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(HANSARD)

Wednesday, November 24, 2021

The Honourable GEORGE J. FUREY,
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Wednesday, November 24, 2021

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

Prayers.

[*Translation*]

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Yuen Pau Woo: Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-5(j), I move:

> That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules or previous order, for today's sitting, tributes to the Honourable Judith Keating, who passed away on July 15, 2021, be 45 minutes, after which the Senate proceed to Routine Proceedings.

The Hon. the Speaker: Is leave granted, honourable senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

[*English*]

TRIBUTES

THE LATE HONOURABLE JUDITH KEATING, Q.C.

Hon. Yuen Pau Woo: Honourable senators, on February 4, 2020, I welcomed Judith Keating to the Senate. It is with great sadness that I now bid her farewell. In my welcome, I touched on Senator Keating's impressive career, how she was designated as a provincial chair of the All Nations and Parties Working Group on Truth and Reconciliation, how she served as Deputy Minister of Justice and Deputy Attorney General for New Brunswick. She was, in fact, the first woman to serve as New Brunswick's Deputy Minister of Justice.

Senator Keating was the founder of New Brunswick's Women in Law. In 2015, she received the Muriel Corkery-Ryan Q.C. Award of the Canadian Bar Association's New Brunswick branch, granted to recognize the outstanding contributions of an individual to the profession as well as their significant role in the mentorship of women.

With such a distinguished track record, she could have easily coasted on her previous accomplishments after being appointed as a senator. This was not the Judith Keating we knew.

She landed in the Red Chamber and hit the ground running. As a result, her impact on the Senate far exceeds what one would expect from the short 14 months she served in the Senate, and during the disruption of COVID-19 at that.

Within weeks of joining the Senate, she co-led an ISG working group on the legislative review process of our group, resulting in the development of a new approach to the work of what we call "legislative leads" in the ISG.

She then volunteered with Senator Cotter to be the legislative lead on Bill C-7; medical assistance in dying. She modelled for her colleagues an approach to the rigorous and comprehensive review of legislation, working collaboratively with other ISG senators.

In her capacity as senator, Judith Keating was one of 38 parliamentarians who lent their support to New Brunswick's Clinic 554, a clinic that provided access to women's reproductive rights and services for the 2SLGBTQ+ community. She was both learned in her arguments in support of the clinic and passionate in her defence of it.

I extend my condolences on behalf of the ISG to Senator Keating's family and friends, the people of Fredericton and New Brunswick. Her loss is felt by all of us in this chamber and it is fitting that we are paying tribute to her today.

[*Translation*]

Goodbye my friend.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, Judith Keating was summoned to the Senate in January 2020. She passed away July 15, 2021, surrounded by her beloved family. Her wisdom and experience were taken from us, and from them, far too soon.

Senator Keating arrived in this chamber just weeks before the COVID-19 pandemic changed how the Senate operated. Soon after her arrival, we came to know each other. I'm grateful that I had the opportunity to meet with her privately just before her swearing in. In the short time that she served the people of New Brunswick in this chamber, and our country, she made an enduring impression on me, and on us, as colleagues.

[*Translation*]

Before Senator Keating arrived in the Senate, she served as chief legislative counsel and chief legal advisor to the Premier of New Brunswick. She also served as the provincial chair of the All Nations and Parties Working Group on Truth and Reconciliation.

She was a strong advocate for the equal and just treatment of women in the legal profession and for the equal status of both official languages in New Brunswick.

She had a long and impressive resumé, and her professional experience was admirable and inspiring.

[*English*]

Senator Keating and I had lengthy and very interesting discussions on many subjects of mutual interest. We continued those conversations from time to time when we would meet and a friendship formed out of that. She was an intelligent, hard-working, devoted senator. I will miss her as a colleague and as a friend.

[*Translation*]

New Brunswick and Canada have lost an extremely proud Canadian and the Senate has lost a powerful voice, but even more importantly, her family has lost a spouse, mother and grandmother.

[*English*]

May her memory be a blessing and may her family be spared further sorrows.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

• (1410)

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, it seems like only a short time ago that we welcomed Senator Judith Keating into the Senate of Canada; yet today, it is our sad duty to say goodbye to our colleague. Her passing in July was a terrible loss for her family, friends and staff, and for the people of her province of New Brunswick.

The passing of Senator Keating and, indeed, of Senator Forest-Niesing this past weekend, has cast a shadow over our return to the chamber. They will both be sorely missed by colleagues on all sides.

Senator Keating was a member of the Senate of Canada for just under a year and a half before she passed away. Pandemic restrictions kept us apart from each other for much of that time and as a result, we did not have many opportunities to work together with Senator Keating. However, it was evident that she always approached her work as a senator with dedication and conviction. Those are admirable traits for anyone to have, and for a parliamentarian they're essential.

Judith Keating's lifetime of experience in the Government of New Brunswick was the foundation for the work she did in the Senate. She was the first woman to serve as Deputy Minister of Justice and Deputy Attorney General of New Brunswick, and she worked to promote the equal status of the English and French languages in her province. She was an advocate and a mentor for women in the legal profession in her province and worked to advance Indigenous reconciliation. Those remarkable skills and her unique perspective served Judith Keating well as she took on her duties as a senator for, sadly, too short a period of time.

On behalf of the entire Conservative caucus, and on behalf of all honourable senators, I offer sincere condolences to Senator Keating's husband, Michael, their two children and four grandchildren. In her obituary, Senator Keating's family stated that the titles of "mother" and "grandmother" were more important to her than any of the honours bestowed upon her. I know that my wife would second that sentiment.

May her loved ones find comfort in knowing that their loss is felt by all honourable senators and that they remain in our thoughts and prayers. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Jane Cordy: Honourable senators, I am joining others in paying tribute to our late colleague Senator Judith Keating.

Senator Keating's time with us was all too brief. Many of us did not have a chance to get to know her as well as we would have liked, since her appointment and her swearing in took place only a few short weeks before we went into the pandemic lockdown and restrictions. This drastically changed our everyday lives, including how we as senators operated and interacted with each other in the Senate.

As we adjusted to the new circumstances of how we work, it didn't take Senator Keating very long to get her bearings. She was very active and took a lead in this place on Bill C-7, the medical assistance in dying legislation; and Bill C-3 that amended the Judges Act, which required judges to participate in continuing education on matters related to sexual assault law. Both of those pieces of legislation passed earlier this year.

Honourable senators, there will come a time when we will no longer have to say "the first woman to," but, until that time, it is important that we recognize those who, particularly in recent history, fill those spaces. Senator Keating was one such woman. She was the first woman to serve as New Brunswick's Deputy Minister of Justice and Deputy Attorney General. She was also the founder of New Brunswick's Women in Law.

In 2020, Senator Keating was one of 36 senators to sign a letter in support of Clinic 554 in Fredericton, which was facing a threat of closure. Senator Keating argued that the Province of New Brunswick was constitutionally obligated to provide medical care for women and to ensure that those services continued. This example highlights Senator Keating's sharp legal mind and considered approach to the application of law.

Other highlights of her legal career include time spent as editor-in-chief of the *Solicitor's Journal* of the Canadian Bar Association as well as serving as chief legal adviser to several New Brunswick premiers of varied political stripes. She was widely recognized and appreciated as a leading legal and constitutional expert.

Insightful and tenacious, Senator Keating unquestionably made her mark in the Senate in a short period of time under unprecedented circumstances. We should all regret her future accomplishments that are now left unfulfilled. New Brunswickers and indeed all Canadians are poorer for her loss.

On behalf of my colleagues in the Progressive Senate Group, I extend my deepest condolences to Senator Keating's family and friends. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. David Richards: Honourable senators, it might be stated that a remarkable and exceptional life is one to be celebrated, not only among our colleagues or in private but in the greater public forum, and that not to do so is to commit something of an injustice to that person. No one brought home this plight of exceptional Canadians and the sometimes blasé way we cherish them more than Senator Judith Keating, who died this past July and whose life was of continuous service to her fellow women and men. Certainly, the celebration might have come sooner and certainly the plaudits might have been greater, and although I am sure she was aware that she was loved and that her life was cherished, as is often true among us, more might have been given to a fellow Canadian who was so absolutely distinguished.

A graduate of the University of Ottawa and the Université de Moncton, she was, as we know, an accomplished legal and constitutional expert with over 30 years of senior public service to our province. A chief legal adviser to the premier, a dedicated judicial expert, a chief legislative counsel, New Brunswick's First Nations representative and a provincial chair of the All Nations and Parties Working Group on Truth and Reconciliation, she wore many hats with the common themes of justice, equality and compassion. During her career, Senator Keating worked tirelessly to promote the equal status of English and French and, as was said by her colleagues on the bench, she was so proficient in both languages that she spoke without the hint of an accent.

Her life was one of such dedication that it has few, if any, peers, and all of it was done with less fanfare than most who have done much less.

As my sister, who served with Senator Keating on the bench for years, once said to me, "She is absolutely brilliant and utterly driven." Of that, we know there can be no doubt. So let us not be deterred in celebrating her life now or acknowledging her less. She was a fundamental force in the lives of New Brunswickers and in Canada.

Two things do come to mind that Senator Keating's friends and relatives related to me. The first was when Senator Keating's mother was told by doctors that she would never conceive. Her mother prayed on the many steps of Saint Joseph's Oratory in Montreal every day, rain or shine, for weeks to be gifted with a child. She was in 1957, and she gave birth to Senator Keating.

The world was much better off for that small miracle.

The second and last story is about a woman from Cameroon who arrived as a refugee to Canada. Although she had a master's degree, she was unable to find a job. She mentioned this to Senator Keating after mass one day. Senator Keating not only hired her as a jurilinguist, but helped get her children to Canada where they were able to purchase a home.

These were private moments that made up a public life, and if they weren't big things, they were certainly great things. Like so many of the great things she did in her life, they were done with an unassuming grace. We now realize that all of us are greater for it. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Hon. René Cormier: Honourable senators, in our society, there are people with big personalities who are always in the spotlight and then there are those who quietly and humbly work hard behind the scenes and have a major impact on our society.

The Honourable Judith Keating was one of the latter. She represented the best of what the public service has to offer: a sense of duty and commitment.

She was a strong, reserved, generous and determined woman who dedicated her life to the service of Canadians and particularly the service of her adopted province of New Brunswick.

• (1420)

[*English*]

Prior to entering the Senate, as was mentioned, Senator Keating served for over 30 years as a legal and constitutional expert in various positions within the Government of New Brunswick: namely, that of Chief Legislative Counsel, Chief Legal Adviser to the Premier, New Brunswick's First Nations Representative and a provincial chair of the All Nations and Parties Working Group on Truth and Reconciliation.

As the first woman to hold the position of Deputy Minister of Justice and Deputy Attorney General of New Brunswick, she ensured fair and equitable treatment of women in the legal profession by founding New Brunswick's Women in Law for which she assumed the presidency.

[*Translation*]

All through her brilliant career, Judith Keating helped to break quite a few glass ceilings. As a leading citizen, she was awarded numerous distinctions, including Queen's Counsel in 2002. She also received the Muriel Corkery-Ryan Q.C. Award in 2015 in recognition of her significant role as a mentor to women and her outstanding contribution to the legal profession.

As a proud francophone with a law degree from the Université de Moncton, Judith Keating made the promotion of official languages one of her top priorities. She also played a crucial role in achieving recognition of New Brunswick's unique status in the Canadian Constitution.

During a long and memorable road trip we took from Ottawa to New Brunswick, she spoke passionately about our legislative role, colleagues. She was appalled at the unjust treatment of Indigenous peoples and the trauma inflicted on the Acadian people.

That day, she generously made sure that I understood our constitutional obligations with respect to official languages and how crucial reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and Senate modernization are to the future of our country.

That day, while marvelling at the beauty of the St. Lawrence River, alternating between playful laughter and waves of emotion over her precarious health status, she reflected fondly and with tremendous pride on her role as a mother and grandmother.

That day I told her that she was one of New Brunswick's greatest hidden treasures.

Judith Keating left us too soon, much too soon. She, who still had so much to offer the Senate of Canada, leaves behind a valuable legacy. It is one of a woman and dedicated citizen who loved her country deeply and would want us to continue to work hard, colleagues, to ensure that all Canadians have access to justice and true equality.

[*English*]

Thank you, Senator Keating.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Brian Francis: Honourable senators, I rise today to honour the memory of our friend and colleague the Honourable Senator Judith Keating, who will be dearly missed by all those who knew and loved her, and by the province and country she served.

During her long and distinguished career, Judith championed reconciliation. Her passion and dedication to this cause continued after her appointment to the Senate in January of 2020.

We did not know each other for long, but I will never forget when she rose to add her clear and unequivocal support for a motion I tabled with Senator Christmas, dealing with the treaty right of the Mi'kmaq to fish in pursuit of a moderate livelihood. That was her maiden speech.

I want to draw your attention to something Judith said then that has stayed with me:

> I can only imagine what my Indigenous sisters and brothers are feeling. I don't want to hear from my government that they take this all very seriously and that they are working on it. This must be settled now so that everyone knows what the rules are. It's the least all Canadians should expect after more than two decades. Only this will quell the ever-present seeds of violence and anger.

To hear Judith validate the suffering that has been inflicted on my people and the calls on all levels of government to recognize and address it made me feel seen, heard and valued as a Mi'kmaq. That has not happened often in this place when it comes to Indigenous people.

This memory was made even more touching when, after the funeral, her family told me about how hard she worked on her speech. I encourage you to go back and read it in full. Her words remain poignant a year later.

Judith understood that Canada's failure to recognize and implement the inherent and treaty rights of Indigenous people, and to uphold the decisions of its own courts, seriously undermines reconciliation efforts. She understood that political commitments without follow-through are not only empty but harmful. This is part of her illustrious life and legacy.

If we truly want to honour who Judith was and what she stood for, we must have the courage and determination to make reconciliation more than just a word but a reality.

Wela'lioq, thank you, Judith. May the Creator embrace you and hold you tight.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Brent Cotter: Honourable senators, others have spoken eloquently about Senator Keating's professional talents, achievements and contributions. My remarks will mostly be personal reflections.

I had known Judith Keating by reputation prior to her coming to the Senate — her dedication to the citizens of New Brunswick, her work on official languages, her commitment to women and to Indigenous people and her distinction in senior executive positions within the Government of New Brunswick — but we had never met prior to the day on which she and I were sworn in to this place in February 2020. My impression on that day was that her family was ecstatic that Judith was being recognized by the Senate appointment, and the air was electric with joy for her.

After she passed away, her daughter Stephanie and I shared reflections on Judith in a few communications this summer. This reinforced both the love and admiration her family had for her. Stephanie wrote:

> Her appointment to the Senate brought me (and her!) great joy. Mom's life wasn't easy. She overcame a lot of obstacles. When challenges came her way, she always pushed through, always worked harder, always put others before herself. . . . She was the toughest, smartest person I know.

Judith was also an intensely private person. While many of us got to be good friends with her, most of us were completely unaware of the health challenges she faced prior to taking her leave from the Senate and ultimately, sadly, never being able to return.

It was a small example of the gifts she extended to others, minimizing our worry and grief had we known how serious her health problems were. Indeed, at the very end of her life, she asked Stephanie to convey to me her thanks for the embroidered pillow my daughter had made for her, saying, "She loved the pillow your daughter sent her and kept it on her bed beside her until she died." In her very last days, a gift from her to my daughter.

Her premature death is a loss to so many of us who were her friends and a deep loss to the Senate — her contributions here would have been great — but most of all to the family and friends who loved and admired her.

I would like to end this on a small personal reflection. Sometime after we'd been sworn in to this place, I asked Senator Keating why she had asked Senator Percy Mockler to be her

sponsor. To be honest, I was a bit surprised because I didn't have the sense that she and Percy were philosophical fellow travellers, if I can put it that way.

Her answer was:

> Well, Percy is a friend and sometime mentor, and has had a distinguished career in public service in New Brunswick and here in the Senate, and, most importantly, he is a good, decent and principled person.

Her intention was to emulate that. In a sense, to breathe life and meaning into the title "honourable" that was bestowed on her and on all of us. Perhaps this is Judith Keating's greatest gift to us.

Thank you, Judith Keating, for being my friend and for the message of goodness you have provided to all of us in your too short time in this place.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mary Jane McCallum: Honourable senators, I hold tobacco today to thank the Creator for lending me Senator Keating.

Colleagues, I'm honoured to pay tribute to Senator Keating. Even though our budding friendship was shortened by her untimely passing, Senator Keating left an indelible mark on me. She was gentle, humble and passionate. She was a warrior. Truth and honesty were her touchstones.

• (1430)

Senator Keating was and remains an ally. She will always be with me now — in spirit and as a mentor.

As an ally, she never hesitated to put her words into action to address the wrongs she perceived. In the Senate, it was not enough for her to simply speak against the systemic institutional racism that she saw; she acted on it. While it might have intimidated many, she immediately saw the path forward to start dismantling this pervasive issue that exists everywhere, including within our own institution.

She was a bridge between the different worldviews. She was an ally and advocate for many before she came to the Senate: women, the marginalized and the powerless. She brought these skills, expertise and history to the Senate to teach us.

Senator Keating always made time to listen to — or to read — the issues I brought to her attention and was concerned about. She didn't take charge of the issues but respected the boundaries that came with the request for help. She didn't see herself as a saviour, but as a supporter. She was also aware that these were long-term commitments, and she was prepared to invest the time and energy required. She gave back more than she took away.

One of the teachings from my elder says:

> From the moment we are born, life is about detachment. The first is when we leave our mother's womb to be born in this world. The second is when we finish suckling from our mother's breast. The last is when we leave this earth world to go to the spirit world. All along this journey we meet people and we will all have our varied experiences of detachment.

The elder continued, "When I am gone, just reach out and I will be beside you, right at the end of your fingertips."

Today, when I miss people who have meant so much to me, I reach out and know that their spirit, love and support is right there with me.

I sorely miss our dear senator. The impact that she made has left me in a better place, that's for sure. Thank you, Senator Keating. I will carry you with me for the rest of my time in the Senate and thereafter. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Paula Simons: I am proud to rise today to say a few words about our dear colleague, Senator Judith Keating.

[*English*]

We had so little time to get to know Judith in person. Because of COVID restrictions, most of our friendships with her were forged over Zoom, Teams and telephones. My own relationship with her was very much shaped by the isolation of the COVID pandemic when we were all working from home and not rubbing shoulders here in the chamber.

But the woman and the senator that I came to know long-distance was such an inspiration. She had a dark and subversive sense of humour, and we bonded, if I can say so, over our shared love of irony and our shared impatience with hypocrisy. She was so smart, so serious, so no-nonsense in her work in the Senate. But privately she was wickedly funny and irreverent, and that was a side of her I really only got to know and see as we spoke and laughed via phone and video.

[*Translation*]

When we sat together on the Transport and Communications Committee, we would talk about issues that were important to her. She was deeply concerned about protecting and celebrating the French language in New Brunswick. We had many conversations about the future of the Broadcasting Act, and she fought hard to make changes to the legislation that would have ensured the future of French-language broadcasting in the province that was so dear to her.

[*English*]

We worked together on transportation issues, too. Senator Keating was particularly concerned about the future of air service in her province and about the plight of rural communities in New Brunswick that were cut off from bus service, too. Judith was also a vital part of our little gang of NAV CANADA agitators who lobbied together to Transport Canada to ensure that smaller Canadian airports didn't lose their service and connections.

Her love for New Brunswick was the wellspring and the motivation of so many of the things she did. She loved the province with her whole heart.

When she first fell ill, I was touched and honoured that her office asked me to fill in for her on the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. It was a daunting task. Of course it was impossible for me, as a non-lawyer, to match in any way her extraordinary knowledge of the law and of constitutional affairs. But I was inspired by her example, and I tried my best to make her proud.

Few of us had the chance to get to know Judith Keating as well as we wanted to. I know I didn't. We were all robbed of time we wanted to have with her, and we in the Senate were all robbed of her incisive intellect, wit, wisdom and profound legal knowledge. That makes our loss all the more poignant as we gather today to reflect on what might have been. May her memory forever be a blessing, and may she be bound up in the bond of eternal life.

SILENT TRIBUTE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I ask that you now rise and join me in a minute of silence for our former colleague the Honourable Senator Judith Keating.

(*Honourable senators then stood in silent tribute.*)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

MOTION TO EXTEND TODAY'S ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS ADOPTED

Hon. Pat Duncan: Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-5(j), I move:

> That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules, for today's sitting, Routine Proceedings extend beyond 30 minutes, until the end of business related thereto.

The Hon. the Speaker: Is leave granted, honourable senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

ADJOURNMENT

NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

> That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, November 30, 2021, at 2 p.m.

[*Translation*]

PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate) introduced Bill S-2, An Act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts.

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator Gold, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

• (1440)

[*English*]

BILL TO AMEND THE CANADA ELECTIONS ACT AND THE REGULATION ADAPTING THE CANADA ELECTIONS ACT FOR THE PURPOSES OF A REFERENDUM (VOTING AGE)

FIRST READING

Hon. Marilou McPhedran introduced Bill S-201, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and the Regulation Adapting the Canada Elections Act for the Purposes of a Referendum (voting age).

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator McPhedran, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

[*Translation*]

PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Patricia Bovey introduced Bill S-202, An Act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act (Parliamentary Visual Artist Laureate).

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator Bovey, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

[*English*]

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK ON AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER BILL

FIRST READING

Hon. Leo Housakos introduced Bill S-203, An Act respecting a federal framework on autism spectrum disorder.

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator Housakos, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

CUSTOMS TARIFF

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Leo Housakos introduced Bill S-204, An Act to amend the Customs Tariff (goods from Xinjiang).

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator Housakos, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

[*Translation*]

CRIMINAL CODE

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu introduced Bill S-205, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to another Act (interim release and domestic violence recognizance orders).

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator Boisvenu, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu introduced Bill S-206, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (disclosure of information by jurors).

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator Boisvenu, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

[*Translation*]

BILL TO CHANGE THE NAME OF THE ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF CHÂTEAUGUAY—LACOLLE

FIRST READING

Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond introduced Bill S-207, An Act to change the name of the electoral district of Châteauguay—Lacolle.

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator Dalphond, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

DECLARATION ON THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF ARTISTS AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION IN CANADA BILL

FIRST READING

Hon. Patricia Bovey introduced Bill S-208, An Act respecting the Declaration on the Essential Role of Artists and Creative Expression in Canada.

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator Bovey, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

PANDEMIC OBSERVANCE DAY BILL

FIRST READING

Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie introduced Bill S-209, An Act respecting Pandemic Observance Day.

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator Mégie, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

PROTECTING YOUNG PERSONS FROM EXPOSURE TO PORNOGRAPHY BILL

FIRST READING

Hon. Julie Miville-Dechêne introduced Bill S-210, An Act to restrict young persons' online access to sexually explicit material.

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator Miville-Dechêne, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

FIGHTING AGAINST FORCED LABOUR AND CHILD LABOUR IN SUPPLY CHAINS BILL

FIRST READING

Hon. Julie Miville-Dechêne introduced Bill S-211, An Act to enact the Fighting Against Forced Labour and Child Labour in Supply Chains Act and to amend the Customs Tariff.

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator Miville-Dechêne, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

• (1450)

CRIMINAL RECORDS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Kim Pate introduced Bill S-212, An Act to amend the Criminal Records Act, to make consequential amendments to other Acts and to repeal a regulation.

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator Pate, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer introduced Bill S-213, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (independence of the judiciary).

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator Jaffer, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY BILL

FIRST READING

Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer introduced Bill S-214, An Act to establish International Mother Language Day.

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator Jaffer, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

[*Translation*]

POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS BANKRUPTCY PROTECTION BILL

FIRST READING

Hon. Lucie Moncion introduced Bill S-215, An Act respecting measures in relation to the financial stability of post-secondary institutions.

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator Moncion, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

[*English*]

INCOME TAX ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Ratna Omidvar introduced Bill S-216, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (use of resources of a registered charity).

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator Omidvar, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

FROZEN ASSETS REPURPOSING BILL

FIRST READING

Hon. Ratna Omidvar introduced Bill S-217, An Act respecting the repurposing of certain seized, frozen or sequestrated assets.

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator Omidvar, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

DEPARTMENT FOR WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Mary Jane McCallum introduced Bill S-218, An Act to amend the Department for Women and Gender Equality Act.

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator McCallum, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

NATIONAL RIBBON SKIRT DAY BILL

FIRST READING

Hon. Mary Jane McCallum introduced Bill S-219, An Act respecting a National Ribbon Skirt Day.

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator McCallum, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

[*Translation*]

LANGUAGE SKILLS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Claude Carignan introduced Bill S-220, An Act to amend the Languages Skills Act (Governor General).

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator Carignan, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Claude Carignan introduced Bill S-221, An Act to amend the Governor General's Act (retiring annuity and other benefits).

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator Carignan, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

[*English*]

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Diane F. Griffin introduced Bill S-222, An Act to amend the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act (use of wood).

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator Griffin, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

CRIMINAL CODE
IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROTECTION ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan introduced Bill S-223, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (trafficking in human organs).

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator Ataullahjan, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

• (1500)

CRIMINAL CODE

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan introduced Bill S-224, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (trafficking in persons).

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator Ataullahjan, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

PROHIBITING CLUSTER MUNITIONS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan introduced Bill S-225, An Act to amend the Prohibiting Cluster Munitions Act (investments).

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator Ataullahjan, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

CONSTITUTION ACT, 1867
PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Jane Cordy, with leave of the Senate, for the Honourable Senator Mercer, introduced Bill S-226, An Act to amend the Constitution Act, 1867 and the Parliament of Canada Act (Speaker of the Senate).

(Bill read first time.)

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

(On motion of Senator Cordy, for Senator Mercer, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading two days hence.)

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO CALL UPON THE GOVERNMENT TO IMPLEMENT THE EIGHTH RECOMMENDATION OF THE FIRST REPORT OF THE SPECIAL SENATE COMMITTEE ON THE CHARITABLE SECTOR

Hon. Ratna Omidvar: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Senate call upon the Government of Canada to implement the eighth recommendation of the first report of the Special Senate Committee on the Charitable Sector, entitled *Catalyst for Change: A Roadmap to a Stronger Charitable Sector*, adopted by the Senate on November 3, 2020, during the Second Session of the Forty-third Parliament, which proposed that the Canada Revenue Agency include questions on both the T3010 (for registered charities) and the T1044 (for federally incorporated not-for-profit corporations) on diversity representation on boards of directors based on existing employment equity guidelines.

NOTICE OF MOTION TO CALL ON THE GOVERNMENT TO DENOUNCE THE ILLEGITIMACY OF THE CUBAN REGIME

Hon. Leo Housakos: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Senate call on the Government of Canada to:

(a) denounce the illegitimacy of the Cuban regime and recognize the Cuban opposition and civil society as valid interlocutors; and

(b) call on the Cuban regime to ensure the right of the Cuban people to protest peacefully without fear of reprisal and repudiation.

[Senator Cordy]

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE SITUATION IN LEBANON

Hon. Leo Housakos: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade be authorized to examine and report on the situation in Lebanon and determine whether Canada should appoint a special envoy, when and if the committee is formed; and

That the committee submit its final report no later than February 28, 2022.

[*English*]

NATIONAL FINANCE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY A ROAD MAP FOR POST-PANDEMIC ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICY TO ADDRESS HUMAN, SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL COSTS OF ECONOMIC MARGINALIZATION AND INEQUALITY

Hon. Kim Pate: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance be authorized to examine and report on a road map for post-pandemic economic and social policy to address the human, social and financial costs of economic marginalization and inequality, when and if the committee is formed;

That, given recent calls for action from Indigenous, provincial, territorial and municipal jurisdictions, the committee examine in particular potential national approaches to inter-jurisdictional collaboration to implement a guaranteed livable basic income; and

That the committee submit its final report no later than December 31, 2022.

[*Translation*]

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO RECOGNIZE THAT CLIMATE CHANGE IS AN URGENT CRISIS

Hon. Rosa Galvez: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Senate of Canada recognize that:

(a) climate change is an urgent crisis that requires an immediate and ambitious response;

(b) human activity is unequivocally warming the atmosphere, ocean and land at an unprecedented pace, and is provoking weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe, including in the Arctic, which is warming at more than twice the global rate;

(c) failure to address climate change is resulting in catastrophic consequences especially for Canadian youth, Indigenous Peoples and future generations; and

(d) climate change is negatively impacting the health and safety of Canadians, and the financial stability of Canada;

That the Senate declare that Canada is in a national climate emergency which requires that Canada uphold its international commitments with respect to climate change and increase its climate action in line with the Paris Agreement's objective of holding global warming well below two degrees Celsius and pursuing efforts to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius; and

That the Senate commit to action on mitigation and adaptation in response to the climate emergency and that it consider this urgency for action while undertaking its parliamentary business.

SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE ASSISTED HUMAN REPRODUCTION LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Hon. Lucie Moncion: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology be authorized to examine and report on the Canadian assisted human reproduction legislative and regulatory framework and any other related issues deemed relevant by the committee, when and if the committee is formed; and

That the committee submit its final report on this study to the Senate no later than October 31, 2023, and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings for 180 days after the tabling of the final report.

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO CALL UPON THE GOVERNMENT TO DESIGNATE THE SECOND WEEK OF MAY OF EVERY YEAR AS JURY APPRECIATION WEEK

Hon. Lucie Moncion: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Senate recognize that, each year, thousands of Canadians are called to jury duty and contribute to the Canadian justice system; and

That the Senate call upon the Government of Canada to designate the second week of May in each year as Jury Appreciation Week in Canada, to encourage those Canadians who provide this public service and to recognize their civic duty.

[*English*]

NOTICE OF MOTION PERTAINING TO THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SYSTEM

Hon. Mary Jane McCallum: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Senate of Canada:

(a) acknowledge that racism, in all its forms, was a cornerstone upon which the residential school system was created;

(b) acknowledge that racism, discrimination and abuse were rampant within the residential school system;

(c) acknowledge that the residential school system, created for the malevolent purpose of assimilation, has had profound and continuing negative impacts on Indigenous lives, cultures and languages; and

(d) apologize unreservedly for Canada's role in the establishment of the residential school system, as well as its resulting adverse impacts, the effects of which are still seen and felt by countless Indigenous peoples and communities today.

• (1510)

NOTICE OF MOTION TO CALL ON THE GOVERNMENT TO ADOPT ANTI-RACISM AS THE SIXTH PILLAR OF THE CANADA HEALTH ACT

Hon. Mary Jane McCallum: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

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.

ENERGY, THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE CUMULATIVE IMPACTS OF RESOURCE EXTRACTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Mary Jane McCallum: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

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, 2022.

[*Translation*]

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF 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

Hon. Thanh Hai Ngo: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

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*.

[*English*]

SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE FEDERAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

Hon. Stan Kutcher: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology be authorized, when and if it is formed, to examine and report on the Federal Framework for Suicide Prevention, including, but not limited to:

(a) evaluating the effectiveness of the Framework in significantly, substantially and sustainably decreasing rates of suicide since it was enacted;

(b) examining the rates of suicide in Canada as a whole and in unique populations, such as Indigenous, racialized and youth communities;

(c) reporting on the amount of federal funding provided to all suicide prevention programs or initiatives for the period 2000-2020 and determining what evidence-based criteria for suicide prevention was used in each selection;

(d) determining for each of the programs or interventions funded in paragraph (c), whether there was a demonstrated significant, substantive and sustained decrease in suicide rates in the population(s) targeted; and

(e) providing recommendations to ensure that Canada's Federal Framework for Suicide Prevention and federal funding for suicide prevention activities are based on best available evidence of impact on suicide rate reduction; and

That the committee submit its final report on this study to the Senate no later than December 16, 2022.

[*Translation*]

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION PERTAINING TO SECTION 55 OF THE CONSTITUTION ACT, 1982

Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Senate:

1. recall that, despite the commitment found in section 55 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* to have a fully bilingual Constitution, as of today, of the 31 enactments that make up the Canadian Constitution, 22 are official only in their English version, including almost all of the *Constitution Act, 1867*; and

2. call upon the government to consider, in the context of the review of the *Official Languages Act*, the addition of a requirement to submit, every five years, a report detailing the efforts made to comply with section 55 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

[*English*]

ROLE OF LEADERS' DEBATES IN ENHANCING DEMOCRACY BY ENGAGING AND INFORMING VOTERS

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Donna Dasko: Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to the role of leaders' debates in enhancing democracy by engaging and informing voters.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Paula Simons: Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to the challenges and opportunities that Canadian municipalities face, and to the importance of understanding and redefining the relationships between Canada's municipalities and the federal government.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND IMPACTS OF MÉTIS, INUIT, AND FIRST NATIONS

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Yvonne Boyer: Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to the positive contributions and impacts that Métis, Inuit, and First Nations have made to Canada, and the world.

NET-ZERO EMISSIONS FUTURE

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Mary Coyle: Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to the importance of finding solutions to transition Canada's society, economy and resource use in pursuit of a fair, prosperous, sustainable and peaceful net-zero emissions future for our country and the planet.

QUESTION PERIOD

THE LATE DR. OLLI MIETTINEN

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): I will break slightly from protocol, if I could, Your Honour. We just got a text from our good friend and colleague Senator Seidman that her husband suddenly passed away this afternoon — complications with cancer — so our thoughts and prayers are with another colleague.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Let me begin by expressing my condolences to our colleague Senator Seidman and her family as well.

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

SUPPORT FOR FARMERS AND PRODUCERS

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): It's good to be back in the chamber, leader, holding this continuously incompetent government to account.

The emergency in B.C. caused by unprecedented flooding has been heartbreaking for all Canadians to witness. I know every honourable senator joins me in sending condolences to the families of those who have died.

My question relates to the situation being faced by farmers in British Columbia. Livestock producers who were able to evacuate with their animals had to leave behind the feed for their

herds. As the Canadian Federation of Agriculture has stated, the crisis in the region could have long-term consequences for animal welfare and our food supply.

Leader, what is the Government of Canada doing right now to provide emergency support to British Columbia farmers, especially livestock producers?

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

The devastation in British Columbia touches us all. The Canadian government has responded quickly to the calls of the B.C. government for assistance — much of which has been reported in the newspaper — military presence and financial aid.

• (1520)

I will make inquiries with regard to specific aid to those farmers who are suffering grievous damage as a result of this disaster and report back as quickly as I can.

Senator Plett: I hope that report will come sooner rather than later, leader. This is devastating, and continues to be so, for British Columbia.

This year, leader, British Columbia farmers have been challenged by the pandemic, wildfires, drought and now catastrophic flooding and mudslides. While yesterday's Speech from the Throne contained a vague assurance that the Trudeau government will be there for the province, it barely mentioned our farmers from B.C. or, indeed, anywhere else in Canada.

Farm families need assurances from the Trudeau government that they will not be an afterthought once British Columbia begins its recovery process. Yesterday's Throne Speech would have been a good time, leader, to offer that support, but instead it was nowhere to be found.

Leader, I appreciate that you'll probably have to get back to us on this, but what long-term assistance is your government offering farmers and livestock producers who have had their operations destroyed by the floods in B.C.?

Senator Gold: I will be happy to get back to you with specific answers. I do want to emphasize, though, that the tragedies and devastation — not only in British Columbia but elsewhere in this country — underline the importance of a collective effort to fight climate change, to which this government remains committed.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

CANADA-CHINA RELATIONS

Hon. Leo Housakos: My question is for the government leader in the Senate, Senator Gold. A couple of days ago, a spokesperson for Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly said her government was in discussions about boycotting the Beijing games because of the disappearance of tennis player Peng Shuai.

I'm perplexed as to why this decision was not taken much earlier, in light of the kidnapping of our two Michaels, or the genocide of the Uighur people, or the suspension of democracy and civil liberties in Hong Kong. But here we are.

My question is a simple one: Will the Trudeau government take action and boycott the Beijing Olympic Games, yes or no?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. The government is very much preoccupied with this situation, as are our allies and partners around the world. Canada continues to discuss this issue with our partners to ensure that decisions that are made are both effective and coordinated.

CANADA-CUBA RELATIONS

Hon. Leo Housakos: It's nice, Senator Gold, that we're always discussing these issues with our partners and relying on international help, but Canada is a G7 country that should stand up for its Canadian citizens, as well as for liberties and civil rights around the world.

Senator Gold, while we're on the topic of detained Canadians, has Minister Joly or anyone from her office managed to provide consular service to Michael Carey Abadin, the Canadian citizen being held in Cuba as part of a crackdown by the authoritarian regime in that country against political dissidents and pro-democracy protesters?

We're told by Mr. Abadin's family that this 19-year-old, who is in poor health and has been denied proper medical treatment, has also been denied assistance from the Canadian embassy. Has that changed? If not, why? What is Mélanie Joly waiting for in giving support to this young Canadian detained in Cuba?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question and for underlining the unacceptable situation that this young Canadian faces in Cuba. The Canadian government continues to make every effort to ensure that Canadians who are detained abroad receive equitable treatment. Every consular case is unique and the assistance we're able to provide will vary with the circumstances.

I'm advised that the Canadian government is engaged with Cuban officials and continues to work to seek consular access to the individual, and that consular officials maintain regular contact and will continue to provide support to the individual's family. I'm also advised that, due to privacy considerations, no further information may be disclosed at this juncture.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

AFGHAN REFUGEES

Hon. Ratna Omidvar: My question is for Senator Gold, the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

My question, Senator Gold is about Afghanistan and our obligations to those who are in danger because they worked alongside Canadian Forces, Canadian NGOs, journalists and activists. Now they are in danger and Canadians believe it is our moral imperative to bring them to safety.

However, the government's good intentions — and I want to grant that the government does have good intentions — must be followed through with execution and implementation. By all accounts, we are failing significantly on that front.

Why is the government not taking a leaf out of the Syrian refugee playbook? If there is a key lesson to take forward from our response from that time, it is this: A deadline serves all parts of the system, political and bureaucratic, to get to the finish line.

When will the government outline a detailed plan, with timelines, to bring Afghan refugees to Canada?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you. I'm pleased to answer this in my capacity as Government Representative in the Senate. I appreciate, Senator Omidvar, your advance notice of this question.

I've made inquiries to the government, but have not heard back. When I do, I will report in a timely fashion.

I would like to add that, to date, the government has approved 9,800 people under the special immigration program, and of this number, more than 3,600 Afghan refugees have already arrived in Canada. Regrettably, the absence of stable conditions and the ever-changing circumstances abroad — regarding what exit documentation is required at checkpoints and international crossings with third countries — make it exceedingly difficult to get Afghan refugees out safely. The government remains committed to welcoming 40,000 Afghan refugees to Canada on the strength of our humanitarian resettlement policy.

Senator Omidvar: Senator Gold, I draw your attention to the safe houses in Kabul that are being operated by former members of the Canadian Armed Forces. Our veterans have stepped up to the plate and are raising money so that Afghan interpreters and their families can be safe while efforts are being made for their evacuation. Their money has run out and these safe houses are being closed.

Can you tell us whether the Canadian government is going to fund these safe houses to support the safety of Afghan interpreters, and their families, who worked alongside our troops?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question. I've been advised that the government is providing $1.7 million to Journalists for Human Rights, Veterans Transition Network and Aman Lara in their efforts to provide support to vulnerable persons in Afghanistan, and is working with these organizations in extremely difficult and evolving circumstances.

Due to the volatility and the problems associated with the security situation in Afghanistan, I'm advised that the government is not currently funding the safe houses directly. However, on August 26 our country announced $50 million in humanitarian assistance to support a number of international organizations over the next 15 months, both inside Afghanistan and in neighbouring countries. This is in addition to the $27.3 million in humanitarian assistance already allocated to Afghanistan for 2021.

PUBLIC SAFETY

NATIONAL SUPPLY CHAIN

Hon. Bev Busson: My question is for the representative of the government.

The sacrifices of the people of British Columbia in the latest natural disaster have once again laid bare the risk of supply chain disruption, not only in B.C. but our entire country.

Even as the immediate disaster relief and emergency response still unfold, we are yet again reminded — as was the case in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic — of the longer-term and dangerous fragilities of our supply chains. From food, to fuel, to feed for starving animals, supply chain resilience is an essential element of Canada's longer-term sustainable economic development and, indeed, our national security.

The time has come for a national strategic plan for supply chain resilience that assesses vulnerabilities and aims to mitigate the risks for Canada as a whole — a strategy that ensures participation of all levels of government and all federal government departments involved in economic development, along with national security, industry and private-sector associations like Supply Chain Canada and others.

Will the Government of Canada consider developing a fully national and integrated strategic plan for supply chain resilience to more effectively address the next inevitable disaster?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you, senator, for your question. The government is very aware of the serious situation that's posed by flooding and mudslides in British Columbia, as well as the impact on transportation networks and supply chains.

• (1530)

Transport Canada, I'm advised, is optimistic about the news of rail lines gradually restarting, and with key industry partners and members of federal and provincial governments, the Government of Canada has formed a joint Supply Chain Recovery Working Group to assess transport networks and plan for the prioritized movement of goods. I have been informed that the government continues to work closely with these partners to address the broader supply chain issues going forward.

Senator Busson: Thank you, Senator Gold. The appointment of a kind of "supply chain czar" in an appropriately senior level of the federal government could provide the focal point for continuing the work of all interested parties. This would give supply chain resilience the policy attention and priority it truly deserves. Given the importance of supply chain resilience in enabling sustainable and reliable economic development for Canada and our national security, would the government consider appointing such a senior "supply chain czar"?

Senator Gold: The government is committed to doing everything it can both to help in the immediate term but, equally importantly, to take the steps with its partners — provincial and territorial — to build greater resilience into our supply chains and infrastructure. Indeed, Minister Blair underlined that in a recent pronouncement. The government will consider all possible measures, in consultation with its partners.

[*Translation*]

FINANCE

MONETARY POLICY FRAMEWORK RENEWAL

Hon. Diane Bellemare: I have a question for the Government Representative in the Senate, Senator Gold, and I congratulate him on his reappointment.

My question has to do with the five-year agreement between the Bank of Canada and the Government of Canada. As you know, there is no in-depth review by parliamentary committees before the government signs an agreement with the Bank of Canada on specific monetary policy. This agreement has a significant influence on the country's economy and public finances, but it is free from any scrutiny by parliamentarians.

December is fast approaching, and the agreement has yet to be renewed. That is unusual, since past agreements have generally been submitted in October. When can we expect to see this agreement, and when will we be able to question the Minister of Finance on the content of this agreement here in the chamber?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. I have inquired but have not yet received an answer from the government. I will share the answer as soon as I receive it.

As for when we will have an opportunity to question the Minister of Finance, I hope that this chamber will continue regularly inviting ministers for question period. The parliamentary groups will be discussing this topic in the coming weeks. I also hope that we will soon be able to invite ministers, including the Minister of Finance, to answer this question and any others that come up.

[*English*]

INCOME-TESTED BENEFITS

Hon. Diane F. Griffin: My question is to Senator Gold, the Government Representative in the Senate. The Budget Implementation Act, 2021 contains a drafting error because of a House of Commons amendment made at report stage. The error was not caught by the Senate prior to Royal Assent due to the bill being passed without going to committee and having clause-by-clause review. Under Division 31, entitled Increase to Old Age Security Pension and Payment, section 268 exempts from the calculation of income the $500, one-time Old Age Security payment for seniors aged 75 and above. This means that the benefit should not impact the OAS clawback threshold or income-tested benefits, like the Guaranteed Income Supplement.

However, this section incorrectly references section 276 rather than section 275 for the exemption. Section 275 refers to the $500, one-time payment under the Consolidated Revenue Fund. Section 276 refers to unrelated amendments to the Public Service Employment Act.

Question: Is the government aware of the drafting error and does it intend to introduce legislation to retroactively correct the error prior to the end of the tax year so that it does not impact income-tested benefits for seniors?

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

It is my understanding that Finance Canada has previously engaged with the office of the honourable senator in order to try to provide clarification on this matter. I have been assured by the government that there will be no impact on the benefits paid or to be paid to Canadian seniors arising from the issue that had been identified following parliamentary approval of Bill C-30.

I would also point out that Bill C-30 was the subject of a robust Senate pre-study involving six committees and that Division 31 of the bill, dealing with OAS increases, was studied extensively by the Senate's Social Affairs Committee. The government remains focused on the successful implementation of increases to Old Age Security both in terms of short-term support through one-time payments, followed by the permanent 10% increase to monthly OAS pensions for seniors aged 75 and older beginning in July 2022.

Senator Griffin: I think a pre-study cannot do justice to a change that's made during committee stage in the House of Commons. This is one problem with a pre-study as opposed to a Senate committee being able to do a more thorough, clause-by-clause study after the bill has come to us by the House of Commons.

Can I come back to ask: Does this drafting error highlight the usefulness of the Senate undertaking a clause-by-clause review?

Senator Gold: I think all senators would agree that under all circumstances, wherever possible, the most rigorous study and review of bills is appropriate.

That said, I can assure the honourable senator that it is the government's view that the issuance of these payments will be done in accordance with the policy directives announced by the government in Budget 2021 and through the passage of Bill C-30, and seniors — and I address this to any and all who are watching — can be assured that these payments will be done in a correct manner.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

AFGHAN REFUGEES

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan: Senator Gold, my question is about Afghanistan too. On August 15, the Taliban effectively sealed their control over Afghanistan in a matter of days. The 20-year-old war was over, and Afghan interpreters and mission staff who had worked alongside the Canadian Armed Forces were abandoned. The initial response was that nobody could have foreseen the sudden and swift return of the Taliban, but we know that is not accurate. A recent "The Fifth Estate" investigation revealed that the Office of the Minister of Immigration was aware of the urgency to take decisive action and bring our interpreters to safety in Canada, and as early as February 2020, he was contacted by MP Marcus Powlowski. Also, in December of 2020, a total of 24 MPs signed a letter addressed to both the Minister of Immigration and the Minister of Foreign Affairs requesting the government help Afghan interpreters.

Senator Gold, given the number of requests submitted to the Minister of Immigration to act swiftly in rescuing Afghan interpreters, why did the Government of Canada wait until the Taliban takeover to rescue vulnerable Afghans?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question and for underlining the real and important issue of helping those who helped us when we were on our mission in Afghanistan. The government has done everything that it can under extraordinarily difficult circumstances to assist all of those, whether interpreters or others, in Afghanistan who worked with our military and our presence in Afghanistan and will continue to do so.

• (1540)

Senator Ataullahjan: Senator Gold, for four months now we have been receiving desperate emails and phone calls from Afghans trying to flee Kabul and from Canadians concerned about their loved ones.

Besides fearing for their lives, they are also struggling with poverty. The UN currently estimates that nearly half the country's population, 24 million people, is now facing acute hunger. As a result, child marriage is on the rise. Also, the selling of female children has begun. There was an instance where a father was trying to sell his daughter for $300, and he was told that the price of an Afghan life has gone down to $110.

Senator Gold, what is the government's plan to alleviate this humanitarian crisis?

Senator Gold: Thank you, senator, for raising this question and for your ongoing commitment to keeping this in the public eye.

As I reported in response to an earlier question, the government has invested tens and tens of millions of dollars in humanitarian aid to various international organizations working on behalf of those struggling and suffering in Afghanistan. It is complicated by the political situation, of course. Canada is doing everything it can. I won't repeat the figures, but there are significant efforts by Canada in assisting in the humanitarian crisis that is facing too many in Afghanistan.

INFRASTRUCTURE

DISASTER MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION FUND

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

Senator Gold, 8,300 people in my home town of Iqaluit, Nunavut, have been under a do-not-consume water advisory since October 12, 2021, after hydrocarbons were found in a section of the water-treatment plant. You can't get rid of hydrocarbon contamination by boiling the water.

The source of alternative water for consumption has been our nearby river, which is now frozen, so protection measures must be put in place at the city reservoir, Lake Geraldine, in order to prevent source water contamination. A new monitoring station will help with early detection moving forward, and sea cans full of recyclables from the emergency response must be shipped out.

Will the government support the Iqalummiut in our time of need by providing financial support from funds such as the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund to pay for these much-needed disaster relief and prevention measures?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question and for your ongoing commitment to the people of Iqaluit. I had the pleasure to visit there some few years ago, as you know.

I have been advised that the government has received a request for funding through the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund's large project stream for the City of Iqaluit for the Iqaluit water infrastructure improvement project. The project is currently being assessed. The government is of the view that a long-term solution is infrastructure based, and it is committed to working collaboratively with the city and the territory to arrive at a long-term and viable solution.

Senator Patterson: Thank you, Senator Gold. I appreciate your noting that there is also a longer-term issue here due to shifting permafrost that is damaging our underground utilidor system, decreased precipitation as a result of climate change and increased population. So a new system would require a new source of potable water, additional storage and a distribution system. The city estimates that a significant sum of $180 million is required to respond to the need for a new long-term water supply in one of Canada's capital cities.

Senator Gold, will your government make the necessary investments during this parliamentary session — in particular, a commitment to funding a new long-term water supply for the capital city of Nunavut? Thank you.

Senator Gold: It's the policy, principle and a value of this government, and I'm sure of all Canadians, that the access to safe drinking water for everyone is something we all deserve. It's a priority for this government.

With respect to your question about providing funding for the new long-term water supply, I have been advised that Infrastructure Canada has received a request for funding and that the project is currently being assessed. The Government of Canada will continue to work with the Mayor of Iqaluit and territorial officials to move this forward as quickly as is reasonably possible.

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

IMPORT PROHIBITION ON GOODS PRODUCED BY FORCED LABOUR

Hon. Julie Miville-Dechêne: Senator Gold, the November 15 edition of *The Globe and Mail* reported that the Canadian government had intercepted a shipment of clothing from China for the first time since the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, or CUSMA, was signed 15 months ago. There were suspicions that the shipment contained goods produced using forced labour. Canadian authorities did not disclose the date of the seizure or the company that was importing the goods. Meanwhile, U.S. authorities have made several seizures and published the dates and names of the companies involved. Why the difference between the two countries? One factor is that in order to stop a shipment, the U.S. requires information that reasonably, but not conclusively, indicates the presence of forced labour, while Canada requires legally sufficient and defensible evidence. This high standard of proof makes intervention very difficult. We even run the risk of becoming a top destination for these suspicious shipments.

Why does Canada have a standard of proof that makes it almost impossible to seize goods produced by forced labour?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question and for raising this very important and troubling issue. Every country has the right to choose how to implement its international legal obligations, as Canada has done. The Government of Canada is committed to upholding human rights and international labour standards, and it is actively working to implement the ban on forced labour. I have been informed that officials at Employment and Social Development Canada are actively working with CBSA officials to monitor and search for evidence related to problematic supply chains. As for why Canada has chosen such a high burden of proof, if I can put it that way, I'll have to look into that question and try to get an answer.

Senator Miville-Dechêne: Thank you. I would like a written response, if possible. In the meantime, we still have a choice about the standard of proof, since, as it now stands, Canadian authorities basically have to prove the existence of forced labour abroad. For example, they have to prove that a shipment of cotton clothing or tomatoes from Xinjiang, where Uighurs live, actually contains goods produced by forced labour. The problem is that no consultants or journalists can conduct an investigation because the Chinese government will not grant them access to that province. How can Canada hope to stop the importation of goods produced by modern slavery if we've set standards that are impossible to meet?

Senator Gold: Thank you for the question. I would respectfully submit that I cannot accept the premise that these standards are impossible to meet. As I said, we are working closely with the CBSA to ensure that goods produced by forced labour do not cross the border, because they are banned in Canada. We will continue to do just that.

[*English*]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THE SENATE

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE HYBRID SITTINGS—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate), pursuant to notice of November 23, 2021, moved:

That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules, previous order or usual practice:

1. as soon as practicable after the adoption of this order the Senate begin to hold hybrid sittings, with all senators able to participate in sittings either from the Senate Chamber or through an approved videoconference technology to be determined from time to time by the Speaker after consulting with the leaders and facilitators, with the provisions of this order applying until hybrid sittings cease, and during the time this order is in effect, the Senate Administration continue to implement a system to allow senators in the Senate Chamber to see, on screen, the senators participating by videoconference;

2. the Speaker, after consulting the leaders and facilitators, determine the date on which such hybrid sittings shall commence;

3. hybrid sittings of the Senate be considered, for all purposes, proceedings of the Senate, with senators participating in such sittings by videoconference from a designated office or designated residence within Canada being considered, for all purposes, including quorum, present at the sitting; the sitting being considered to take place in the parliamentary precinct; and times specified in the Rules or this or any other order being Ottawa times;

4. subject to variations that may be required by the circumstances, to participate in hybrid sittings of the Senate by videoconference senators must:

   (a) use a desktop or laptop computer and headset with integrated microphone provided by the Senate for videoconferences;

   (b) not use other devices such as personal tablets or smartphones;

   (c) be the only people visible on the videoconference from an active video feed, other than those in the Senate Chamber; and

   (d) except while the bells are ringing for a vote:

      (i) have their video on and broadcasting their image at all times; and

      (ii) leave the videoconference if they leave their seat;

5. the Senate recognize that, except as provided in this order, there should generally be parity of treatment among all senators attending in person and those attending by videoconference during hybrid sittings of the Senate and that proceedings should follow usual procedures, subject to such variations required for technical reasons as may be directed by the Speaker, subject to appeal to the Senate if technically feasible;

6. senators participating in hybrid sittings of the Senate by videoconference need not stand;

7. without restricting the operation of rule 3-6 and the right of senators to move a motion to adjourn the Senate as allowed under the Rules, without affecting requirements in certain circumstances that the Senate continue sitting after receipt of a message from the Crown or the announcement that a message is anticipated, and except as otherwise provided in this order:

   (a) when the Senate sits on a Monday, the provisions of rule 3-3(1) be suspended and the sitting:

      (i) start at 6 p.m.; and

      (ii) adjourn at the earlier of the end of Government Business or 9 p.m.;

   (b) when the Senate sits on a Tuesday, the sitting:

      (i) start at 2 p.m.; and

      (ii) adjourn at the earlier of the end of business for the day or 9 p.m.;

   (c) when the Senate sits on a Wednesday, the sitting:

      (i) start at 2 p.m.; and

      (ii) adjourn at the earlier of the end of Government Business or 4 p.m.;

   (d) when the Senate sits on a Thursday, the sitting:

      (i) start at 2 p.m.; and

      (ii) adjourn at the earlier of the end of business for the day or 9 p.m.; and

   (e) when the Senate sits on a Friday, the sitting:

      (i) start at 10 a.m.; and

      (ii) adjourn at the earlier of the end of Government Business or 4 p.m.;

8. the Speaker be authorized to suspend the sitting of the Senate as required for technical and other reasons, and the microphones of senators participating by videoconference shall be muted during any suspension;

9. the Speaker be authorized to direct that the sitting of the Senate be adjourned for technical reasons, provided that this direction be subject to appeal if technically feasible;

10. the times provided for adjournment of the sitting in paragraph 7 be considered the ordinary time of adjournment for the purposes of the Rules, and, for greater certainty, any provisions of the Rules permitting the continuation of the sitting beyond that time in certain circumstances continue to apply, provided that if the provisions of paragraph 9 are invoked when an item that would allow the Senate to continue beyond the ordinary time of adjournment is under consideration, that item of business shall, except in the case of an emergency debate and subject to the provisions of rule 4-13(3), be dealt with at the start of the Orders of the Day of the next following sitting;

11. on the first day of debate on a motion moved in relation to a case of privilege, debate may be adjourned, even if normally prohibited under rule 13-6(6);

12. the evening suspension provided for in rule 3-3(1) end at 7 p.m.;

13. when the Senate sits on a day other than a Friday, any provision of the Rules requiring that something take place at 8 p.m. be read as if the time therein were 7 p.m.;

14. the Senate recognize the importance of providing the Speaker with information necessary to allow him to assist with the orderly conduct of business in hybrid sittings, and therefore, subject to normal confidentiality practices, strongly encourage all senators:

    (a) to advise their party or group representatives, or the Clerk of the Senate or his delegate, as far in advance as possible, if they intend to intervene during the sitting; and

    (b) to provide the Clerk of the Senate or his delegate, as far in advance as possible with an electronic copy in English and French of any amendment, subamendment, notice of motion, notice of inquiry, committee report to be tabled or presented, bill to be introduced, or any other document required for the sitting as far in advance as possible;

15. a senator who has provided an advance copy of a document under subparagraph 14(b) be considered to have fulfilled any obligation to provide a signed copy of that document;

16. the following provisions have effect in relation to voting during hybrid sittings of the Senate:

    (a) only senators present in the Senate Chamber shall participate in:

        (i) the procedure for a voice vote; and

        (ii) the determination as to whether leave is granted for bells of less than 60 minutes;

    (b) to be one of the senators requesting a standing vote, a senator participating by videoconference must clearly indicate this request, but need not stand;

    (c) rule 9-7(1)(c) shall be read as follows:

    "(c) then:

    (i) ask the "yeas" in the Senate Chamber to rise for their names to be called;

    (ii) ask the "yeas" participating by videoconference to hold up the established card for voting "yea" for their names to be called;

    (iii) ask the "nays" in the Senate Chamber to rise for their names to be called;

    (iv) ask the "nays" participating by videoconference to hold up the established card for voting "nay" for their names to be called;

    (v) ask those who are abstaining in the Senate Chamber to rise for their names to be called; and

    (vi) ask those who are abstaining and participating by videoconference to hold up the established card for abstaining for their names to be called.";

    (d) when a standing vote is underway, senators participating by videoconference must have their camera on for the duration of the vote and each senator must be seen on camera when voting;

    (e) except as provided in subparagraph (h), if a vote is deferred pursuant to rule 9-10, it shall be held at 3:30 p.m. on the next day the Senate sits, after a 15-minute bell, interrupting any proceedings then underway, except another vote or the bells for a vote;

    (f) except as provided in subparagraph (h), if a vote is deferred pursuant to rule 4-6(1), it shall be held at 3:30 p.m. on the same day, after a 15-minute bell, interrupting any proceedings then underway, except another vote or the bells for a vote;

    (g) except as provided in subparagraph (h), in the case of votes deferred pursuant to other provisions of the Rules, the usual processes for such votes shall hold, with the sitting being suspended, if necessary, at the end of the time otherwise provided for the end of the sitting pursuant to this order; and

    (h) if a deferred vote is to be held on a Monday, it shall be held at the end of Question Period, after a 15-minute bell;

17. for greater certainty, leave be considered granted during hybrid sittings of the Senate when requested, unless the Speaker, after a sufficient period of time, hears an objection from a senator, either in the Senate Chamber or participating by videoconference;

18. from the time of the adoption of this order:

    (a) any return, report or other paper deposited with the Clerk of the Senate pursuant to rule 14-1(6), may be deposited electronically;

    (b) the government be authorized to deposit electronically with the Clerk of the Senate any documents relating to its administrative responsibilities, following the process of rule 14-1(6);

    (c) written replies to oral questions and to written questions may be deposited with the Clerk of the Senate electronically following the process of rule 14-1(6), provided that written replies to oral questions be published as an appendix to the *Debates of the Senate* of the day on which the tabling is recorded in the *Journals of the Senate*; and

(d) written replies to oral questions deposited electronically with the Clerk of the Senate shall be distributed to all senators;

19. from the time of the adoption of this order, Senate committees have the power to hold hybrid meetings;

20. for greater certainty, and without limiting the general authority granted by this order, when a committee holds a hybrid meeting:

(a) members of the committee participating count towards quorum;

(b) such meetings be considered to be occurring in the parliamentary precinct, irrespective of where participants may be; and

(c) the committee be directed to approach in camera meetings with the utmost caution and all necessary precautions, taking account of the risks to the confidentiality of in camera proceedings inherent in such technologies;

21. subject to variations that may be required by the circumstances, to participate in a committee meeting by videoconference senators must:

(a) participate from a designated office or designated residence within Canada;

(b) use a desktop or laptop computer and a headset with integrated microphone provided by the Senate for videoconferences;

(c) not use other devices, such as personal tablets or smartphones;

(d) be the only people visible on the videoconference;

(e) have their video on and broadcasting their image at all times; and

(f) leave the videoconference if they leave their seat;

22. if a committee holds a hybrid meeting in public, the provisions of rule 14-7(2) be applied so as to allow recording or broadcasting through any facilities arranged by the Clerk of the Senate, and, if such a meeting cannot be broadcast live, the committee be considered to have fulfilled any obligations under the Rules relating to public meetings by making any available recording publicly available as soon as possible thereafter; and

23. the terms of this order cease to have effect, and hybrid sittings of the Senate and hybrid meetings of Senate committees cease, at the end of the day on March 31, 2022.

He said: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak briefly to Government Motion No. 2, which re-establishes hybrid sittings of this chamber, including our committees, based on provisions that were in place and agreed to during the last Parliament. Thanks to the work of the Senate Administration, which helped operationalize this system, colleagues from all corners of the country were able to take part in deliberations related to the Senate's proceedings.

• (1550)

While the situation was different at the outbreak of the pandemic and for months afterward, I would respectfully submit that the current situation is still tenuous for a variety of reasons and, for some, participating at a distance, virtually, remains the appropriate option.

[*Translation*]

Although mandatory vaccine requirements are in place for employees and guests on Parliament Hill, including in the Senate Chamber, the number of cases of COVID-19 here in Ontario and in many provinces in Canada remains high. As winter approaches, activities are moving indoors, which seems to be contributing to a new spike in cases.

[*English*]

I am incredibly grateful to our healthcare professionals, our workers, our public health officials and scientific experts here in Canada who have accelerated the vaccination effort.

However, as a professional and responsible workplace, the Senate of Canada must remain vigilant. We need to be honest with ourselves about the grim reality that our country continues to face.

Our jobs require us to commute back and forth to Ottawa from our regions situated across this vast country. For many of us, our homes are a flight or two away, a walk through crowded airports and many hours from our destination. Having to make this journey every week, for two or three weeks each month, is quite frankly tempting fate.

There may be colleagues amongst us whose health or an underlying medical condition puts them in a vulnerable category. This doesn't mean, however, that they are unable to do their jobs. It means they should have the option of not travelling to Ottawa when we have the means for them to join us virtually.

[*Translation*]

Some of us may live with or take care of an aging relative or a person who is immunocompromised, and with the holiday season around the corner, many of us will be spending time with our children, our grandchildren or our loved ones, who are also vulnerable.

Colleagues, last year, the Senate worked hard to bring in a hybrid system so that senators across the country could fully participate in the daily sittings, the important debates and the votes, and, just as importantly, senators were able to attend committee meetings virtually.

[*English*]

The global pandemic may have shuttered the doors of this chamber to all but a few, but it did not halt the legislative agenda that moved through Parliament and assisted those individual Canadians and Canadian businesses who so desperately needed assistance and support to weather this storm. We performed our duty last Parliament and we did so with the input and participation of our colleagues from as far away as the Yukon, northern Alberta and Prince Edward Island.

As we commence this new Parliament, no one should be prevented from participating in their constitutionally mandated duties when we have the wherewithal to provide a viable and proven option.

This motion and the ability for some to work virtually in a hybrid setting is not for the long term. While the motion contains an expiry date of March 31, 2022, should the situation improve between now and then, and colleagues feel confident based on their own personal circumstances that travel to Ottawa does not pose a threat to themselves or their loved ones, then senators will have the opportunity to do so.

We must keep in mind provincial parameters and the possibility of restrictions being imposed by individual provinces should their case counts reach unacceptable levels.

[*Translation*]

Nevertheless, if the state of public health deteriorates or remains unstable, I hope that we can re-evaluate the circumstances collectively and responsibly to ensure that we have prudent measures in place to protect senators, our staff and the entire Senate family.

[*English*]

Until that time, I submit that it is incumbent upon us to do all possible in allowing for the participation and inclusion of colleagues who, for whatever reason, must join us virtually.

I ask all honourable senators present to support this motion in this unprecedented time and permit senators to fulfill their constitutional duties regardless of their physical location in the country. As we continue to grapple with the harsh realities of COVID-19, we must continue to deploy all means necessary to protect ourselves and those around us.

Honourable senators, to me this motion is about ensuring that the Senate is a safe, compassionate and inclusive workplace. I hope that you will support this motion so that all senators are able to participate without fear of putting their health and safety and those of others at risk. I thank you.

Hon. Diane F. Griffin: Senator Gold, will you take a question?

Senator Gold: Of course.

Senator Griffin: When I started in the Senate, Wednesday sittings ended at the end of government business or at 4 p.m., whichever was later. This gave us some flexibility to get through some more of the Order Paper if government business was scant.

The current motion has us sitting on Wednesdays until the end of government business or 4 p.m., whichever is earlier, which takes away that flexibility.

Until we have committees working on multiple government bills, I anticipate that our workloads on Wednesdays will be quite light. Senator Gold, could you support requests for leave to sit until 4 p.m. or until the end of government business, whichever is later, on days when we don't have much government business to occupy us?

Senator Gold: Thank you for the question and for reminding us of how things have changed since the pandemic.

Let me note for the record, if I may begin with this, that the motion before us with the language to which you referred was the by-product of extensive consultations with the leaders of all groups.

All leaders knew and understood that we were re-establishing the provisions of the hybrid motion which were in place during the Forty-third Parliament, which includes how the Wednesday sittings operate.

I also understand and am pleased that there is a strong desire by all groups to have committees established as soon as possible. I'm hopeful that committees will be operational soon.

The reality of hybrid sittings and committees is that we do not have the technical abilities to have the Senate and multiple committees operating at the same time.

I would respectfully submit that it would be unwise to put ourselves in a position where this chamber would be required to seek leave for a committee to meet if the Senate is still discussing government business in the chamber, because this might put a committee in a situation where it cannot meet if leave is denied, even if there is important government legislation before it.

More importantly, these provisions as drafted would secure committee spots and meeting times that I expect would be in place on Wednesdays.

It's important, colleagues, that we ensure that our committees are organized, that meeting times are respected. We've all had the experience of being members of committees, having invited witnesses — some who come from afar and at great inconvenience — who are forced to wait and sometimes cannot even appear because the times in the chamber have been such that the committees can't meet. I believe that the provisions in the current motion, as existed in the previous hybrid motions, remain the appropriate course of action.

Now to your question — and you'll forgive me for that, but I wanted to put that on the record — in any circumstances, we as a chamber have the ability to be flexible. You can rest assured that our office will continue to remain flexible if circumstances so require.

For the moment, we're satisfied that this motion before us is the right way to proceed in a hybrid sitting.

• (1600)

Thank you for your question.

Hon. Fabian Manning: Senator Gold, would you take a question, please?

Senator Gold: Of course.

Senator Manning: I'm confident that it was not intentional on your part, Senator Gold, but in your speech you mentioned that wherever one of us senators was located in this great country of ours, we could participate in the hybrid sittings.

You mentioned the expanse of Canada, from Yukon to Prince Edward Island. I just want to be on record, as you always want to be on record, as saying that we, too, in that far, beautiful province in Eastern Canada of Newfoundland and Labrador indeed participate in the hybrid sittings. I just want to make sure that it is on record that we, too, are part of this great country.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Gold: I deeply regret the need to rise, but I'm grateful for the opportunity to agree with you and thank you for your support for the hybrid motion for all of the honourable senators from Newfoundland and Labrador.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Raymonde Saint-Germain: Would you take a question, Senator Gold?

Senator Gold: Yes.

Senator Saint-Germain: I would like some clarification on the first clause of the motion, which says, and I quote:

> . . . as soon as practicable after the adoption of this order the Senate begin to hold hybrid sittings . . .

We have been holding hybrid sittings since the fall of 2020 and have all the equipment and resources required. I would therefore like some clarification on what specifically could delay the implementation of hybrid sittings. When do you think we can expect to hold hybrid sittings?

Senator Gold: Thank you for the question. As the motion states, it will be up to the Speaker to determine the date.

That said, I've been told that it will take about 48 hours to get the necessary equipment and systems in place to run a hybrid system. I hope that we can adopt the motion before we adjourn this week. That would mean that when we return next week we would be able to have a working hybrid system.

[*English*]

Hon. Denise Batters: Senator Gold, would you take a question?

Senator Gold: Of course.

Senator Batters: I will try to make myself heard over this mask.

How many committees are able to sit at once under this revised virtual system or hybrid system? I'm wondering why the Senate previously was a lot further behind the House of Commons. They got back to many simultaneous committees functioning at once, and they were able to have hybrid committee hearings, whereas a lot of times the Senate was forced to have only virtual committee hearings. I'm wondering if that has changed.

We're one of two chambers of Parliament. We have excellent committee hearings, and I want to make sure that our committee hearings are treated equally.

Senator Gold: Thank you. That is a very good question, and I appreciate it.

My understanding is that from a technical infrastructure point of view, we share resources with the House of Commons. Therefore, our ability to chart our own course independently of what is happening in the other place is somewhat constrained.

My understanding, Senator Batters, is that at any given time there can be a limited number of hybrid committee meetings. That is why when the Committee of Selection, sometime in the course of the last Parliament, recommended and the Senate approved the system, it was to allow for completely virtual committee sittings so as to allow more of our committees, more of the time, to do the important work that we do here in the chamber.

Senator Batters: Senator Gold, "sharing" implies sharing and equality, not subservience to the House of Commons. I'm hopeful that we will be in a situation where our committees are also able to be hybrid, so if we're here we can choose to attend in person or be virtual.

I'm wondering if you have any more information with regard to that. Will our committees be able to be hybrid or will they be mostly virtual?

Senator Gold: The motion before us only contemplates hybrid committees, senator. There is nothing before us that contemplates virtual committees, even though it's the position of the government that this would be a good additional element to allow more committees to sit for more hours. That said, it remains the

case that in addition to the technological and room size limitations, there are human resource limitations, including translators and others.

This is a matter, as you know, which is overseen by the Speaker's office and through the administration. My understanding is that this has been discussed at the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration and other places and will continue to be brought to this chamber. For the moment, this motion only contemplates hybrid committees.

(On motion of Senator Wells, for Senator Plett, debate adjourned.)

(*At 4:07 p.m., the Senate was continued until tomorrow at 2 p.m.*)

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