being addressed in communities. Here in Ontario, I gather one can finally get a haircut as of, I think, tomorrow. In other provinces, different rules apply.

It's not clear to me, honourable colleague, how your question about borders relates to the rest of your question. I can only repeat that, in terms of borders, the government continues to work with its counterparts in the United States to make sure that Canadians remain safe and secure as we hope to transition out of this wave while fighting off the other variants.

DELAYED ANSWER TO ORAL QUESTION

(*For text of Delayed Answer, see Appendix*.)

[*Translation*]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 4-13(3), I would like to inform the Senate that as we proceed with Government Business, the Senate will address the items in the following order: third reading of Bill C-12, followed by second reading of Bill C-10, followed by second reading of Bill S-5, followed by third reading of Bill C-30, followed by all remaining items in the order that they appear on the Order Paper.

[*English*]

CANADIAN NET-ZERO EMISSIONS ACCOUNTABILITY BILL

THIRD READING

Hon. Rosa Galvez moved third reading of Bill C-12, An Act respecting transparency and accountability in Canada's efforts to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2050.

She said: Honourable senators, I rise to speak at third reading as the sponsor in the Senate of Bill C-12, An Act respecting transparency and accountability in Canada's efforts to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2050.

In November 2020, the government tabled this bill, which will enshrine in legislation Canada's commitment to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and provide a comprehensive framework of accountability and transparency to ensure governments undertake the planning, take action and conduct the monitoring needed to achieve that goal. In May 2021, Bill C-12 was referred to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development in the other place for consideration and study.

The bill, with 29 sections, has been strengthened by over 30 amendments proposed by several parties in the other place. In terms of amendment, I would like to first highlight the most important one, which offers an opportunity for potential improvement to the legislation. There will be a comprehensive review of the provisions and operation of the act five years after it comes into force to be undertaken by the relevant committee of the Senate, the House of Commons or both houses of Parliament. This ensures that we parliamentarians can examine the effectiveness of the act with the benefit of five years' experience and make recommendations for improvements at that point.

The objective of Bill C-12 is for Canada to achieve net zero by 2050. That is that all anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions will be balanced by anthropogenic removals. The updated version of Bill C-12 clarifies that nothing in the act precludes Canada attaining net-zero emissions before 2050. In other words, net zero is a race, not something that we should wait until 2050

to hit. If we can reach the goal earlier it would be great, and nothing in the law prevents that kind of ambition. Climate science is clear that early action is crucial to avoid catastrophic consequences. Many stakeholders and Canadians voiced their concern that the original version of the bill did not go far enough to ensure accountability prior to 2030. I'm pleased that the purpose section of the bill was amended to add emphasis on "immediate and ambitious action."

An interim objective for 2026 was added, and progress reports are required in 2023 and 2025 in addition to the 2027 progress report. Furthermore, the 2025 progress report must contain an assessment of the 2030 target and must include changes being made to course correct, if needed, to achieve the target. Moreover, the bill now requires that the first report of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development be submitted by the end of 2024. These changes provide for — and ensure — almost yearly meaningful accountability "checkpoints" over the next decade, which will also inform our parliamentary review in five years.

• (1450)

The other place also worked on improving the bill's provisions in relation to targets.

First, the bill now codifies the 2030 greenhouse gas emissions target by incorporating Canada's Nationally Determined Contribution — its NDC — for that year under the Paris Agreement. This amendment was preceded by Canada's commitment made at the Leaders Summit on Climate in April 2021 to enhance its emissions reduction target under the Paris Agreement to 40% to 45% below 2005 levels. With Bill C-12, the 2030 and 2050 targets will now be clearly enshrined in legislation.

In addition, clarifications were made to ensure that each greenhouse gas emissions target set under the act must be a progression from the previous one, preventing backsliding on Canada's greenhouse gas emissions targets.

The bill now provides that all targets that remain between 2030 and 2050 must be at least 10 years before the beginning of its corresponding milestone year. Instead of 5 years in the original bill, we will now have targets 10 years in advance. This will ensure that the government starts planning for future targets sufficiently ahead of time, providing a great opportunity for long-term planning.

Going a step further, the bill now requires the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to publish a high-level description of the key emissions reduction measures to achieve that target and the latest projections of greenhouse gas emissions within a year of setting targets for 2035, 2040 and 2045.

If we take as an example the 2035 target, it will need to be set by the minister on December 1, 2024, at the latest, and the high-level description of key measures and projections will be made public by December 1, 2025. The detailed emissions reduction plan in relation to the 2035 target must be established at least five years prior to the deadline, meaning no later than December 2029.

Another set of amendments reinforces the involvement of Indigenous peoples. The preamble now states the Government of Canada's commitment to considering Indigenous knowledge when carrying out the purposes of this act. Related amendments require the minister to consider Indigenous knowledge when setting greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets and as an expertise requirement of the advisory body as a whole. Emissions reduction plans must also consider the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The bill now includes more detail on the required content of these plans. It is now mandatory to include in each plan a description of how Canada's international commitments with respect to climate change are considered, projections of the annual greenhouse gas emissions reductions resulting from the plan's combined measures and strategies, and a summary of cooperative measures or agreements with provinces and other governments in Canada.

We heard criticisms about this bill not setting legally binding targets. However, I would like to bring to your attention section 9(1), which states that "The Minister must establish a greenhouse gas emissions reduction plan for achieving the target . . ." — so there is an obligation to plan for success.

Similarly, progress reports must include Canada's most recent published greenhouse gas emissions projections for the next milestone, as wells as details on any additional measures that could be taken to increase the probability of achieving the target if the projections indicate that a target will not be met.

Similar content is also required in assessment reports.

The amended bill also took into consideration concerns with respect to the advisory body. The act now specifies that the Net-Zero Advisory Body provides independent advice on achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 and on targets and plans.

With respect to the membership of the advisory body, the amended bill contains a provision requiring the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to consider the need for the advisory body as a whole to have expertise in or knowledge of, among other subjects, the following: climate change science; Indigenous knowledge; physical and social sciences; climate change policy at the national, sub-national and international levels; energy supply and demand; and relevant technologies.

These explicit requirements of independence and expertise bring Canada into the international "best practices club" in that regard. I note that our own committee pre-study report included an observation on the administrative independence of the advisory body, including control over its own budget and secretariat, which I hope will be considered by the government. With regard to avoiding conflicts of interest, the Conflict of Interest Act of 2006, which applies to all public office holders, will also apply to members of the advisory body.

In line with the bill's objectives of transparency and accountability, Bill C-12 requires the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to publish the advisory body report 30 days after receiving it and to respond publicly within 120 days. Moreover, the bill requires that the minister's response to the Net-Zero Advisory Body address any difference between the target he or she sets and the target recommended by the Net-Zero Advisory Body.

Finally, Bill C-12 in some ways is stronger than the U.K. Climate Change Act held as the gold standard. It is better in terms of the level of detail required in plans and reports and their timing. Our new course-correction mechanism under sections 14 to 16 is much stronger, and so is the obligation of the Minister of Finance to report on financial risks of climate change but also on economic opportunities. The fact that targets can only get stronger is also not present in the U.K. law.

The Senate's Standing Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources began its pre-study on Monday, June 7, and met each day that week. The committee heard from 35 witnesses, representing 22 groups and 5 individuals, in 11.5 hours of hearings. Since the other place did not hear from any Indigenous witnesses in their study of the bill, it was a priority for our study to hear from those groups who are disproportionately impacted by climate change. We heard from four individual First Nations and Indigenous Climate Action.

There was consensus among witnesses that Bill C-12 is an important piece of legislation and that a climate accountability framework is desperately needed.

[*Translation*]

As an environmentalist, I would have preferred a more ambitious bill, but sadly, we can't waste any more time. Half a loaf is better than none.

I strongly believe that this bill is our best chance at taking swift action to address the climate emergency and protect the interests of future generations. Parliament must set up a legal framework that will ensure transparency from future governments and hold them accountable for how they combat climate change and its negative impact.

On June 17, 2019, an overwhelming majority of members in the House of Commons adopted a motion that states, and I quote:

> . . . Canada is in a national climate emergency which requires, as a response, that Canada commit to meeting its national emissions target under the Paris Agreement and to making deeper reductions in line with the Agreement's objective of holding global warming below two degrees Celsius and pursuing efforts to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius;

Canada's climate situation has not improved since then. Rather, it has gotten worse. Bill C-12 is the logical next step following that recognition that we are in a climate emergency.

I want to thank all of the senators who dedicated their time and energy to studying this bill. I particularly want to thank the members of the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources, who met for several days in a row to ensure that we had all of the information we needed to do our job as parliamentarians.

• (1500)

I hope that you'll all join me in voting in favour of this improved version of Bill C-12, which seeks to finally address the causes of climate change in Canada so that everyone, Canadians and people around the world, including future generations, can live a prosperous life on this earth.

Thank you very much. *Meegwetch*.

Hon. Claude Carignan: Esteemed colleagues, I rise today at third reading of Bill C-12, the short title of which is the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act.

In theory, Bill C-12 is meant to be a tool to help Canada achieve net-zero emissions in 2050. The bill's legislative summary states, and I quote:

> "Net zero" means a balance between emissions that are produced and those that are taken out of the atmosphere. It is not the same as "gross zero," which means reducing emissions from all sources to zero.

The purpose of Bill C-12 is to provide the dates on which the government must set greenhouse gas reduction targets and produce reports explaining the steps it has taken to meet those targets. Simply put, Bill C-12 is a schedule of the reports that must be produced between now and 2050.

Bill C-12 also creates the Net-Zero Advisory Body, which is responsible for providing the minister with advice with respect to the targets that must be met and the measures the government is taking in order to achieve them. This advisory body must produce annual reports, and the minister must publicly respond to the advice contained in those reports.

In his November 25, 2020, speech, the Minister of the Environment said that Bill C-12 will allow Canada to meet and exceed its 2030 reduction targets under the Paris climate agreement. However, that target will be extremely difficult to achieve according to the following Government of Canada numbers in the legislative summary:

> . . . Canada has committed to reducing its emissions to 40%–45% below 2005 levels by 2030. . . .
>
> . . . Canada's emissions will be 3%–5% below 2005 levels in 2020.

These numbers show that, over the past 15 years, Canada has reduced its emissions by just 3% to 5%, which means it will have to reduce its emissions by another 37% to 40% over the next nine years to meet its 2030 target. It has taken us 15 years just to climb the first step of a long stairway, and we have only nine more years to get to the top.

I would add that some of the emissions reductions observed in 2020 are temporary because they are due to lockdown measures to fight the pandemic, which slowed some economic activity. Here is what Corinne Le Quéré, Professor of Climate Change Science at the University of East Anglia, said in her testimony on June 10, 2021:

> In 2020, the decrease in emissions due to COVID-19 confinement measures is temporary because nothing has changed: we still have the same infrastructure; we just use it less. Emissions are going back up around the world and the situation is extremely serious.

I see Bill C-12 as a very unambitious plan, because it lacks concrete measures and imposes no accountability on the government if it misses its targets. The bill merely proposes a plan to make a plan. It is not ambitious enough or strategic enough to reach our Paris targets for 2030 or our goal to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

The government is asking us to quickly pass a bill that makes a false promise to Canadians, especially young Canadians who will suffer the worst effects of climate change. This bill will only increase cynicism by once again allowing the federal government to promise reduction targets without any robust measures to meet them and by failing to impose any consequences if it does not meet the promised targets.

As the Senate committee explained in a report following its pre-study of the bill:

> Canada has never had a problem setting greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets; rather, the problem has always been achieving those reductions. To date, no Canadian government has been held politically accountable for these failures.

I don't think that Bill C-12 will be an exception to that disappointing and terrible trend. From what I can see, this bill doesn't give any indication of how Canada will have to meet the short-, medium- and long-term goals to achieve net-zero. I want to echo what Senator Paula Simons told the Minister of the Environment on June 9, 2021.

> It is a plan to have a plan, and the very name of the act incorporates words like "transparency" and "accountability," but I'm not seeing an actual accountability mechanism.

This bill is quite obviously a ploy to win votes, and I'm disappointed to see the government playing with our country's climate future in this way.

To convince you, here's a telling example. The initial version of Bill C-12 did absolutely nothing to impose an accountability mechanism on the government for 2021 to 2030. Instead, the Liberal government voluntarily gave itself a 2030 deadline so that, during its next election campaign, it could promise to set high reduction targets that would impress the public — with smoke and mirrors — but would be very hard to meet. Therefore, if the government were re-elected, it would not have to explain why the targets weren't met.

The amendments made by the House of Commons committee did improve the situation somewhat by requiring the minister to prepare a plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions with an interim objective for 2026 and to prepare a progress report by the end of 2023, followed by another by the end of 2025 and a final one by the end of 2027.

However, these amendments are woefully inadequate because they do not address the bill's biggest problem, which is the government's lack of accountability if it misses the reduction targets. On that point, I will quote the questions Senator Simons asked John Moffet, Assistant Deputy Minister at Environment and Climate Change Canada, on June 7, 2021:

> I want to return to the issues raised by my colleagues, Senator Black, Senator Miville-Dechêne and Senator Massicotte. We are told there will be three interim reports between now and 2030. There will be many, many other reports of various descriptions, but where is the moral hazard for failing to meet these targets? You told Senator Miville-Dechêne that there is no right of civil action to hold the government accountable. The government is accountable for producing the reports, but is there any moral hazard beyond public shaming if this doesn't actually come to pass?

In reply to Senator Simons' questions, Mr. Moffet essentially states that there would be two consequences if the government fails to meet the targets. In my opinion, they are inadequate given the gravity of the situation for future generations if we fail to meet the targets, as they will have to suffer the worst effects of climate change.

According to the Assistant Deputy Minister, the first consequence is that the government would be subject to judicial review. This recourse already exists, as Senator Massicotte pointed out. He told Mr. Moffet, "That same recourse has been applicable for the last 30 years and hasn't achieved very much, but let's hope it changes."

If the government doesn't meet its greenhouse gas reduction targets, the second consequence is an increased risk of losing the election, but that provides little consolation to the younger generations, particularly those who aren't old enough to vote yet.

I'm not saying that the amendments proposed by the House of Commons committee didn't do anything to improve the bill. However, I don't think they're sufficient. In other words, I don't think that the bill goes far enough because, in its current form, it won't enable us to meet or exceed the proposed Paris targets or to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

That being said, I think the amendment that the committee in the other place made to section 7 is worthwhile. It requires that each greenhouse gas emissions target represent a progression beyond the previous one. That is an essential obligation if we want to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. If we want to make it to the top of the stairs, we can't turn around halfway up.

I'm disappointed, however, that despite these amendments, the bill doesn't do enough to hold the government to account if it fails to meet its targets and the bill doesn't contain any practical measures. A mere legislative promise that the government will come up with a greenhouse gas emissions reduction plan is not

enough to convince Canadians and other countries that Canada will achieve its targets. Bill C-12 is nothing more than a table of contents indicating that there will be chapters; it doesn't say what those chapters will be.

• (1510)

For example, nothing in the bill obliges the minister to take the necessary measures to achieve the targets, even though that is a requirement in the Paris Agreement. Here's what Christopher Campbell-Duruflé of the Quebec Environmental Law Centre told the committee on June 11, 2021:

> . . . this is a very procedural framework where we lay down plans to meet targets, but we have no legal obligation to proceed with those plans at this time, whereas article 4(2) of the Paris agreement includes a requirement to take action to meet the targets.

That said, I support the addition of paragraph 8(d) and subclause 9(5) to the bill by the House of Commons committee. Those two additions, read with clause 13, which was in the original version of the bill, reinforce the federal government's obligation to take the provinces' views into account. Under clause 13, when the federal government is setting a greenhouse gas emissions target or establishing an emissions reduction plan, it must provide the governments of the provinces, as well as Indigenous peoples, with the opportunity to make submissions. Under paragraph 8(d) and subclause 9(5), the bill now requires the minister to take their submissions into account.

It was a good idea to add these two new clauses to the bill, but I believe that the bill could do much more to ensure that the federal government collaborates with the provinces to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

The environment is an area of constitutional jurisdiction that is shared by the federal government and the provinces. The provinces have a say, and they must be listened to. The Senate committee that did the pre-study on Bill C-12 shares this point of view. I remind honourable senators that this committee is made up of 12 experienced members from the four groups of senators and that their report on Bill C-12 was unanimous, that is to say it contained no dissenting comments. The report reminds us that the provincial governments and Indigenous governance structures play a major role in efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Canada. I quote from the report:

> In Canada's federation, constitutional jurisdiction over some of the most important policy areas influencing GHG emissions rests with the provinces, territories and Indigenous governance structures, rather than with the federal government.

I am convinced that we will not be able to meet the Paris Agreement's 2030 reduction target or the 2050 net-zero target unless the federal government does more to harmonize its own targets and specific greenhouse gas reduction plans with those of provincial governments, the administrations of major cities and large industries. In that sense, I am in complete agreement with this passage from the Senate committee's report, and I quote:

> The committee notes how important it is for the federal government to work closely with the provinces, territories, municipalities, and industry, and in ongoing collaboration and consultation with Indigenous governance structures towards the net zero 2050 target.

Furthermore, the Senate committee rightly recognizes that transitioning the energy system and meeting the greenhouse gas reduction targets will pose more challenges for certain economic sectors. However, several major corporations have managed to do something the federal government was unable to include in Bill C-12: They have developed plans with concrete measures for reducing their emissions.

For example, yesterday, June 28, *La Presse* had a very interesting article by Hélène Baril about different industries' contributions to achieving net zero. The article states:

> In Canada, 66% of the companies listed on the S&P/TSX Venture Index disclose their GHG emissions, said Millani [a Montreal firm that specializes in ESG (environment, society , governance) integration], but just 23% of them are implementing the recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures on the need to incorporate governance and climate-related risk management measures into their operations.

It is urgent that we engage companies in different strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

It is ironic that even Suncor and other oil companies developed net-zero plans before the federal government did. I want to share another quote from Ms. Baril's article:

> Suncor, Canadian Natural Resources, Cenovus Energy, MEG Energy and Imperial, which produce 90% of Canadian oil, recently made a collective commitment to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, while still carrying out their operations.

The oil companies have said that Bill C-12 does not go far enough to support their efforts to reduce their own emissions. They are calling for the bill to be amended to ensure better harmonization of provincial and federal plans. According to them, inadequate harmonization will have significant negative consequences. Shannon Joseph, a representative from the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, said the following to the Senate committee on June 8, 2021:

> We know as an industry that is regulated both federally and provincially that different governments have their own climate ambitions and perspectives on opportunities for policy measures to achieve those ambitions. Often different orders of government develop policies targeting the same activities and the same emissions, and this creates policy inefficiencies that drive away the capital needed for Canadian industry to innovate and deliver environmental results.

> Bill C-12 must create the framework for us to do better. It should be amended to enhance integration and collaboration between federal, provincial and territorial governments in the way strategies are developed and evaluated.

I share the concerns of the Senate committee, which indicated in its report on Bill C-12 that the bill does not require the minister to include in the greenhouse gas reduction plans any information about the economic and social impacts of the climate action set out in therein. In fact, the committee report states that the minister is not required to consider essential economic indicators, such as the real gross domestic product, levels of investment and employment, or even energy affordability and security, in the reduction plans he or she has to prepare. That omission is another significant flaw in the bill because, according to the committee report, and I quote:

> . . . including economic and social considerations in the climate accountability regime does not diminish the clear policy signal sent by the milestone GHG emission reduction targets under Bill C-12. In fact, considering and measuring these indicators may improve Canada's ability to get to net zero faster and more equitably.

It's therefore counterproductive for the Liberal government not to make it clear in the bill that the minister must take community and industry social and economic factors into account in developing Canada's greenhouse gas emissions reduction plans. I would add that the U.K.'s and France's climate accountability laws take economic considerations into account, according to what Professor Le Quéré told the Senate committee on June 10, 2021. She added:

> It is recognized in the U.K. and in France that there will be a cost to tackling climate change, and the role of the advisory committees in these two countries is to do the job at the lowest possible cost and to distribute the costs fairly. The advice is not blind to the economy, but it is made with the objective of reducing the emissions in the most efficient way, considering the capacity of the economy in general to absorb, but with the priority given to the instrument that would work best.

• (1520)

From my perspective, it was critically important that Bill C-12 include provisions requiring the minister to take economic factors into account when developing greenhouse gas reduction plans. Otherwise, these plans can't be adapted to the reality of communities and industries, which means that it will be impossible for them to fully contribute to achieving the reduction targets set through these government plans.

The other major flaw in the bill is the inadequate safeguards to ensure the independence of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development and the Net-Zero Advisory Body. This flaw was raised by a number of witnesses as the bill was being studied by both the House of Commons and Senate committees. The commissioner's role under Bill C-12 is described in clause 24. The commissioner must produce a report at least once every five years on the implementation of measures adopted by the Government of Canada to mitigate climate change. However, in order for the commissioner to conduct a thorough review, the bill must to be amended to give the commissioner greater independence from government. On May 19, 2021, in his testimony before the House of Commons committee, Paul Fauteux recommended that the commissioner be designated as an officer of Parliament, so that he could answer to parliamentarians rather than to the government. The Senate committee report made the same recommendation, which would have ensured greater transparency and accountability in future government actions to achieve net-zero emissions.

It is deplorable, but the government certainly does not intend to support an amendment to the bill that would increase the independence of the commissioner. Clearly, the government is refusing to make this change because it would mean that the bill would have to be returned to the House of Commons, precluding it from passing before the summer adjournment.

To convince you that the possible amendment that I could propose would be rejected as the session is ending, I have an excerpt from an open letter written by nine Quebec senators, members of the majority group in the Senate, concerning my amendment to Bill C-15, which was rejected. It was nonetheless a legitimate amendment that would have responded to a clear request from the premiers of six provinces. I will quote their letter as follows:

> It is incumbent upon us to now speak honestly about the true objective of this amendment, which is to slow down passage of the bill at any cost. The bill would slowly become trapped on the Order Paper, hostage to a game of parliamentary ping-pong between the Senate and the House of Commons.

I don't share these senators' point of view. What I think is that the Senate is once again being held hostage to a fake emergency brought about by the Liberal government itself, which created it by dragging its feet on the study of this bill over the past few months. The government waited a year after being elected to introduce this bill. Now it is trying to create a false sense of urgency, thus keeping the Senate from carrying out its true role, which is to provide sober second thought on legislation. The government is doing all this purely for electoral gain, since it's the one making these choices, while we are seeing more and more signs pointing to an election being called this summer.

On another matter, the report of the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources also highlighted, as I did, the insufficient guarantees with regard to the independence of the Net-Zero Advisory Body. The committee states:

> . . . the committee is of the opinion that the Net-Zero Advisory Body must have administrative independence, including control over its own budget and secretariat, as well as a strict conflict of interest code requiring recusals from discussions and recommendations relating to direct conflicts of members.

In his testimony on May 19, Paul Fauteux mentioned the lack of independence in the process for appointing members to the advisory body. He said:

> . . . the minister appoints members, and may determine and amend the terms of reference of, the advisory body.

When the Minister of the Environment testified in committee on May 17, MPs Dan Albas and Elizabeth May also criticized the fact that the members of the advisory body had already been chosen before the bill had even been implemented. This concern was evident when Ms. May asked the minister a question and he was unable to give a convincing answer. Ms. May said, and I quote:

> . . . the bill refers to an advisory committee, not an expert committee. You have only one climate scientist on the current body. I think it was disrespectful to this committee and the parliamentary process to jump the gun and appoint an advisory committee before the bill had even had a single witness to talk about why so many people and experts believe we should model ourselves much more on the U.K. climate committee, which is universally respected for its expertise. You have one climate scientist on your advisory body. . . .
>
> I wonder if you will reconsider the composition—more than the people on it, the structure of it—to be much more like the U.K. expert body that sets carbon budgets.

I believe the bill should have extended guarantees of independence to the advisory body, including structural guarantees to the advisory body and individual guarantees to its members. It is inexplicable that the government didn't do this.

I will note that the amendment to clause 20 that was adopted is purely symbolic and does nothing to address the lack of independence of the body and its members. While the original version of clause 20 required that the body provide the minister with advice, the new version states that it must provide the minister with "independent" advice. The addition of the word "independent" does nothing to genuinely guarantee the institutional and structural independence of the advisory body.

I will therefore be voting against Bill C-12 because it is seriously flawed and doesn't provide the necessary means to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 or meet the 2030 Paris target. I don't think there is any chance that the government, or even a majority of senators, will agree to amend the bill because of the undue pressure from the Liberal government to hold an early election and because this bill could die on the Order Paper. I refuse to comply with the government's ultimatum. I will not pass a flawed bill that is lacking in substance, a bill that will fuel the cynicism of Canadians, those who are counting on us to pass robust laws in order to drastically and sustainably reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. I don't agree with the proverb that says that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. Young Canadians have the right to expect the strongest fundamental guarantees to ensure the protection of their environment.

I therefore humbly ask you to vote against Bill C-12, so that the government has to redo its homework and introduce a new bill. This new bill would have to include a lot more than just a promise to come up with plans. It would have to contain specific robust and practical measures to achieve net-zero emissions targets and comply with the Paris Agreement. We also need a bill that would hold the minister and government to account if they fail to meet the targets that have been set.

Thank you for your attention.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

Hon. Robert Black: Honourable colleagues, I rise today to speak to Bill C-12, An Act respecting transparency and accountability in Canada's efforts to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2050.

As many of you know, I am — and always will be — an "agvocate." I have worked in agriculture for most of my life. It's what I know best and it will remain my primary focus as long as I serve Canadians here in the Senate Chamber.

Thus, my focus today will be the role of agriculture in the fight against climate change and the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions in support of Canada's efforts to achieve net-zero emissions within the next 29 years.

First, I would like to thank my colleague the Honourable Senator Rosa Galvez for sponsoring this bill in the Senate. This is an important step forward in making Canada a greener, cleaner and more sustainable place to live, work and play.

I was particularly pleased to see that additional accountability measures were introduced in the other place, such as further progress reporting in 2023 and 2025 — including a review of the 2030 target — and a 2026 interim emissions objective as well as more prescriptive requirements for the emissions reduction plan and progress reports. These markers along the way provide not only ways to maintain accountability, but also ways to further update and include all Canadians in this journey.

• (1530)

As I mentioned earlier, agriculture is one of my primary focuses, and it's no surprise that this industry has an important role in fighting climate change. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, in 2016, agriculture contributed about 17% of greenhouse gas emissions globally, and that figure does not include an additional 7% to 14% caused by changes to land use. According to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 10% of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions are from crop and livestock production, excluding emissions from the use of fossil fuels or from fertilizer production.

These are significant numbers that we need to work to bring down. However, the onus cannot be placed solely on farmers and the agricultural industry. They work hard to provide us with

food, and most of them are good stewards of the land. And, as stewards of the land, farmers are heavily invested in the fight against climate change and mitigating its impacts.

In fact, in many cases, our farmers face the brunt of climate change as Canadian agriculture suffers greatly from the effects. The frequency of extreme weather events has doubled since the 1990s. There has been an increase in floods, droughts, forest fires and storms that, unsurprisingly, interfere with both planting and harvest, which disproportionately affects farms of all sizes.

While we must recognize that agriculture is only a small part of the problem when it comes to climate change, the agricultural sector has demonstrated continuous improvement over many years while emissions from other sectors have risen over time. Agriculture also has an amazing potential to be an important part of the solution.

In fact, many farmers have already taken steps over the years to make their land a zero-till operation. This technique increases the retention of organic matter and nutrient cycling, which in turn increases carbon sequestration. Many have also included perennial forage and cover crops in their cropping rotations. There is more carbon in soils under perennial forage than annual crops, due in part to the former's ability to better transfer carbon to the soil. In fact, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture shared that farmers have kept their emissions steady for 20 years while almost doubling production, resulting in a decrease in greenhouse-gas-emission intensity by half.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada also recognizes that agriculture helps slow climate change by storing carbon in agricultural lands. Storing, or sequestering, carbon in soils as organic matter, perennial vegetation and in trees reduces carbon dioxide amounts in the atmosphere.

We have also seen more technological advancements and innovation, including precision agriculture, the use of artificial intelligence and drones, that aim to decrease negative environmental impacts while also increasing profitability. We can also explore the possibility of scaling up technologies that we already know yield positive environmental outcomes.

There are many other innovative methods farmers employ in order to protect the environment without sacrificing profitability. An example of this is reintegrating livestock and crops on the farm and managing grazing, which can increase livestock's nutrient consumption as well as increase the soil organic matter.

Additionally, vertical farming and urban farming have gained popularity in recent years. These innovative ways of farming allow us to grow crops in urban areas without taking up much space. We're also seeing the use of hydroponics, meaning growing crops directly in nutrient-enriched water rather than soil.

The challenge for the agriculture and agri-food sector will be to mitigate greenhouse gases while adapting to the impacts of climate change without jeopardizing food security. To do so, Canadian agricultural producers and food processors will need the government's support in transitioning their operations to be more sustainable, and they will also require the government's support while they seek to change decades-long practices and procedures.

Many organizations, including the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the Canadian Cattlemen's Association and the Canadian Pork Council, among many others, have highlighted their dedication to supporting Canada's fight against climate change. There are, of course, concerns specific to each sector regarding issues such as fair carbon pricing, which I have spoken about in the past, and other potential impacts to the overall sustainability of the industries but, overall, Canadian agriculture knows that they have a critical role to play as stewards of the land, which involves preserving ecosystems and resources, such as our soil and water, as well as minimizing the environmental impacts of their activities through the implementation of beneficial agricultural practices.

At this time, I would like to pivot to the role of soil health and the environment and how it can and does affect climate change. I have risen on a number of occasions in this chamber and in the Agriculture and Forestry Committee to speak about the importance of soil health. As you may know, I have proposed that the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Forestry undertake a new study on soil health in Canada.

In relation to Bill C-12, soils across Canada play a critical role in carbon storage and can help deliver on the net-zero greenhouse gas emissions target by 2050.

As one of Canada's most precious natural resources, soil conservation is a top-of-mind matter for the agriculture and agri-food sectors. In fact, I believe it's a cross-sector, cross-Canada concern. The future of this country is intrinsically linked to the health of its ecosystem, which in itself hinges on soil health.

Since becoming a senator in 2018, I have consistently been meeting with soil health stakeholders, including farmers, scientists and other agri-business owners, as well as experts like the godfather of soil health, Don Lobb, and his academic son, Dr. David Lobb. In fact, it was Don Lobb who gave me a nudge to look into former senator Herbert Sparrow's 1984 report on soil health.

It has been 37 years since the Senate last completed a study on soil health. What you may not know is that the 1984 study, entitled *Soil at Risk*, done by the Senate Agriculture Committee, is the most-requested Senate report on Parliament Hill ever. However, in the decades that have passed since that report came out, the Canadian landscape has changed significantly, and it's high time that this report be updated.

At this time, I am pleased to share that my office has heard from over 185 supporters of the proposed study. We have received support from academics, government officials, as well as both national and provincial organizations from across the country.

I am hopeful that the study I proposed to the Agriculture Committee, if undertaken, will connect with Canadians by introducing soil health through the lens of food security, environmental conservation, the link between air and water quality and soil health, and the role of soil in carbon markets and climate change, as healthy soils will help support Canada's net-zero targets.

I think we can all agree that ensuring the health and conservation of Canadian soils is a shared responsibility and will require collective leadership and sustained commitment and action by those directly responsible for managing soil across the country. Healthy soil is arguably one of the most critical resources for the health of our natural and agri-ecosystems so that they can sustain food production, as well as the provision of ecosystem services. Knowing how to manage soils and understanding how soils function is key to their productivity and long-term sustainability and will have serious effects on how we manage climate change into the future.

In March 2019, a report by the Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute, entitled *Clean Growth in Agriculture*, highlighted that:

> Canadian agriculture . . . has steadily reduced its GHG emissions intensity as a result of dramatic disruptive technological changes. The efforts by governments, industry and academia continue to enable the industry to reduce its emissions. . . .

The report also says those efforts are also helping the industry to become ". . . a net sink . . . providing solutions for the rest of the economy."

Colleagues, soil health and climate change are intrinsically linked. On the one hand, soils are the second-largest carbon sink after our oceans, storing three times more carbon than is found in the atmosphere. On the other hand, rising temperatures and changing precipitation patterns can lead to soil erosion, fertility loss and a decline in the soil's ability to carry out basic ecosystem services.

We know that soil is not a renewable resource, and we don't have much time left to save our soils — some experts say less than 50 years. Additionally, the cost of soil degradation in Canada is estimated at $3 billion annually, and this will only increase if nothing is done. Improving soil health is not a one-size-fits-all endeavour across Canada's varied landscape, but it is clear that healthy soil has an important role to play in our economy, environment and society, including in helping our country reach our target of net-zero emissions by 2050.

Honourable colleagues, we know that climate change is one of the biggest issues facing our world. It is clear that the agriculture industry understands and supports the call to action to fight climate change. However, we are asking a lot of our farmers. Many agricultural operations rely on decades-old practices that have only recently been deemed to be environmentally detrimental. Making the switch to new technology costs a lot of money and, while I've never heard of a farmer who was "in it for the money," it does impact on the viability of their businesses.

• (1540)

At this time, I am taking this opportunity to once again call upon the Canadian government to work collaboratively with our agricultural industry so they can help make the journey to environmental sustainability a little easier for everyone.

I am confident that the agriculture industry — which has been innovating for as long as it has existed — will continue to rise to the challenge by helping in the fight against climate change. Of course, initiatives must come from all sectors, and it must be a joint effort from all of us. In order to achieve our goals in greenhouse gas reduction, government and industry must work together.

I know that many of us in this chamber have children and grandchildren. Without working together to challenge and change the effects of climate change, I fear that they will be living in a world entirely different from the one we know today. I hope you will all join me in supporting the passage of this important bill.

Thank you. *Meegwetch*.

Hon. Mary Jane McCallum: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak on third reading of Bill C-12, the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act. I would like to thank Senators Galvez and Coyle for all the hard work that they have done.

As much of my work as a senator has been to work with and fight for the countless Indigenous communities that are ravaged by both climate change and resource extraction and development, I wanted to use this opportunity to elevate their voices within this consequential debate. As such, the following is a speech I will read on behalf of the Wa Ni Ska Tan: An Alliance of Hydro Impacted Communities that represents 40 communities in Manitoba.

Wa Ni Ska Tan is a Cree word that means "let's rise" or "let's wake up." They say:

> We welcome the opportunity to speak on this bill and to the impacts of hydro dams and climate change in Manitoba, particularly on Indigenous communities.
>
> Cree and Anishinabe peoples in Manitoba have been living with the impacts of hydro dams, diverted rivers and impounded lakes in their homelands for over half a century and are all too familiar with the severe environmental damages they cause. They are also concerned about the escalating climate crisis.
>
> Hydroelectricity has long enjoyed a reputation as "clean, green," even "carbon-neutral" energy. Unfortunately, this reputation is not deserved. Newer research has shown that, in addition to the grave and ongoing damages hydropower operations cause to lakes, rivers, forests, fish, birds and land animals, hydropower also contributes significantly to the climate crisis.
>
> The public conversation about climate change and greenhouse gases focuses heavily on fossil fuel use as the main driver of climate change. While fossil fuels are clearly an important part of the problem, it would be a great mistake

to build more hydro dams as a way of reducing our fossil fuel use. For one thing, as the river protection group American Rivers notes:

> It is equally imperative that we do not destroy the environment we are trying to save by rushing to develop low-emissions energy sources that will result in serious environmental harm, as well as high economic and societal costs.

Beyond these vital considerations, it is also important to understand that hydropower, in fact, is not carbon-neutral but contributes to greenhouse gas emissions in several significant ways.

The most important way that hydropower creates greenhouse gas emissions is via large reservoirs. One summary of recent scientific research summarized the problem in the following words:

. . . the world's reservoirs are an underappreciated source of greenhouse gases, producing the equivalent of roughly 1 gigaton of carbon dioxide a year, or 1.3 percent of all greenhouse gases produced by humans.

> That's more greenhouse gas production [globally] than all of Canada

Hydro reservoirs actually produce not only carbon dioxide but also nitrous oxide and methane. The latter two gases contribute much more powerfully to climate change: methane emissions produce 24 times as much global-warming potential and nitrous oxide 298 times as much as carbon dioxide over a 100-year time scale. Over shorter terms, methane's impact is even greater: over a 10 to 20-year period, it is 86 times more potent than carbon dioxide in accelerating climate change. Methane makes up nearly 80% of the greenhouse gas emissions from reservoirs.

Reservoirs produce these greenhouse gas emissions principally through the flooding of shorelines and forests, which kills trees and plants, introducing organic matter into the water that then decomposes, producing carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane. Such flooding occurs not only at the time of dam construction, but also on a regular, ongoing basis on lakeshores, islands and riverbanks whenever a hydro utility artificially raises water levels or releases surges of impounded reservoir water.

These scientific observations are supported by the experiences and knowledge of Indigenous communities whose traditional territories include these reservoirs. Thus, Leslie Dysart, a fisher from O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation living near South Indian Lake in Northern Manitoba, said:

> I have witnessed many times over the years, along or near eroded, destroyed shoreline, areas of bubbling gas emitting from below the water continuously.

Hydro operations have also led to the destruction of large areas of Canada's northern boreal forest, the North's equivalent of the Amazon rainforest in terms of protection against climate change. The northern boreal forest sequesters carbon and produces large amounts of oxygen. But it has been under attack for many years, and hydropower's role includes the forest cut down during hydro dam construction for roads, transmission line corridors, generating stations, dams themselves, construction materials, forest drowned and killed by the flooding of land and the tens of thousands of trees lost annually due to the constant slumping of shorelines and destruction of islands caused by hydro's manipulation of water levels.

Again, as Leslie Dysart further indicates:

> Hundreds of Islands have disappeared on South Indian Lake over the decades, the trees and vegetation are submerged and decay emitting GHG's, there is no monitoring of this impact.

Both the construction and the decommissioning of hydro dams are also major emission sources. Building mega dams requires moving tonnes of earth and rock and long-distance transport of large amounts of heavy materials such as concrete and cement, which involves burning a lot of fossil fuels. Decommissioning hydro dams actually causes even more emissions – up to three times as much as constructing them. Thus, accounting for emissions related to hydropower must consider the amount related to the decommissioning process in addition to construction and maintenance.

Hydro dams and climate change have significant impacts on Indigenous peoples and communities. Indigenous peoples suffer some of the highest burdens of disease and ill health in Canada, combined with some of the poorest access to health care. While multiple factors are at work here in northern Manitoba, hydro dams are a major factor. The filling of lakes and rivers with silt, dead trees and debris have made travel dangerous and difficult, led to many fatal accidents and created a drinking water crisis in a land where, in the past, people could literally dip their cups in the water and drink. Bathing and swimming in once-pristine water is no longer possible in many lakes, with children suffering skin rashes when they make the attempt.

• (1550)

Mercury contamination after flooding has forced the closure of numerous fisheries over the years, and the damages to land and water have inhibited or prevented the practice of culture on the land and the harvesting of healthy food and medicines. The people are left with chronic boil-water advisories and reliance on expensive, unhealthy, mostly processed store-bought food. They have to pay for this new unhealthy type of food with incomes derived mostly from social assistance, since their once-lucrative commercial fisheries have been decimated by hydro operations.

Climate change will make all these problems worse and is already beginning to do so. While hydro dams have created a chronic problem with dangerous "hanging ice" suspended precariously above the water by the wintertime lowering of water levels, climate change will weaken ice even more and lead to more deaths by falling through the ice.

Already, prairie winters have become shorter and warmer. This, in turn, means winter roads can only be created for very short periods to bring in heavy and bulky supplies to communities without regular road access, further increasing the cost and difficulty of supplying communities with their basic needs. Thinner ice for shorter periods also increases the difficulty and danger of travel on land and water, further threatening health and promising to lead to more accidents and fatalities.

Climate change threatens animal populations that have long been important to Indigenous communities, such as muskrat, caribou and moose. Hydro dams have already forced many animals to move — moose, caribou, beaver, muskrats and rabbits — as they can no longer live in the forest or by the erratically fluctuating lakes and rivers. The sturgeon and white fish that traditionally formed the foundation of Cree diets have already been decimated by hydro operations, unable to spawn safely or to follow their traditional movements, while fishing nets are tangled or destroyed by the fallen trees. Climate change will only worsen these disasters.

All these negative changes in the climate, along with the lands, waters, forests and animals, are especially harmful to Indigenous peoples and they have resulted from activities that have brought them little or no benefit. Many hydro-affected Cree and Anishinaabe people have difficulty paying for the hydro that heats and lights their homes, even though it is generated at great cost to them — environmental, economic and human cost.

Not only has hydro power largely wiped out their once-abundant hunting, trapping and fishing economies, but there is also the human loss, psychological damage and emotional distress created by witnessing the profound harm and destruction to their homelands, economies, health and families.

The industrial activities that have created the climate crisis have similarly brought them proportionally few benefits, as the jobs and services that the industrial economy makes available to non-Indigenous Canadians are more difficult or even impossible for them to access, even though they live right there. Moreover, the combined effects of hydro power and the climate crisis intersect with other issues that confront Indigenous communities, including residential schools, gendered violence and substance abuse. Indeed, much recent media attention has focused on the violence against Indigenous women and two-spirit people engendered by so-called "man camps," notably those associated with hydro construction over the last 50 years.

We welcome this bill to require measurable concrete action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reach net-zero emissions. Implementation should explicitly reject large-scale hydro as an acceptable strategy and include direct, mandated and properly funded collaboration between scientists and Indigenous knowledge keepers, combining scientific expertise and know how with each Indigenous nation's close familiarity and long-term relationship with the lands and waters of their territories.

Indigenous traditional ecological knowledge is intensive, detailed, local knowledge accumulated through millennia of active use, observation and stewardship of specific homelands. It offers an invaluable source of understanding of particular ecosystems as holistic, interdependent, synergistic webs of connection and interaction. This collaboration should also focus on how to better mitigate past, present and anticipated impacts associated with both hydro power and climate change. Both the work and resulting decision-making should engage actively with, and be accountable to, impacted communities.

They close by saying, "Thank you for the opportunity to raise our concerns in the Senate Chamber."

Senators, as a fellow senator, I urge you to support this bill so that we can move to action. We can't afford to continue to do nothing. Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Douglas Black: Honourable senators, I also rise today to speak at third reading to Bill C-12, An Act respecting transparency and accountability in Canada's efforts to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2050.

Let me start my remarks by saying that I strongly support the net zero by 2050 objective. This is an important goal shared by governments, industry and civil society. It's a goal that will require the efforts of all economic sectors to achieve. Bill C-12 endeavours to create a climate accountability regime, as we heard this afternoon, through the establishment of and reporting on emissions targets. As hundreds if not thousands of Canadians have reminded me by email and on Twitter, this is a consequential piece of legislation. The result, if successful, is no less, senators, than reordering the Canadian economy. Before I get into the content of the bill, I would like to reflect on process.

While I am very proud of the work that our committee has done, our observations and the level of cooperation and respect shown amongst all senators, I must acknowledge that the process was truncated. A core strength of the Senate is our unfettered and thorough work. As I have often said, we are Canada's best think tank, but if we abbreviate our processes to convenience a government, as we have done far too often during this pandemic, we will justifiably lose that mantle.

The pre-study tool is, in my view — and I believe it's shared by many of my colleagues — designed to be used in unique, complex and time-sensitive circumstances, such as budget implementation bills, trade agreements with looming ratification dates or bills addressing court-imposed deadlines, not to rush legislation that has been in contemplation for years.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to gain a full view of a bill and the dynamics around it before the final version even comes to the Senate. The situation in which we found ourselves when trying to pre-study Bill C-12 is a perfect example of why the Senate should act consecutively with the House of Commons and not in conjunction with it.

As our committee was meeting to hear witnesses and consider possible amendments, there were significant amendments being debated at committee in the other place.

Because the legislation was so in flux and the timelines were short due to the arbitrary deadlines that the government placed upon us and that the Senate agreed to, we could not hear from a full slate of witnesses as we neither had the time, or we were asking witnesses one or two days before we wanted their considered remarks. It was not our finest hour.

Perhaps even worse, as the committee noted in its pre-study report, there were important witnesses who did not get to participate from whom we should have heard as they would have helped paint a more complete picture.

• (1600)

These potential witnesses, from whom we did not hear, but many expressed interest to be heard, would be industry associations, such as rail, airlines, road transport, agriculture, steel, construction and housing. We did not hear from provincial and territorial governments. We did not hear from representatives from other countries with experience in climate accountability nor, importantly, did we hear from investment professionals or economists.

If we had not been arbitrarily constrained, we could have finished the job we were supposed to do in this place, which is to rigorously scrutinize legislation affecting Canadians. And senators, aggressively decarbonizing the economy on a tight timeline will impact all Canadians and is worthy of the Senate's best work.

The Senate's role is also to understand and defend regional interests, a duty we did not comprehensively discharge in our study of Bill C-12. Not only was the process imperfect, but so is the bill. The Prime Minister likes to say that the environment and the economy go hand in hand. How many times, senators, have we heard that? But in this bill, there is only one hand. No consideration has been given to the hand that governs our diverse social circumstances and prosperity.

As the committee noted in our observations, the targets themselves should be focused exclusively on emissions reductions. I agree, but that said, without reporting on, measuring and considering economic factors in the decision making, there is little hope that we can achieve these targets. Also, no thought was given in this bill to understanding where the action of change must happen: industry, commerce and individual Canadians.

Allow me to quote quickly from our committee observations:

> . . . the committee is concerned that plans and reports under Bill C-12 are not required to contain information about the economic and social impacts of climate action or inaction, such as through cost-benefit analysis. Further, despite the preamble of Bill C-12 referring to making Canada's economy "more resilient, inclusive, and competitive", there is no specific inclusion of measures such as real gross domestic product, levels of investment and employment, energy affordability, among others, as considerations in the Minister's plans and reports. Similarly, there is no mention of energy security as a consideration despite its importance as a factor in the transition to a low carbon economy. It is therefore the view of the committee that these measures must be included as considerations in the Minister's plans and reports before the statutory five-year review.

Senators, if we are serious — and we should be serious — about reaching the targets required to be set by this legislation, then we need to move from the 60,000-foot elevation to the ground without crashing.

Looking at it another way but using a similar analogy, we've got to build a plane that has all of the parts necessary to successfully take off and not crash out of the gate. That means public and private sector investment, talent and jobs, and affordable and reliable energy. A single missing piece could relegate this bill before us to another stack of paper, meaning as much as Canada's previous climate commitments have meant.

Without domestic and foreign investment, we cannot further electrification, develop clean energy projects or advance the technological innovations we know are necessary. Without talent, we cannot build the infrastructure needed for a low-carbon future. And without jobs being created and affordable and reliable energy available, there will be no guarantee of political support for net-zero policies or even net-zero objectives.

I believe Canada's climate accountability regime must include an economic component to be effective. In fact, I believe this bill should be amended to include economic considerations. However, I recognize that the will for an amendment, given the circumstances, does not exist in this chamber. While I accept this fact, I want the record to clearly reflect that this legislation is not complete without its second hand.

The other key issue with this bill is it does not adequately acknowledge the role of provinces and territories on the road to net zero, as my colleague Senator Carignan has also pointed out. There are many possible paths to net zero, and no province or territory has the same emissions profile or the same financial and social capacity to effect large-scale economic change in a very short period of time. The federal government must account for and respect that, and the amendment that was made in the other place reflects consultation. It does not reflect what is required here to get the job done.

With much of the constitutional authority residing with levels of government other than the federal government, there is a clear need for intergovernmental collaboration. Specifically, this bill should have ensured the provincial and territorial climate policies and their plans are integrated into the targets, plans and reports for the minister under Bill C-12.

Building in the contributions of Indigenous governance structures and Indigenous communities is also of great importance in this effort. So too are the initiatives undertaken at the local government level. Silent on all.

An integrated approach to emissions reduction is necessary in order for us to be successful with this massive undertaking. Witnesses were unambiguous in committee hearings: Sustained investment is needed to fund Canada's energy transition. A stable and predictable policy environment is a precursor to attracting that investment. Climate accountability regimes at the federal level must have a role to play in establishing that environment, but investors must also see intergovernmental cooperation. Including a provision in the bill to make this change would send a strong signal that Canada will both respect jurisdiction and work together with partners across governments to make progress.

An equitable and just transition, as is often referred to, will not happen without due consideration given to the regions and regional economies. The challenges, for example, facing my province of Alberta in this transition are different than those facing Ontario or Nova Scotia, for example.

It is worth mentioning that ongoing progress on emissions reduction will be threatened if the country is mired in political conflict or jurisdictional battles before the courts.

These are not my only reservations with Bill C-12. I am also uneasy with vesting a single minister, however capable, with the singular authority to amend emissions targets and plans. And there are other aspects mentioned in our committee's observations that could improve this bill. Action to close the gaps in Bill C-12 would help secure the confidence of those whose support is crucial to achieving the bill's aims: provinces, territories, Indigenous communities, investors and individual Canadians.

Before I conclude my remarks, I would like to thank my fellow committee members for the collaborative nature of our pre-study deliberations. I want to make a special mention of our chairman, Senator Massicotte, for his leadership in a very difficult circumstance. Also, I want to acknowledge the contribution of the bill's sponsor, Senator Galvez.

May I also thank my colleagues in my office for outstanding work, as well as the clerks and all support to the committee who were working under the gun from the very first moment.

In summary, I will support this bill. I support the aspirations of this bill, but I have substantial practical concerns that the imbalance and omissions in Bill C-12 will prevent Canada from achieving the goal of net zero by 2050.

I suspect that we have not seen the last of this legislation. I urge the government to give the committee's observations and the comments of senators, both in committee and here today, the attention they deserve, and address those shortcomings at the earliest opportunity so Canada can achieve this goal. Thank you, colleagues.

• (1610)

Hon. Peter Harder: Honourable senators, I rise in support of Bill C-12, a piece of legislation aimed at helping Canada achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2050. The framework in this legislation is an important step forward, and I am pleased that this Forty-third Parliament will take meaningful climate action.

The basic question I ask is this: What is the climate legacy we wish to pass on to our grandchildren? I doubt I'll be here in 2050, but I am raising the alarm so that our generation does not continue to fail them.

We have no time to waste. Much bolder measures than Bill C-12 will be required to avoid catastrophe on this planet. However, together with carbon pricing, green investment and innovation, this legislation gives Canada a fighting chance to do our part to meet humanity's greatest ever challenge. Essentially, this bill requires an emissions reduction plan, with the benefit of an expert advisory body and the government reporting requirements to meet incremental goals. This statute will also survive any change in government in the decades to come, providing there are no attempts to repeal. On that point, the Senate of Canada ought to be paying particular vigilance.

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development strengthened this bill, adding reporting requirements in 2023 and 2025 to work toward the critical benchmark of 2030. According to the 2018 report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, or IPCC, to avoid catastrophe emissions must fall by about 43% from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching net zero around 2050. These are the numbers required to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. I'll describe the scientific importance of that threshold shortly. The IPCC commented that achieving this goal will require ". . . rapid and far-reaching transitions in energy, land, urban and infrastructure (including transport and buildings), and industrial systems . . . ."

Unfortunately, between 2016 and 2019, Canada's greenhouse gas emissions increased by 3.3%. The recent growth rate is the highest of any G7 country. Since the Paris Agreement was signed in 2016, all other G7 countries, except the United States, have decreased their emissions. Those decreases were between 4.4% in Italy and 10.8% in Germany.

Canada is a wealthy country with very high per-capita emissions. In fact, Canadians are among the top per-capita emitters from fossil fuel combustion, with emissions of 3.4 times the world average in 2019. We're also stewards of a large part of the natural world, with collective responsibilities to protect many relatively pristine and globally consequential ecosystems. At the same time, Canada is warming twice as fast as the rest of the world, and the Arctic is warming at three times the global rate.

Canada is not doing its fair share to reduce emissions, let alone take a leadership role. Progress has also been difficult to achieve. Just this year, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the federal carbon-pricing legislation, preserving our country's most effective policy tool after the Governments of Saskatchewan, Ontario and Alberta challenged the law.

Fortunately, there is now almost consensus at the federal level with climate change as a reality and that a price on carbon is rational and efficient in reducing emissions.

Using that tool and massive green investment, we can and must fulfill our commitments under the Paris Agreement.

Canada must earn the credibility to positively influence international cooperation and prevent disaster. To this end, with Bill C-12, the government will be required to develop a rational plan with accountability for its success. Constructively, senators can help develop and support policies to meet our Paris targets.

We can also depoliticize the policy debate through a long-term and evidence-based lens. With climate change, we must rededicate our commitment to following the science, just as we have followed the science in terms of our pandemic response.

Colleagues, the IPCC report begins with a reference that states the challenge before us. From Antoine de Saint Exupéry:

[*Translation*]

> As for the future, your task is not to foresee it, but to enable it.

[*English*]

So let us consider our options in terms of the difference between a planet with a 1.5-degree increase versus a 2-degree increase. According to the IPCC report, keeping warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius will limit the risks of increases in heavy precipitation events, including the number of very intense tropical cyclones and hurricanes. Globally, Western Canada and Eastern Canada are two regions most at risk from increases in such events at conditions of 2 degrees.

Limiting the increase to 1.5 degrees will also substantially reduce the probability of extreme drought and water scarcity. This lower rate of change will enhance the ability of natural and human systems to adapt in terms of ecosystem resilience and food production.

At 1.5 degrees, the risks of catastrophic poverty in terms of energy, food and water availability can be mitigated in Africa, Asia and small island states. At 1.5 degrees, there would be significantly less risk of flood hazard and a much lower risk of extinction for many species. At 1.5 degrees, the likelihood of an Arctic Ocean free of ice in the summer would be once per century compared to once per decade at 2 degrees. By 2100, the global sea levels would be 10 centimetres lower at 1.5 degrees compared to the alternative.

Particularly striking, at 1.5 degrees, 70% to 90% of the coral reefs will be destroyed. At 2 degrees, over 99% of the reefs would die.

We must hold the line at 1.5 degrees, including allowing changes in our lifestyles. Compared to the sacrifices of previous generations, such as those who endured the Great Depression and the Second World War, very little has been asked of us. For example, we can fly less, buy cleaner vehicles and consume more plant-based foods with a much lighter environmental footprint.

The tangible costs of climate change are already evident. Wildfires in Australia, California and Western Canada have been devastating and are a sign of things to come. In Quebec, 66 people died in the heat wave in Montreal in 2018. The Îles de la Madeleine are suffering massive erosion due to the lack of protection from sea ice. The 2019 Hurricane Dorian, worsened by climate change, has caused extensive damage in Halifax.

The consequences of our failure to act in a rich country like Canada will be disastrous for the most impoverished populations on this planet and will take a shameful place in history, unless we change course now.

Perhaps the greatest crime of all is being perpetuated in respect of mass extinction. The eradication of species is an incalculable theft from all future generations and an atrocity against Mother Nature and our fellow creatures. Climate change is occurring at the same time as many other human activities contributing to mass extinction, including habitat destruction, wildlife trafficking, plastic pollution, overfishing and the spread of invasive species. Yet climate change undermines whatever resilience those strained wildlife populations may have left.

In 2018, the World Wildlife Fund released a major report indicating that 60% of vertebrates — mammals, birds, fish, reptiles and amphibians — have been eradicated since 1970. Since I was 18-years-old, more than 60% of vertebrates have been eradicated.

A 2019 UN report found that a million animals and plant species are now threatened with extinction, many within decades. This die-off is what scientists now refer to as the Anthropocene extinction, named after us in our dishonour, constituting the sixth mass extinction in the history of the planet.

• (1620)

For context, the last mass extinction in this series occurred 66 million years ago when an asteroid slammed into the earth, killing dinosaurs and wiping out three quarters of animal and plant species. In considering these issues, we must think of the younger generations and the future generations.

In 2019, climate change protests that began with teenagers in Europe spread around the world. On September 27 of that year, hundreds of thousands of Canadians took to the streets calling for bold climate action. Canadians of all generations marched in cities from St. John's to Edmonton to Vancouver, and as far north as Inuvik in the Northwest Territories. Greta Thunberg met with Prime Minister Trudeau and rallied young people in Montreal. Here in Ottawa, just outside Parliament, one little girl held a sign asking if there would still be whales, turtles and cheetahs when she is 18. An older marcher held a sign urging seniors to fight for the planet. One young person carried a picture of Dr. Seuss's famous environmental messenger, The Lorax, referred to yesterday by Senator Coyle with the ominous warning: "unless."

Honourable senators, with Bill C-12, and in our own work, we must stand with and for Canada's young people, our grandchildren. They have much more to lose with our decisions on environmental matters than we do and their interests are not well represented in the political process or institutions.

In this country and around the world we must put aside political divisions. We must cooperate because one thing is certain: If we do not work together, we will fail together. Just this month, the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report indicated that the government is not on track to meet its targets. If Bill C-12 and measures like carbon pricing cannot reduce our emissions due to political barriers to rational policies, it may be that the courts will eventually play a role, given the impact of climate change on human rights.

In 2019, the Supreme Court of the Netherlands ordered that the national government take further action against climate change, requiring a 25% reduction from 1990 emissions by the end of 2020. In 2020, the Supreme Court of Ireland quashed the government's national mitigation plan because it did not give enough detail on the reduction of greenhouse gases. There have been important decisions this year in France and Germany, with the German Federal Constitutional Court indicating that current inadequate measures violate the freedoms of young people. In Canada, there are currently efforts to bring a climate case before the Federal Court of Appeal. Nonetheless, in legislatures and through executive action, all efforts must be directed toward rational and effective ways to reduce emissions.

With the challenge of climate change, we live at the most consequential time in human history. We must not be the broken link in the chain. If we do not cooperate toward the shared and necessary objectives of saving the environment, we will fail ourselves, our children, our grandchildren and all generations. We will fail the miraculous creatures with whom we share this planet. We are now their only hope, and their only threat. We must choose to do better. With Bill C-12, Parliament can commit to taking all the necessary action to begin to turn that tide by creating a rational plan that we can work to implement.

In the Senate, we should contribute to this goal in the critical years ahead and, for the sake of our grandchildren, we should and must be bold.

Colleagues, I call the question.

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: Question.

The Hon. the Speaker: Are honourable senators ready for the question?

Some Hon. Senators: Question.

The Hon. the Speaker: It was moved by the Honourable Senator Galvez, seconded by the Honourable Senator Gagné, that the bill be read a third time.

If you are opposed to the motion, please say "no."

Some Hon. Senators: No.

The Hon. the Speaker: I hear a "no."

All those in the Senate Chamber who are in favour of the motion, please say "yea."

Some Hon. Senators: Yea.

The Hon. the Speaker: All those in the Senate Chamber who are opposed to the motion, please say "nay."

Some Hon. Senators: Nay.

The Hon. the Speaker: In my opinion, the "yeas" have it.

I see two senators rising.

And two honourable senators having risen:

The Hon. the Speaker: Do we have an agreement on a bell?

An Hon. Senator: Fifteen minutes.

The Hon. the Speaker: Fifteen minutes. Is there any objection to a 15-minute bell? If you are opposed to that, please say "no."

The vote will take place at 4:40.

Call in the senators.

• (1640)

Motion agreed to and bill read third time and passed on the following division:

YEAS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Anderson
Bellemare
Bernard
Black (*Alberta*)
Black (*Ontario*)
Boehm
Boniface
Bovey
Boyer
Brazeau
Busson
Campbell
Christmas
Cordy
Cormier
Cotter
Coyle
Dalphond
Dasko
Dawson
Deacon (*Nova Scotia*)
Deacon (*Ontario*)
Dean
Downe
Duncan
Dupuis
Forest
Forest-Niesing
Francis
Gagné
Galvez
Gold
Greene
Griffin
Harder
Jaffer
Klyne
Kutcher
LaBoucane-Benson
Lankin
Loffreda
Massicotte
McCallum
McPhedran
Mégie
Mercer
Miville-Dechêne
Moncion
Moodie
Pate
Petitclerc
Ravalia
Ringuette
Saint-Germain
Simons
Tannas
Verner
Wetston
White
Woo—60

NAYS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Ataullahjan
Batters
Boisvenu
Carignan
Housakos
MacDonald
Manning
Marshall
Martin
Mockler
Ngo
Oh
Patterson
Plett
Richards
Seidman
Smith
Stewart Olsen
Wells—19

ABSTENTIONS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Dagenais
Wallin—2

• (1650)

BROADCASTING ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING

On the Order:

> Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Dawson, seconded by the Honourable Senator Gold, P.C., for the second reading of Bill C-10, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts.

Hon. David Richards: Honourable senators, I'm going to speak to this bill as a writer of books and fiction for 50 years and see how it applies to the internet.

Fellow senators, to quote Irving Layton, "Whatever else poetry is freedom."

I was having dinner one night in the mid-1980s with J.D. Salinger's cousin, in a restaurant in North Carolina. We were speaking about freedom because of Salinger's tortured life. Ms. Salinger told me she felt freer in Canada than in the United States. I told her the opposite; that when I visited campuses in Virginia or Boston or out west, I felt freer than in Canada.

It was a puzzle. When I arrived back in Canada, I asked a friend of mine — a Vietnam vet, expatriate American — which one of us right. He said, "You both are." He said that Ms. Salinger was speaking of a physical freedom and I was speaking of an intellectual one. He said he never felt Canada was intellectually free; that our authorities in university and government tried for a conformity of thought. Because of this, many Canadians over the years have gone to the United States to fulfill their intellectual destiny, whether it was with NASA, some high-tech industry, the music industry or Hollywood. I have thought of that conversation with Ms. Salinger and my friend a lot since.

When I was younger, my book *Hockey Dreams* was ready to be filmed by the CBC. At the last moment, the CBC creative director decided not to film it. He said, "I just realized Canada already has a hockey movie." I told him that the U.S. didn't even like hockey and they had eight. He was a man from England.

Two producers, one in New York and one in Los Angeles, told me to change the setting to New England and they would be sure to get it made. That is like *The Mighty Ducks* movies of the 1980s; make it about American kids, not Canadian ones. But that would have been a betrayal of my country, which it seems had no qualms about betraying me.

The idea that I was ever included in the grand pan-Canadianism that afforded an outlet to Canadian writers was nonsense. That my work was embraced because I was of a certain ethnicity or background was and is entirely bogus. For years, I felt the Canadian literary world and the world promoted by the CBC had little or nothing to do with me or where I lived.

I never finished university, never joined PEN International or The Writers' Union of Canada. I was invited to one PEN International conference where people — mainly tenured academics from Toronto — sat on stage and shouted at each other about who should be allowed to write what about whom. They were the authoritative, cultural decision makers of Canada, many who had never written a book. I see them somewhat today in the angst over this bill.

In my life, I have edited over 100 writers. They sent me their books. I never asked them their race or creed or where they stood on any subject. It was only the work that mattered. I have read and offered advice to Christians, Muslims, Jews, First Nation men and women, atheists, secularists and hedonists. Only the work mattered. That is the content of the character, not the colour of the skin.

At that PEN International conference awhile back, where they shouted and insulted one another about how inclusive they all were, they had cheapened and reversed Martin Luther King Jr.'s great axiom in the name of freedom.

I'm worried that this bill might do the same.

I was the first to write a blurb for Esi Eudigan many years ago. When I received her manuscript, I did not know if she was a man or a woman or what race or nationality she was. But I knew as I read the book that she — who eventually won two Giller Prizes and The Booker Prize — would be a major writer. Their work will tell you this. No law or bill or jurisdiction will inform you, no social justice theory or psychological report can come close to great literature and it can never be inoculated by these disciplines to make it more acceptable.

There is no psychological paper in the world that comes close to Dostoyevsky, and no social justice platform that can rise to the level of Chekhov or Tolstoy; all three are writers who are banned in the Soviet Union by a government that believed, supposedly, in art and culture.

Stalin called himself the engineer of human souls. How that fits into these specious governmental yearnings is most often recognized by those who must deal with them.

I was supposed to give the keynote address to the worldwide symposium on Flannery O'Connor last year. I have always called her the infuriating but inspired prophetess, and I know she has said things she should never have said. But that should not negate her entire life's work. My talk was cancelled because of COVID-19. Now she is under attack, her name is being erased, her books and letters questioned. Perhaps by the time I give the lecture, if I ever get to do so, her books will be banned, and those who care for her life's truly brave and exceptional struggle, suspect.

In *Fahrenheit 451* books are burned because they cause emotion; sometimes deep emotion.

The euphemism of today about offensive books is that they don't reflect the truth in identity. And this is what our new cultural gurus insist upon. But I'm not sure if that is correct.

There is a remake of the movie version of *Fahrenheit 451* starring Michael Shannon. The opening scenes showed books being lighted and destroyed, including *Wise Blood* by Flannery O'Connor, *As I Lay Dying* by William Faulkner and *Lolita* by Nabokov. That is, books recently and actually banned by those who once cautioned us liberally about censorship.

I was to give the keynote address at the worldwide symposium on Flannery O'Connor's work. Last month they scratched her name off a building.

• (1700)

I remember the movie *This Land Is Mine* where, during World War II, the Germans listed certain books that must be banned or altered in a certain occupied town. In altering them, pages and pages have to be torn out. Charles Laughton's character tells his students to tear them out and burn them, knowing the pages are profoundly important, but is too frightened not to do so. He becomes the hero of the story in the end. Maureen O'Hara's character, his love interest, tells her students to tear out the said pages and secretly give them to her, and that she will hide them until such time as she can staple them back in their proper place.

Most of them were accepting the unacceptable, still able to call it freedom by re-evaluating the meaning of the books they destroyed and being silent in the face of facts that told them they were cowards.

Those professors, or at least many of them, who helped burn James Joyce's *Dubliners* near Trinity College in 1904, would, if alive today, teach it with gusto. Until such time, it is once again deemed a book to be burned.

In my own country, I have defended everyone from Margaret Laurence to Ernest Buckler in trying to keep their books visible when invisibility is considered justice.

Professors like Strax — the disgruntled former nuclear physicist and American activist who helped cause a great disturbance at the University of New Brunswick in the 1960s — were very willing to entreat students to create mischief and hardship in the name of freedom and greater equality.

In 1968, the protest was against the administration for not allowing students to borrow books without a library card — a formality that had been in existence for generations. To certain students, it was shameful if authority figures knew what any students were reading.

Since one had to have a library card in order to borrow Euripides or Cicero, instead of borrowing books the students ransacked the shelves and left hundreds of books out on the floor and at the registration desk. The authority figure in this case was an elderly librarian woman who was overwhelmed by these bad-mannered, hush puppy and juvenile theatrics. It was entirely bogus, of course. This childish revolution would never have gotten started if it were not for the childishness of two or three professors.

Now, in the name of equality, these same students, these masters of democratic values, would demand to know exactly what books were on the shelves and maybe ban those very books that did not fit the criteria and fire the librarian for releasing these books to a susceptible public.

"I wish men to be free as much from mobs as kings," Lord Byron said. We should remember that.

I was to give a reading for the Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia next month, until I saw the pledge I must sign about using language that might offend or words that might trigger unwanted emotion in an audience member. If I were to use words that might trigger unwanted emotion, my reading would be halted and I would be prevented from completing it. I did not sign this pledge and I will not read.

This sanctimony is the hidden foundation of this bill and of many bills that have come to this chamber. As Heinrich Heine said, "Those who burn books will in the end burn people." Those who propose this bill will retort that their assault on the internet is nothing like this. Well, it doesn't pretend to be.

There is a book in the centre of one of my bookshelves, surrounded by other books. Some of the books it is surrounded by have had an interesting history. They were banned in many countries for long periods of time: Dostoyevsky's *Demons*, Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Solzhenitsyn's *The First Circle*. In the centre of them is this book, which sits unobtrusively and inconspicuously for months at a time, without anyone noticing it: *Mein Kampf* by Adolf Hitler — himself the banal and venal master of book burning. But if I begin with him, as venal as he was, where would I end?

Some years ago, I was at a dinner with some very important, famous people. One academic mentioned that he had given his entire life for Canadian literature. Others there applauded him for doing so.

When I was writing my fourth novel, we sold our 20-year-old car to pay the rent; and my wife, to keep us alive, was selling Amway door-to-door in the middle of winter. I believe she gave her life for Canadian literature as well, but she didn't get to that dinner.

For that reason, in her honour, I will always and forever stand against any bill that subjects freedom of expression to the doldrums of governmental oversight, and I implore others to do the same. I don't think this bill needs amendments; I think, however, it needs a stake through the heart. Thank you very much.

[Senator Richards]

[*Translation*]

Hon. Patricia Bovey: Honourable senators, I am speaking to you from Winnipeg, Treaty 1 territory, the traditional territory of the Anishinabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dene and Dakota, the birthplace of the Métis Nation and the heart of the Métis Nation homeland.

I support the objective of Bill C-10, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts. I subscribe to the objective of supporting Canada's creative sector, its artists and producers, and showcasing the work of Canadians, First Nations and people of diverse backgrounds and circumstances. I agree there is a need to fund ongoing programming that reflects the ideas of Canadian creators and the realities of Canada, at home and abroad. That is what this bill aims to do.

[*English*]

First, I want to thank all who have spoken on this bill. It is complex, and these complexities have come to the fore and will be studied further in committee.

Senator Richards spoke as an author of 50 years. I do the same as one who has been involved in the visual arts world and the arts for 50-plus years.

Bill C-10 represents the first overhaul to the Broadcasting Act since 1991. To say that the bill is overdue is an understatement. The world of broadcasting has been through a sea change since that date. Modernization is necessary in a world now dominated by the internet and digital technology.

As we have heard, Canadians now access digital platforms for entertainment. Indeed, Netflix is now accessed by some 62% of Canadian households, and in 2019 that platform alone generated some $1 billion. This is a success story and a well-earned one; however, the shift to digital has created an imbalance as online broadcasters are not required to support Canadian content. This is of major concern to Canada's arts and culture community. Bill C-10 would seek to redress this situation.

The changes we are discussing today, for the most part, were taken from the 97 recommendations in the report of the Broadcasting and Telecommunications Legislative Review Panel, which was struck in 2018 and issued its final report in 2020. The panel was tasked to review the current situation, with the objective of providing the Government of Canada with recommendations on how best to modernize the Broadcasting Act in the digital age and in the Canadian context.

As Senator Dawson mentioned, the legislation resulting from the panel's final report, Bill C-10, was introduced in the other place in November 2020, studied in the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage with some 112 meetings and has been amended over 100 times. We are studying the result of that process — and yes, it is unfortunate we did not receive this bill sooner.

The root for this bill was to boost creative production, thus supporting the arts and culture in Canada. I hope we all remember this goal when we study the bill. There are three key desired and needed outcomes: artists' payments, production monies and discoverability.

Simply put, the updates in Bill C-10, if passed, will — quoting from briefing material provided to us all — clarify that online broadcasting is within the scope of the act; better reflect Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and Canada's diversity; give fair and equitable treatment between online and traditional broadcasters; introduce an administrative monetary penalties regime; and add more explicit information-sharing and confidentiality provisions.

We will study this bill and determine whether these objectives are met.

The key provision for me, simply put, is that the internet platforms will be regulated as broadcasters are — and that is very much supported by Canada's creators. For our creative sector, support for creation and presentation is essential. In the early years of the internet, it was described as the "information highway." Highways have rules and realities. This highway is our living culture, which presents the unique talents of Canadians.

Let me remind you of the reality. The arts and culture industries are the third-largest employer in Canada. They contribute significantly to our GDP, yet the startling anomaly is that our artists make up the largest percentage of the working poor living below the poverty line. This must be corrected. I believe they, like any other professional, should be compensated fairly for their work and the development of new work. Every other industry is, so why is it so difficult to do this for our creative sector? This bill takes that step.

• (1710)

In these past 18 months, artists have been creating and sharing, using whatever means they have had at their disposal, many being cellphones and internet platforms. Musicians, writers, actors, visual artists, storytellers and more have given us solace, inspiration, connections and hope through the pandemic and other tragedies. They did so earning nothing, as the internet platforms don't pay. So Canadian artists have supported the country.

This bill takes the important steps that enable creators, producers and arts communities to get some recompense. Colleagues, the arts are not a societal frill; they are a core of society. They are not unimportant; they are a mirror of who we are.

Let me go back in history for a minute and the guiding principles we have held nationally over decades as new technologies have developed. If we go back to the broadcasting chapter in the 1951 Massey Report, chaired by future Governor General Vincent Massey, you will see some equivalencies to today.

One of the general perceptions noted then was that ". . . television is becoming an important and even dangerous rival of the other mass media, radio and the cinema . . . ." The Massey Report debunked that perception. It went on to say:

> There is television broadcasting today in a number of countries, notably, of course, in Great Britain, France and the United States. Each of these countries follows in television the same policies as in radio broadcasting.

Today, with the new technological platforms it is only right and fair that they be treated with the same principles as earlier technologies.

It is interesting to look at the outcomes of the early days of the CBC. Graham Spry and Alan Plaunt were integral to the beginnings of the Canadian Radio League, feeling that, according to George Woodcock's book *Strange Bedfellows: The State And The Arts In Canada*:

> Only public control of broadcasting would ensure that this powerful agency was used to foster the sense of a Canadian identity with its own characteristic culture.

I believe Bill C-10 takes that goal into the world of the internet. I remember as a youth Graham Spry coming to our house — what an inspirational Canadian. His vision still guides.

In his important book, Woodcock noted the impressive commissioning of and paying for works. Thousands of scripts and music scores were commissioned by and performed on CBC in its early years and are now in the archives. Thousands more were commissioned but are not in the archives. Woodcock noted:

> Even the employment provided by the CBC to actors, musicians and writers assured in most cases only part of the money needed to survive.

In 1949, Woodcock himself was paid $25 for each of his 13-minute talks on CBC, and $75 for a half-hour comedy. That marked a positive change in Canada's support for artists, albeit the reality was that the amounts were small.

Colleagues, the production and digital presentation on air and online enriches Canada's perception at home and around the world.

Now to today. Regarding this bill, the *National Post* stated on June 22, 2021:

> In Canada, an additional worry is how to protect domestic cultural industries as more Canadians turn to internet companies for music and video programming, which is the focus of the new law.

> Stunting the influence of U.S. culture, in particular, is a core principle of modern Canadian media law. For decades the government has required radio and television broadcasters to produce and distribute local content.

Robin Sokoloski, Director of Organizational Development at Mass Culture, expressed her unwavering support for this bill, not only for the monies which should be paid to and for the artist, but also for the real need for discoverability of art. She told me:

> The Bill proposes to include in the broadcasting policy objectives needed to ensure that the works of our creators are 'discoverable' and in this algorithm-driven online world, accountability just isn't a consideration. Therefore, we need to build in measures that both protect our artists and provide access to their work.

I can confirm that her sentiments and concerns are felt nationally. Over the past year, I have been in direct touch with and conversation with hundreds of artists across this country, of all diversities, ages and disciplines — over 600 alone for a project I will launch in the fall, and more than another 200 to 300 solely on the economic and psychological impacts and crises of COVID-19.

Many expressed the urgent need for internet platforms to be within the purview of the CRTC, and that the artists must be paid, and that funds are critically needed for new productions. Without due financial contributions, our stories cannot and will not be told, and I contend their telling has never been more important. We have to be able to see and hear the Indigenous, Black and immigrant histories that have not been part of the traditional Canadian histories.

As my colleague Senator Dawson said in his second reading speech:

> The policy objectives set out in the Broadcasting Act will ensure that our broadcasting system reflects Canadian society and that diverse and inclusive programming is available to everyone. That is essential to ensuring that the Canadian broadcasting system can help broaden people's perspectives, spur empathy and compassion for others and celebrate our differences, while strengthening the common bonds that unite our unique Canadian society.

Thus, the need to respect and recompense Canadian artists is key. So, too, is the production and presentation of Canadian content, our stories, our issues and our perspectives. That, colleagues, is exactly what Canadian writers, musicians, actors, dancers and visual artists do.

As I have said, this issue is not new, and has been the focus of broadcasting legislation and regulation for decades. It is not the first time new technologies have challenged Canada's broadcasters. It was addressed by the Aird Commission in 1929, the Massey Commission of 1949-51, the Applebaum-Hébert Federal Cultural Policy Review of 1981, not to mention the Mulroney government's well-handled concerns of Canadian periodicals when negotiating the first Canada-U.S. trade agreement. In 2021, the issue is as simple and complex as in former times.

Again as summarized in the *National Post*:

> The bill would effectively add three requirements for digital media companies: They must provide information about their revenue sources, give a portion of their profits to a fund to support Canadian content and increase the visibility or "discoverability" of Canadian content. It would be the first modernization of the country's broadcasting legislation since 1991.

Canada is not alone. The government has looked at and drawn from situations, policies and actions of other countries, including Britain, Australia and the European Union. The EU local content rules, for instance, require platforms to promote European cultural productions, and at least 30% of their catalogues must be made in the bloc. The EU requires video-on-demand services to prioritize local content.

Colleagues, history has demonstrated many times that no members of society fight for free speech more than artists. I join them in unwavering support for the importance of freedom of speech and freedom of expression — a non-negotiable principle for me, which has driven my career and multiple initiatives.

Indeed, the foresight and courage of artists' and scientists' expressions and explorations, as I have said in this chamber before, puts light on issues our society needs to deal with and those concerns have not always been popular or heard. Take, for instance, the role of artists in putting the issue of residential schools and missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in our sightlines long before the commissions for each were established and long before they were heard by society as a whole or even in part.

It is important to know what is really in and not in this bill. We must update the act last done in 1991, and recognize and reflect contemporary technologies. We must do it so Canadian stories are told, celebrated and heard, so that their creators and producers are recompensed, and so there are budgets for more stories. Heaven knows we are in dire need of Canadian truths, insights and inspirations now. Only then will we be able to fully understand who we are and what we need to do not only to honour our past but also to confront the realities of that same past in order to move ahead together.

I look forward to our study on this bill. While I could quote many artists today, I think it would be better to hear from creators directly, so I suggest we invite them as witnesses to the committee's deliberations. Having been a member of the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications, I know there will be a thoughtful and thorough study conducted. I very much look forward to taking part in that. I thank you.

The Hon. the Speaker: Are honourable senators ready for the question?

Hon. Senators: Question.

Hon. René Cormier: Would Senator Bovey take a question?

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Bovey, you have one minute. Would you like to take a question?

Senator Bovey: I would be happy to take a question.

Senator Cormier: Thank you for your speech, senator. I listened carefully to your speech and to Senator Richards's speech. Do you think this bill really deprives Canadian artists of their freedom of speech?

Senator Bovey: No. I do not believe this bill deprives freedom of speech or freedom of expression. I think change of anything in our lives as human beings creates a fear or a concern. I believe our artists and Canadian society stands up for freedom of expression and freedom of speech. I think if you go back over in those prior decades, you will see those fears were expressed before and did not come to reality.

Senator Cormier: Thank you.

The Hon. the Speaker: Your time has expired, Senator Bovey. Are honourable senators ready for the question?

Hon. Senators: Question.

• (1720)

The Hon. the Speaker: It was moved by the Honourable Senator Dawson, seconded by the Honourable Senator Gold that the bill be read a second time. If you are opposed to the motion, please say "no."

An Hon. Senator: No.

The Hon. the Speaker: I hear a no.

All those in the Senate Chamber who are in favour of the motion will please say "yea."

Some Hon. Senators: Yea.

The Hon. the Speaker: All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

Some Hon. Senators: Nay.

The Hon. the Speaker: In my opinion, the yeas have it.

The Hon. the Speaker: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Senators: Agreed.

An Hon. Senator: On division.

(Motion agreed to and bill read second time, on division.)

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this bill be read the third time?

(On motion of Senator Dawson, bill referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications.)

[*Translation*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION BILL, 2021, NO. 1

THIRD READING—DEBATE

Hon. Lucie Moncion moved third reading of Bill C-30, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 19, 2021 and other measures.

She said: Honourable senators, my speech today at third reading is about Bill C-30, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 19, 2021 and other measures.

I'll present an overview of Budget 2021 and highlight the budget measures that Bill C-30 will implement.

First, I'd like to emphasize that Budget 2021 is an ambitious plan that should make a considerable contribution to our economic recovery. It includes major investments in social and physical infrastructure and human capital, which will put Canada back on the path to prosperity.

To support our recovery, the government chose to focus on jobs, growth and resilience. The first and most important task is to beat the pandemic. The fight isn't over yet, but vaccination is proceeding apace and Canadians' collective effort to roll up their sleeves is beginning to bear fruit. Still, we have to keep vaccinating as many people as possible as quickly as possible to secure a strong economic recovery.

The government decided to make resources available to Canadians to complete the immunization campaign, as well as to address other needs that have emerged over the past 15 months.

As I mentioned in my speech at second reading, the bill provides for a one-time payment of $1 billion to the provinces and territories to reinforce the rollout of vaccination programs.

[*English*]

Bill C-30 also provides an emergency top-up of $4 billion to provinces and territories through the Canada Health Transfer to help provincial and territorial governments address immediate health care system pressures. This additional funding will help clear the backlog of procedures put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It will support provinces and territories in ensuring health care systems can continue to respond to and recover from the pandemic and help protect the health and safety of Canadians.

[*Translation*]

The second part of Budget 2021 focuses on supporting Canadians and Canadian businesses until economic activity has recovered. The government will continue to make resources available to Canadians to protect jobs and support affected businesses and workers. Nearly $27 billion in funding has been earmarked for this part of the budget.

[*English*]

Bill C-30 supports the government's plan for job creation, the details of which are outlined in Budget 2021 where the government is committed to creating nearly 500,000 new training and work opportunities for Canadians. The proposed new Canada recovery hiring program will help small- and medium-sized businesses across Canada bounce back from the uncertainty and countless challenges they have faced over the past 16 months.

[*Translation*]

This program will support eligible employers experiencing a decline in revenue because of the pandemic by covering up to 50% of the increase in payroll paid to eligible employees. The program will be retroactive to June 6, 2021, and will be available until November 20, 2021.

The recovery of our small- and medium-sized businesses is indispensable to our broader economic recovery, and I believe this program will help these businesses hire the workers they need to resume their operations.

[*English*]

Furthermore, Bill C-30 would extend the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, the Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy and the Lockdown Support until September 25. The wage subsidy has already protected millions of jobs across Canada, and rent subsidies have helped businesses pay fixed expenses as they saw their revenues decline and they were forced to significantly restrict their activities under public health orders.

Other measures are aimed more specifically at helping Canadian businesses do business. The government intends to make available the resources necessary for innovation and greater integration into the digital economy. It aims to remove barriers to internal trade and make it easier to do business in Canada and abroad by continuing to invest in world-class research and innovation.

Small businesses need access to financing so they can invest in people and innovation and to have the space and capital to operate and grow. The government plans to continue its support for small businesses by proposing, through Bill C-30, to improve the Canada Small Business Financing Program by amending the Canada Small Business Financing Act, which will result in an expansion of eligibility and an increase in loan limits.

[*Translation*]

Honourable senators, by passing Bill C-30, we will be ensuring that Canadian businesses have the support they need to sustain their day-to-day operations and invest in long-term growth.

[*English*]

The next component of the plan focuses on creating jobs and growth for our country. This factors in key elements of the recovery, considers the contribution of women in increasing productivity and of young people in accessing a qualified and competent workforce. The conditions for this success are based on the measures to be taken in the area of early childhood education, access to child care spaces and on the place of youth in the economy, whether in education, employment or succession planning.

[*Translation*]

In Budget 2021, the government also announced historic and generational investments in our future, and Bill C-30 lays the groundwork for part of this work.

The government announced its vision for the creation of a Canada-wide early learning and child care system. I want to talk about it briefly in this speech, since it's a measure that is very important for Canada.

This plan would stimulate economic growth, support women's participation in the labour force and make sure every Canadian child gets off to the best start possible.

This measure will have a long-lasting economic impact. Daycare services help women and families work and contribute to children's future academic success and overall well-being. These services have an impact on growth and GDP and, consequently, on government revenues and government spending. The economic impact shows that every dollar invested in early childhood education generates an estimated $1.50 to $2.80 in economic spinoffs for the country.

With this plan, the government plans to reduce the average fees for child care by 50% by 2022, with the goal of bringing fees down to $10 per day, on average, by 2026 everywhere except in Quebec, which already has a system that is the envy of the rest of Canada.

To support this vision, Bill C-30 proposes to provide up to $2.9 billion to the provinces and territories to begin working on the implementation of this system, with Budget 2021 providing $27 billion over the next five years.

• (1730)

[*English*]

The pandemic has shown us all just how urgent an economic issue this is. However, this isn't new. Women have long known that without child care, parents, usually mothers, cannot work outside the home. I believe the time is right to move forward with this long-term investment as a key piece of our country's social infrastructure. This investment will have an impact for generations to come.

[*Translation*]

Over the past year, youth have made extraordinary sacrifices to ensure the safety of older people. Bill C-30 would make college and university studies more accessible and affordable by

extending the waiver of interest on federal student and apprenticeship loans until March 2023. This will make it possible for the 1.5 million Canadians who are repaying student loans to save some money.

Bill C-30 has a number of important measures aimed at reducing poverty and improving the health and well-being of Canadians.

As mentioned earlier today, the government is proposing to set the minimum federal hourly wage at $15. Note that workers in jurisdictions with a higher hourly wage will receive the minimum wage in effect in their province.

With Bill C-30, the government is also enhancing the Canada workers benefit and simplifying eligibility rules for people working multiple jobs.

The government is choosing to standardize EI eligibility rules and guarantee that severance and other termination benefits do not delay EI benefits. Additionally, it is extending EI sickness benefits to better support sick or injured Canadians and is providing additional weeks of recovery benefits.

In the past 14 months, no one has felt the devastating health effects of COVID-19 more than seniors. We were able to see just how vulnerable they were, and how urgent it was to implement measures to help them financially while allowing them to age at home with dignity.

Seniors deserve a safe, secure and dignified retirement. The government proposes to make a one-time payment of $500 in August 2021 to Old Age Security recipients who are or will be 75 or over in June 2022. Bill C-30 also includes a permanent 10% increase to OAS for people aged 75 and over as of July 2022.

Measures are also being taken to improve the disability benefit and relax the rules pertaining to the transfer of generational wealth from a parent or grandparent to a person with a disability, and to make our communities and workplaces more accessible.

[*English*]

In Budget 2021, the government is committed to continuing its support for Indigenous communities as it invests in addressing COVID-19, child and family services, mental health and education. The government is also working to support Indigenous entrepreneurs in building greater capacity for community investment.

[*Translation*]

Bill C-30 also makes an important change that would eliminate an obstacle to First Nations' use of tax revenues. This amendment will facilitate access to financing under the system created by the First Nations Fiscal Management Act.

This amendment will give Indigenous peoples much greater autonomy for the purpose of building and overseeing infrastructure projects necessary to their community development.

In the next part of my speech, I will quickly go over other measures and investments in Bill C-30 that relate to various sectors of the economy.

[*English*]

The government intends to accelerate the growth of our net-zero-emissions economy, invest in our clean-energy industries and greener communities, advance Canada's climate plan and protect nature. Bill C-30 proposes an investment of $1.1 billion.

The government proposes measures for access to affordable housing; the restoration of tourism and artistic, cultural and sports activities; and the budget lays out support for charities, investment in infrastructure, local and regional development, rural communities, the North and immigration.

The planned investments are in the order of $4.7 billion.

[*Translation*]

Furthermore, the government's commitments focus on fairness and fiscal responsibility. Bill C-30 introduces a new retail payments supervison framework that will establish a regulatory framework for payment service providers. It makes important adjustments to the GST for digital services. It implements measures to combat aggressive tax avoidance and close loopholes, expands the scope of measures dealing with money laundering and strengthens certain Canada Revenue Agency measures.

As you can see, this plan has a good number of important measures that were developed in accordance with the economic and social imperatives of our country. This approach should result in strong and sustained economic recovery.

I will now speak about the government debt. Senators will recall that, before the pandemic, the debt-to-GDP ratio was just over 31.2%. We note that this ratio is now estimated to be 51.2% in the estimates for the 2021-22 fiscal year.

A slightly more detailed analysis of the debt indicates that liabilities total $1,799.7 billion, backed by financial assets of $466.2 billion and non-financial assets of $99.8 billion, for total federal debt of $1,233.8 billion.

As for debt charges, they should total $22.1 billion for 2021-22, which represents 0.9% of GDP.

I can well understand my colleagues' concerns regarding our country's debt, because I share those concerns.

The debt is costing taxpayers a lot of money. It will be transferred to future generations and, one day, they may find that burden difficult to bear.

When the pandemic hit, Canada was in a strong budgetary position, which enabled the government to provide support to Canadians and businesses. The objective was twofold: to help them deal with the impact of the pandemic and to better position our economy for recovery.

The pandemic had an effect not only on Canada's debt but also on the debt of all the other countries in the world. It is important to remember, however, that Canada is doing well compared to other countries because it has the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio of all the G7 countries and has maintained its AAA credit rating.

What's more, in its debt management strategy, the government plans to maximize the financing of COVID-19-related debt through long-term issuance by lowering debt rollover and providing more predictability in the cost of servicing debt.

I'd like to close with the words of the Governor of the Bank of Canada, Tiff Macklem, who said the following in his testimony before the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce last week, and I quote:

[*English*]

> For working Canadians, a complete recovery means a healthy job market with good opportunities. That includes low-wage workers, women and young people, who have been hit hardest by this pandemic. A complete recovery means companies have confidence that the pandemic is over and they are investing to seize new business opportunities.

[*Translation*]

Most of the measures proposed in this bill involve significant investments in human capital and in businesses, which will ensure a greener, fairer and more prosperous economic recovery for all Canadians. With that, I urge you to vote in favour of Bill C-30. Thank you for your attention.

• (1740)

[*English*]

Hon. Donna Dasko: Honourable senators, I am pleased to rise today to contribute to this third reading debate on Bill C-30, Budget Implementation Act, 2021.

I very much want to thank the bill's sponsor, Senator Moncion, for her hard work in preparing and bringing this bill to the Senate. I also want to thank my colleagues at the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, and especially our chair, Senator Petitclerc, for the time and effort they invested in studying a number of divisions in this legislation.

My comments today are devoted to Division 33 of Bill C-30, titled Early Learning and Child Care.

In just three sentences, Division 33 sets out the first tranche of spending toward the government's ambitious plan to create a national child care system. But behind the short text of Division 33, colleagues, lies a long history of hopes, dashed expectations, and failed efforts to forge such a system.

It was 50 years ago that the Royal Commission on the Status of Women called for accessible, affordable, high-quality national child care. Its report, released in December of 1970, includes a remarkably modern sounding call for child care, which stated:

> We recommend that the federal government immediately take steps to enter into agreement with the provinces leading to the adoption of a national Day-Care Act under which federal funds would be made available on a cost-sharing basis for the building and running of day-care centres meeting specified minimum standard . . . .

That was said in 1970.

Over this half century since the report there were studies, there were promises and there were two major attempts to develop and pass federal legislation. The first of these was in 1987, when Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservative government came up with a $5.4-billion plan to create 200,000 new child care spaces across Canada, among other items. That's a lot of money — $5.4 billion — especially in 1987.

The legislation passed the House of Commons, but when Mr. Mulroney called an election in the fall of 1988 his child care initiative died on the Order Paper right here in the Senate, never to be resurrected after Mr. Mulroney's government won re-election. Nearly two decades later, in 2005, Paul Martin's minority Liberal government promised $5 billion over five years toward a national system. Mr. Martin succeeded in obtaining bilateral early learning and child care deals with all 10 provinces just days before the 2006 election, but those arrangements were terminated by Stephen Harper's incoming Conservative government.

So 50 years have now gone by without such a national program. For much of this time, a national child care program was seen to be the next big social program to follow medicare, which was our first big social program, but national child care was always on the back burner, always strangely out of reach, and always dominated, behind other priorities. Therefore I think it's really important for us to understand this journey and the historical moment we find ourselves in today.

We are here to consider this national child care program developed by this federal government under Minister Freeland, with an estimated expenditure of $30 billion over five years. Yes, this is it; this is the real deal. As Senator Moncion said, the first step is an initial expenditure of $2.95 billion in fiscal year 2021-22, and that is what is in Bill C-30. This year's dollars will flow to provinces and territories in connection with bilateral agreements in respect of early learning and child care. The goal at the end of year one is to reduce the price of regulated child care by 50% by the end of 2022 in all provinces and territories.

Senators, I support the federal government's involvement in national child care. Child care is important from every possible perspective. For many decades now, women have recognized that independence and equality are advanced only when child care responsibilities can be shared. Child care makes it viable for women to work and to return to work, it increases the quantity and quality of employment opportunities in child care itself — careers that are largely occupied by women — and it reduces barriers to women's success in the labour force.

Government estimates suggest that this child care plan could add 240,000 employment opportunities for women in Canada. And some experts, like the Vancouver-based Centre for Future Work, predict that as many as 780,000 more women are likely to join the labour force or increase their hours of work in the next 10 years as a result of affordable child care.

With women re-entering the workforce more readily, Canadians should also expect to see material increases to household income, especially among lower-income families, where a return to work was financially untenable with high child care costs. My city, Toronto, consistently shows up as having the highest child care costs in this country in almost every category of child care — infant, toddler and so on — so a 50% reduction in fees is going to be very helpful in my community.

We know that health outcomes are linked to household incomes as well, and we know that children's outcomes are dramatically improved by access to early childhood education. The prospects for economic growth are also significant. Karen Hall, Director General, Strategic and Service Policy Branch, Employment and Social Development Canada, told the Social Affairs Committee that for every dollar invested in early childhood education, the broader economy receives between $1.50 and $2.80 in return.

Also at the Social Affairs Committee, Craig Alexander, Chief Economist and Executive Advisor, Alexander Economic Views and Deloitte Canada said:

> The economic multiplier, the return on investment that you get, has been studied a lot . . . . The estimates range from around 1.5 for every dollar invested to upwards of $5.

So a national child care program will benefit women, children, families and the economy. This is one of the very best ways for this country to "build back better" after the pandemic that has done so much damage to this country and to the world.

As important as it is, I have two concerns about this initiative. The first is that the shape of the child care created by this spending depends entirely on what the federal government negotiates with the provinces. While federal objectives and principles around affordability, training and quality have indeed been set out already in a 2017 framework document, the end result of this process is anything but clear.

Professor Ken Boessenkool from McGill University, who came to speak to our committee, suggested that the child care plan was, as he called it, the "opening bargaining position of the federal government," and he also stated, "It is all aspiration, with the perspiration all dependent on negotiations with the provinces."

The government holds up the Quebec system as a model, but there is no guarantee at all that most provinces or even any provinces will end up with this model, so that is one of my concerns. My second concern is that this program is especially vulnerable to being cut as we go forward.

• (1750)

This year's expenditure, just below $3 billion, amounts to a little less than 10% of the total and high price tag of $30 billion. That's a lot of money out there that's not currently allocated. Another government, other priorities, another emergency, concerns about fiscal prudence and concerns about the growing deficit — all of these or any of these may derail this program down the road.

Then, colleagues, we have our history, which I summarized earlier. In 1988, a federal government created a national child care program, an election was called and the program died. In 2005, a federal government created a child care program, an election was called and the program died. In 2021, a federal government created a child care program, an election was called and then what? Will history repeat itself, or will we take a different path?

Colleagues, I am proud and pleased to be a parliamentarian today and to cast my vote for a different and better future.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Colin Deacon: Honourable senators, Budget 2021 is historic both in size and scope. According to its authors, ". . . it's about creating more jobs and prosperity for Canadians in the days —and decades—to come."

I'd like to congratulate our Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance on her first budget and recognize her efforts, including the important creation of a beneficial ownership registry.

However, I will focus my comments on whether some of the budget plans and the legislative authorities in Bill C-30 hold sufficient promise to actually deliver greater prosperity in the decades to come. This includes important investments in child care, as well as digital adoption in small- and medium-sized

enterprises, or SMEs. I will also look at the inclusion of the Retail Payments Activity Act in Bill C-30, which the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce studied along with efforts to address money laundering. I will finish by examining the budget efforts to harness the potential of the digital economy, discuss the absence of a plan for digital identity and whether the increased investment in our Competition Bureau is sufficient. I'll focus my efforts on where the budget and Bill C-30 hold promise and deliver, and where I think further efforts will be required.

I want to start by discussing the only way to create greater prosperity, beyond winning the lottery, and that's improving productivity growth. A simplified formula for increasing prosperity starts with robust competition. That's because competition is what inspires new entrants to disrupt inefficient incumbents. Equally, it forces and causes mature incumbents to look for ways to improve the value they deliver to their customers.

Competition drives innovation, which produces productivity growth, enabling companies to do more with less and produce greater value from every hour worked. It's the only sustainable path to increase prosperity, especially in a global economy upended by climate change, digitization and COVID.

Let's look at the budget promise to invest in child care and early learning. This, in itself, is a positive force for improved productivity. It liberates our current workforce to be engaged, to take risks and to seek opportunity. It reverses Canada's long-standing underinvestment in early learning relative to other major economies.

Research suggests that the broader economy stands to gain between $1.50 to $2.80 for every dollar invested into child care and early learning. A 2017 Conference Board of Canada study places this number as high as $5.80 for every dollar invested. I'm convinced that the highest returns come from ensuring that the investment does not just deliver child care but the effective early learning that measurably improves the skills that all children need to succeed in school.

It's tragic that reading skills, which are foundational to the processing of language in all subject areas and aspects of life, remain shockingly low. For example, the 2018-19 results from Ontario's Education Quality and Accountability Office indicated that 26% of Ontario's Grade 3 students did not meet the provincial standard for reading. If you are struggling to read in Grade 3, there are decades of evidence to show that your struggle with formal education is only beginning. Sadly, little has changed in the 25 years since I was immersed in this field, working with North America's leading reading researchers.

Our desire for prosperity in the decades to come demands that we deliver world-leading early-learning programs.

I sincerely hope that the federal government, with the help of its to-be-created national advisory council, will prioritize the recommendation of a 2009 Senate report called *Early Childhood Development and Care: Next Steps*. This report supported an evidence-based approach to reduce the risk of illiteracy and to help our most vulnerable children to succeed. They cited the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, or OECD, recommendations that investments should include national curricular frameworks, emphasize quality improvement and increase data collection and research. Our colleagues also recommended that an annual accountability review, based on robust data collection, be conducted. This aligns with recommendations made to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance in 2016.

I pray we will not miss this crucial opportunity to catalyze the success of all children, especially our most vulnerable. Let's not just deliver child care for parents but empower their children with the early skills they need to succeed in this increasingly competitive world. I'd argue that unprecedented levels of economic disruption demand that our students be much better prepared than our generation ever was.

Our businesses need to be better prepared as well. Consider the Statistics Canada report that labour productivity in our digitally intensive industries grew three and a half times faster than the rest of the economy over the last 20 years. Yet, in 2019, 19% of small businesses still had no web presence at all. This put those businesses at an incredible disadvantage as they headed into the pandemic. Even more concerning is that sophisticated technologies, those with the greatest productivity growth potential, are not being adopted by SMEs. For example, artificial intelligence, or AI, has the potential to unleash astonishing productivity gains, yet only 1.7% of small businesses and 3.5% of medium enterprises in Canada integrate AI into their operations.

When SMEs do not adopt digital technologies, they struggle to stay competitive. According to the Business Development Bank of Canada, or BDC, digitally mature SMEs are 62% more likely to have higher sales growth, 52% more likely to have higher profits and 70% more likely to be exporters.

These are among the reasons I was pleased to see the budget include significant investments in assisting SMEs in their digital adoption. Budget 2021 will invest $4 billion over four years through the Canada Digital Adoption Program. Additionally, $1.4 billion will be invested through Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, or ISED, to create training, advisory and work opportunities to enable digital adoption, and $2.6 billion through BDC to help SMEs finance digital adoption.

The smaller Australian Digital Business Plan announced last September provided AU$800 million, and it's expected to return an impressive AU$6.4 billion per year in GDP by 2024. Let's aim for that level of return on investment.

The federal government must ensure that this program delivery ultimately catalyzes greater private investment. In 2020, Canadian businesses only invested 10.5% of capital spending in digital technologies, compared to 14% in Britain and 16% in the United States. Increasing digital maturity is associated with significant productivity gains across the entire economy, but some need more support. This is true for SMEs from equity-seeking groups. It's good that the budget recognizes that special attention is needed to reduce systemic barriers to opportunity and inclusion, so we ensure our economy is firing on all cylinders.

Additionally, Bill C-30 does well to introduce a long overdue Retail Payments Activities Act, or RPAA. In Part 4 of Division 7 of Bill-30, the RPAA will deliver new payment service options that are far more cost efficient, accessible and secure for both consumers and merchants. This is good news.

Currently, when customers pay with a credit card, merchants must pay up to 3.5% of the revenue to process that payment, and customers pay exorbitant rates of interest if they are late with their payment. Additionally, the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada estimate that 34% of Canadians are victims of credit card fraud, knowingly or not. Regulatory stagnation has prevented Canadians from accessing globally competitive payment services.

• (1800)

The Hon. the Speaker: I'm sorry, Senator Deacon, but it's six o'clock, and I have to interrupt you.

Pursuant to rule 3-3(1) and the orders adopted on October 27 and December 17, 2020, I am obliged to leave the chair until seven o'clock, unless there is leave that the sitting continue.

If you wish the sitting to be suspended, please say "suspend."

Hon. Senators: Suspend.

The Hon. the Speaker: The sitting will be suspended until seven o'clock, at which time you will have the balance of your time, Senator Deacon.

(The sitting of the Senate was suspended.)

(The sitting of the Senate was resumed.)

• (1900)

THIRD READING

On the Order:

> Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Moncion, seconded by the Honourable Senator Gagné, for the third reading of Bill C-30, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 19, 2021 and other measures.

Hon. Colin Deacon: Honourable senators, I hope you enjoyed your dinner. A quick recap: Before the break, I highlighted the importance of the early learning portion of the child care early learning initiative in the budget and the initiative to accelerate digitization of our small- and medium-sized enterprises. I am now speaking about the proposed RPAA, the retail payment activities act, and how regulatory changes will reduce costs for small business and consumers and will reduce credit card fraud.

Regulatory stagnation has prevented Canadians from accessing globally competitive payments services.

To illustrate, an India-based challenger bank has developed an innovative smartphone-based payments system. It costs merchants next to nothing, helps them to advertise and build up customer loyalty, but it has also reduced fraud rates by more than twentyfold relative to credit card fraud rates in Canada. Remarkably, this globally delivered payments system was developed in Toronto but has not been available in Canada due to our regulatory stagnation in the banking sector.

The RPAA will finally enable Canadians to access these services and productivity improvements. Sadly, there is still no word as it relates to the massive economic and social potential that will be unlocked through open banking or what is now called consumer-directed finance.

The Budget Implementation Act includes a lot of incremental actions aimed at addressing the issue of money laundering. However, Canada lacks a meaningful legislative agenda to address this pervasive issue, worth trillions of dollars every year. There was, however, a bright spot, as I mentioned, with the creation of the federal benefit ownership registry, as noted by Senator Downe last week. But the amendments to the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act in Bill C-30, Part 4, Division 6, are incremental and, as our Banking Committee observed, insufficient. We found that additional measures must be considered by the government to improve the enforcement of Canada's anti-money-laundering and anti-terrorist-financing regime.

Consider the fact that, based on estimates from the United Nations, the bad guys are winning 99.8% of the time. At the very best, criminal money flows are intercepted only 1.1% of the time, despite the fact that I am sure we were seeing the best efforts of everyone involved. But what we're doing, what the world is doing and how we're doing it is not working. We've got to change the game.

Consider for a moment the global RegTech market, which is expected to grow by 21% a year through 2026. This presents Canada with an incredible opportunity to lead the world by empowering a new sector of business dedicated to helping governments and financial institutions intercept criminal and terrorist money flows. It fits our country's brand, and we have already built global leaders in this sector, like Verafin in Newfoundland and Trulioo in B.C. Instead, we stick to our ineffective command-and-control approach to regulation that I spoke about on Bill C-10 last night.

Speaking of the burgeoning markets and harnessing digital technology, the Minister of Digital Government has spoken of the need for Canada to implement a pan-Canadian digital identity plan. However, neither the budget nor Bill C-30 include any of the funding or legislative changes needed to do this.

Digital ID provides reliable identity and credential authentication where web and mobile applications require proof of identity. Think of banking, think of government services, health care, health records, among others. A robustly designed digital identity framework protects individuals from privacy, identity and cyberthreats, and it has been proven to generate significant economic and social benefits, including lower costs and increased financial, social and political inclusion. However, it's worrisome that due to a lack of coordinated leadership, we are starting to see a fragmentation of efforts on digital identity, which risks resulting in a patchwork of legislation approaches, severely limiting future benefits.

Legislation is needed to create and incentivize the adoption of a trusted digital identity framework across governments, private sector and the not-for-profit entities, akin to recent developments we've seen in Australia. New legislation can be supported by existing national standards, such as those published by the CIO Strategy Council, and provide the authorities to incorporate these into regulations.

Ultimately, this all ties back to the fact that we are not yet providing a sufficient regulatory foundation for Canada to become more competitive. This will limit our future prosperity. Despite increasing the funding to Competition Bureau Canada by $96 million over five years, that funding did not come with any increased authority. We are not even close to taking advantage of the benefits that the Competition Bureau could bring if it were fully empowered to unlock competition as a means to spur innovation throughout our economy.

Competition matters, perhaps more now than ever. It drives the innovation that delivers productivity growth, which improves our global competitiveness and ultimately our prosperity in the decades to come. Other nations have imbedded mandatory, formalized competition assessments into their reviews of new legislation. Australia has their Competition Principles Agreement, France has their *Code de commerce*. South Korea has their Monopoly Regulation and Fair Trade Act. Japan has the Implementation Guidelines for Policy Evaluation of Regulations. We need to empower our Competition Bureau to require the examination of programs, policies, regulations and legislation to assess whether they limit competition in Canada. This type of authority will unlock the regulatory stagnation that is limiting innovation, productivity, growth, and ultimately, our prosperity.

To be very clear, I am not suggesting deregulation. I'm suggesting agile regulation that responds to changes in technology, business models and consumer needs and expectations. Canada, at all levels, needs more innovation. Entrepreneurs are problem solvers. The bigger the problem, the more excited they get. Sadly, we still view Innovation Canada as being responsible for innovation in Canada. Let's change that and prioritize a whole-of-government approach, especially as we work to rebuild from the COVID recession.

Bill C-30 has sprouts of good ideas and some forward motion, but much more needs to be done to create opportunity from the multitude of current and emerging challenges that we face in Canada today. Thank you, colleagues.

Hon. Elizabeth Marshall: Honourable senators, I rise to speak to Bill C-30, the Budget Implementation Act and to Budget 2021, which was tabled in Parliament on April 19.

Budget 2021 outlines the government's priorities and spending plans for the current fiscal year and the following four years. Specifically, the government proposes to spend an additional $101 billion in what it called "incremental spending" over the next three years, with $49 billion earmarked for this year.

The $101 billion in "incremental spending" was identified in the Fall Economic Statement 2020 as a stimulus plan to accelerate economic recovery and create jobs. In fact, both the Fall Economic Statement and Budget 2021 include a commitment to create 1 million jobs.

Major initiatives in this $49 billion in incremental spending for this year include $14 billion for programs to support workers affected by the pandemic, $12 billion to support businesses and jobs primarily through the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy and the Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy, and $3 billion to establish a Canada-wide early learning and child care system.

The remaining $20 billion is allocated to about 240 budget initiatives, which range in estimated costs up to $1.7 million.

The $101 billion in incremental spending or stimulus has been criticized by a number of reputable organizations and individuals who question the necessity and timing of the investments and whether the additional $100 billion in spending is necessary.

The International Monetary Fund in its 2021 Article IV Consultation said that the federal government's commitment to spend up to 4% of GDP over the next three years to support the recovery needs further justification.

Our own Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer has been critical of the $100 billion in incremental spending, questioning the timing and the assessment of the impact of the $100 billion. While the government has committed to creating 1 million jobs, the Parliamentary Budget Officer has estimated these measures will increase employment by only 89,000 jobs.

• (1910)

Honourable senators, budget deficits and increasing debt have become a serious fiscal challenge for the government. This past year has been a difficult one, with increasing deficits and increasing debt.

Bill C-14, which we passed in May, raised the government's debt ceiling from $1.1 trillion to $1.8 trillion.

At the end of March 2020, just 15 months ago, the government's debt was $1 trillion. It is now projected to increase to $1.8 trillion by the end of March 2024. The increase is quite significant: an increase of $651 billion, or 60%, over a four-year period.

This year, the government estimates that its revenues, which are primarily tax revenues, will cover approximately 71% of its expenses. The shortfall of the other 29%, or $154 billion, will be borrowed.

Honourable senators, two themes emerged at our Finance Committee and were revisited a number of times when we studied the budget. These were concerns over the debt and the deficit: how the debt will be repaid and the deficits decreased and the risk of rising interest rates.

An official of the C.D. Howe Institute appeared before our Finance Committee and presented its views on Budget 2021. Of particular concern were comments identifying the government's projection scenarios as "rather optimistic," and that slight changes in economic growth and interest rate assumptions can dramatically change the course of the debt burden.

The budget is based on the assumptions of low interest rates and economic growth. We need only compare November's Fall Economic Statement and April's budget to realize the impact that an increase in interest rates has had on the government's projected deficit. In the four months between the economic statement and the budget, estimated interest charges on the public debt increased $1.8 billion, from $20.3 billion to $22.1 billion.

Even the government's own budget identifies the impact a sustained 100-basis-point interest rate increase will have on the deficit. In year one, it would increase the deficit by $1 billion, and by year five the increase would be $5 billion.

Honourable senators, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development released its current economic outlook recently. While comments on government's financial supports to businesses and households were positive, the report went on to say that:

> . . . once the economy is on a firm footing, a medium-term fiscal strategy to reduce public debt should be considered.

It also said:

> With only modest reductions in the public-debt burden projected over the four years to 2025-26, a medium-term fiscal strategy should aim to restore fiscal headroom after the pandemic subsides.

Honourable senators, these are uncertain times. Government debt is at its highest and continues to grow. Deficits are projected well into the future, financed by more debt. Higher debt will limit the fiscal room for the next financial shock, and it will be passed on to future generations.

The balance sheet of the Bank of Canada has expanded significantly by hundreds of billions of dollars over the past 15 months, primarily because of its purchase of Government of Canada bonds. The Bank of Canada has adjusted its weekly purchase of Government of Canada bonds to a target of $3 billion a week. This works out to $156 billion over the next year — the exact amount the government says it will need to borrow this year.

Inflation was 3.4% in April and 3.6% in May — well above the Bank of Canada's target of 2%.

Interest rates are projected to rise, increasing the cost of servicing the public debt, corporate debt and personal debt, including mortgage debt.

These low interest rates make new spending "affordable" for government provided they remain low, but this is a big risk. If interest rates rise, the cost of servicing the debt will rise and crowd out spending on other government programs.

Canadian household debt is also a concern. According to the OECD, Canadian household debt was at 176%, which is the highest among the G7 countries. We are the most highly indebted citizens of the G7.

The Governor of the Bank of Canada, the President of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development have all identified household debt as a risk to the Canadian economy. When the President of CMHC testified at our Finance Committee, she said that homeowners were taking on excessive debt and, while it may not be a problem now, excessive debt creates economic fragility.

If there is another financial shock to the economy or interest rates rise, homeowners may be faced with the same challenges our government will face.

An early learning and child care plan is one of the major initiatives of Budget 2021. Government is proposing new investments of $30 billion over the next five years to implement a Canada-wide early learning and child care system in conjunction with the provincial and territorial governments. Of the funding projected to be spent over the next five years, $3 billion of the $30 billion has been allocated to this year and $5 billion next year.

The objective is to cost share the program 50-50 with the provinces and territories. Officials told us that discussions with the provinces and territories have already commenced. Funding of $916 million has been identified in Supplementary Estimates (A), and funding will be transferred to the provinces and territories as soon as bilateral agreements are reached.

The objectives of the program are ambitious and include a 50% reduction in average fees for regulated early learning and child care in all provinces except Quebec by 2022 — that is, within the next 18 months.

The Social Affairs Committee, in examining this part of Bill C-30, suggested the government examine the possibility of enhancing existing national surveys in order to collect the information required to evaluate the success of the new system and to guide future policy decisions. This information is necessary to ensure the $30 billion meets its objectives.

When officials testified before the Finance Committee earlier this month, very few details of the program were provided. Given that a major objective is to be achieved within the next 18 months — that is, a 50% reduction in average fees for regulated early learning and child care in all provinces outside of Quebec — I would expect the department to report their progress on this objective. Officials are going to be challenged to deliver on this objective: $8 billion is expected to be spent on this program within the next 18 months, so we will soon know whether this $8 billion has met its objective of reducing average fees by 50% by the end of next year.

The Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy and Lockdown Support programs are currently set to expire this month. Bill C-9, assented to in November 2020, extended the wage subsidy program to the end of this month. This bill proposes to further extend the wage subsidy program to September 25 and phase out the subsidy from July 4 to September 25 by declining the subsidy rate for each of the three 4-week periods.

Government has included $10 billion in its budget to extend the wage subsidy program to September 25. The wage subsidy program and the formula for calculating the amount of subsidy to which a business is entitled has, until now, been included in legislation. Each extension and change in the formula has been brought forward to Parliament for debate and approval. I've spoken on this program several times in this chamber.

Bill C-30 proposes to give the minister the authority to extend the wage subsidy program and its formula for calculation by regulation up to November 30. There will be no opportunity for parliamentary debate. The extension of spending authority has already been provided under the Income Tax Act.

There is no money included in the budget if the program is extended between September 25 and November 30, so if this program is extended it will increase the deficit and increase the amount the government must borrow.

The bill also proposes to extend the Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy and the Lockdown Support program to September 25 and, similar to the wage subsidy program, will gradually reduce the amount of subsidy.

Government has included $1.9 billion in its budget this year to extend the rent subsidy program and Lockdown Support. The bill also proposes to extend, by regulation, the rental subsidy program and subsidy formula up to November 30. Again, there will be no opportunity for parliamentary debate, as spending authority has already been provided and there is no money included in the budget if the program is extended between September 25 and November 30.

In summary, the government does not have to return to Parliament for approval of the program extensions, the changes to the program or the subsidy rates. They don't even have to return to Parliament for spending authority.

• (1920)

Honourable senators, Bill C-30 proposes to make several amendments to the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act. This section of Bill C-30 was referred to the Banking Committee for study.

The government is also proposing to spend $2 million to implement a publicly accessible corporate ownership registry by 2025.

Canada's legislation on money laundering is one of the weakest among liberal democracies. James Cohen of Transparency International Canada, in addressing our committee, told us that Canada is marketed as a safe haven for illicit cash because Canada has weak anti-corruption laws and enforcement. Transparency International Canada is the Canadian chapter of Transparency International, the world's leading anti-corruption movement.

This part of the budget was referred to our Banking Committee, which included the following, and this is right from the committee report:

> The committee continues to be disappointed with the federal government's efforts in combatting money laundering, terrorist financing, corruption, tax evasion, tax avoidance and other related criminal activities. The committee believes that the incremental changes proposed . . . are insufficient and that additional measures must be considered by the government to improve the enforcement of Canada's anti-money laundering and anti-terrorist financing regime.
>
> The committee notes that the 2021 federal budget proposes to provide $2.1 million over two years to support the implementation of a publicly accessible corporate beneficial ownership registry. This registry is integral to a robust system to combat criminal offences such as those listed above. However, implementation will not occur until 2025. The proposed funding would expire in 2023 and no funding is proposed for the two years prior to the scheduled implementation date. As such, the committee feels that the proposed funding may not be adequate and questions whether the beneficial ownership system will be completed by 2025. . . .

> The committee believes that the scheduled implementation date of 2025 will place Canada further behind international peers.

Honourable senators, British Columbia has been actively investigating money laundering in its province. The Cullen Commission of Inquiry was appointed in 2019 to investigate the scope and impact of money laundering in the province over the past decade and a half. The Cullen Commission released its interim report in November.

I just want to go back and give you information as to the commitment by this government over the past years to combat money laundering.

In Budget 2017, the federal government specifically committed to implementing strong standards for corporate and beneficial ownership transparency that provides safeguards against money laundering. The following year, the government made additional commitments in Budget 2018 to pursue legislative amendments to their corporate statutes to require corporations to strengthen the availability of beneficial ownership information. Then, in Budget 2019, the government created the Anti-Money Laundering Action, Coordination and Enforcement Team —

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Marshall, I apologize for interrupting you, but your time has expired.

Senator Marshall: Thank you very much, Your Honour. I'll save my notes for my next speech.

Hon. Rosemary Moodie: Honourable senators, I rise to speak to Bill C-30, Budget Implementation Act, 2021.

Colleagues, it is important to note the significance of this budget. The past 15 months have been marked by the COVID-19 pandemic and the devastation that has been left in its wake. During this time, we as a country have deliberated and debated what we need as a society as we move out of this pandemic, redefining what is meant by essential, what a caring society is and what it must look like, how we ought to care for each other, and we vowed to act differently as a country as we emerged from this tragedy.

For many policy-makers, there is an increased willingness to undertake wholesale and ambitious changes that are overdue in many areas, such as long-term care, Pharmacare, housing and reforms to our Employment Insurance regime. We know that the status quo does not work and that we need to chart a new path and create a Canada that works for all Canadians.

Today, I want to speak about one such issue: one that will require purposeful government action to make the difference that is needed. I will be speaking about child care.

I will not repeat the history that was very well outlined by Senator Dasko, a history that reflects the decades of incremental investments in a system that fails to provide the care children and their families require.

A UNICEF study compared 41 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, or OECD, countries on their performance on child care. Canada, in its performance, was quite lacklustre: twenty-second overall, ranking sixteenth in access and twenty-first in affordability for child care. When we reflect further on availability and access, our overall enrolment rates for ages 2 to 4 was only 53% prior to the pandemic. We are in the middle of the rankings on affordability, with child care of two children costing just under 20% of a family's income. The report also notes that the high cost of child care exacerbates inequalities and deters women from returning to work.

Then came the pandemic, which severely depressed women's participation in the workforce as the burden of caring for children fell on them. An RBC report from 2020 found that women were much more likely to fall out of the workforce and that employment among women with toddlers or school-aged children fell by 7% in the early months of the pandemic compared to 4% among fathers. Regaining lost ground will not be easy for many women, colleagues.

These issues drove renewed calls for child care as a care policy and as an important economic policy that will have a significant impact on all prosperity by bolstering women's participation in the workforce. Budget 2021 has made child care a policy priority, allowing us to move from ineffective, incremental steps to strong and substantial action.

The government's commitment of $3 billion this fiscal year to be scaled up, as we have heard, matches the request of advocates nearly to the dollar. We know that negotiations with the provinces are the next step, but what do meaningful negotiations look like and what do we hope to get out of this?

I would like to share with you a vision for action that I'll take from an article I co-authored with Margaret McCain, the twenty-seventh Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick and author of the *Early Years Study* on child care and early childhood education. Along with this, I'll present evidence received from the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology during its study of Division 34 of Part 4 of Bill C-30.

First, in terms of vision, child care ought to be a non-mandatory entitlement starting at 2 years of age. This would effectively extend education by properly recognizing the pre-elementary tier. Child care should be accessible and available whether or not parents are working. Child care is an entitlement that will significantly benefit children's development and increase their potential.

The Social Affairs Committee heard from Craig Alexander, Chief Economist and Executive Advisor at Deloitte Canada. He proposed that in a province such as British Columbia, where over $1.6 billion is spent on special education annually, early childhood education would be key in better preparing children for school, fostering better cognitive development and producing significant long-term savings on special education. He suggested that it's actually easier and cheaper to address developmental issues earlier in the life of a child than later in life.

Child care as an entitlement will also have the downstream impact of producing a more resilient, better educated workforce. Child care ought to be universal, which means it should be accessible to all children, with a special view of ensuring access for children with disabilities and children from marginalized groups. Morna Ballantyne, Executive Director of Child Care Now, shared with the Social Affairs Committee that making child care universal is a key strategy to increasing social inclusion and strengthening the Canadian cultural mosaic. In my view, universality also means departing from traditional models to extend care to a broad set of children. For example, there are new models that provide child care for shift workers who are not on a normal 9-to-5 schedule.

• (1930)

Child care should be high quality, from the facilities to the training of staff and the resources available to them. Minister Qualtrough, in her testimony before the committee, recognized the need to standardize and streamline training for educators throughout the country. As Ms. Ballantyne shared, standardization needs to be combined with meaningful efforts to retain trained staff through competitive wages.

The topic of training was also a feature of the committee's report, where we welcomed the proposed focus on training and education standards for workers. Beyond training, every child should be cared for in a high-quality facility which provides an avenue for direct involvement with the federal government who would be providing capital investments in infrastructure for child care.

Child care should be publicly funded so that the child-care operators do not depend on parents for their operational costs. This has the impact of lowering the cost for parents and ensuring continued care for children should a parent lose work. Ms. Ballantyne shared with the committee that direct funding of child care in Quebec not only reduced costs but led to better quality of care.

Finally, child care should be publicly managed. For the last few decades, we have seen market pressure fail to provide accessible and affordable child care. Child care must be handled by the public to ensure proper distribution of resources, accountability and transparency.

This last point begs the question: What is the role of our federal government? I believe that by making child care a centrepiece of the budget and elevating child care as a policy priority, this government has already demonstrated leadership. Of course, the management of child care is done and will be done at local centres and administered by the provinces, but there is a role for the federal government.

The 2017 Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework, which contains many of the same principles that I have shared here, demonstrates that the federal government can play a role in setting the standard on the scope and principles for child care services in the provinces.

Mr. Alexander, in his deposition, proposed that the Government of Canada can provide data and analytics that would serve as evidence on the performance of various systems, and that this would in turn put pressure on the provinces to move toward more successful models.

The data could also allow us to track accessibility and identify child care deserts to ensure equitable access to care and early learning for those communities who need it most.

In its report, the committee noted the need for robust data and proposed the enhancement of the Canadian Health Survey of Children and Youth in order to collect this data. In addition, I would also propose that grants to conduct pilot projects and test models of care could be another way the federal government could contribute to improving outcomes.

We heard from Ken Boessenkool, J.W. McConnell Professor of Practice, Max Bell School of Public Policy, at McGill University, who proposed that the Government of Canada should reform the child care expense deduction to make it more generous to low- and middle-income families and to convert it to a rebate that is received monthly.

I agree with his proposal as it is a step that sits solely within the federal scope. Therefore, the government can have an immediate and meaningful impact in the near term. Some could view some elements of his testimony as opposed to the wholesale reforms envisioned by the federal government, but I do welcome his views, and I believe that in this important effort we should use every tool at our disposal.

Colleagues, any step toward universal child care and early learning is contingent on negotiations between Canada and the provinces. There are some positive signs of progress and past agreements that may provide a foundation for discussions. Nonetheless, I am concerned that more than two months since the budget, there have not been any announcements on the state of negotiations, and it is my hope that we will hear some news soon.

As I conclude, colleagues, although this budget is not perfect, it demonstrates that to move toward meaningful solutions, we need to get the right people to the table. After many decades of activism, it was Canada's first woman Finance Minister who made the commitment to universal child care. It was female academics and thought leaders such as Armine Yalnizyan and Kate Bezanson who sounded the alarm on the outsized impact of the pandemic on women's economic participation and pushed the policy discussion toward meaningful change — important voices who impacted decision making and change.

I also acknowledge that there is much work to be done. Canada must strengthen its parental leave policies to ensure that parents can care for their children in the crucial early months of their lives.

We must also tackle affordability and access in other areas, such as housing and food insecurity. This is important because making Canada the best country in which to raise a family and to be a child is key in keeping and attracting a quality workforce, it is key in producing the innovators and leaders of tomorrow and it is key in ensuring our long-term prosperity, wealth and moral leadership on the world stage.

I believe that there is now a greater understanding that caring for one another is not just the right thing to do, but it is also a strong economic policy. It is my hope that this lesson does not fade as we move past this pandemic.

Therefore, I invite you to support this bill, as I plan to do. Thank you, *meegwetch*.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marilou McPhedran: Honourable senators, as a senator from Manitoba, I want to acknowledge that I live on Treaty 1 territory, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota and Dene peoples and the homeland of the Métis Nation.

I also want to acknowledge that the Parliament of Canada is on unceded and unsurrendered Algonquin Anishinaabe territory and that we have many people joining us today from across Turtle Island who are located on both ceded and unceded land.

[*English*]

As an independent senator from Manitoba, which is Treaty 1 territory and the homeland of the Métis Nation, I commend Senator Lucie Moncion for her skill and grace as the sponsor of this crucial bill in this place.

Colleagues, there are many notable aspects of Bill C-30. Some are visionary and inspiring; others, not so much.

Exciting herstory was made when Canada's first woman Finance Minister, Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland, presented her first budget in April, the second year of this COVID-19 recession, which is the steepest and fastest economic contraction since the Great Depression.

We know that this pandemic has disproportionately affected low-wage workers, young people, women and racialized Canadians, many of whom are designated as essential workers who must stay on the front lines of society regardless of their level of risk.

For a feminist recovery plan to be real, this bill needs to provide jobs for workers, the majority of whom are women. It must enable parents, particularly mothers, to reach their full economic potential while their children are safe and supported, and it must invest in our viability as a democracy by substantially supporting generations of engaged and well-prepared young learners who are the leaders who will bear the brunt of what is being done or not done by our generation of leaders.

I am going to support this bill, but in my observations today, my focus is on intersectionality, women and youth in the context of the feminist recovery plan that we were told was core to Bill C-30, but overall can be hard to find.

Entrepreneurial businesswomen in this country contribute significantly to Canada's economic viability, and in this recession some prospered, but many businesses, especially small businesses, lost their battle to survive.

• (1940)

It's a good sign that the $22 million provided for women entrepreneurs in the budget will include a micro-lending program as a result of consultation with women entrepreneurs. Forty-one per cent of all loans provided to federal programming were to women, but now there is a target of 50% of loans to Indigenous women.

This budget can be seen as a feminist document in some ways.

Through this bill, the Canada Child Benefit will deliver huge improvements for this country. But one of the most destructive impacts of COVID-19 across the country has been the increase in reports of domestic violence and child abuse. Canadian social service entities are fielding almost double the number of calls related to domestic violence than before the pandemic. Statistics Canada advised that, during COVID-19, 1 in 10 women reported they were "very or extremely worried" about being abused in their homes. While not in this bill in detail, we can reasonably anticipate that the national action plan to reduce domestic violence will include necessary funding for women's shelters, health services, crisis hotlines and other social services.

Considering the majority of the budget is geared toward COVID-19 recovery, it is unfortunate that there are no provisions specifically being made for the recovery of women placed in severe danger for many months. What is not in Bill C-30 is moving forward on a first-ever national action plan to end gender-based violence, but we know that we're going to have an investment of over $600 million over five years, starting this year.

Helping to build, repair and support 35,000 affordable housing units for vulnerable Canadians through an investment of $2.5 billion and a reallocation of $1.3 billion in existing funding is much needed.

Subclause 24(22) and subclause 24(23) of the bill introduce the Canada recovery hiring program to facilitate the rehiring of employees who were laid off due to COVID-19 as well as the hiring of new employees, yet there are no provisions in place for how employers go about recruiting and creating incentives within this program to encourage the hiring of diverse folks, LGBTQ2+ folks or women generally. Those are the groups which we know have been hit the hardest by the pandemic, and that would be a way to implement a feminist agenda in this bill.

Those two examples highlight how a feminist lens on implementation could change outcomes.

COVID-19 recovery is an essential element of this bill, but without taking account of the way the pandemic has impacted women and their many intersecting identities, Bill C-30 will fall short of what can actually be delivered.

The gendered lens on child care and early learning is twofold. Not only does the burden of child care often fall on mothers, the child care and early-childhood learning sector is dominated by women who make up about 96% of the workforce. However, 95.5% of these women are estimated to earn less than the provincial minimum wage.

The wage gap is often misconstrued as a comparison of paycheques. However, it really becomes highlighted when workforces are primarily made up of women, labour becomes undervalued and women get underpaid and overworked.

Additionally, because Canada currently lacks a universal child care program, child care costs in the country can reach almost $2,000 a month. According to the most recently available census, over 80% of one-parent families are single mothers. This extreme inconsistency in cost paralyzes women who are left to care for their children on their own, and this makes the provisions of Bill C-30 crucial.

I also observe that there are gaps between what was promised in the April budget and what is, in fact, being delivered in Bill C-30. In April speeches, the federal government committed to a 50% reduction in average fees for regulated early learning and child care, or ELCC, everywhere outside of Quebec, which is up to $30 billion over the next five years, with $8.3 billion ongoing, for ELCC and Indigenous ELCC. The government also committed a minimum of $9.2 billion per year in child care, including Indigenous ELCC, starting in 2025, with the future objective of reaching a 50-50 cost share with provinces and territories.

In the words of the Honourable Maryam Monsef, our very capable Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development:

> In five years, every Canadian family will have a choice of $10/day childcare, which would reduce the average cost per child in Alberta from $1100 a month to approximately $200 a month. With a distinction based focus for Indigenous families and separate investments for kids with disabilities, this system will offer quality care for our kids, peace of mind and more choice for families and enable the biggest growth to our economy since NAFTA.

A review of Bill C-30 reveals that subclause 288(1) authorizes payments to the provinces through bilateral agreements on ELCC, but only to the end of this fiscal year in contrast to the five years announced in Budget 2021. Also, I can find no specific funding guaranteed for ELCC for Indigenous children in this bill, despite the commitment made in Budget 2021.

At a Senate committee meeting last month, Division 34 of the bill, ELCC, was addressed, and senators raised thoughtful concerns. To summarize, expert analysis was provided by Child Care Now's Executive Director, Morna Ballantyne, who noted that the promises in Budget 2021 on ELCC over the next five years, with a minimum of $9.2 billion annually thereafter, is sufficient leverage to persuade every province and territory to partner with the federal government. But if the federal government doesn't use its spending power to transform child care, it will be wasted.

So what is missing in Bill C-30 should be of great concern.

There are four key elements necessary to build a Canada-wide system of early learning and child care: One, licensed child care operations must be publicly funded; two, expanding the supply of services must be made a government responsibility; three, a workforce strategy to address recruitment, retention and program quality must be implemented; and four, expansion of the system must be limited to the public and not-for-profit sectors.

I would add a fifth crucial element: applying the intersectional lens to each and every aspect of the rollout of this bill and to the additional promises in Budget 2021 that are not addressed in this bill. For example, let's look at age. Seventy-one per cent of families under age 25 are single-parent households. Of those, more than 80% of those single parents are women. Effective implementation will be enhanced when more detailed analysis is applied to each aspect of the child care provisions.

In short, Bill C-30 is a crucial and major step in the right direction of centring publicly funded child care as key to an egalitarian, productive, feminist recovery that builds back better and fairer.

But there are insufficient guarantees in the bill to ensure that the key elements for ELCC and ELCC for Indigenous children will be rolled out as promised.

Dear colleagues, these facts lead to a clarion call for vigilance by parliamentarians long after we pass this bill.

Here are some key takeaways. The 2021 federal budget represents an important step toward achieving a child care system in Canada that is equitable, affordable and universal. Bill C-30 reflects this commitment in part, but it only represents the commitment for the coming fiscal year. It's important to ensure the government follows through on what is set out in the bill. Division 34 on ELCC is absolutely core to a feminist recovery in that it focuses on an issue that disproportionately impacts women on both sides of the coin. However, because ELCC is a twofold issue from the labour force to the parents in need of child care, ensuring that a gendered lens is available is absolutely crucial.

• (1950)

In order to deliver on a feminist recovery, attention and resources must focus on how each provision may have varying implications when considering intersections of age, race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender expression. It is difficult

to find evidence of such an intersectional lens in this bill to strengthen the policies and programs that must be implemented as a result.

In the time remaining, let's look at what is promised in this bill to benefit younger people in Canada, bearing in mind the common occurrence that governments with good intentions, regardless of party affiliation, are prone to delivering less than promised. For example, the Canadian Federation of Students raised the alert that of the $9 billion in student relief already promised, as of March 2021, $3 billion was yet to be allocated or spent.

Trouble is brewing, colleagues. The youth unemployment rate in May was 18%, the highest rate since the first wave of COVID and nearly 10% above the national average. Youth rely heavily on the industries that were hit the hardest by COVID-19 — tourism, retail and other entry-level jobs. Many of these jobs are not coming back soon, if ever. Last summer, essential government financial support for youth volunteers fell through with great embarrassment, but at least some youth affected by the pandemic were eligible for the Canada student relief fund. Youth unemployment is affected similarly this year, but no student relief fund is in place for this summer. Yes, it's a good thing that no interest will be charged on student loans for two years, but the result of having no student relief is that we're going to have a surge in need for loans. Yes, it's a good thing that the student loan repayment assistance threshold is planned to go from $25,000 to $40,000, but, honourable senators, a loan is a loan; a loan is a debt.

Just think of the difference this bill could have made if the government had made bold and innovative investments in young Canadians, or if even a pilot for guaranteed liveable income for young people had been introduced. Systemic discrimination is still alive in access to post-secondary education and a more generous loan program is not going to fix that. Simply put, the pre-COVID status quo for youth was troubling, and the bill seems focused on returning to that normal as opposed to building back better and fairer. Youth indebtedness, the age wealth gap and job security were problems well before the pandemic. Approaching these issues as if they are novel, as opposed to the ongoing reality for young people across Canada, is a mistake. Most of the positive youth-oriented provisions in the budget are pitched as temporary relief, not as permanent changes to the system. Temporary measures like freezing interest on loans, lowering the threshold for repayment and increasing grants are all good initiatives, but they should extend far after the end of this pandemic.

I commend Minister Freeland on Bill C-30. It is a powerful step forward and needed to strengthen resilience in our country. But it is the beginning of much more, longer term, that we must be prepared to do, because a stronger Canada, built on inclusion and fair opportunities, is achievable and the best way out of this crisis.

Thank you, *meegwetch*.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Éric Forest: Honourable senators, I'd like to thank Senator Moncion, who sponsored the bill, as well as all the members of the Social Affairs Committee and the Finance Committee for their hard work on Bill C-30.

I am pleased to speak at third reading of the Budget Implementation Act. I will take a few minutes to outline the Finance Committee's pre-study of Bill C-30. The committee held seven meetings and heard from witnesses from the business community, municipalities and cultural communities, in addition to representatives from the main departments involved. The committee did not append any observations. I would say that the budget was well received overall. The representatives from the business community were relieved to see that the measures to assist with wages and rents were being extended. I would, however, like to take a few minutes to highlight two major problems with Bill C-30.

First, I regret that the government continues to refuse to narrow the criteria for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy to prevent companies that access this subsidy from using it to increase shareholder dividends and executive bonuses. The committee has been critical about this, but the government still refuses to do anything about it.

Canadians were aghast to learn that Air Canada proposed to give nearly $20 million in bonuses and stock options to certain executives, even though the company had been given $656 million under the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy. Air Canada also received close to $5.9 billion under the Large Employer Emergency Financing Facility. As part of that program, Air Canada promised to limit the compensation and benefits paid out to executives. Given how upset Canadians were, many Air Canada executives chose to return their bonuses.

I thought it was pretty pathetic that the government was forced to ask Air Canada to cooperate after the fact, rather than taking responsibility in the first place. In my opinion, any assistance provided to businesses should have been subject to strict conditions regarding benefits for executives and shareholders. We are talking about public funds, after all. The government had the ability to act, but it chose not to do so.

The other thing that seems problematic to me relates to Employment Insurance. The Social Affairs Committee considered this issue, and I would like to echo what was said by the witnesses who appeared before the Finance Committee with regard to the economic region boundaries used to calculate Employment Insurance benefits.

As you know, these regional boundaries always create tension and unfairness, especially for seasonal workers. Workers don't understand why two people in the same industry have different EI qualification thresholds or aren't entitled to the same number of weeks of benefit. The government has committed to take a look at this as part of the EI reform.

The Minister of Finance promised that the reform should make EI coverage available to self-employed workers. The consultation itself is good news, but the government shouldn't spend two years reforming EI when the problem and the solutions are already well known.

Ever since the Axworthy EI reform of 1993, various studies, consultations and pilot projects have been introduced in an attempt to minimize these irritants. The pandemic exposed some of the system's shortcomings. The fact that hundreds of thousands of workers couldn't qualify for EI when they were laid off by employers because of the lockdown demonstrated the EI system's failings. I think we need we need the political will to tackle the problems with the system more than we need another EI consultation.

• (2000)

I therefore ask the government to shorten this consultation. In my view, two years is far too long, especially since no valid reason has been given to justify this time frame. If the government is committed to this two-year time frame, I hope that at least all the measures will be addressed and that the time can at least be used to study two more strategic issues. The first one, which I think is essential to our collective reflection, is the feasibility of a guaranteed liveable income for Canadians. The second issue is the need to set up an independent Employment Insurance fund separate from the Consolidated Revenue Fund and managed by workers and employers, much like the CNESST fund, for example.

In closing, I believe that Budget 2021 and Bill C-30 contain several elements that will help Canada emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic in a good position. Now that the urgency initially felt at the beginning of the crisis has passed, I would have hoped that the government would tighten the eligibility criteria for its business support programs to prevent abuse. I hope the process to reform the EI system can be accelerated so that it can become a real insurance plan and an effective tool for social solidarity and workforce development.

As a final point, I want to take a moment to thank all those who have supported us with dedication and professionalism throughout this unusual session as we navigated the crisis caused by the pandemic.

I wish everyone a relaxing summer with their families. Stay safe. Thank you. *Meegwetch*.

[*English*]

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I also rise today to speak to Bill C-30. My speech won't be quite as complimentary as others have been, and you may find that surprising. Nevertheless, let me point to some of the truths and realities of Bill C-30 and not the mess we have been told here so often — first of all by the Minister of Finance, as well as by many senators — about how wonderful this bill will be and that everything will be roses from here on in, if we adopt it.

This legislation, colleagues, is a 366-page omnibus bill divided into four parts, containing 363 clauses. It amends 40 acts of Parliament and enacts one new one.

Part 1 of the bill introduces 30 income tax measures. Part 2 implements nine GST measures. Part 3 implements excise tax measures. Part 4 consists of 37 divisions covering a wide range of initiatives. Let it never be said there is a tax that the Liberals don't like.

This bill implements only some of the programs announced in Budget 2021, so you can be certain that at some point we will be asked to examine budget implementation act, 2021, no. 2.

Among the spending measures contained in this bill are the following:

It establishes the Canada recovery hiring program, with up to $595 million for rehiring laid-off workers or new hires.

It provides $30 billion in funding over five years to establish a Canada-wide early learning and child care system.

It extends the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, the Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy and the Lockdown Support until September 25.

It extends the Canada Recovery Benefit and the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit.

It increases Old Age Security for seniors 75 and over.

It enhances the Canada workers benefit with $8.9 billion over six years in additional support for low-wage earners.

It enhances Employment Insurance sickness benefits from 15 to 26 weeks.

It establishes a $15-per-hour federal minimum wage.

It extends the waiver of interest on federal student and apprenticeship loans to March 2023.

What could possibly be wrong with this budget?

It enhances the Canada Small Business Financing Program through amendments to the Canada Small Business Financing Act, including broader eligibility and increased loan limits to facilitate greater access to financing for small businesses.

It provides an emergency top-up of $5 billion for provinces and territories — specifically, $4 billion through the Canada Health Transfer to help provinces and territories address immediate health care system pressures and $1 billion to support vaccine rollout campaigns across the country.

It provides $2.2 billion to address short-term infrastructure priorities in municipalities and First Nations communities.

It provides $4 billion to help small- and medium-sized businesses buy and adopt new technologies to increase productivity and competitiveness.

I tell you, there is no end to the gifts here. These items represent only a portion of the $497.6 billion in spending commitments made by the government in this budget and include only part of the $101.4 billion for new programs that will be rolled out over the next three years.

Colleagues, the Conservative Party has been, and continues to be, very supportive of getting financial assistance to Canadians whose health or finances have been negatively impacted by the pandemic. We have expedited the passage of every bill that was drafted to get help to those who have needed it in these unprecedented times. But after waiting two years for this budget, we are very troubled by a number of things, colleagues.

First, this bill — and the budget as a whole — is crammed with measures that are clumsily crafted, poorly thought out and extremely blunt instruments. At a time when every dollar should be spent wisely and utilized to ensure maximum impact, this government is carelessly spraying money around. This has become a habit of theirs.

Take the Canada Child Benefit, for example. Just over a month ago, we were here in this chamber and green-lighted $2.4 billion to be spent on CCB payments. But of that $2.4 billion, an estimated $300 million will go to households making — hear this — $100,000 or more per year, and over $50 million will go to families with a combined income of more than $150,000. Instead of targeting the money to those who needed it the most, the government chose to maximize the political impact of the expenditure.

This was the second time the government used the CCB program for COVID relief. The first time was in May 2020, when they sent out an additional CCB payment of $300. How many of you got that?

In her report on the Canada Child Benefit, the Auditor General of Canada noted that:

> . . . the formula adopted for the additional payment allowed close to 265,000 higher-income families not previously entitled under the program to benefit from it. Payments to higher-income families amounted to almost $88 million.

The OAG's report continued:

> . . . before the formula was amended, a family with 1 child under 6 years of age could receive benefits if its net family income did not exceed $195,460. The modified formula raised the maximum to $307,960 for the May 2020 one-time payment. . . .

Colleagues, in the early days of the pandemic there was a legitimate argument that blunt instruments were unavoidable as we scrambled to make sure Canadians were taken care of in the midst of very uncertain times. But one year later, Canadians can rightfully expect, and should rightfully expect, that the government would be a little more targeted in their spending. Yet, once again, we see this same careless lack of precision in the bill before us today.

• (2010)

Division 32 of Part 4 of the bill proposes to increase the Old Age Security pension by 10% for seniors aged 75 and over, and provide a one-time payment of $500. The 10% increase will cost $3 billion a year and will most certainly be welcomed by all who receive it. But if you are trying to help those seniors who need it most, why would you not spend the money on increasing the Guaranteed Income Supplement, which goes directly to low-income seniors rather than increasing the Old Age Security, which is a universal benefit for all seniors regardless of their income?

This question was raised by senator after senator in the Social Affairs Committee, as they tried unsuccessfully to get answers from a government official. Does that sound familiar? First, Senator Frum tried, asking:

> Ms. Underwood, can you help us understand why the government decided to increase the OAS for Canadians over 75 instead of choosing to increase the Guaranteed Income Supplement for seniors, which targets the most vulnerable seniors? It's hard to understand the policy rationale for a universal benefit versus a targeted benefit. I see the political rationale, particularly with the one-time payment in August of $500, but what is the policy rationale for this?

Think there might be an election called in August?

Ms. Underwood replied:

> As you know, the Old Age Security pension is a universal benefit for all seniors and, in this case, for all seniors over age 75. The policy rationale was to support that universal benefit and to support seniors as a large group of important contributors to our society.

Since that was obviously an attempt to sidestep the question, Senator Frum tried a second time and received a similar non-answer. So, then Senator Bovey tried; then Senator Forest-Niesing; then Senator Black, Senator Manning, Senator Kutcher, Senator Dasko and Senator Omidvar. In spite of the committee's valiant efforts, there was no suitable answer given because, quite frankly, the policy is indefensible. It was another example of a clumsily crafted, poorly thought-out and extremely blunt instrument designed for political ends rather than public good.

This has become a very familiar pattern with this government. Take, for example, the plan to implement a flat federal minimum wage across the country. Division 23 of Part 4 of Bill C-30 establishes a federal minimum wage across Canada of $15 an hour. At first glance, this might sound like a good idea. For those who don't know, there already is a federal minimum wage. It is the general adult minimum wage established in each province and territory.

The advantage of this existing approach is that it reflects the regional differences in the cost of living. Minimum wages vary across the country because the cost of living varies. Now you are

going to have one flat rate across the country for those who work in a federally regulated sector, which in most cases will differ from provincial rates.

For example, Alberta already has a $15 minimum wage, so nothing changes there. But Manitoba's minimum wage is currently $11.90 an hour, while Nunavut's is $16 an hour and Prince Edward Island's is $13 an hour. How does it make sense to introduce a federal minimum wage which will have no correlation to the regional ones? It does not. It is a blunt instrument designed to make it look like the government is helping when really they are just causing more harm.

This policy is expected to cost $44.1 million, but it is not the federal government who will be covering the cost. It is the business owners. So just as we begin to come out of the worst public health crisis in 100 years, when businesses are struggling to make ends meet and have piled up hundreds of thousands of dollars of debt just to stay afloat, the government decides to increase the cost of doing business. It is an absurd measure which is tone-deaf to provinces, insulting to businesses and could not come at a worse time.

This government's promise to provide $100 billion in economic stimulus to help Canada recover from the impact of the pandemic is another example of this pattern. In the Fall Economic Statement, the government said:

> To ensure a robust and resilient recovery, the government is developing the details of a plan to help Canada build back better, by preparing to invest up to $100 billion over the next three fiscal years . . . .

The problem is that according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, this so-called stimulus comes too late. In the PBO's December *Fall Economic Statement 2020: Issues for Parliamentarian*, the PBO warned, ". . . the size and timing of the planned fiscal stimulus may be mis-calibrated." It is going to be too much too late.

The PBO repeated this warning again in May, in *Budget 2021, Issues for Parliamentarians*, where he said, ". . . we maintain our judgment that the stimulus in Budget 2021 could be mis-calibrated . . . ."

The PBO further explained the problem by saying that:

> Based on PBO's pre-budget projection of the fiscal guardrail indicators, almost all of the ground lost in the labour market due to the pandemic will be made up by the end of 2021-22, the first year of the stimulus measures in Budget 2021.

So basically, even though the ground lost during the pandemic will have already been made up, the government's so-called stimulus will continue for another two years. But it gets worse: Because the so-called stimulus spending is going to come too late, the PBO notes that it will have an inflationary impact by increasing consumer demand relative to the economy's potential supply.

The PBO projects that this miscalibrated spending of $100 billion in borrowed money will bump inflation by 0.1% in 2021, 0.3% in 2022 and 0.1% again in 2023, and this will result in an increase in the Bank of Canada policy rate of 50 basis points in order to keep inflation in check, which will then ". . . directly increase public debt charges as existing debt is refinanced and future borrowing requirements are financed at higher rates. . . ."

So here we have a government that plans on borrowing $100 billion to stimulate an economy that won't need to be stimulated. Instead, they will overstimulate it, driving up interest rates by half a percentage point, increasing costs for every Canadian and escalating our public debt charges in the process. Welcome to "Trudeau-nomics."

Colleagues, as I said, this bill and the budget as a whole are crammed with measures that are clumsily crafted, poorly thought-out and extremely blunt instruments. At a time when every dollar should be spent wisely and utilized to ensure maximum impact, this government is being very careless with taxpayers' money.

Our second concern with this bill and this budget is that it contains no plan to secure the long-term prosperity of Canadians.

• (2020)

The first place you see this is the fact that the government has no plan to stop running deficits. Last year, the deficit was $354.2 billion. This year, it will be $154.7 billion. Most of us can accept that these deficits were primarily due to the impact of the global pandemic.

However, over the following four years, the government is planning an addition of $177 billion in deficit spending, and it appears to have no intention of balancing the budget as far as the eye can see, because we've been told, "We believe it will balance itself." All of this is based on the rosiest of economic forecasts.

Senator Marshall described it accurately when she said the following to the finance minister during her appearance at the National Finance Committee:

> Your budget is based on the assumptions of strong economic growth and low interest rates, but even slight changes in economic growth and interest rates can dramatically change your fiscal projections and your debt burden to an even-worse-case scenario than what's included in your budget. So your projected economic growth might not materialize and the interest rates may rise. In fact, if you look at your Fall Economic Statement and Budget 2021, the projected debt servicing costs increased in the mere four months between the two documents.

Senator Marshall went on:

> Your projections for the next five years show continuing deficits and more debt, even though you're counting on a healthy economy. Our debt load over the next three years, leading up to 2024, will increase by 50% to almost $2 trillion.

A few years ago, colleagues, we had no idea what $2 trillion was.

> There is no indication that there will be any repayment of any of this debt by our generation. Rather, the plan is to pass it on to our children, our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren.

Like with $2 trillion, we don't even know how many great-grandchildren we have to go down.

Colleagues, the C.D. Howe Institute echoed similar concerns in their presentation to the Committee on National Finance. They said this:

> . . . our own preliminary modelling at the C.D. Howe Institute shows that slight changes in economic growth and interest rate assumptions can dramatically change the course of the debt burden to the worst scenario. Under credible assumptions for potential economic growth and assuming quite reasonably that the interest rate on the debt will eventually catch up to economic growth over time, the debt burden can easily be shown to rise over time instead of decreasing, thus violating the budget's own fiscal anchor. All of these scenarios assume unchanged spending policies over the years, which is obviously highly unlikely given provincial demands for higher federal health transfers.
>
> In a nutshell, our internal modelling shows that the federal debt burden could very well return to the peak of the mid-1990 fiscal crisis under alternative — but perhaps more reasonable — assumptions about the future path of growth and interest rates. The combined federal-provincial debt ratio may cross 100% of GDP before 2040, on its way toward 150% by 2055.

It makes you think you are in Venezuela.

Colleagues, this government has no plan to stop running deficits, has based its future economic modelling on the rosiest of forecasts and has no intention of reducing our national debt. After cutting the ship of state loose from every existing fiscal anchor, this Liberal government has increased our debt-to-GDP level from 31.2% to 51.2%, with no plan to return us to where we were before the exceptional circumstances of the pandemic were forced upon us.

In his publication, *Budget 2021: Issues for Parliamentarians*, the Parliamentary Budget Officer, or PBO, put it this way:

> Over the medium-term horizon, the Government projects the federal debt-to-GDP ratio to decline marginally to 49.2 per cent from a peak of 51.2 per cent, and remain well above its pre-pandemic level of 31.2 per cent. Long-term projections presented in the budget also show the federal debt ratio remaining above its pre-pandemic level through 2055.

Colleagues, the year 2055 is 34 years into the future. My youngest grandchild, who is 5 years of age today, will by then be 39 years old. By 2055, every senator in this place will have retired, and most of us will have passed away, so at least a quarter of a century earlier. Senator Munson, you're right there with us.

Justin Trudeau himself will be 83 years old, and his children will be in their forties. Yet, according to the forecast laid out by this government, Canada's fiscal balance sheet will still not have recovered — not because of the pandemic but simply because this government has no plan for it to recover.

You may recall that in June of last year, the Parliamentary Budget Officer issued a warning to parliamentarians when he said this:

> In the context of fiscal sustainability, it is essential to distinguish between temporary and permanent budgetary measures. . . .
>
> Once the budgetary measures expire and the economy recovers, the federal debt-to-GDP ratio should stabilize and then start declining under pre-crisis fiscal policy settings. However, should some of the measures be extended or made permanent, the federal debt ratio could keep rising.

The PBO reiterated his warning in his *Economic and Fiscal Outlook — September 2020*, and he said this:

> Should these [temporary pandemic spending] commitments translate into new programs that are deficit financed, there is a risk that the sustainable debt-to-GDP trajectory over the medium term [will be] reversed.

Eight months later, after reviewing the government's budget documents, the Parliamentary Budget Officer flagged for parliamentarians that his warnings had not been heeded and that, under the current forecast, the federal debt ratio would indeed remain above its pre-pandemic level through 2055. He said:

> This suggests that the Government has decided to effectively stabilize the federal debt ratio at a higher level, potentially exhausting its fiscal room over the medium- and long-term.

Furthermore, in the briefing call provided by the PBO on their budget analysis, the Parliamentary Budget Officer expressed grave concerns that the government was moving into dangerous waters by establishing new, permanent programs that would be financed by deficit borrowing.

Colleagues, if I had an alarm bell I would be ringing it loudly right now. This government's failure to table a plan to restore the nation's balance sheet to a healthy state puts us on a very dangerous course. The only reason that Canada was able to respond quickly and adequately to the challenge posed by the pandemic was because of the fiscal room made available by the careful stewardship of former prime ministers Paul Martin and Stephen Harper.

• (2030)

Contrary to popular mythology, after the first Prime Minister Trudeau's careless implementation of structural deficits in the 1970s, the budget did not balance itself. It never does. Even a plumber knows that.

Instead, the health of our balance sheet steadily declined over the next 20 years, with the International Monetary Fund knocking at our door, threatening to intervene in our financial affairs in the mid-1990s. The deficit was finally wrestled into balance and kept there through very difficult decisions, unrelenting determination and strict discipline.

It was partly because of that fiscal discipline that when Canada was hit with the financial crisis of 2008, we had the fiscal stability and the financial health necessary to weather the storm that followed. We came through it much quicker than either the United States or Europe, and our recession was less severe than that of either the early 1980s or the early 1990s.

Although the second Trudeau began chipping away at the health of our balance sheet as soon as he took office in 2015, he was fortunate that when we were hit with a global pandemic in 2019, we still retained enough fiscal capacity to act quickly and decisively in a national emergency.

Colleagues, that capacity is almost gone now, and this government has no plan to restore it. We have no way of knowing when the next pandemic will hit. But it will. It is not a question of if; it is a question of when. We have no way of knowing when the next market crash will hit. But it will. It is just a question of time.

It is the responsibility of every government to prepare for such contingencies, and yet this government has no plan to be ready. Instead, Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland says she believes that the COVID crisis has created a window of political opportunity for the government to launch new, permanent initiatives that will add billions of dollars in expenses to our bottom line.

This sentiment is shared by the Prime Minister who described the pandemic as an "opportunity for a reset . . ." and ". . . our chance to accelerate our pre-pandemic efforts, to re-imagine economic systems . . . ."

I don't know what that means.

This completely ignores the recent warnings of the Parliamentary Budget Officer and ignores the fact that even if we never experience another pandemic or market crash, we are headed toward some very difficult waters, and we are completely unprepared.

Consider the Parliamentary Budget Officer's last fiscal sustainability report, which was published in February 2020.

These reports were first published in 2010, at which time the PBO raised the alarm, noting, "The Government's current fiscal structure is not sustainable over the long term. . . ."

How many warnings do they need?

The following year, the PBO warned again that not only was the federal government's fiscal structure unsustainable but so too were those of the provincial and territorial governments. If something did not change, Canada was headed for trouble.

Colleagues, we are well down that road. The reasons for this are well-known and underappreciated. The 2010 *Fiscal Sustainability Report* put it this way:

> . . . in Canada, as in other industrialized countries, a major demographic transition is underway that will strain government finances. During this time, the ageing of the population will move an increasing share of Canadians out of their prime working-age and into their retirement years. With an older population, spending pressures in areas such as health care and elderly benefits are projected to intensify. At the same time, slower labour force growth is projected to restrain growth in the economy, which will in turn slow the growth of government revenue.

In other words, colleagues, Canada is heading into a demographic perfect storm in slow motion.

The Harper government took this warning seriously. Two years later, in 2012, the PBO reported that due to changes made by the Conservative government, the federal government's fiscal structure was now sustainable, although the provinces and territories still were not.

This annual report card remained largely unchanged every year since.

In the most recent fiscal sustainability report released one month before the pandemic, the PBO said the following:

> From the perspective of the government sector as a whole (that is, federal and subnational governments and public pension plans combined), current fiscal policy in Canada is sustainable over the long term. Relative to the size of the Canadian economy, total government net debt is projected to remain below its current level over the long term.

But then came the warning:

> This perspective, however, masks fiscal policy at the subnational level that is not sustainable—albeit to a modest extent. Under current policy, we project that the federal government will eliminate its net debt and shift into a net asset position. Combined with the public pension plans, this net asset accumulation more than offsets the projected increase in subnational government net debt.

In other words, colleagues, the fiscal sustainability of the nation hangs on the federal government eliminating its net debt and shifting into a net asset position. By doing so, it will ensure that Canada has the fiscal resources to "more than [offset] the projected increase in subnational government debt."

Can you call this a fiscal life jacket?

The only problem, colleagues, is that the government just decided to pitch that life jacket overboard. Instead of tabling a budget that would return Canada's balance sheet to health and ensure fiscal sustainability going forward, the Prime Minister has abandoned every fiscal anchor and set our lifeboat adrift. Without a course correction, we are headed in a direction that we do not want to go, and our children and our grandchildren are going to arrive somewhere they will not want to be.

Colleagues, I am not exaggerating. When finance minister Paul Martin introduced what has been called the "budget that changed Canada" in 1995, Canada's debt to GDP level was 66.8%, and interest payments consumed 35.2 cents of every tax dollar. He was able to balance the budget within three years, but he did so primarily by unloading the costs on to provinces.

Today, the provinces have no such fiscal room to absorb additional costs. They were running deficits before COVID and have been stretched to the max by the pandemic. Going forward, they are going to face unprecedented challenges caused by rising health care costs, an aging population and a declining growth of their labour force.

Yet, knowing all of this, the federal government has not only failed to get its own house in order, but it has unilaterally decided to launch a national child care initiative that will impose billions more in new costs on provincial governments.

Instead of being part of the solution, this government has become the problem.

Colleagues, the Conservative caucus in this Senate cannot and will not support this budget or this bill. The government has demonstrated once again that they have no strategy, no wisdom and no understanding of what lies ahead. They are carelessly spraying money around with no plan to balance the budget, no plan to reduce our national debt and no plan to secure long-term prosperity for Canadians. Instead, they simply insist on burying their heads in the sand and pretending everything is fine when it is not. This should alarm us all, colleagues.

• (2040)

Sometime in the next year, Canadians are going to make a choice. They will go to the polls to decide if they want to keep this Liberal government at the helm of a ship of state that is sinking or whether they want a Conservative government that will protect our economy and prepare us for an uncertain future. Colleagues, it is my sincere hope that everyone in this chamber, when people in the other place have not been able to realize this, that everybody in this chamber — we talk about non-partisanship — let's put the partisanship aside and let's vote for Canada and vote against this budget. Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

The Hon. the Speaker: Are honourable senators ready for the question?

Some Hon. Senators: Question.

The Hon. the Speaker: It was moved by the Honourable Senator Moncion, seconded by the Honourable Senator Gagné that the bill be read a third time. If you are opposed to the motion, please say, "no." Carried.

Senator Patterson: On division.

The Hon. the Speaker: On division.

Senator Plett: Your Honour, we said, "no."

The Hon. the Speaker: I'm sorry, just a moment. There's no need to panic. It just means I didn't hear you, Senator Plett.

An Hon. Senator: Which is hard.

The Hon. the Speaker: Table, did you hear a "no?"

I'm speaking to the table. Did you hear a "no" that I did not hear?

A Clerk at the Table: Yes.

The Hon. the Speaker: Thank you. Hearing a "no," senators who are in the chamber who are in favour of the motion will please say, "yea."

Some Hon. Senators: Yea.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senators in the chamber who are against the motion will please say, "nay."

Some Hon. Senators: Nay.

The Hon. the Speaker: In my opinion the "yeas" have it.

I see two senators rising.

And two honourable senators having risen:

The Hon. the Speaker: Do we have an agreement on a bell?

An Hon. Senator: Now.

The Hon. the Speaker: Do we have an agreement on a bell?

Senator Mercer: And they want to run the government. Come on.

An Hon. Senator: What did Senator Mercer say?

The Hon. the Speaker: Order, please.

Do we have an agreement on a bell? I'm speaking to the government liaison and the Opposition Whip.

Senator Plett: Fifteen minutes.

The Hon. the Speaker: Fifteen minutes.

Senator Harder: Is that the voice of the whip?

The Hon. the Speaker: The vote will take place at 8:58. Call in the senators.

• (2050)

Motion agreed to and bill read third time and passed on the following division:

YEAS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Anderson
Bellemare
Bernard
Black (*Alberta*)
Black (*Ontario*)
Boehm
Boniface
Bovey
Boyer
Brazeau
Busson
Campbell
Christmas
Cordy
Cormier
Cotter
Coyle
Dalphond
Dasko
Dawson
Deacon (*Nova Scotia*)
Deacon (*Ontario*)
Dean
Downe
Duncan
Dupuis
Forest
Forest-Niesing
Francis
Griffin
Harder
Hartling
Jaffer
Klyne
Kutcher
LaBoucane-Benson
Lankin
Loffreda
Marwah
Massicotte
McCallum
McPhedran
Mégie
Mercer
Miville-Dechêne
Moncion
Moodie
Munson
Pate
Petitclerc
Ravalia
Ringuette
Saint-Germain
Simons
Tannas
Verner
Wallin
Wetston
Gagné
Galvez
Gold
White
Woo—63

NAYS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Ataullahjan
Batters
Boisvenu
Carignan
Dagenais
Housakos
MacDonald
Manning
Marshall
Martin
Mockler
Ngo
Oh
Patterson
Plett
Seidman
Smith
Stewart Olsen
Wells—19

ABSTENTION
THE HONOURABLE SENATOR

Greene—1

• (2110)

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION ADOPTED

Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate), pursuant to notice of June 28, 2021, moved:

> That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, September 21, 2021, at 2 p.m.

She said: Honourable senators, I move the motion standing in my name.

The Hon. the Speaker: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

POINT OF ORDER

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I am ready to rule on the point of order raised during yesterday's sitting with respect to the question being put on Motion No. 79.

Colleagues will recall that, after Senator Housakos had exercised his right of final reply, I started to read the question on the motion. When I asked if there was leave to dispense with reading the entire motion, there was a senator who said "no." This created some confusion. In order to ensure clarity, we restarted the process, and this time there was leave to dispense. I then put the question on the main motion, and, as has been the case throughout our hybrid sittings, I asked senators who were opposed to the motion to say "no."

It soon became evident, however, that some honourable senators were not entirely clear as to where we were in the voting process. On the video recording of the sitting, a senator can be heard to say "We're having a vote," even when, to some, it seemed that the Senate had passed that point in the voting process. Senators Moncion and Lankin explained that, because of their internet connections, there is sometimes a lag in what they hear, and they had not appreciated the stage the Senate had reached in the voting process.

Honourable senators, in all our proceedings — and especially during our hybrid sittings — good will and cooperation are necessary to facilitate the conduct of business. In this case, there clearly was confusion about dispensing with reading the question. While this was compounded by the technical challenges some honourable colleagues faced, this was not the only cause, since some senators in the Senate Chamber also expressed a level of misunderstanding as to what had occurred. We ought to take our colleagues at their word when they say that, for various reasons, they did not realize how far the process had advanced.

Senators, as members of this house, must have a clear understanding as to what we are voting on. We must be very cautious about making significant decisions when some senators clearly, and for perhaps understandable reasons, had not realized how the process was proceeding and the stage that had been reached. When we sit in person, such misunderstandings become apparent much more quickly, and we can deal with them as they arise. Such is not always the case when we sit virtually.

Honourable senators, let me be clear that this ruling, as in all my rulings, is not influenced by comments about an appeal. This ruling is based on the particular circumstances of the situation we faced yesterday and is solely driven by a desire to be as fair as possible to all senators, in light of the misunderstandings. While all senators are welcome to engage in debate on a point of order, they should limit their comments to arguments on the merits.

This being said, in this particular set of circumstances, I am forced to come to the conclusion that we should consider the process of putting the question on Motion No. 79 to be incomplete. All other proceedings on the motion have concluded. In light of these unusual circumstances, we will now deal with the motion, following through with the voting process in an orderly manner.

Before we continue in this way, I again thank honourable colleagues for their cooperation and understanding.

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Your Honour, I want to echo at least one of the comments you made in that there should be goodwill and cooperation.

I thank you for taking the matter under advisement. We appreciate your ruling, and we fully accept and support that ruling. We are prepared to move on.

The Hon. the Speaker: Thank you, Senator Plett.

THE SENATE

MOTION CONCERNING GENOCIDE OF UYGHURS AND OTHER TURKIC MUSLIMS BY THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA NEGATIVED

On the Order:

> Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Housakos, seconded by the Honourable Senator McPhedran:
>
> That,
>
> (a) in the opinion of the Senate, the People's Republic of China has engaged in actions consistent with the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 260, commonly known as the "Genocide Convention," including detention camps and measures intended to prevent births as it pertains to Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims; and
>
> (b) given that (i) where possible, it has been the policy of the Government of Canada to act in concert with its allies when it comes to the recognition of a genocide, (ii) there is a bipartisan consensus in the United States where it has been the position of two consecutive administrations that Uyghur and other Turkic Muslims are being subjected to a genocide by the Government of the People's Republic of China, the Senate, therefore, recognize that a genocide is currently being carried out by the People's Republic of China against Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims, call upon the International Olympic Committee to move the 2022 Olympic Games if the Chinese government continues this genocide and call on the government to officially adopt this position; and
>
> That a message be sent to the House of Commons to acquaint that House with the above.

The Hon. the Speaker: If you are opposed to the motion, please say "no."

Some Hon. Senators: No.

The Hon. the Speaker: I hear a "no." Do I see two senators standing?

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Put the question.

The Hon. the Speaker: Those in favour of the motion who are in the Senate Chamber will please say "yea."

Some Hon. Senators: Yea.

The Hon. the Speaker: Those opposed to the motion who are in the Senate Chamber will please say "nay."

Some Hon. Senators: Nay.

The Hon. the Speaker: In my opinion, the "yeas" have it.

And two honourable senators having risen:

The Hon. the Speaker: We have a hand raised and a senator rising.

Do we have agreement on a bell?

Some Hon. Senators: Fifteen minutes.

Some Hon. Senators: Now.

The Hon. the Speaker: I hear the government liaison and the opposition whip say 15 minutes.

Is any honourable senator in the Senate Chamber opposed to 15 minutes? Fifteen minutes it is. The vote will take place at 9:34.

Call in the senators.

• (2130)

Motion negatived on the following division:

YEAS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Ataullahjan
Batters
Black (*Alberta*)
Boisvenu
Carignan
Downe
Greene
Griffin
Housakos
Jaffer
MacDonald
Manning
Marshall
Martin
McCallum
McPhedran
Miville-Dechêne
Mockler
Munson
Ngo
Pate
Patterson
Plett
Seidman
Simons
Smith
Tannas
Wallin
White—29

NAYS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Anderson
Bellemare
Harder
Hartling
Black (*Ontario*)
Boehm
Boniface
Bovey
Boyer
Busson
Cordy
Dasko
Dawson
Dean
Duncan
Dupuis
Forest
Forest-Niesing
Francis
Klyne
Kutcher
Loffreda
Marwah
Massicotte
Mégie
Mercer
Moncion
Moodie
Petitclerc
Ringuette
Saint-Germain
Wetston
Woo—33

ABSTENTIONS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Bernard
Brazeau
Cormier
Cotter
Coyle
Dagenais
Dalphond
Deacon (*Nova Scotia*)
Gagné
Galvez
Gold
LaBoucane-Benson
Lankin—13

• (2150)

ENERGY, THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE CUMULATIVE IMPACTS OF RESOURCE EXTRACTION AND DEVELOPMENT—MOTION IN AMENDMENT ADOPTED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator McCallum, seconded by the Honourable Senator Loffreda:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources be authorized to examine and report on the cumulative impacts of resource extraction and development, and their effects on environmental, economic and social considerations, when and if the committee is formed; and

That the committee submit its final report no later than December 31, 2021.

And on the motion in amendment of the Honourable Senator Tannas, seconded by the Honourable Senator Seidman:

That the motion be not now adopted, but that it be amended by adding, before the word "impacts", the words "positive and negative."

The Hon. the Speaker: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion in amendment?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion in amendment of the Honourable Senator Tannas agreed to.)

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY THE CUMULATIVE IMPACTS OF RESOURCE EXTRACTION AND DEVELOPMENT

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion, as amended, of the Honourable Senator McCallum, seconded by the Honourable Senator Loffreda:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources be authorized to examine and report on the cumulative positive and negative impacts of resource extraction and development, and their effects on environmental, economic and social considerations, when and if the committee is formed; and

That the committee submit its final report no later than December 31, 2021.

The Hon. the Speaker: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to, as amended.)

THE SENATE

MOTION TO CALL ON THE GOVERNMENT TO ADOPT ANTI-RACISM AS THE SIXTH PILLAR OF THE CANADA HEALTH ACT— DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator McCallum, seconded by the Honourable Senator McPhedran:

That the Senate of Canada call on the federal government to adopt anti-racism as the sixth pillar of the Canada Health Act, prohibiting discrimination based on race and affording everyone the equal right to the protection and benefit of the law.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I move the adjournment of the debate.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

MOTION TO CALL ON THE GOVERNMENT TO CREATE PATHWAYS TO CITIZENSHIP OR PERMANENT RESIDENCY FOR ESSENTIAL TEMPORARY MIGRANT WORKERS ACROSS ALL SECTORS AND TABLE A STATUS REPORT ON THE ISSUE ADOPTED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Omidvar, seconded by the Honourable Senator Woo:

That, in light of a recent Nanos poll demonstrating strong support amongst Canadians to provide a way for temporary foreign workers to remain in Canada, the Senate call on the Government of Canada to create pathways to citizenship or permanent residency for essential temporary migrant workers across all sectors; and

That the Senate call on the Government of Canada to table a status report on this issue within 100 days of the adoption of this order.

An Hon. Senator: Question.

The Hon. the Speaker: Are honourable senators ready for the question?

Some Hon. Senators: Question.

The Hon. the Speaker: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Senators: Agreed.

An Hon. Senator: On division.

(Motion agreed to, on division.)

MOTION TO URGE GOVERNMENT TO CALL UPON CURRENT PARTIES TO THE ACT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON VIET-NAM TO AGREE TO THE RECONVENTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON VIET-NAM— DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Ngo, seconded by the Honourable Senator Martin:

That the Senate note that, by adopting the *Journey to Freedom Day Act* on April 23, 2015, and taking into account the first two elements of the preamble of the said Act, the Parliament of Canada unequivocally recognized violations of:

(a) the *Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet-Nam* and its protocols (Paris Peace Accords); and

(b) the *Act of the International Conference on Viet-Nam*; and

> That the Senate urge the Government of Canada to call upon six or more of the current parties to the *Act of the International Conference on Viet-Nam,* which include Canada, France, Hungary, Indonesia, Poland, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, amongst others, to agree to the reconvention of the International Conference on Viet-Nam pursuant to Article 7(b) of the *Act of the International Conference on Viet-Nam* in order to settle disputes between the signatory parties due to the violations of the terms of the Paris Peace Accords and the *Act of the International Conference on Viet-Nam*.

Hon. Thanh Hai Ngo: Honourable senators, I rise today on a matter of great importance — my motion for the Government of Canada to call upon six or more of the current parties to the Act of the International Conference on Viet-Nam to agree to reconvene the International Conference on Viet-Nam.

In an effort to end the Vietnam War and come to a lasting resolution, the Agreement on ending the war and restoring peace in Viet-Nam and its protocols, commonly known as the Paris Peace Accords or Paris Agreement, were signed by the U.S.; the Republic of Vietnam, called South Vietnam; the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, called North Vietnam; and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Vietnam, called Viet Cong, in Paris on January 27, 1973.

Some of the key provisions of the Paris Peace Accords called for a ceasefire throughout Vietnam; bans on introduction of war material and military troops into South Vietnam; and creation of the International Commission of Control and Supervision, called ICCS, to monitor the implementation of specific provisions of the Paris Peace Accords.

According to Article 19 of the Paris Agreement, from February 26 to March 2 a second international conference was held again in Paris, which, among other things, established the ICCS rules of conduct and its reporting mechanisms to support the agreement's implementation.

The conference was concluded on March 2, 1973, by the signing of the Act of the International Conference on Viet-Nam, called the Act, wherein the parties to the Paris Agreement and eight other countries — Canada, France, Hungary, Indonesia, Poland, the U.K., the Soviet Union and China — pledged they would, henceforth, not only uphold and support its terms, but also abide by its provisions, including those related to foreign interference. Both the Paris Agreement and the Act were registered with the United Nations Secretariat on May 13, 1974.

In addition to the many Canadian soldiers who died during the Vietnam War, Canada made significant contributions toward the effort to reach a lasting peace in Vietnam.

It was part of the first International Commission for Supervision and Control – Vietnam, established by the 1954 Geneva Accords.

It was part of the second International Commission for Control and Supervision — the ICCS — established by the Paris Peace Accords, sending peacekeeping forces in 1973 to investigate compliance and uphold its provisions; and, more importantly, is a signatory to the Act of the International Conference on Viet-Nam.

As one of the signatories to the Act, Canada played an integral supervisory role in the effort to support peace. As part of the ICCS — along with Poland, Hungary and Indonesia, which were at the time, respectively, communist countries and a dictatorship — we made key contributions by investigating and overseeing that respect of the ceasefire, withdrawal of troops and return of captured military and civilian personnel were maintained.

Unfortunately, Canada's role was rendered difficult as it was the only democratic nation member of the ICCS — the four nations had to unanimously agree to investigate the violations. During Canada's time as a member, at least 18,000 ceasefire violations were reported. During the same time, only 1,081 complaints were investigated by the ICCS.

• (2200)

Despite the subsequent invasion of South Vietnam by North Vietnam's Communist forces in 1975, in absolute violation of the Paris Peace Accords and of the act, I believe they remain valuable diplomatic tools for the resolution of disputes between signatory parties that arise from violations of their terms.

I wish to draw your attention to Articles 7(a) and 7(b) of the act, which provide a useful mechanism for dispute settlement in the event the Paris Peace Accords are infringed upon.

Article 7(a) allows the parties to determine necessary remedial measures in the event of a violation of the Paris Peace Accords:

> . . . which threatens the peace, the independence, sovereignty, unity, or territorial integrity of Viet-Nam, or the right of the South Vietnamese people to self-determination . . . .

Article 7(b) reads:

> The International Conference on Viet-Nam shall be reconvened upon a joint request by the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam on behalf of the parties signatory to the Agreement or upon a request by six or more of the Parties to this Act.

Canada has a vested interest in continuing to uphold stability, peace and democracy in Asia. To this end, it is incumbent upon Canada's government to call upon six or more of the current parties to the act to agree to reconvene the International Conference on Viet-Nam.

There are compelling arguments that indicate there are sufficient grounds to engage Article 7(b) of the act and thereby reconvene the said conference.

On April 23, 2015, the Journey to Freedom Day Act was adopted. The first two elements of its preamble acknowledge the involvement of the Canadian Forces by assisting in the enforcement of the Paris Peace Accords and the subsequent invasion of South Vietnam by military forces of the People's

Army of Vietnam and the National Liberation Front in 1975. Considering these first two elements of the said preamble, the Parliament of Canada unequivocally recognized violations of the Paris Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet-Nam and its Protocols; and the Act of the International Conference on Viet-Nam.

Not only are there no provisions within the Paris Agreement allowing the parties to terminate it, but also the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties— which provides the mechanisms for states to either withdraw, terminate or suspend treaties — is inapplicable in this case as it came into force after the Paris Agreement was reached. Article 4 of the Vienna Convention regarding its non-retroactivity makes it impossible to invoke it. Furthermore, the United States has never ratified it.

Additionally, when the U.S. and Vietnam decided to establish diplomatic relations after the fall of Saigon and the reunification of South and North Vietnam, public statements referring to the Paris Agreement were made by their respective officials, thus suggesting it could be considered as still in force, at least in part.

As is the case with the Paris Peace Accords, the act is bereft of provisions that allow for its termination or for sunset clauses to its application.

Also, since the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties came into force after the act, the convention is also inapplicable to the act. Contrary to the Paris Peace Accords, where customary international law makes it difficult to give a clear-cut and conclusive answer because of the ambiguity regarding its status, in this particular case, one must look to customary international law to interpret the act. Such an interpretation would imply that the act continues to be in force, as it specifically provides a mechanism for the international conference to be reconvened without the U.S. and Vietnam jointly requesting it.

Therefore, the act continues to be binding on the other eight signatory countries. Furthermore, the act is listed among multi-party treaties and agreements by the U.S. Department of State as still being in force as of January 1, 2020, with Canada still listed as one of the parties.

For the purposes of reconvening the international conference in accordance with Article 7(b), *in fine*, Canada, France, Hungary, Indonesia, Poland, the U.K., the U.S., Russia and China — most of which are democratic countries, including Hungary, Indonesia and Poland, which were not at the time — should be considered as being the current parties to the act. For the reconvening of the international conference to take place, at least six of them should agree to it.

Alternatively, and pursuant to Article 7(b), *in limine*, the reconvening of the conference could also happen if the U.S. and Vietnam jointly request it, provided that Vietnam clearly states its intention in continuing North Vietnam's participation in the act.

Ultimately, if there is a consensus among the parties that the Paris Agreement continues to be in force, it can then be reopened and renegotiated. The same applies to the act; in its case, it would allow for the international conference to be reconvened in accordance with Article 7(b).

Furthermore, during a luncheon address by the former U.S. Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger, at The Nixon Center in Washington on April 24, 1988, entitled "Vietnam, the Paris Agreement and Their Meaning for Today," he said:

> . . . because an agreement that you don't enforce is a surrender; it's just writing down surrender terms. And that we never intended.
>
> Every senior member of the Administration—including myself, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State—is represented in compendiums of statements that said publicly every other week that we intended to enforce the agreement. There was nothing new about that.

Moreover, reconvening this international conference can also be a valuable mechanism to initiate negotiations in some of the most pressing geopolitical issues in Asia today, such as the South China Sea dispute. Articles 4 and 5 of the act indicate that its signatories, including China:

> . . . solemnly recognize and strictly respect the fundamental national rights of the Vietnamese people, i.e., the independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of Vietnam, as well as the right of the South Vietnamese people to self-determination. The Parties to this act shall strictly respect the agreement and the protocols by refraining from any action at variance with their provisions.

In 1974 and 1988, China invaded Vietnam's Paracel Islands and Spratly Islands, respectively. These invasions are violations of the act, allowing any signatory country to reconvene the international conference as per the conditions set out in Article 7(b) of the act.

On December 30, 1974, President Ford signed Public Law 93-559, Section 34(b)(4), which requires the U.S. Executive Branch to reconvene the international conference in the eventuality of any violation of the Paris Peace Accords. By the intermediary of Article 7 of the act and by invoking the spirit of Public Law 93-559, the U.S. has legal grounds to initiate the reconvening of the international conference and to force signatory governments to a conference table where China has no veto power and where it can be held accountable for its unlawful invasions and its disruption of stability in the South China Sea.

Additionally, on April 24, 2018, we passed a motion in this chamber calling upon the Canadian government to take a leading role in urging all involved parties in the South China Sea dispute to promote peace by supporting international law and its regional partners and allies, as well as by taking additional steps necessary to de-escalate tensions and restore peace and stability in the region.

More recently, during an appearance at the House of Commons Special Committee on Canada-China Relations this April, Minister Sajjan said:

> . . . Canada opposes land reclamation projects and building outposts in disputed areas for military purposes. We support lawful commerce, freedom of navigation and freedom of overflight in accordance with international law.

> We will continue supporting our allies and partners in the Asia-Pacific region, especially in the face of unilateral actions that undermine peace and stability. . . .

The minister delivered a similar speech during the 12th South China Sea International Conference, held in Vietnam in November 2020. It is worth mentioning that Canada is also actively maintaining a naval presence in that region.

Colleagues, for all of these reasons, it is therefore of the utmost importance to reopen this important debate and conference and to give serious consideration to reconvening the historic multilateral forum that is the International Conference on Viet-Nam. I truly believe this would be a vital policy tool and a useful means for the diplomatic and peaceful resolution of conflicts in Asia. Thank you.

• (2210)

Hon. Leo Housakos: Honourable senators, there has been a lot of talk in this chamber lately about whether we as parliamentarians have the right or the moral authority to call on governments to take actions, especially as it pertains to what's happening in other parts of the world. I will argue once again, as I always have, that we not only have the right and the moral authority, but we also have an obligation to do so. As Canadians, we have never refrained from standing up for what's right and for getting involved in defending human rights, whether it be here at home or abroad.

Canadians expect their parliamentarians and senators to reflect our values and principles of who we are as a nation and what we're all about to the world. They expect parliamentarians to call out tyranny, not to appease it; to call out brutality around the world and stand for those values that Canadians cherish deeply. If we bypass those values in pursuit of geopolitical interests and petty economic interests, then we do not become a great democracy but a state that's nothing more than transactional on the world economic scene, like an offshore bank account: you make withdrawals and you make deposits.

We can't say we believe in the rule of law, freedom and human rights and then turn a blind eye when we see gross violations of those principles. We can go about the business of cleaning up our own backyard while also calling for the neighbourhood as a whole to be cleaned up. If we have done it throughout our history, then there's no reason we shouldn't continue to do it.

With that said, I would like to support Senator Ngo. He is calling to reconvene the international conference on Vietnam. Some will argue that the Paris Peace Accords are no longer applicable. I think Senator Ngo has made a more than compelling argument stating quite the opposite. I think now is a good time to reconvene the conference, given the instability in the region. This conference was part of the Paris Peace Accord that was signed in an effort to bring peace to Vietnam. Canada was part of those efforts at the time, and we re-established our commitment when we passed the Journey to Freedom Day Act, which includes in its preamble that violations of rights to self-determination of the people of South Vietnam compel us to call for the reconvention of the conference.

What needs to be done here is very clear based on that alone. It's entrenched in our law, honourable senators. That ought to satisfy concerns about bringing forth a motion to direct or call on the government to take action. It's in a law that was duly passed in both chambers.

I want to thank Senator Ngo for his tireless efforts in standing up for what's right, as he's done throughout his Senate career. He needs to be complimented. He's never wavered on human rights, and he has been unequivocal. I wholeheartedly support his motion and I think this chamber should as well, honourable senators. Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Duncan, debate adjourned.)

[*Translation*]

ROYAL ASSENT

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that the following communication had been received:

RIDEAU HALL

June 29, 2021

Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that the Right Honourable Richard Wagner, Administrator of the Government of Canada, signified royal assent by written declaration to the bills listed in the Schedule to this letter on the 29th day of June, 2021, at 9:46 p.m.

Yours sincerely,

Ian McCowan

Secretary to the Governor General

The Honourable
The Speaker of the Senate
Ottawa

Bills Assented to Tuesday, June 29, 2021:

An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (bereavement leave) (*Bill C-220, Chapter 17, 2021*)

An Act to establish a federal framework to reduce recidivism (*Bill C-228, Chapter 18, 2021*)

An Act to establish a national framework for diabetes (*Bill C-237, Chapter 19, 2021*)

An Act to amend the Criminal Code (sports betting) (*Bill C-218, Chapter 20, 2021*)

An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (transfer of small business or family farm or fishing corporation) (*Bill C-208, Chapter 21, 2021*)

An Act respecting transparency and accountability in Canada's efforts to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2050 (*Bill C-12, Chapter 22, 2021*)

An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 19, 2021 and other measures (*Bill C-30, Chapter 23, 2021*)

[*English*]

THE SENATE

MOTION CONCERNING THE CLOSURE OF PROGRAMS AT LAURENTIAN UNIVERSITY ADOPTED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Forest-Niesing, seconded by the Honourable Senator Woo:

That the Senate:

1. express its concern about the closure at Laurentian University in Sudbury, of 58 undergraduate programs and 11 graduate programs, including 28 French-language programs, representing 58% of its French-language programs, and the dismissal of 110 professors, nearly half of whom are French speaking;

2. reiterate its solidarity with the Franco-Ontarian community;

3. recall the essential role of higher education in French for the vitality of the Franco-Canadian and Acadian communities and the responsibility to defend and promote linguistic rights, as expressed in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Official Languages Act*; and

4. urge the Government of Canada to take all necessary steps, in accordance with its jurisdiction, to ensure the vitality and development of official language minority communities.

The Hon. the Speaker: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Senators: Agreed.

An Hon. Senator: On division.

(Motion agreed to, on division.)

• (2220)

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, before proceeding to Motion No. 89, the leaders have all asked for time to make a few statements before we adjourn for the summer break. We're going to do that now and then we will return to the Order Paper.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable colleagues, this has been a shocking, worrisome and historic year. When I took on the job of Government Representative in the Senate, it never occurred to me that within weeks of the opening of the Forty-third Parliament, the government would be forced to abandon its planned business and divert all of its attention to the protection and support of Canadians, as a deadly virus spread across the country and around the world.

This institution managed. Frankly, we did better than simply manage. It wasn't easy, but senators negotiated and prioritized, we insisted on occasion and we conceded on occasion. And for every decision we reached in our mission to continue Senate operations, there were dozens of people in the background making it happen.

I would first like to thank Speaker Furey for guiding us through this uncertain time. We all understand that this pandemic was an unprecedented threat and yet we also understood that Parliament, this chamber, could not shutter its doors and ignore the business of Canadians. Through Speaker Furey's office, and with the tireless efforts of his staff, we were able to get to work and, at the same time, allow all colleagues to participate and weigh in, whether from their home offices or from their dining-room tables.

When we consider that such an endeavour had never been attempted before and the speed with which we were able to connect with each other, I give great credit and thanks to our IT staff. And I extend a very special thank you to our Senate clerks, the table officers and the pages for ensuring the smooth running of a much more sparsely attended chamber.

Senate committees and the review and study of legislation are arguably the most essential functions of this chamber. We owe a debt of gratitude to the committee clerks, the interpreters and the committee attendants who worked behind the scenes to see to it that we could do our jobs to the best of our ability. And I must not forget to also recognize and thank the Parliamentary Protective Service officers who manned the doors in rain, snow or shine.

I owe a huge thank you to my GRO colleagues Senator Gagné and Senator LaBoucane-Benson. Their advice and patience were invaluable to me and to our team as we navigated these uncharted waters. The three of us could not have functioned at all without the consistent and reliable assistance, advice and research of everyone on the GRO team. They are extraordinary and I salute them.

To my colleagues, leaders of the groups, for the many hours of meetings, phone calls, messages and texts, I want to thank Senator Plett, Senator Woo, Senator Tannas and Senator Cordy. It wasn't always easy or convenient. Politics gets in the way sometimes, but our personal relationships were strong. I'm proud of the work we accomplished together on behalf of Canadians and I'm proud of the way in which we were able to hammer out our differences without rancour or animosity, even if at times we may have disappointed each other.

Finally, I owe much to my wife Nancy, who supports me in this newest chapter in my professional life. Frankly, without her encouragement this past year would have been far, far more difficult.

Colleagues, I hope this summer you all finally get to spend time with those you love and that, when we return, the world will have changed sufficiently so that we can all greet each other in person for the first time in a very long time. I look forward to it. Once again, thank you all very much.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, what a year it has been. Much has happened since I gave thanks before our suspension last June. This time last year, we were all hoping that our fall session would be fully in person by the time we regathered. Alas, here we are. Our hybrid sittings have sustained us this year — yes, often making suspensions for technical difficulties all the more frequent, but they have kept us meeting.

Reflecting on this year reminds me of how, in many ways, it has been a troubling year for many of us. It has been challenging in our personal lives. We long for life to return to normal. We miss seeing our extended families. Loved ones have been lost. My heart goes out to all who have had a painful year personally.

News stories this year have been tragic and deeply troubling. Canada was confronted with the state of some long-term care homes, grappling with the reality of many of them suffering with COVID-19 outbreaks in poor conditions. The Governor General had to resign in a swirl of controversy. More recently, we confronted the finding of children's graves in Kamloops, in Brandon and in Cowessess. The act of terror against a Muslim family in London also troubled us all. These have been horrifying truths that we have had no choice but to face head on.

It has also been a heavy year in the Red Chamber. Bill C-7 passed through our walls, making death an available option to Canadians with disabilities. It's no secret I did not support this legislation. It was emotionally heavy for me and many of my colleagues to watch this bill gain so much support in both the House and the Senate despite widespread concerns voiced by our disability communities. I still believe we really did fail our disability community, colleagues.

To reflect on this year properly, we should also acknowledge the shortfalls of the government. It has been troubling to witness Trudeau's minority government continue to push forward policies that do not help Canadians in the long run. The government has put us in trillions of dollars of debt, unemployment levels are up, the Bank of Canada cannot seem to stop printing money and our annual inflation rate has hit its highest level in a decade.

Certainly, we have not gone without moments that deserve rejoicing. We have seen bills come forward that have brought Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action to life. We have recently seen the passage of Conservative MP's private members' bills: Bill C-208, Bill C-210, Bill C-218, Bill C-220 and Bill C-228. Our debates bring me joy and it is an honour to be in the same room discussing Canadian legislation with all of you. Truly, it is an honour.

Colleagues, throughout the disappointments from the government and our lively debates, you have remained steadfast in your commitment to serving Canadians and representing them here in the Senate. We can never forget that this place — this chamber, our committees, our seats — all exist to act as sober second thought in the Canadian democratic system. What an honour it is to hold these positions.

Senator Gold, I know you will miss my vaccine questions during your summer break. It certainly makes my job easier, knowing that you understand my role as the opposition. And I look forward to bringing my best questions forward come September. It continues to be a pleasure to work with you.

I also want to thank Nancy for keeping you motivated, keeping you active, and please bring my best regards to Mrs. Gold.

Senator Woo, Senator Saint-Germain and Senator Tannas, it has been a pleasure working with you here. Senator Cordy, instead of sparring in the Senate, I look forward to again playing a game of golf with you and Bob in the Villages of Florida — a lot more fun there than here.

Thank you, Your Honour, for all you do to keep us in line. I can only imagine that your job has become even more difficult with our hybrid sittings, so we applaud you for your dedication to maintaining order and excellence in this chamber.

I also want to extend my gratitude to our Speaker pro tempore. I appreciate your strictness when you preside. Truly, in Committee of the Whole, it has been a pleasure working with you, as well as the way you have kept ministers in line, Speaker pro tempore, always with integrity and a smile.

Perhaps it goes without saying that I am deeply proud of our Conservative caucus. Thank you to my leadership team: our deputy leader, Senator Martin; our whip, Senator Seidman; our deputy whip, Senator Housakos; and of course, Senator Poirier, who has had a difficult year and we miss her. Your dedication is resolute and inspiring.

To our entire Conservative caucus, it is an absolute pleasure to be on the same team as all of you. I learn from all of you each and every day. Our Conservative caucus proudly represents the Canadians from coast to coast to coast who identify with the values of the Conservative Party of Canada, including the 6,155,662 who voted Conservative in October of 2019.

• (2230)

Canadians are increasingly hungry for a government that is truly transparent, trustworthy and competent, for a strong national defence and for a recovery plan that puts our economy back on track to thrive. It is an honour to represent these values under the banner of the Conservative Party of Canada and the Senate of Canada.

To all of our office staff, thank you for everything you do. We could not do what we do without you. We wish you all a wonderful summer. And a special thanks to my own staff: thank you for your loyalty and expertise.

To the Senate Administration that does endless work behind the scenes to keep our sessions running, our technology up to date, our payrolls coming — even giving raises to our staff without us knowing about it — and our words translated, thank you.

A special thank you to the pages. We wish you all the very best. We wish it could have been a different year for you.

Thank you to the Office of the Usher of the Black Rod for your dedication, to Blair Armitage whom we will not be seeing this fall as he will be retiring today, I believe.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Plett: Thank you, Blair, for all the work you have done, as well as the Clerk of the Senate and others. Thank you all so much.

To all of those who work to keep our building running, including our security, it is such a pleasure to feel so safe and well taken care of here, and we appreciate you deeply.

To the people who clean the building, it certainly does not go unnoticed, especially this year as we grappled with the new reality of doing business during a global pandemic.

Colleagues, it has been a long and hard year for many. I thank you all for your dedication to what you do and what you stand for. We may not agree, but we all stand for what we believe. I hope that you all have a wonderful rest this summer in preparation for our sessions in the fall.

Honourable senators, I look forward to seeing you all again soon. Take care and stay safe.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Yuen Pau Woo: Honourable senators, this is my second end-of-session message during the COVID-19 pandemic, and I find myself again sending good wishes on our departure when I haven't even had the chance to send good wishes to many of you on our arrival at the beginning of 2020.

In that time, eight of our colleagues have retired, and our farewells to them have not been as we would have wished them to be. Over the summer, two more colleagues will retire: Senator Munson and Senator Stewart Olsen. While we had the opportunity to honour Jim, we will not have the chance to formally toast our colleague from New Brunswick.

To Senator Stewart Olsen, we say thank you, adieu and warm wishes for a happy and healthy retirement.

We are now half a decade into the Senate reforms of 2016 and will soon welcome to our ranks three new members appointed under the arm's-length independent panel process. The Senate today is more diverse than it has ever been and demonstrates greater independence from partisan forces in the House of Commons than in the past.

The Canadian public supports the new approach to Senate appointments and the fact that new senators sit as nonpartisan members. Indeed, 80% of us today belong to parliamentary groups that are not part of a political caucus and do not align with a party in the other place.

Regardless of your views on a less-partisan Senate, we face long-standing challenges related to the legitimacy and credibility of the institution that we need to tackle collectively. That is a matter for a different speech, but I hope the end of another session — a most unique session — is an opportunity to reflect on just how we continue to work on Senate modernization when we return in the fall.

We have shown that we can rise to disruptions, such as COVID-19, which was a unique test of institutional resilience. I want to offer once again my thanks to the Senate Administration for helping us respond through adjustments in just about everything we do, from rules to physical space to technology to human resource management. While our response was not perfect, the proof of success is in the fact that infections in the Senate family were kept to a minimum, and we were able to continue our work.

I hope we will take the summer to reflect upon what we have learned from our response to COVID-19 and how we prepare for the next disruption.

We did not have a business continuity plan when COVID-19 struck — to be fair, no parliaments did — but we put one in place in due course and executed it reasonably well. The question is how we might now embed elements of our recent experience into the regular functioning of the Senate, both as a matter of good practice and as a buffer for future disruptions.

To be specific, what should we carry over from our largely successful experiment in virtual and hybrid sittings for the ongoing work of Senate sittings, committee meetings and the like? I believe the benefits of doing so in terms of efficiency, cost savings and a lower carbon footprint are compelling.

Let me conclude by thanking all staff across the Senate — cleaners, pages, clerks, translators, advisers and more — for your service to this institution in a most unusual and challenging period. I also offer my personal thanks to colleagues in the Senate leadership — the Speaker, the Speaker pro tempore, Senators Gold, Plett, Tannas and Cordy — for your willingness to solve problems together even in the face of occasional strong disagreements.

A special thank you to the ISG leadership team — Senators Saint-Germain, Omidvar and Duncan — who were supported by our very capable ISG Secretariat in serving not just the ISG membership but the entire Senate for the greater good of our institution.

Colleagues, I wish you all a safe, restful and rejuvenating summer recess and look forward to seeing you again in the fall, hopefully in person. And happy Canada Day.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Scott Tannas: Honourable senators, it has been an unforgettable year; I think we can all agree. We got through it together here in the Senate of Canada.

Canadians received the vital financial support they needed, and we engaged on other priority initiatives of the Government of Canada in a thoughtful way and in a timely fashion. We accomplished this because we are blessed with such dedicated and capable staff who met challenge after challenge and kept us and our institution in business.

To all members of the Senate family, we say thank you and bravo. You are our heroes, and it is an honour to work with each and every one of you. We hope you rest well and enjoy much-deserved time with your families over the summer, in addition to the inevitable preparations for a busy fall.

I was awestruck by the way our administration delivered innovative technology solutions that helped us do our work, but I must say that I hope this is the last we see of each other on Zoom.

I firmly believe that we do our best work when we are together and in person, but I have to admit that "Zooming" was a unique experience that has, for me, created some lasting memories. For example, I will not forget the majesty of Senator MacDonald's china cabinet, especially in the early days of hybrid sittings. Like a sentinel, it presided over our hearings.

I admired the beautiful artwork surrounding many senators, from Indigenous pieces to Group of Seven paintings to grandchildren's colouring.

I'm envious of Senator Cormier's beautiful piano and greatly enjoyed the night he serenaded us with a lively number while we waited for a vote.

• (2240)

I'm curious about those snazzy gold tassels attached to Senator Harder's Canadian flag and what they mean. I plan to ask him about it when I see him next.

All this to say, with gentle humour, that we have invited each other into our homes, and I think we are, in new ways, closer and more connected than we imagined possible across thousands of kilometres. I believe it will enrich our perspectives and our relationships as we turn to future work.

In closing, colleagues, we in the Canadian Senators Group are looking forward with optimism to us all being together again in Ottawa, working on behalf of the people of our great country and helping them resume, or achieve for the first time, success, happiness and security for themselves and their families.

Here's wishing you all a great summer.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Jane Cordy: Honourable senators, I would like to begin by acknowledging that I am joining you from Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

On behalf of the Progressive Senate Group, or PSG, I wish to echo the sentiments expressed by the other leaders today. Honourable senators, throughout the course of this session, we have worked together to improve the lives of Canadians. I look forward to resuming that work when we return. And please, God, as others have said, let it be in person.

We have also continued to face ongoing logistical challenges with our new way of work, but I would like to offer gratitude to all of those who have been working on these challenges and finding solutions for us. The employees who have continued to go above and beyond to adapt to our new circumstances deserve our thanks and, hopefully, as others have said, some time to rest and relax this summer.

To the Speaker's office, Information Services, the translators and interpreters, the maintenance staff, the pages and clerks, as well as the rest of the employees in the Chamber Operations and Procedure Office, Communications, Broadcasting, Protective Services and Corporate Security, the employees of the Library of Parliament, and to all the other employees of Senate Administration and the staff whom we rely on in our own offices, we appreciate all the work that you do for us. We thank you so much for that support.

Thank you to Senator Furey and your staff during these challenging times and to Senator Ringuette, our Speaker pro tempore.

I also want to salute the leaders of all the groups, Senator Gold, Senator Woo, Senator Plett and Senator Tannas. We have not always agreed on the best path forward, but we've worked on finding ways to do what is best for Canadians. It is a pleasure to work with each of you. I want to wish a happy birthday to Senator Gold, whose birthday is tomorrow. If he were in Newfoundland, he could be celebrating at this moment, because it's after midnight.

To Senator Plett, golf sounds like a great idea, and I can't wait to golf with both you and Betty. For everybody else, we have a rule that there's not to be any politics when we golf and particularly when we have dinner later, but both Senator Plett and my husband, Bob, never follow that rule. Betty and I both have to remind them of it many times.

I do hope that everyone can take some time this summer to reflect on recent events. Particularly, I'm thinking of the horrific act of anti-Muslim terrorism in London, Ontario, earlier this

month and the discovery of the remains of First Nations children on the grounds of former residential schools in British Columbia and Saskatchewan.

Honourable senators, we are all proud of our country, but honourable senators, we must do better. We must confront the past and chart a new course forward. There are many opportunities for us to do better, and I look forward to working toward tangible progress on issues like racism and reconciliation when we return.

I'm pleased to note that when we do return, we will be joined by new colleagues. I look forward to welcoming future senators Bernadette Clement, James Quinn, and Hassan Yussuff to the upper chamber. The addition of new ideas and new perspectives is always valuable to the work we do here.

As we wind down today's sitting, we must also say goodbye to our friends and colleagues, Senator Jim Munson and Senator Carolyn Stewart Olsen, who will be leaving us over the course of the summer. We will miss them. The chamber won't quite be the same without them. Jim and Carolyn, you have both made a positive difference.

Jim, we in the Progressive Senate Group will miss you, but we will toast you again at our group's social next Tuesday evening — a Zoom social, of course. That's the only kind we have these days, it seems.

Honourable senators and staff, I wish you a safe and a restful summer.

To all the members of our group, the Progressive Senate Group, you are incredible senators and caring people. I love working with each of you. My sincere hope is that we can all meet in person this fall. To our PSG staff, we are truly blessed to have such a great team. Thanks to each of you.

Thanks to our leadership team of Senator Dalphond, Senator Bovey and Senator Francis — and Senator Dawson for a while. It's been a pleasure working with each of you. I know we've had many long meetings. That's the thing with Zoom; we have to call special meetings. There's no just getting together for two minutes behind the chamber. It's always calling for a special meeting. Thank you for always being so patient and helpful, and for sharing your ideas and suggestions.

Honourable senators, I hope that we are all able to spend more time with family and friends this summer, and who knows, maybe this fall. I look forward to seeing all of you in person. Thank you very much.

THE SENATE

BLAIR ARMITAGE—TRIBUTE ON DEPARTURE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, before making a few brief remarks before we break for the summer, I would like to take a moment and bid farewell to a valuable member of the Senate family and a dear colleague and friend to everyone present. As Senator Plett said, in a couple of months Blair Armitage will come in for his last day on the job before taking a very well-earned retirement. However, today marks his last day as a familiar and friendly face at the table.

Since his arrival on Parliament Hill over 30 years ago, Blair has embraced a wide array of roles with both pride and professionalism. His passion in the work of Parliament, its traditions, its practices and its procedures have been the underpinning of his illustrious career, whether supporting the work of Committees, interparliamentary diplomacy, Debates, Broadcasting, Communications, Information Management or even as the Acting Usher of the Black Rod, we in the Senate have all benefited immensely from Blair's deep institutional knowledge and his tireless work ethic.

With his departure, the Senate family will lose one of its most valued members and a colleague who has made countless contributions to our institution.

On behalf of all honourable senators, we wish you all the best, Blair, for a happy retirement. We hope that you enjoy every moment with your family and friends, including your latest family member, your very new granddaughter, Sibyl. The very best to you, Blair. Take care.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, as we will soon be adjourning for the summer, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to senators and staff members for their cooperation and collaboration. We worked together to overcome the many challenges we faced in recent months.

[*English*]

To the leaders — Senator Gold, Senator Plett, Senator Woo, Senator Tannas and Senator Cordy — thank you for your cooperation. Thank you for your stewardship during our troubling times in these uncharted waters over the last year and a half. Thank you also to all senators for your support and your understanding during these difficult times.

• (2250)

On behalf of all senators, I wish to express our heartfelt appreciation for the work of our staff and in particular the Table, the Usher of the Black Rod, the pages, the Committees Directorate, the Corporate Security Directorate, our interpreters, stenographers, Communications, console operators, multimedia services and broadcasting, the Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel, our Corporate Services including our cleaning and maintenance personnel, our partners in the Library of Parliament and the Parliamentary Protective Service, our own staff and all those who contribute to the success of our work on behalf of all Canadians.

We are keenly aware that in the past year and a half it has been a very, very difficult time. But you all rose admirably to the challenge.

[*Translation*]

Colleagues, over the past year, we have had to face the devastating consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are confident that the situation in Canada will improve, but we know that people in many parts of the world are still in dire straits, and we must continue to think of those affected by this crisis.

[*English*]

In addition, we have witnessed senseless attacks in our communities and the horrific and shocking discoveries at the sites of the former Kamloops and Marieval residential schools. Now it is our fervent hope to move forward to the reopening and to the rebuilding of our provinces. And it is especially our fervent hope that we move forward to a very real and meaningful reconciliation.

To all my colleagues and to all those who work to keep us safe and to support us here at the Senate, stay safe, look after yourselves, take care of your families, take care of your friends and take care of your communities.

Have a wonderful summer, everybody, and hopefully we'll see you again in the fall. As everybody has expressed so far, let it be in person, please. Thank you.

LONG-TERM CARE SYSTEM

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONCLUDED

On the Order:

> Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Seidman, calling the attention of the Senate to weaknesses within Canada's long-term care system, which have been exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hon. Rosemary Moodie: Honourable senators, tonight I rise for the final speech of the session to speak to Senator Seidman's inquiry on long-term care. As many have acknowledged, the pandemic has highlighted many significant and long-standing gaps in our long-term care system. This system was already in deep trouble with pre-existing issues when the crisis struck and resulted in high rates of infections and death.

Now, over a year since the beginning of the pandemic and a few months since the beginning of the rollout of vaccines, we have observed once again, as the crisis begins to fade, the urgency slips away and the memories begin to fade, but these critical issues remain.

Thank you, Senator Seidman, for raising this issue in the Senate. We do have a role to play in ensuring that the focus on this issue is maintained and that the pressure on Canada's leadership to develop solutions continues.

When I consider the events that we are living through, I do so through the lens of my experience as a medical leader and as a surveyor with extensive experience in accreditation of health institutions and health systems of care, nationally and internationally.

Today, I hope to share some thoughts on how we got to this point and focus on potential solutions.

At the outset, using the data that has been gathered and what we now know about Canada's experience, I can create a snapshot of the impact of the pandemic on long-term care homes and the patients in them.

As we know, if you were living in a long-term care home, you were more likely to be exposed to COVID-19.

In a report entitled *Long-term care and COVID-19: The first 6 months*, the Canadian Institute of Health Information found that in the first six months of the pandemic, one third of long-term care homes experienced outbreaks.

Being in a long-term home meant that you were much more likely to die of COVID-19 than most Canadians and, in fact, than most people worldwide.

In May 2020, long-term care residents accounted for 81% of COVID-19 deaths, which doubled the OECD average.

If you lived in a long-term care home, your quality of care decreased and you lost access to the outside world.

Visits from physicians dropped by 16% between March and August 2020, compared to the previous year.

During that period, assessments of care noted that no personal contact with family or friends in the previous week had occurred for many of the residents of long-term care homes. This included virtual contact or phone calls. This was three times more than in 2019.

In fact, front-line workers in health care faced a hazardous environment, accounting for one in five COVID-19 cases in Canada.

There are numerous studies that outline many of the long-standing challenges in long-term care that preceded the pandemic, and those of us who are familiar with their findings know that the breakdowns in systems of care across our country were not only predictable, they were inevitable.

Beyond reviewing all of these studies and reports, my office consulted with a number of experts across Canada to hear from them on what they saw as the root causes of these issues.

Many spoke about the challenges of the lack of integration across health systems of care, meaning the acute care system, long-term care and public health systems of care. In some provinces, such as Ontario and Quebec, these systems of care fall under the authority of different ministers, not under the Minister of Health.

In Ontario, there's a designated minister for long-term care, while in Quebec a minister responsible for seniors.

This structural separation, people told us, set the stage for the lack of integration that unfolded. It caused gaps in communication, failed collaboration with long-term care officials who were, not infrequently, left out of critical pandemic planning and decision-making processes, with dire consequences and resulting in critical system failures.

They gave the example of long-term care institutions and front-line workers having poor access to personal protective equipment, tests and updated information on disease prevention. As an example, we heard from stakeholders about the significant and long-standing human resource shortages and gaps in the system of care that had historically resulted in the issue of overwhelming workload and increased staff burnout rate.

In a system of care challenged by steadily increasing volumes and complexity of care, besides the challenge of staff shortages, there was a lack of training and of mental health supports for providers. In some cases, there was even a lack of physical supports, such as a sufficient time for breaks or even spaces in which to take your breaks, all of which were in place and already having a deleterious impact on the workforce when the pandemic struck.

As the pandemic unfolded, this shortage of staff was further exacerbated as providers caught the virus themselves or were forced to quarantine due to exposure, a situation that was made worse by increasing vulnerability of staff who did not have access to PPE or testing equipment because of the shortages and delays.

In some cases, the very same measures that were implemented to prevent spread to and within long-term care homes, such as limiting workers from providing care in more than one location, further enhanced these staff shortages.

• (2300)

Colleagues, there has been much discussion about what comes next, but to understand our path forward we must examine the mistakes of the past that set the stage for the smouldering system failures that ignited during the pandemic.

It's important to consider that at the federal level, this issue began as far back as the mid-1990s, when the government of the day made significant reductions to social transfers. Ever since, we've been under-investing in long-term care and many other areas of our social infrastructure.

What is our track record? Well, compared to our OECD peers, we are 10th out of 26 countries in spending as a percentage of GDP. Countries with model systems such as Norway, Denmark and Sweden spend twice as much as we do.

This pandemic shows us that the cost of these tepid investments far outweighs the need to maintain a decent debt-to-GDP ratio. What is the value of an economy, I'd ask, if those who are meant to benefit from it are languishing? Needed improvements cannot be focused on money alone, but undoubtedly there is need to significantly increase the available resources to ensure these systems function well.

Let me focus on what else is needed. Going forward, in addition to increased investments, we need to build accountability into the system. I believe that we should do this through the implementation of national standards that are tied to targeted funding. Standards are important to ensure a third-party evaluation of the conditions of long-term care homes for patients and employees, to ensure that all within the environment are treated with dignity.

One model proposes that targeted funds could be provided through a new framework similar to the Canada Health Act, which articulates core standards. Even further, Parliament could adopt legislation with specific criteria for federal funding of long-term care.

Many colleagues had the benefit of hearing from Dr. Tuohy from the University of Toronto in a recent webinar organized by Senator Seidman and Senator Boehm. She argues for the adoption of a national long-term care insurance, which would build on the existing Canada and Quebec Pension Plan. This provides an interesting mechanism for the funding of long-term care and for the standardization of services, as payment out of the fund could be solely limited to institutions that meet standards set collaboratively by the provinces and the federal government.

I strongly believe there needs to be some targeted funding that promotes desired outcomes. One option may be to provide special grants for research or pilot projects based on successful models in Canada. This would also foster greater cross-Canadian collaboration.

Finally, and importantly, what will those standards be? A report by the CMA and other organizations provides us with a number of options. I'll share three that I believe are hitting the nail on the head. Long-term care homes should go through an accreditation process similar to that of hospitals. In hospitals, this is currently a voluntary activity paid for by organizations, but encouraged in some provinces through financial incentives. I believe there would need to be changes made to this process to make it a more effective requirement.

A second standard would be to provide reliable ways for patients and their families to have a voice. A third would be to focus on supports for employees, such as training, proper working conditions and mental health supports.

As proposed by a number of national groups, standards for long-term care should encompass the full continuum, ranging from home to residential care to palliative care, and focus on pushing the system towards desirable outcomes.

Colleagues, having stated the problems and potential solutions, there is one underlying societal issue we must consider, and that is ageism. When this chamber last examined aging 13 years ago, one of the recommendations was to launch a national strategy on public education campaigns and training for service providers in both health and social service programs against ageism. To quote the report, this was because "ageist stereotypes and prejudices unnecessarily limit the intrinsic value to society which older people bring."

The environment leading up to the pandemic, and the position from which we are working from now, is that working with seniors is not as prestigious as working in other areas of health care. In fact, for many Canadians, we'd rather not think about these homes or those living and working in them or the conditions they face. We would rather not think about our own futures and how we may well end up there. We forget that those people are people too, who have lives, dreams, careers, families and deserve our respect and admiration. They suffer because we have ignored them, because we are not comfortable thinking about them, and therefore, we have not committed our energy and our talents to improving their lives.

Colleagues, there have been decades of reports, studies and tragedies that have informed us of the atrocious state of long-term care. What more do we need before we decide that people, regardless of their age, deserve to live with dignity? Is that a standard we're willing to set for our society?

The issues that erupted in long-term care during the pandemic are not going away. A recent study by the Conference Board of Canada found that in the next 15 years, we'll need another 200,000 beds, doubling the amount currently unavailable. This means we also need more folks to staff these beds. The reality that many of us have a hard time accepting is that we are the ones, colleagues, who may well end up in these beds. If not for the sake of Canadians, maybe for our own, we will make this issue a priority.

As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, we are at a crossroads now. Do we go forward and return to normal, as if what was exposed to us never happened again? Or do we buckle down and pursue a stronger Canada where we define our success as more than GDP and our economic outputs, but by the number of families that can put food on the table, the number of children who have access to strong child care and early learning, and the number of seniors who, after spending their decades building this country, can spend their last years in dignity and respect? Thank you.

Hon. Tony Dean: Honourable senators, I rise to speak to Senator Seidman's inquiry on the weaknesses in long-term care systems exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. I thank Senator Seidman for her leadership on this timely and critically important issue and Senator Moodie for her sound advice to us this evening.

Long-term care homes in Canada have been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Canadian Institute for Health Information reports that more COVID-19 deaths occurred in long-term care homes in Canada than in any other wealthy nation. Among the provinces, Ontario has suffered some of the worst outbreaks, with deaths in long-term care accounting for 61% of all COVID deaths.

According to the Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table, for-profit homes saw 78% more COVID deaths than did public homes. Yes, colleagues, 78% more deaths in for-profit homes. This is drawn from the Science Advisory Table's report of January 2021, which also points to some key risk factors. A couple of them were mentioned by Senator Moodie, such as poor infection control and part-time staff who themselves became infected and moved between jobs in different homes as part of an effort to accumulate a livable wage.

In response to horrific stories emerging from long-term care homes, the Ontario government called in the Armed Forces in April 2020 to help several homes manage outbreaks that were out of control. It also launched the Marocco Commission to examine the issues and make recommendations on necessary changes.

The Canadian Armed Forces submitted a report to the Marocco Commission, detailing the horrific conditions they witnessed. The allegations are numerous and disturbing: a lack of personal protective equipment and other medical supplies, harsh treatment of residents, issues with cleanliness, infestation with mould, staffing shortages leading to resident deaths as a result of dehydration and malnutrition, and the list goes on. At one home, the Canadian Armed Forces said they suspected that COVID-19-related deaths paled in comparison to general deaths in the facility, which were much greater than they would normally be.

• (2310)

There were also existing challenges before the pandemic hit, including insufficient staffing, lack of sufficient training, and aging home infrastructure and overcrowding. In some cases, there were four beds to a single room. But things hit a breaking point with the arrival of the pandemic, and the issues were too deeply rooted to overcome quickly.

The Marrocco report set out 85 recommendations for improving Ontario's long-term care system. Some of the recommendations include fast-tracking increases in staffing and care levels at all long-term care homes; separating the construction of the homes from the provision of care; improving working conditions and organizational cultures in long-term care homes to better attract, recruit, develop and retain staff, and reduce reliance on part-time staffing; implementing a streamlined expedited approvals process for creating new long-term care beds that accommodates the participation of existing and new not-for-profit and municipal licensees; and, importantly, developing an unannounced inspections regime and implementing enforcement mechanisms, including fines, for homes that are routinely non-compliant.

Colleagues, further to this, a recent paper on necessary long-term-care reforms, written by policy experts and health advocates, was published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. The paper, *Invest in Care, Not Profit*, builds on the Marrocco report in recommending an orderly and phased reduction of for-profit long-term care; that already announced new licences for 30,000 long-term care beds be allocated entirely to the non-profit sector; increased funding for not-for-profit and municipal long-term-care providers and removal of the impediments preventing them from receiving funding currently;

the creation of an agency with a mandate in resources to support non-profit homes and an independent task force to take up the Marocco Commission's recommendation to:

> . . . urgently implement a streamlined, expedited approvals process for creating redeveloped and new long-term care beds that accommodates the participation of existing and new not-for-profit and municipal licensees.

Finally, as touched on by Senator Moodie, federal long-term care legislation should be established that recognizes that long-term care is necessary health care, and commit to ongoing federal funding for these essential services.

Honourable senators, the evidence is clear, it is overwhelming and it is tragic. Canada has a fundamental problem providing long-term residential care to those whose lives and well-being depend upon it.

We cannot commit the system to default back to business as usual. This has to end. Addressing these problems will require comprehensive reform, increased government funding, reduced wait lists, better standards of care and staffing, effective enforcement and far less contracting out.

There is a clear path forward and considerable consensus on necessary reforms, much of which is embedded in the Ontario government's independent inquiry report and is now supplemented by *Invest in Care, Not Profit*.

It is now our responsibility to do everything we can to support the proposed changes. We must move forward. I look for your support in doing that, and I thank you for your attention.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Senator Seidman and honourable senators, I must inform the Senate that if the Honourable Senator Seidman speaks now, her speech will have the effect of closing the debate on this inquiry.

On debate, Senator Seidman.

Hon. Judith G. Seidman: Honourable senators, I rise tonight at this late hour, during Seniors Month, to conclude debate on my inquiry, which calls the attention of the Senate to weaknesses within Canada's long-term care system that have been exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

I would like to express my gratitude to all my colleagues who have extended their voices to look at the state of long-term care in their regions: Senators Martin, Pate, Bovey, Plett, Boehm, Boniface, Dasko, Moodie and Dean.

The social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have been far-reaching, but the devastation that occurred within our long-term care sector stands as a paramount tragedy of this pandemic. In March, the Canadian Institution for Health Information released a report that examined the impact of COVID-19 on long-term care residents and staff during the first six months of the pandemic and provided early comparisons of outbreaks, cases and deaths between the first and second waves. They found that between March 1, 2020, and February 15, 2021, more than 2,500 care homes across the country experienced a COVID-19 outbreak, resulting in the deaths of over 14,000 residents and close to 30 staff. That represents more than two thirds of Canada's overall COVID-19-related deaths.

Other reports and investigations have exposed the underlying conditions responsible for the disproportionate number of deaths among residents in long-term care homes: insufficient resources, shortage of personnel, outdated infrastructure and poor quality of care. These persistent challenges have fuelled a national conversation about the causes of and solutions to the challenges faced by the long-term care system. That in turn has encouraged Canadians to think about where they want to live as they age.

In late 2020, the National Institute on Aging, in partnership with the Canadian Medical Association and Ipsos, conducted an online survey to better understand the concerns and perspectives of Canadians regarding the state of Canada's long-term care system. The survey found that 86% of Canadians surveyed and 97% of those aged 65 years and older reported that they are concerned about the challenges faced by Canada's long-term care systems. Meanwhile, 85% of Canadians of all ages who participated in the survey and 96% of Canadians aged 65 years and older report that, as they get older, they will do everything they can to avoid moving into an LTC home.

The results of the survey are clear: A majority of Canadians wish to live safely and independently within their own homes for as long as possible.

It is important to note that the desire to age in place is not new; for years, surveys and studies have reported similar findings. In 2005, the Atlantic Seniors Housing Research Alliance conducted a five-year research project to understand the future housing needs of aging Atlantic Canadians and to develop policy recommendations for alternative housing solutions to meet those needs.

The final report, published in 2010, entitled *Seniors' housing: challenges, issues, and possible solutions for Atlantic Canada*, made two fundamental conclusions. The first is that as we age, we want to stay in our homes for as long as possible, and the second is that having support in and around us in our communities is essential to fostering successful conditions for this to occur.

• (2320)

They explained that the reasons for the desire to stay in our homes for as long as possible include:

> . . . fear of the unknown and change, and comfort with what is known (familiar); wanting to be in control of their lives; and a desire not to be a burden on others.

According to the report, the number of seniors who want to age in place is over 90%.

Somewhat incongruently, reports show that Canada spends a disproportionately low amount on home care compared to the OECD average. According to a report released by Queen's

University in November 2020, entitled *Ageing Well*, Canada spends a mere 0.2% of GDP on home care, the lowest outlay in the OECD. They write:

> And even worse than that, the ratio of more than 6 dollars spent on institutional care for every dollar spent on home care is one of the most imbalanced resource allocations in the developed world.

Results from a study commissioned by the Canadian Medical Association published in March found that:

> . . . demand for long-term care, is expected to reach 606,000 patients in 2031, up from 380,000 in 2019. Similarly, demand for home care will increase to roughly 1.8 million patients in 2031, up from close to 1.2 million in 2019.

As a result, the total cost of care is projected to nearly double, from $29.7 billion in 2019, to $58.5 billion in 2031.

They also found that long-term care utilization has been on a downward trend in recent years. They write:

> If we can sustain that trend, by making better use of home care, we can move 37,000 Canadians out of long-term care, saving the health care system an estimated $794 million a year by 2031.

Finally, they estimate that there are currently more than 9,400 patients in hospitals waiting to be transferred to other care settings, and predict that if some of these patients were transferred to home care and long-term care, an additional $1.4 billion a year could be saved by 2031.

To accompany these findings, the study recommends two policy solutions to improve care, one of which is shifting more long-term care patients to home care. However, at present, most government action is directed towards addressing the glaring and immediate issues pertinent to the beleaguered long-term care sector; namely, the creation of standards, recruitment of personnel and renovation of infrastructure. While these actions are important, they will not adequately respond to the long-term care crisis on their own. The fundamental issue is the chronic underfunding of senior home care and community services that will allow seniors to age within their community in the home of their choice.

Honourable senators, we should ask ourselves: Why is so much of our collective effort and money being spent on care that our seniors do not even want?

As part of this inquiry and to better understand the work being done across the country to enable aging in place, I embarked on a search for creative pilot projects. My research shows a number of initiatives across Canada operative within the past five years. While there are likely more, I identified 21 notable projects, 9 of which are in Ontario, 2 in Quebec, 3 in the Atlantic provinces, 3 in the Prairie provinces, 2 in British Columbia and 2 in the territories. Some of these projects derive their funding from private sources, while others are federally, provincially or municipally funded. The focus and intent of the projects are to support healthy aging in place through the integration of age-friendly housing, health and social support services, transportation, volunteering, telemedicine and emerging technology.

As an example, in my home province of Quebec, the Hôpital Saint-François d'Assise has been operating a mobile clinic in Quebec City since February of 2019. The aim of the pilot project is to conduct geriatric follow-up at the homes of patients after they're discharged from the emergency department.

Meanwhile, the Ontario government announced that they are spending up to $15 million to expand the Community Paramedicine for Long-Term Care program, which launched in October 2020. The aim of the program is to delay the need for long-term care for seniors by providing them with at-home health services.

In P.E.I., a new pilot project, Hospitals Without Walls, launched in November 2019, funded by the Centre for Aging + Brain Health Innovation. The aim of the project is to use technology to allow seniors and their family caregivers to stay connected to their health care team from the comfort of their homes.

In British Columbia, the Better at Home program is funded by the government of B.C. and managed by the United Way. The program mobilizes volunteers, contractors and paid staff to provide a range of support services, such as friendly visits, yardwork and grocery shopping to help seniors live independently within their community.

On a national level, the federal government, in partnership with the Government of New Brunswick, instituted the Healthy Seniors Pilot Project in 2018. This program will support a range of applied research initiatives to examine how seniors can be better supported in their homes, communities and care facilities. As of January, 39 projects were launched.

Lastly, the National Research Council of Canada developed the Aging in Place Challenge program in October 2020. The program intends to partner with the private and public sectors, along with academic and research organizations, with an objective to support seniors and their caregivers to live healthy and social lives in their homes and communities of choice.

These are but a few examples of visionary initiatives that promote and invest in aging in place.

Honourable senators, as parliamentarians we have a responsibility to provide leadership on this pivotal issue related to aging and seniors. On the local, provincial and national levels, we can find commonalties among these initiatives and encourage ones that have worked in one place to take root in another. We can find best practices and perhaps even ensure a centralized oversight clearing house.

In my introductory speech for this inquiry, I examined several clear, attainable, short-term solutions that can be and already have been implemented across the country. At the same time, I encouraged us to think about long-term solutions that will create lasting, deep-rooted change within the LTC system.

The conclusions one draws will depend on one's ultimate definition of the problem. Is it fundamentally a long-term care home problem, or do we need to transform the way health and social services are provided across the health care continuum?

It is evident that the creation of policies at all levels of government, which focus solely on the LTC sector, will not be sustainable to meet the demands of the growing population of Canadian seniors. In order to meet these needs, there must be a shift in the status quo, away from a system that prioritizes acute hospital care and towards one that focuses on the housing, social and health needs of seniors.

As it is written in the *Ageing Well* report published by Queen's University:

> Seniors require 4 primary types of support. The current model gives predominance to care to alleviate physical and mental limitations; housing, lifestyle and social needs lie many tiers down. The new approach must recognize that the four are interrelated and must be advanced together if seniors are to age well.

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided a timely opportunity for parliamentarians, provincial and territorial governments, associations, and the public and private sectors to collaborate and strengthen our collective support for home and community-based care while ensuring that the LTC sector can adequately care for our most vulnerable seniors.

Honourable senators, I encourage you to reflect on what the concept of home means to you. For many of us, the definition of home is complex, embedded in personal meaning that exceeds a physical space. It is a place of many dimensions, including comfort, independence and connection. This concept of home should be at the heart of our policy-making. Thank you.

(Debate concluded.)

• (2330)

LINK BETWEEN PROSPERITY AND IMMIGRATION

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONCLUDED

On the Order:

> Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Omidvar, calling the attention of the Senate to the link between Canada's past, present and future prosperity and its deep connection to immigration.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I am pleased to rise today to speak briefly on Senator Omidvar's inquiry on immigration. Immigrating to Canada is the story of my family, and it's a familiar story that belongs not just to my family but to families across our nation and throughout our rich history. The way I like to view it, our Canadian society is a colourful fabric, and the threads that create this fabric are the distinct families, individuals, and communities that have found their way to our shores and call Canada home.

A common metaphor for Canadian culture is a mosaic of distinct pieces. This contrasts with the other popular metaphor of the United States as a melting pot. It is important, though, that we do not forget about the glue that keeps our beautiful Canadian mosaic intact. The glue is what binds us. It is what unites us in a spirit of cooperation and gives us pride as Canadians. And so, one of the things we must deeply reflect upon, acknowledge and work to strengthen is what unites us all as Canadians. Only through doing so can we preserve our distinct pieces of the mosaic while being glued together as a strong whole.

The future of this nation will come through steady and robust immigration. In recent years, net immigration has accounted for 80% of Canada's population growth. That figure is slated to increase over the next decade. Because of this, immigration will be the key to our country's continued growth and economic success.

In past years, and no doubt in the years to come, immigration from Asia has been important and steadily increasing, comprising over 60% of our country's newcomers. Asian-Canadian leaders of the past paved the way for me and others — leaders like former senator Vivienne Poy, the first senator of Asian descent and the architect of Asian Heritage Month, adopted unanimously in this very chamber in 2001. As a result of her vision, so much key information and stories of tragedy, discrimination, racism, inequality and loss, as well as many triumphs, have come to light during the month of May and throughout the year.

Within the Asian experience in Canada comes a subset of Korean-Canadian stories, which begins in 1888 when the first Canadian missionaries set foot on the Korean Peninsula. In the century and a half that has followed, Canadians fought alongside South Koreans in the Korean War, and most recently signed a historic free trade agreement, the first and only free trade agreement in Asia. I had the honour of sponsoring the CKFTA implementation bill with the good work of the critic, the Honourable Senator Percy Downe. Currently, a quarter million Canadians of Korean descent are in Canada and nearly 30,000 Canadian citizens reside in South Korea. This deep-rooted shared history and people is what makes the Korean-Canadian community strong and distinct within Canada.

Korean Canadians have contributed to Canada's success and progress on every front. People like iconic Hollywood Asian actress and Ottawa native, Sandra Oh; Commodore Hans Jung (Retired), a Korean immigrant to Canada who became the surgeon general of the Canadian Forces in 2009 until his retirement in 2012; and people like Dr. Ahn Suk Hwan, the engineer who designed the Canadarm, an achievement I am reminded of every time I take out a $5 bill to buy a cup of coffee and see the space arm displayed. Speaking of coffee, when my husband rode across our vast country from coast to coast on his Harley-Davidson, he noticed two constants in every city and small town: Tim Hortons and a Hyundai or Kia dealership.

The Korean-Canadian community possesses an incredible entrepreneurial spirit, a deep well of courage and optimism that has fuelled Korean-Canadian business people to settle across this country and operate businesses of all varieties and sizes. They demonstrate self-reliance through networks of hundreds of churches and non-profit organizations that take care of the community. "Kim's Convenience," the popular sitcom written by

Ins Choi, brought into the mainstream these attributes of entrepreneurialism, family values, a tireless work ethic and close-knit family and communities.

Finally, I wish to recognize the more than 26,000 Canadians who fought alongside South Koreans and their UN allies in the Korean War, Canada's third-bloodiest war in which 516 Canadians made the ultimate sacrifice. They never returned home, but are buried to this day in the UN Memorial Cemetery in Pusan, Korea. The veterans are seen as heroes and an inspiration to Korean communities across Canada. Standing on this firm foundation of selfless sacrifice of Canadians in Korea for more than 120 years, Korean-Canadian communities have flourished in various regions with sincere pride, gratitude and commitment to Canada that welcomed the first wave of immigrants following the signing of the armistice on July 27, 1953.

Korean communities make Canada stronger and better. They are an integral piece of our Canadian mosaic and the glue — of course — the glue that binds us and touches all of the parts that make up Canada's beautiful, colourful mosaic of the Canadian values that are shared in all the communities: fairness, inclusion, democracy, economic security, safety, sustainability, health, freedom and peace, to name a few.

Honourable senators, I would like to thank our colleague Senator Omidvar for introducing this important inquiry on a topic so critical to the past, present and future of our country. May the stories I have shared today be a reminder of the contributions to Canada by our Asian community, my own community of Korean Canadians, and a reminder of the glue that binds all of us as Canadians: the sharing of these Canadian values.

Before I finish, may I acknowledge Senator Jim Munson, someone whom I have known throughout my Senate career. He is here to the very last minutes of the sitting, and that is a testament to the kind of dedication with which he has served in the Senate of Canada. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan: Honourable senators, I rise today to call attention to the link between Canada's past, present and future prosperity and its deep connection to immigration. Senator Omidvar first rose in this chamber to launch an inquiry on the link between prosperity and immigration in February of last year, a month before the beginning of the pandemic. Since then, many things have changed, but immigrants' contributions to Canada have not.

As my colleagues have aptly pointed out in the past, many new Canadians have been on the front lines of the pandemic, either by caring for the sick and elderly or ensuring that Canadians continue to have access to fresh produce. Senator Loffreda, through his own story, has shown us that when arriving in Canada, hard work is paramount. Senator Ravalia has spoken eloquently of his journey from Zimbabwe, where he was judged by his ethnicity, to Newfoundland, where he was judged by his ability, humanity and integration into his new home. In return, he has dedicated much of his medical career to his community. In short, immigrants are not only essential workers, they are essential to Canada.

Today, I would like to challenge our notion of prosperity, which is often equated to material wealth and social status. Like Senator Simons, I remember attending Edmonton's three-day Heritage Festival, where over 100 different home countries and cultures met. Similarly, the streets of Toronto, under normal circumstances, come to life in the summer. Festivals and food trucks fill the streets with smells and sights from all over the world. I have fond memories of attending caravans where it was possible to travel the world without leaving the city. This is also prosperity.

I can relate to both Senator Loffreda's life story and Senator Simons's love for cultural events. Today, I would like to talk about how Canada has been enriched by immigrants and specifically about their influence on Canadian cuisine.

Canadian cuisine is often discredited, although Lenore Newman, author of *Speaking In Cod Tongues: A Canadian Culinary Journey*, shows that it is entwined with the historical tropes of Canadian identity: fresh, wild, seasonal, multicultural and regionally distinct.

For instance, a trip to our national capital would be incomplete without a BeaverTail on the Rideau Canal or an Obama Cookie in the ByWard Market. However, Ottawa is also considered the shawarma capital of Canada. Similarly, Halifax is renowned for its lobster, but in 2015, Halifax city council voted to make donair the city's official food. Now, the Halifax donair can be found in restaurants across Nova Scotia.

• (2340)

Unfortunately, COVID-19 has upended our lives for over a year, forcing us to search new ways to cope with loss, anxiety and an uncertain future. Many Canadians, myself included, have turned to comfort food, and we have tried to support local businesses who have been struggling during these unprecedented times.

I would like to share with you some of the most popular dishes among Canadians during the first wave of the pandemic. The most-ordered dishes in Canada were the traditional poutine, as well as miso soup, pad thai, naan, edamame, shawarma and, in first place, senators, was butter chicken. I believe this is a testament to our multiculturalism and cuisine.

We often equate prosperity with a balanced budget and a higher GDP, but linking human flourishing to higher levels of material consumption is unsustainable. Cultural activities are a way of achieving a sustainable form of prosperity, where humans flourish through their capability to engage with cultural and creative practices and communities. I believe that by continuing to welcome Canadians-to-be, we ensure that every generation will continue to flourish and to find their own version of prosperity.

I see that my friend Senator Munson is not here, but I want to take this opportunity to say to Senator Munson, I have enjoyed working with you in the Senate, in this chamber, and outside on many of the various groups that we are fond of and that we support, specifically the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association. I have really enjoyed our interactions, and you really knew what was happening throughout the world. I guess that goes back to your time as a reporter, and you contributed so much. I thank you and you will be missed.

Senators, thank you. Have a good summer.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Yuen Pau Woo: Honourable senators, it is my honour to deliver on behalf of Senator Omidvar her right of final reply on this inquiry. She is unable to deliver this speech herself because of the death of her mother earlier today.

Let me start by offering our sincere condolences to our colleague and her family.

These are the words of Senator Omidvar:

> I rise today to conclude my inquiry on the link between Canada's past, present and future prosperity and its deep connection to immigration. I am grateful that so many of my colleagues joined me in speaking to this inquiry, including Senators Simons, Loffreda, Woo, Ravalia and Cormier.

Senators Martin and Ataullahjan also spoke to Senator Omidvar's inquiry.

> When I first launched the inquiry in February 2020, I noted how immigration has played such a significant role in nation building, and I pointed out its strengths, weaknesses and failings. When I relaunched it in December 2020, the pandemic had overtaken our lives, and I noted that our predetermined notions of immigrants had shifted. If I were to launch it again, I would likely note that as much as we pay heed to our economic prosperity, we need to also pay heed to the unfortunate rise in racism with its devastating impacts on our communities.
>
> This inquiry has been immeasurably enriched by the contributions of our colleagues here in the Senate. Senator Simons emphasized that immigration is a mutually beneficial, symbiotic relationship and that Canada needs immigrants every bit as much as immigrants need Canada. Senator Loffreda told his own story of his immigrant parents in compelling words, noting that resilience is a characteristic shared by many who choose to make new lives for themselves. Senator Woo —

— yours truly —

> — cast his eyes on the estimated 2.8 million Canadians living outside of Canada, characterizing them as one of our hidden assets. He points out that, as such, we are not only a country of immigrants but also a country of emigrants. Senator Cormier focused on the role of francophone immigrants and particularly their contribution to Acadian communities. Senator Ravalia was unforgettable in the story of his journey to Twillingate, Newfoundland, from being a stranger to now a part of the fabric of that community.

Just a few minutes earlier, Senator Martin touched on the prominent role of immigrants from Korea, which is, of course, her own heritage. Senator Ataullahjan, even at this late hour, whetted our appetites with a discussion of so-called immigrant foods that have become part of the Canadian palate.

> I want to thank them all. And I want to signal to this chamber that they, along with others in the chamber who are members of an informal working caucus in immigration, believe that it is essential for the Senate to launch a proper study on immigration. As the chamber of sober second thought, with the capacity to do in-depth work in a non-partisan manner, this is indeed the right institution to take on this essential task.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

(Debate concluded.)

PANDEMIC-RELATED FISCAL CRISIS FACING NAV CANADA

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONCLUDED

On the Order:

> Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Simons, calling the attention of the Senate to the pandemic-related fiscal crisis facing NAV CANADA and its impact on levels of air traffic control and public safety services at regional airports across Canada.

Hon. Paula Simons: Honourable senators, thank you all for your indulgence this evening. I had just finished explaining, at midnight last night, that some of the airport towers had been given a reprieve from NAV CANADA's closures. But NAV CANADA is still studying significantly reducing its hours for service in other airports, including Sept-Îles, Brandon, Prince Albert, Fort St. John, Dawson Creek, Flin Flon, Dauphin, The Pas, Buffalo Narrows and Sydney, Nova Scotia, although it now says none will face imminent service elimination as they had before.

So you may be asking, Senator Simons, if the problem is largely solved, why are you still bothering us at this late date and this late hour by giving the rest of this speech? Well, I do have an answer — because the underlying structural problems confronting NAV CANADA and Canada's smaller regional airports have not gone away.

NAV CANADA has raised its fees to air carriers by 29.5%, a huge hike for struggling airlines, even if they are phased in as planned over the next five years. WestJet, for one, is already calling for relief from having to pay those fees as it tries to ride out this storm.

But NAV CANADA is a private company, and it doesn't take orders from Transport Canada nor from the minister, not when it comes to closing towers or setting fees. Transport Canada's civil servants can intervene if they feel a reduction of service presents real and substantive safety concerns, but such service reviews are supposed to be resolutely apolitical.

Still, NAV CANADA isn't quite like a regular private corporation. It's a federally regulated monopoly which provides an absolutely essential service to Canadians without competition, and its bylaws can only be amended with the consent of Transport Canada.

The NAV CANADA model worked as long as thousands of planes were flying, as long as the fees paid by big international carriers subsidized operations at smaller Canadian airports, but the model has collapsed, and who knows when it may be fully functional again now that the world is grappling with the Delta variant.

Until the pandemic is truly tamed and until people from all around the world are routinely flying in and out of the United States again, we will not be back to anything like normal air traffic through Canadian airspace.

The rules around NAV CANADA's not-for-profit structure mean it can only charge enough fees to cover its costs. The company cannot bank surpluses for a rainy day and, as a result, when the COVID crisis hit, the company had just $93 million in its rate-stabilization account. The company has gone to the bond market and raised significant funds. It's now carrying $850 million in debt, but that money will have to be repaid. And what happens next year if planes still aren't flying at anything like normal numbers?

NAV CANADA was correct to recognize it could not make up revenue shortfalls of between half a billion and a billion dollars by pulling its services from regional airports. Regional airports, in turn, are facing existential financial woes of their own, and they can't afford to bail out NAV CANADA either. Those airports have dodged this bullet, but other extraordinary economic challenges facing regional airports remain.

The organizational structures that were put in place in 1996 and which worked so well for almost 25 years have had their vulnerabilities exposed. And as senators who are bound to represent our regions, I believe we've a duty to recognize this quandary and to think about substantive solutions to sustain NAV CANADA and Canada's network of regional airports. I hope we will put our minds to this issue when we fly back to this chamber in the fall. Thank you. *Hiy hiy*.

(Debate concluded.)

[Senator Simons]

• (2350)

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

ROLE AND MANDATE—INQUIRY—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Peter Harder rose pursuant to notice of March 15, 2021:

> That he will call the attention of the Senate to the role and mandate of the RCMP, the skills and capabilities required for it to fulfill its role and mandate, and how it should be organized and resourced in the 21st century.

He said: Honourable senators, this inquiry was tabled on March 14. It is now June 29. I see there are senators wanting to fete Senator Munson. I yield the balance of my time and will adjourn the debate.

(On motion of Senator Harder, debate adjourned.)

THE HONOURABLE JIM MUNSON

INQUIRY—DEBATE

Hon. Jane Cordy rose pursuant to notice of June 9, 2021:

> That she will call the attention of the Senate to the career of the Honourable Senator Jim Munson.

She said: Honourable senators, I will speak briefly. I want to initiate the debate on the inquiry to allow senators who, due to time constraints, were not able to fete Senator Munson. Please go ahead, anybody who would like to speak. I understand it's very late.

Hon. Marty Klyne: I'm glad we got to this before I retire.

Thank you, Senator Harder, and thank you for seconding this, Senator Munson.

Honourable senators, it is an honour to speak in tribute to our friend, my Progressive colleague and the "king of kindness," the Honourable Jim Munson.

Jim has been a welcoming, friendly and compassionate presence in the chamber — always quick with a joke, quick to laugh and quick to care. While he will be missed, the Progressives feel confident we can intermittently lure him out of retirement from his Ottawa home to provide sage advice every now and then. Pints are optional.

Senator Munson leaves behind an impressive legacy. A common theme is that Jim has been a rock for the disability community and, indeed, for defending and advancing all human rights and the principles of inclusion.

In the previous Parliament, Senator Munson sponsored Bill C-81 to create a barrier-free country for Canadians with disabilities. Notably, the House of Commons accepted all Senate amendments — a testament to Senator Munson's collaborative leadership.

In 2012, after a four-year effort, Senator Munson passed a Senate public bill to establish World Autism Awareness Day in Canada. This bill has brought greater awareness to issues facing the autism community, supporting efforts toward improved public policy and greater inclusion.

Senator Munson was also involved in the groundbreaking 2007 policy report of the Social Affairs Committee, *Pay Now or Pay Later: Autism Families in Crisis*, which recommended establishing a national autism strategy. Today, as we know, Canada is developing such a strategy, and we recognize Senator Munson's determined and successful advocacy over the years toward this goal.

Just last month, Senator Munson passed the Kindness Week Act — I think this is the only Senate public bill to become law in this Parliament thus far, or at least it was when I wrote this — passing the House of Commons in two days. We will have to ask Senator Munson his secret, though the theme of that bill may offer a hint.

Finally, I would add that it has been a real joy to be a part of the Progressive Senate Group with Senator Munson. I have benefited greatly from Jim's experience, collegiality and sense of fun. I am confident that I speak for all members of the Progressive Senate Group when I say we will all try to live up to that spirit going forward.

Create a great summer, everyone. Thank you, *hiy kitatamîhin*.

Hon. Marilou McPhedran: Senator Munson, I won't repeat the facts and descriptions so richly placed on the record by colleagues who have spoken and who clearly hold you in high regard, but I do endorse those positive observations.

I have a confession to make. The first time I heard you speak about Kindness Week, inside my head I scoffed. I was raised a girl in rough-and-tumble rural Manitoba. My sisters and I were proud to be "honorary boys," and aggressive behaviour was part of our protection. My natural prickly nature flowed well within the competitive culture in student politics, law school and as a lawyer.

When you spoke in honour of Rabbi Reuven Bulka, founder of Kind Canada, naming him as the architect and inspiration for your Senate bill, you quoted his testimony at committee where he said:

> My motivation in establishing Kindness Week in Ottawa was to counter the bullying epidemic that had invaded our schools. The logic was simple. Telling children not to do something does not help that much and at times can be counterproductive. But helping children do nice things and say nice things to others creates the type of positive energy that suffocates bullying.

Senator Munson, when you spoke of your work over the years on children's rights, with the disability community, Special Olympics Canada and families with autism, I heard you say:

> Kindness Week can make a positive contribution to inclusion and lead to better experiences for many people and adults alike.

And I paused. I thought of the courtesy and grace you brought to the chair of the Senate Human Rights Committee when I first arrived in the Senate. I thought of how you conducted yourself in this chamber and outside it in less formal encounters. I realized that I was learning from you about increased effectiveness, as a senator who makes kindness their practice.

As you said, kindness has impacted all of us in some way. The impacts can be indirect and sometimes go unnoticed.

You again quoted recently departed Rabbi Bulka from the last time he appeared before a Senate committee, where he said, "There is much research on kindness and its impact that are vital to our appreciating its wide reach."

• (0000)

I have a long way to go on the kindness continuum, I know. We will all miss you in this place, Senator Munson, but we know we can find you at the Victoria Forum, where undoubtedly they too will learn from you about the power and strategic advantages of kindness, not just for one week of the year but perhaps especially during Canada's annual Kindness Week.

Senator Munson, exciting new projects and places await you and your wonderful life partner Ginette, and your colleagues here will look forward to welcoming you back for visits.

Senator McCallum has explained to me that in Cree, *meegwetch* is "thank you," but *chi meegwetch* means more: It is a message of thanks, with a connotation of gratitude going forward. Fare thee well, Senator Munson. *Chi meegwetch*.

(*At midnight, pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate on June 23, 2021, the Senate adjourned until Tuesday, September 21, 2021, at 2 p.m.*)

APPENDIX

DELAYED ANSWER TO ORAL QUESTIONS

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

CANADA-CHINA RELATIONS

(*Response to question raised by the Honourable David Richards on June 2, 2021*)

The Government of Canada's priority is to seek the immediate release of Mr. Spavor and Mr. Kovrig. Canadian officials are providing consular assistance to both men, and are in regular communication with their families. Canada has taken steps to fully support them since the beginning of the detention, and will continue to do so. Their health and well-being, as well as that of all Canadian citizens detained abroad, is of utmost importance to the Government of Canada. However, the Government cannot disclose details on the cases of Mr. Spavor and Mr. Kovrig due to privacy consideration.

Consular assistance provided to the families of detained Canadian citizens abroad include conveying regular updates on the status of the case, providing information on the local legal system and processes, as well as facilitating communication between families and the detained Canadian citizen.

The Forty-third Parliament was dissolved by Proclamation of Her Excellency the Governor General on Sunday, August 15, 2021.

CONTENTS

Tuesday, June 29, 2021

PAGE

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

Chief Wayne Christian
Hon. Mary Jane McCallum 2139

Indigenous Leadership
Expression of Thanks
Hon. Kim Pate 2139

Legislative Work of the Senate
Expression of Thanks
Hon. Mary Coyle 2140

QUESTION PERIOD

Public Health Agency
National Microbiology Laboratory
Hon. Donald Neil Plett 2140
Hon. Marc Gold 2140

Natural Resources
Carbon Tax
Hon. Larry W. Smith 2141
Hon. Marc Gold 2141

Employment and Social Development
Canada Disability Benefit
Hon. Chantal Petitclerc 2141
Hon. Marc Gold 2142

Foreign Affairs
Canada-China Relations
Hon. David Richards 2142
Hon. Marc Gold 2142

Canadian Heritage
Canada Day 2021
Hon. Wanda Elaine Thomas Bernard 2143
Hon. Marc Gold 2143

National Defence
Minister of National Defence
Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu 2143
Hon. Marc Gold 2144

Natural Resources
Support for Energy Sector
Hon. Leo Housakos 2144
Hon. Marc Gold 2144

Foreign Affairs
National Reopening Plan
Hon. Yonah Martin 2145
Hon. Marc Gold 2145

Delayed Answer to Oral Question 2145

PAGE

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Business of the Senate
Hon. Raymonde Gagné 2145

Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Bill (Bill C-12)
Third Reading
Hon. Rosa Galvez 2145
Hon. Claude Carignan 2147
Hon. Robert Black 2151
Hon. Mary Jane McCallum 2153
Hon. Douglas Black 2155
Hon. Peter Harder 2157
Hon. Terry M. Mercer 2159

Broadcasting Act (Bill C-10)
Bill to Amend—Second Reading
Hon. David Richards 2160
Hon. Patricia Bovey 2162
Hon. René Cormier 2164
Referred to Committee 2165

Budget Implementation Bill, 2021, No. 1 (Bill C-30)
Third Reading—Debate
Hon. Lucie Moncion 2165
Hon. Donna Dasko 2168
Hon. Colin Deacon 2169
Third Reading
Hon. Colin Deacon 2171
Hon. Elizabeth Marshall 2172
Hon. Rosemary Moodie 2175
Hon. Marilou McPhedran 2177
Hon. Éric Forest 2179
Hon. Donald Neil Plett 2180

Adjournment
Motion Adopted
Hon. Raymonde Gagné 2186

Point of Order
Speaker's Ruling
Hon. Donald Neil Plett 2187

The Senate
Motion Concerning Genocide of Uyghurs and Other Turkic Muslims by the People's Republic of China Negatived
Hon. Yonah Martin 2187

Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources
Motion to Authorize Committee to Study the Cumulative Impacts of Resource Extraction and Development—Motion in Amendment Adopted 2188
Committee Authorized to Study the Cumulative Impacts of Resource Extraction and Development 2189

CONTENTS

Tuesday, June 29, 2021

PAGE

The Senate
Motion to Call on the Government to Adopt Anti-racism as the Sixth Pillar of the Canada Health Act—Debate Continued
Hon. Yonah Martin 2189
Motion to Call on the Government to Create Pathways to Citizenship or Permanent Residency for Essential Temporary Migrant Workers Across All Sectors and Table a Status Report on the Issue Adopted. 2189
Motion to Urge Government to Call Upon Current Parties to the Act of the International Conference on Viet-Nam to Agree to the Reconvention of the International Conference on Viet-Nam—Debate Continued
Hon. Thanh Hai Ngo 2190
Hon. Leo Housakos 2192

Royal Assent 2192

The Senate
Motion Concerning the Closure of Programs at Laurentian University Adopted. 2193

Business of the Senate
Hon. Marc Gold 2193
Hon. Donald Neil Plett 2194
Hon. Yuen Pau Woo 2195
Hon. Scott Tannas 2196
Hon. Jane Cordy 2196

The Senate
Blair Armitage—Tribute on Departure
The Hon. the Speaker 2197

Business of the Senate 2197

Long-term Care System
Inquiry—Debate Concluded
Hon. Rosemary Moodie. 2198
Hon. Tony Dean 2200
Hon. Judith G. Seidman. 2201

Link between Prosperity and Immigration
Inquiry—Debate Concluded
Hon. Yonah Martin 2203
Hon. Salma Ataullahjan. 2204
Hon. Yuen Pau Woo 2205

Pandemic-related Fiscal Crisis Facing NAV CANADA
Inquiry—Debate Concluded
Hon. Paula Simons 2205

Royal Canadian Mounted Police
Role and Mandate—Inquiry—Debate Adjourned
Hon. Peter Harder 2206

The Honourable Jim Munson
Inquiry—Debate
Hon. Jane Cordy 2206
Hon. Marty Klyne 2206
Hon. Marilou McPhedran. 2207

APPENDIX

DELAYED ANSWER TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Foreign Affairs
Canada-China Relations 2208