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The Honourable GEORGE J. FUREY,
Speaker

CONTENTS

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THE SENATE

Wednesday, March 23, 2022

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

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

THE LATE ALEXA MCDONOUGH, O.C., O.N.S.

Hon. Wanda Elaine Thomas Bernard: Honourable senators, I join you today from East Preston, Nova Scotia, unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people. Today, in honour of National Social Work Month and International Women's Day, I pay tribute to the late Alexa McDonough, an influential social worker, politician and dear friend. Alexa was a courageous and passionate social worker who became the first woman leader of a major federal party.

Alexa inspired and encouraged all women, including me, to get involved in politics. She died earlier this year, having lived a life advocating for equity and justice.

This year's National Social Work Month theme, announced by the Canadian Association of Social Workers, is "In Critical Demand — Social Work is Essential," which invites us to recognize the profession's essential role during COVID-19 and the work we must do as we build back better.

Alexa's life and work are shining examples of social workers as essential in bringing about meaningful change. Alexa spoke on unpopular issues with conviction. As a teenager, she engaged in positive disruption, using her own privilege to effect change in Halifax. She valued the voices and experiences of those who lived outside the margins.

Alexa taught me that being born into privilege is not a problem. It's what you do with that privilege that can influence a positive shift. She led by example, using her platforms to highlight the inequities that were revealed during the COVID-19 pandemic, like anti-Black racism and workers' rights. Alexa also encouraged social workers to move away from Band-Aid solutions and to move toward equitable policy development.

Honourable colleagues, Alexa McDonough's legacy reminds us that social work is a profession where both advocacy and the development of social policy are essential and that social workers are leaders who are in critical demand.

Thank you, *asante*.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

NATIONAL SOCIAL WORK MONTH

Hon. Nancy J. Hartling: Honourable senators, I would like to begin by thanking my friend Senator Bernard for her lovely speech on Alexa McDonough, who was my favourite person too. March is one of my favourite months of the year because there is a lot to celebrate, including International Women's Day on March 8 — which is also my wedding anniversary and my son Marc's birthday — but it's National Social Work Month too.

[*Translation*]

Today I want to celebrate and honour Canadian social workers as we celebrate our profession this month. There are 52,823 social workers in Canada and 2,096 social workers in my province, New Brunswick.

[*English*]

This year's theme is "In Critical Demand — Social Work is Essential." I have seen first-hand the importance of our profession and its impact on people in need, especially during the pandemic. Social workers have been a lifeline for many, whether working in health care, social development, child welfare, with seniors or in community services. A predominantly female profession, social workers too often go unnoticed and are undervalued, but it's important to recognize the value they add to society as they are important and they are essential and critical in demand.

[*Translation*]

One of the first social workers in Atlantic Canada was Jane Wisdom, born in 1884. Since then, thousands of people have worked in the profession, including many parliamentarians such as Alexa McDonough, Rosemary Brown and Ginette Petitpas Taylor, and, here in the Senate, Wanda Elaine Thomas Bernard, Margaret Dawn Anderson, Judith Seidman and me, to name but a few.

[*English*]

Since March 2019, we have been celebrating National Social Work Month on the Hill in collaboration with the Canadian Association of Social Workers, or CASW. The first couple of years we held it here at the Senate, but due to COVID-19, the events in the last two years have been virtual. This year's events were scheduled on March 15 and 28, and Senator Bernard and I worked on the events with CASW staff and our staff. The presentations included social workers and students from Atlantic Canada discussing challenges that are faced by social workers in contemporary society. These events were accessible to social workers and to the public in Canada and internationally.

• (1410)

As we honour and celebrate National Social Work Month, let's remember these dedicated, caring and thoughtful professionals who are absolutely essential and a necessary part of strengthening the social infrastructure of society.

[*Translation*]

We thank you for your good work and your service to society. Thank you very much.

[*English*]

HATE CRIME IN CANADA

Hon. Victor Oh: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak about the unacceptable rise of racially motivated hate crimes in our country.

Once again, I was deeply disturbed to wake up to news of a senseless attack on our Muslim community. This time the attack happened in my own city of Mississauga, at the Dar Al-Tawheed Islamic Centre during their morning prayer. Luckily, however, a heroic group of worshippers bravely stood up and subdued the attacker before something worse could happen.

Unfortunately, this attack is a symptom of a larger problem: the overwhelming rise of hate crimes in Canada. It pains me to rise in this chamber, yet again, to share these unsettling statistics with you. The trend of racially motivated hate crimes only appears to be getting worse. In the city of Ottawa alone, hate crimes increased 185% since 2019, while national numbers, according to Statistics Canada, point toward a 37% increase in 2020.

Colleagues, the core of Canadian values of tolerance, pluralism and multiculturalism are beacons of hope for those who escape tyranny and hardship for a better life in Canada. These values make up the very fabric of our nation. Nevertheless, we are failing to stand up for them. Whether you worship wearing a hijab, kippah, dastar or nothing at all, you must never live in fear because of your faith.

Our fellow Canadians deserve better. We must do better. From coast to coast to coast, let us stand up as one Team Canada, just as we do to cheer on our Olympians, united in our condemnation of Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, anti-Black, anti-Indigenous and anti-Asian racism and all stripes of hate in Canada.

Thank you. *Shukran*.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

S.H.A.R.E. AGRICULTURE FOUNDATION

Hon. Robert Black: Honourable senators, I rise today to highlight the work of S.H.A.R.E. Agriculture Foundation and the importance of charity.

S.H.A.R.E., otherwise known as Sending Help And Resources Everywhere, was founded in 1976 by a small group of farmers with the assistance of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food's Agriculture Representative for Peel, Bob Bell, and then-Minister of Agriculture William A. Stewart.

S.H.A.R.E. is committed to enabling impoverished agricultural-based communities to improve their quality of life by supporting projects that contribute to economic, social and environmental development and sustainability.

Over the last five decades, this not-for-profit organization has supported countless families in Brazil, the Caribbean and Africa, and more recently in Honduras, El Salvador, Belize, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Haiti, Bolivia and even across the world in Cambodia.

I am proud to share that the work of S.H.A.R.E. is almost exclusively delivered by passionate and committed volunteers, many with decades of commitment to the organization, and made possible by the support of Canadians from coast to coast. I personally have followed and supported the work of S.H.A.R.E. for over 25 years. I know first-hand the great work they do, and I am hopeful that they will continue to support agricultural communities in need around the world.

S.H.A.R.E. and many other charities and non-profit organizations support every aspect of Canadian life. In fact, in our 2019 report, the Special Senate Committee on the Charitable Sector found that demand for services has increased, yet funding continues to be constrained. This has become even more true as we continue to face the threat of COVID-19.

Honourable colleagues, S.H.A.R.E. Agriculture Foundation was founded upon the core principle that it provides "a hand up, not a hand out," which has generated long-term sustainability in the support that it provides to communities in need around the world. I am hopeful that, as a nation, we will continue to uphold such values in our own country and abroad.

Thank you. *Meegwetch*.

[*Translation*]

ACTION WEEK AGAINST RACISM AND FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie: Honourable senators, March 21 was the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which was designated by the United Nations in 1966. An organization in Quebec, the Centre international de documentation et d'information haïtienne, caribéenne et afro-canadienne, or CIDIHCA, created the Action Week against Racism and for Equal Opportunities to mark the occasion. This year marks the twenty-third anniversary of this event. The CIDIHCA coordinates activities dedicated to the fight against various forms of intolerance in our society.

A wide range of activities is planned for the week of action, which runs from March 21 to March 31. Virtual and in-person activities will take place in several cities across Quebec. They include exhibitions, workshops, webinars, film screenings and plays performed by students, to name but a few.

This year's theme is about welcoming refugees and migrants to Quebec.

A CBC/Radio-Canada article from March 11, 2022, detailed several reports of racist behaviour on the part of border officials towards people of colour fleeing the war in Ukraine. Here in the nation's capital, the African Canadian Association of Ottawa has already raised nearly \$80,000 in donations to help students facing discrimination. The association hopes that Canada will consider these students like other migrants from Ukraine.

I am encouraged by the solidarity shown in welcoming Ukrainians to Canada. While we celebrate this generosity, I hope it translates into immigration measures that make it easier for other migrants to come to Canada.

Temporary foreign workers represent another challenge in this context. In 2017, there were more than half a million of them in Canada. These workers come to Canada to carry out essential tasks and help fill the labour shortage, particularly in the farming sectors, private homes, service stations, the restaurant industry and health care, to name a few.

Currently, there are nearly one million job vacancies. That is a record. Let's work together to improve how we welcome refugees and migrants. It is a matter of human dignity and also a way to share our Canadian values to build a fairer and more equitable world. Thank you.

[*English*]

THE HONOURABLE SALMA ATAULLAHJAN

Hon. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia: Honourable senators, I rise today to recognize the outstanding contributions of my colleague and friend Senator Salma Ataullahjan.

Today is Pakistan Day, a national holiday in Pakistan that commemorates the passing of the Lahore Resolution on March 23, 1940, a major milestone in the struggle for an independent state. Following the proclamation of Pakistan as an independent republic on March 23, 1956, the Pakistan Civil Awards were established.

On August 14, 2020, Senator Ataullahjan received one of Pakistan's most prestigious awards, the Sitara-e-Pakistan, translated as the "Star of Pakistan." Due to the pandemic, the senator was unable to travel to Pakistan to receive this civil award.

Earlier this morning, at the High Commission of Pakistan in Ottawa, the award was bestowed upon her, and you may admire the decorative star around her neck. This award recognizes individuals who have made an especially meritorious contribution to the security or national interests of Pakistan, world peace, cultural or other significant public endeavours.

Senator Ataullahjan continues to be a fierce advocate for international diplomacy, particularly Canada-Pakistan relations. She is a leader in polio eradication in Southeast Asia, provides extensive services including personal financial donations in

[Senator Mégie]

natural disaster relief, mentors and builds connections with female parliamentarians in Pakistan and also provides supports for internally displaced persons.

• (1420)

It was an honour to attend this ceremony this morning alongside my colleague Senator Victor Oh and Senator Ataullahjan's daughter Shaanzeh as well as our staff.

I would like to congratulate Senator Ataullahjan for this honour and highly prestigious civilian award, and I encourage you to join me in applauding our honourable colleague for her continued tremendous efforts.

Meegwetch. Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

RADIOCOMMUNICATION ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson introduced Bill S-242, An Act to amend the Radiocommunication Act.

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

QUESTION PERIOD

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Hon. Leo Housakos (Acting Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question is for the Government Representative in the Senate. Earlier this month, B'nai Brith Canada sent a letter to Canada's ambassador to the United Nations, Bob Rae, seeking his support for the removal of the chair of the Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory of the UN Human Rights Council. The joint letter was signed by Hillel Neuer, the head of UN Watch, who stated:

By heading this inquiry despite having repeatedly declared Israel guilty of precisely the crimes that she is supposed to investigate, Navi Pillay embodies the injustice of the UN and its human rights council when it comes to the selective treatment of the Jewish state.

Senator Gold, my question is very simple. What is your government's response to B'nai Brith's letter? Also, will the NDP-Liberal coalition government support their simple request?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. Thank you for underlining many of the problems — I alluded to some yesterday — that the international organizations impose on democratic countries.

The problem that you identified — the disproportionate unfair treatment of, in this case, Israel — is one that preoccupies all Canadians of good faith and the Government of Canada as well. I will make inquiries about this specific request that you made and will be happy to report back to the chamber.

Senator Housakos: Government leader, as you likely know, your NDP coalition partner had this to say about Israel in its 2021 federal election platform:

Canada must play an active and constructive role in advancing peace, beginning by suspending arms sales to Israel until the end of the illegal occupation.

I guess this is the NDP-Liberal government's position now, isn't it, leader? Isn't this why B'nai Brith shouldn't expect any help from your government to remove a UN Human Rights Commission chair highly biased against the State of Israel?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question. A Supply and Confidence Agreement between the Liberal Party and the NDP speaks to the support that the NDP is giving, under conditions, to the government with regard to confidence motions. There are many areas where individuals within a party — or the parties themselves — differ. The position of Canada is and shall remain one of supporting a just peace between Israel and Palestine. Canada is a firm friend of Israel as it is of the Palestinian people, and this chamber should rest assured that foreign policy in the hands of this government will remain steady in that regard.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

BAY DU NORD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Hon. David M. Wells (Acting Deputy Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the government leader. As you know, government leader, the Bay du Nord offshore oil project is vital to the economy and future of Newfoundland and Labrador. However, we have yet to hear whether this project will move forward despite the March 6 deadline, which has since passed.

The government extended this decision point by 40 days despite the Impact Assessment Agency recommending approval.

This week, the federal Liberals have agreed to prioritize specific policy issues backed by the New Democrats in exchange for their support to keep the government in power until 2025.

Senator Gold, in light of this new NDP-Liberal partnership government and the fact that the NDP is against the project, could you tell us, please, what is the fate of the Bay du Nord project?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. The government understands the importance of the decision that it has to make on the proposed Bay du Nord development project. As well, it understands the importance of this project to the people and economy of Newfoundland.

The government is taking the time — prudently so — to review the information that has been provided to it to ensure and decide whether the Bay du Nord project is likely to cause unacceptable, negative environmental effects. That's why the government extended the legislated timeline for the project so as to provide the government with more time to review the complex information that's been submitted to it.

Senator Wells: Senator Gold, you will know that the Impact Assessment Agency has said there would be no deleterious environmental effects.

I'm going to supplement it with a follow-up. Does the government recognize that every delay in the legislative process for environmental assessment sends a negative signal to the business community and to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians that the process is not based on science but on Ottawa politics?

Senator Gold: Thank you for the question. No, that is not the view of the government with regard to its responsibilities, which it takes seriously with regard to reviewing the environmental impact of legislation. Both the federal and provincial governments have important roles to play, and both, I am assured, are doing so diligently and responsibly.

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

RAIF BADAWI

Hon. Julie Miville-Dechéne: Senator Gold, 12 days ago one of the most famous prisoners of conscience in the world, Raif Badawi, was released after spending 10 years in prison in Saudi Arabia.

Unfortunately, that is not the end of his ordeal. His passport was confiscated and he has been banned from leaving Saudi Arabia for the next 10 years, in addition to being fined the equivalent of \$335,000. Knowing that Mr. Badawi's wife and three children, all naturalized Canadians living in Sherbrooke, have had to live without him for the past decade, is Canada prepared to give him safe passage and issue Raif Badawi a temporary passport so that he may be reunited with his family?

• (1430)

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question, Senator Miville-Dechéne. We are relieved to learn that after 10 years of imprisonment Raif Badawi has been released. Our thoughts are with his family and friends. The government is working to seek clarity on the conditions of his release and continues to raise Mr. Badawi's case with Saudi Arabia. The government sincerely hopes to see Mr. Badawi reunited with his family.

Senator Miville-Dechéne: One year ago, the Senate and the House of Commons unanimously adopted a motion calling on the government to grant Canadian citizenship to Raif Badawi. However, nothing was done. The will of Parliament was not carried out.

I realize that this may involve confidential or sensitive information, but can the Government of Canada confirm that it is doing everything in its power, together with its allies, to lift the second part of Mr. Badawi's sentence, the 10-year detention in Saudi Arabia for publishing a text that criticized the regime?

Senator Gold: Thank you for the question. I have been informed that the government has raised and continues to raise Mr. Badawi's case at the highest levels in Saudi Arabia. Together with its allies, the government has made several requests for clemency.

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

TRANS MOUNTAIN PIPELINE

Hon. Rosa Galvez: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Senator Gold, the projected cost of expanding the Trans Mountain pipeline has nearly tripled to \$21.4 billion. Our Parliamentary Budget Officer told the Energy Committee earlier this month, "It is very unlikely the Trans Mountain pipeline will be profitable over its lifespan . . ."

Senator Gold, since this soon-to-be-stranded asset is now unfortunately owned by all Canadians, will your government release the two financial analyses done by BMO and TD Bank that purport to show that the project will make money?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question, senator. As the government has made clear, the government does not intend to be the long-term owner of the Trans Mountain expansion project. It aims to divest its ownership in a way and at a time that benefits Canadians.

I'm advised that, despite the revised cost estimate to which you referred and the completion timeline, no additional public money will be spent on this project. Trans Mountain Corporation will secure the funding necessary to complete the project with third-party financing.

The Government of Canada remains confident that previous public investments in the pipeline will, in fact, be recouped.

Senator Galvez: Senator Gold, can you confirm that these two analyses mentioned by Minister Freeland in February exist and clarify whether the reports say if the pipeline will make money or will it be profitable? There is an important difference there. Thank you.

Senator Gold: I'll certainly make inquiries and report back to the chamber.

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ACCESS TO HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND NETWORKS

Hon. Marty Klyne: Honourable senators, my question is for the government leader. Senator Gold, from Treaty 4 territory and homeland of the Métis Nation, I'd like to follow up on a recent question from Senator Black. He asked if the government will cap purchase by individual carriers at the upcoming spectrum auction to complement the "use it or lose it" approach that is referenced in the mandate letter of the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry.

We must remember that spectrum is a public resource and that the needs of Canadians, not corporations, must be met when spectrum is purchased at auction. If an internet service provider buys spectrum but fails to utilize it and instead simply stockpiles or resells that spectrum at a massive profit, that does nothing to provide better and more affordable internet service to Canadians who are being underserved. Many internet service providers have done this time and again, and the fact that these private companies can make enormous profit on the sale of a subsidized public asset is something we can no longer tolerate.

In some areas of Saskatchewan and across Canada, internet access is woefully inadequate, particularly in rural and remote Indigenous communities. However, the Universal Broadband Fund and innovations like Starlink satellites provide some cause for optimism.

Senator Gold, can the government commit to ensuring that any auctioned spectrum will be used by internet service providers to provide more equitable and cost-effective access to high-speed broadband internet for Canadians who live in underserved markets?

Also, will the government ensure that any funding taken from the Universal Broadband Fund will be used to subsidize or upgrade internet and Wi-Fi infrastructure in underserved markets so all Canadians can participate in the new economy at the CRTC standard of 50 megabytes per second download and 10 megabytes per second upload speeds?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. As the Government Representative in the Senate, I'm pleased to respond.

As colleagues may know, the recent spectrum auctions had the strongest rules to date, requiring companies to use the spectrum in a timely way or lose the spectrum. I'm advised that the

government recently consulted on additional measures for making unused spectrum available and will continue to put rules in place so spectrum is used for the social and economic benefit of Canadians.

As indicated, the Universal Broadband Fund supports the government's initiatives to ensure that 100% of Canadian homes and businesses have access to speeds of at least 50 over 10 megabytes per second by 2030, regardless of where they are located in the country. I'm advised that through this fund the government has made billions of dollars available for rural and remote internet infrastructure and an additional \$750 million was announced in Budget 2019.

Colleagues, the government recognizes the urgency of bridging the digital divide for Canadians and has set aside up to \$150 million through a rapid response stream for the fund projects that can be completed during the 2021 build season — 574 applications were received under this particular stream.

The amount of \$50 million for the fund has been set aside for a project to improve mobile internet for Indigenous peoples. I'm advised the government will keep Canadians up to date on these investments and the progress that is being made toward connecting all households in the country through online reporting, updated on a quarterly basis.

INTERNAL ECONOMY, BUDGETS AND ADMINISTRATION

BUSINESS OF THE COMMITTEE

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: Honourable senators, my question is for the Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration. Senator Marwah, as the Senate considers extending the hybrid motion — and we all know we have a motion now before us which I understand is endorsed by leadership to extend the hybrid sessions to the end of April — I'm concerned that the reality is that, due to the pressures of the hybrid format on Senate human resources, Senate committees remain seriously under-resourced.

You're the chair of an important committee, so you would know very well that many committees have found it difficult to meet, some waiting weeks even to have an organizational meeting. Other committees are having difficulty fitting in all the studies and important work they want to move forward into the schedule of one meeting per week that we currently have to work with under the hybrid format.

Government legislation continues to take precedence at the cost of Senate public bills, special issues, hearings and studies that, in my opinion, form the real strength of Senate committees. We've lost our flexibility to extend Senate hearings if clause-by-clause consideration goes long or to have longer meetings if we need to hear from multiple witnesses integral to a bill's consideration.

Senator, is your committee looking at options to increase the availability of resources, including interpreters? I understand that there are no fewer than 10 companies in Ottawa that provide

translation services, but we also need technology and camera operators, committee staff and so forth to enable us to resume our regular meeting schedules if hybrid settings continue.

• (1440)

Hon. Sabi Marwah: Thank you, senator, for that question. There are several dimensions to the problem. I think you've mentioned the first one, and the biggest bottleneck by far: the availability of translation services.

I would remind the senator that translation services are under the purview of the Translation Bureau and not under the purview of the Internal Economy Committee. We've had many discussions with them, and I'm told they are hiring all available staff but there is an acute shortage everywhere. They're making every attempt to hire any available capacity they can find.

Another compounding problem is that the hybrid sittings we have authorized are much more difficult to manage for translators than in-person sittings. Hence that has constrained the availability on the supply side, because we've reduced the service levels to which translators can operate. They normally work six hours, and now they can only do four hours because of additional demands. That's the supply side.

There are a couple of dimensions to this, senator. One is that we keep extending hybrid sittings one and two months at a time. Hence that's not very conducive to long-range planning on our part, and we don't want to invest in resources when we don't know how long the hybrid setting is going to last. That has been a constraint.

Our third and fourth constraints are that senators agreed to prioritize government business, and that leaves less time for everybody else.

The last point is that there are more groups in the Senate. There used to be only two groups. Now there are four, and each one wants translation services. When you add that up, it constrains the availability of translation.

Senator Patterson: Thank you, Senator Marwah. I would just remind you and note that our former colleague Senator Griffin asked you on February 10, 2021, about reallocating some of the \$5.5 million in savings — born from the decrease in travel as a result of the pandemic — to support additional staff and technology infrastructure. On May 25, 2021, she asked you about training new staff to support our sittings and committee meetings.

I know you've said that sometimes Internal Economy is constrained by not having a mandate or by supply-side issues, but we have savings of over \$5 million. Have you been able to make some progress on utilizing this money to solve these problems of which we all are so keenly aware?

Senator Marwah: Thank you, senator, for that question. I think where it can have an impact, Internal Economy has authorized additional resources. We have authorized at least 10 to 15 additional translation booths. We have authorized additional staffing in the Information Services Directorate —

which is technology — and in broadcasting, but there is not much point in hiring additional staff if we can't solve the translation issue. That remains the bottleneck.

What I will do, senator, is revisit this issue and see if there are other short-term measures we can take that will help alleviate some of the bottlenecks, and I shall let you know.

FINANCE

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL UPDATE 2021

Hon. Elizabeth Marshall: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Senator Gold, I have a question about Bill C-8 that is currently under debate in the House of Commons. That's the bill to implement the fall fiscal update. Parts of the act are very complex, and within that act is another act called the Underused Housing Tax Act, and I think that's where most of the complication resides.

I'm looking at the calendar for this fiscal year. There are eight days left in the parliamentary calendar for this fiscal year. If and when Bill C-8 arrives in the Senate, and most likely it will be "when," will senators have time to thoroughly review this bill?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Yes, we will.

Senator Marshall: My supplementary question is that quite a few bills are being rushed through during the review cycle. I'm a member of the Finance Committee, and we are quite often rushed in reviewing money bills. Do you have any concern that there's a perception that the Senate is becoming a rubber stamp for government legislation?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question. My concern is to do my part and my very best with my colleagues to ensure that the Senate has the opportunity to do the important work that we were summoned to do. That is often possible, and, indeed, the quality of our work is testament to that.

Colleagues in this chamber with many more years than I, and who have been here through different governments, will also know that certain circumstances inevitably recur. We're approaching one now as we close the end of the fiscal year with regard to the supplementary estimates. There are other circumstances where bills come to us rather late in the day for a variety of reasons — in some cases bureaucratic and in others a function of the minority nature of Parliament.

Fortunately, at least to date, we as a chamber, in our wisdom and in the exercise of our wisdom in a responsible way, have undertaken pre-studies of such bills. This has allowed for an opportunity for senators and committees with expertise and institutional memory to dig in and advise the Senate as to their views when the bills finally do arrive.

We are not a rubber stamp. The history of our involvement in the Senate since 2015, as set out in my predecessor's reports and simply in our own experience suggesting amendments to bills —

a significant number of which were accepted in whole or in part — is testament to the fact that the Senate continues to do its job responsibly for the benefit of all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

DEFENCE BUDGET

Hon. Claude Carignan: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate.

Canada's defence budget represents around 1.4% of its GDP, which falls far short of its international commitments to NATO. The Prime Minister is on his way to the NATO summit in Brussels, and I'm wondering whether he has packed anything other than speeches in his suitcase, perhaps a firm commitment to increase Canada's defence contributions.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. I think the best, clearest and most transparent response is that you will get an answer when the budget is presented.

Senator Carignan: Did the Prime Minister compromise any commitments as part of his agreement with the NDP, for example, did he agree not to increase defence spending in order to get the NDP on board? Did the Prime Minister compromise our international commitments in exchange for the NDP's help to keep him in power until 2025?

Senator Gold: Thank you for the question. I have no information about any of that.

[*English*]

SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY

BUSINESS OF THE COMMITTEE

Hon. Scott Tannas: Honourable senators, I have a question for Senator Boniface in her role as Joint Chair of the Special Joint Committee on the Declaration of Emergency.

I noticed from the first report filed that you have had your initial meetings. You have some timelines with which to work, you now know your colleagues and so on. I appreciate that there may be things that you can and can't say, but could you give us your take on how things might go and your sense of your and the committee's ability to get the job done as was envisioned?

Hon. Gwen Boniface: Thank you, Senator Tannas, for the question. As you know, the report I filed yesterday dealt with the meeting that took place on March 13, during which we were able to have the organizational meeting, as you've said, and the joint chairs had to be formally elected, as did the vice-chairs.

I want to assure members of the Senate that they are very well represented by Senator White, Senator Harder and Senator Carignan as our vice-chair. We have a number of routine motions that we've dealt with. We will deal with some others on Thursday night, which is the evening of our next meeting.

• (1450)

I feel reassured, having met my co-chairs, Mr. Green and Mr. Fortin, that we are all agreed on moving this process forward. I met other members of the committee, and I believe that there is a lot of commitment to get the process moving and to ensure that we do a fulsome job. I remain optimistic, and I'm reassured by the people I've met at the table.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

Hon. Leo Housakos (Acting Leader of the Opposition): Government leader, I'd like to follow up on the question from my colleague Senator Carignan who unfortunately didn't get an answer on a very important issue.

The Secretary-General of NATO has made it clear repeatedly that they would like Canada to carry its fair share of spending when it comes to maintaining their request of 2% of its GDP investment in security and national defence, particularly in the context of the threats democracy is facing around the world, including the threats we potentially face in the Northwest Passage in this country and the Arctic with Putin being right next door to us. Your government has failed.

Now, with your coalition with the NDP, a party that has unequivocally said they do not support any defence and security spending, will your government continue to fail now that you have this new coalition in not respecting the call of our security friends and allies around the world that want us to carry our fair share in our spending when it comes to supporting NATO and its security capability on behalf of Canada and Canadians?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): A supply and confidence arrangement does not — and I will insist on using those terms, colleagues, because in any serious parliamentary institution, facts should matter. However, that is not to deny you the right to continue to call the arrangement whatever you want. It's your privilege, but it is mine to insist on the terms that are accurate.

There is nothing in the arrangement that has been communicated publicly or to me that speaks to this issue, nor is it the case that the call for 2% of GDP is necessarily the same thing as doing one's fair share. The position of Canada has been for some time that it does indeed do its fair share, notwithstanding the fact that according to certain calculations, Canada has not and does not provide spending as requested by NATO.

Canada continues to re-evaluate its needs. The crisis in Ukraine has certainly shone a spotlight on it. As I said in my response to our colleague's questions, details of what the government's intentions and plans are for its defence spending will be revealed in the budget. Until then, we'll just have to be patient.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, the time for Question Period has expired.

DELAYED ANSWERS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

(For text of Delayed Answers, see Appendix.)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PUBLIC SECTOR INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

MOTION TO REAPPOINT INCUMBENT ADOPTED

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate), pursuant to notice of March 22, 2022, moved:

That, in accordance with subsection 39(1) of the *Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act* (S.C. 2005, c. 46), the Senate approve the reappointment of Mr. Joe Friday as Public Sector Integrity Commissioner for a term of 18 months.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

(At 2:54 p.m., pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate on November 25, 2021, the Senate adjourned until 2 p.m., tomorrow.)

APPENDIX

CITIZENSHIP, IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEES

DELAYED ANSWERS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

IMMIGRATION PROCESSING BACKLOG

HEALTH

PROOF OF VACCINATION—INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Jane Cordy on November 25, 2021)

Public Health Agency of Canada

The United States requires any non-U.S. citizen who is a non-immigrant entering from another country to provide proof of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by one of the United States' accepted vaccines.

As of February 28, 2022:

- Travellers arriving to Canada from any country, who qualify as fully vaccinated, will be randomly selected for arrival testing and will no longer be required to quarantine while awaiting their test result.
- Children under 12 years old, travelling with fully vaccinated adults, will continue to be exempt from quarantine, without any prescribed conditions limiting their activities.
- Travellers will now have the option of using a COVID-19 rapid antigen test result or a molecular test result to meet pre-entry requirements.

Canada adjusted its Travel Health Notice from a Level 3 to a Level 2, meaning that the Government will no longer recommend that Canadians avoid travel for non-essential purposes.

Canada has successfully engaged other countries to recognize Canadians who have received mixed vaccine schedules as being fully vaccinated. The Government of Canada respects the sovereign right of other countries to decide their travel restrictions and border measures and will continue to monitor the situation and provide updated travel advice to Canadians.

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Ratna Omidvar on December 1, 2021)

Insofar as Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) is:

- The Government of Canada is very concerned by the case of Raif Badawi in Saudi Arabia; has consistently advocated on his behalf and will continue to use every opportunity to do so. His well-being is foremost in our minds.
- IRCC is working with Global Affairs Canada regarding the motions made in the House and Senate.
- I cannot speak to any specifics related to individual cases in order to respect the privacy, security and safety of those individuals.
- IRCC has been moving towards a more integrated, modernized and centralized working environment in order to help speed up application processing globally.
- For citizenship, between April 1 and October 31, 2021, more than 74,000 applicants have become citizens through video oath ceremonies.
- The department is inviting approximately 3,500 to 5,000 applicants weekly to do the Oath of Citizenship virtually. Additionally, IRCC is now able to invite approximately 5,000 clients per week to complete the online citizenship test. However, despite our efforts, we know that some applicants have experienced considerable wait times with the processing of their applications, and we continue to work as hard as possible to process applications.

PUBLIC SAFETY

COVID-19 PANDEMIC—TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Marie-Françoise Mégie on December 2, 2021)

Public Health Agency of Canada

Preliminary evidence suggests a growth advantage of Omicron over the Delta variant and a potential decrease in vaccine protection against infection. In November 2021, South Africa experienced a significant resurgence in COVID-19 case activity with an increase in hospitalization with evidence of Omicron transmission in neighbouring

countries and spread outside the Southern Africa region. Canada border testing results detected high test positivity rates that stood out from other countries.

Border restrictions put in place in response to COVID-19 are not impeding the safe and timely movement of vaccines either into Canada to meet domestic needs, or from Canada to other countries to meet international commitments. The Government of Canada is working closely with the ACT Accelerator and the COVID 19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility towards its commitment to support equitable global access to COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics. Canada has committed to donating the equivalent of at least 200 million doses to the COVAX Facility by the end of 2022.

We are working closely with public health experts and global partners to monitor the Omicron variant of concern around the world. As the situation evolves, we will continue to monitor and we will not hesitate to adjust our measures.

HEALTH

COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE PLAN

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Stan Kutcher on December 7, 2021)

Public Health Agency of Canada

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), in collaboration with provinces and territories (PTs), develops guidance and advice on the use of individual and community-based public health measures to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

While PHAC provides recommendations on individual public health measures that all people in Canada should continue following, regardless of vaccination status, PTs are responsible for implementing more restrictive public health measures, including business and school closures, inter- and intra-provincial/territorial travel restrictions, gathering size limits, and curfews. PTs are also responsible for mask mandates and proof of vaccination requirements within their jurisdictions.

PHAC signalled its commitment to improving health data collection, sharing, and use for the wellbeing of Canadians by establishing a Pan-Canadian Health Data Strategy, supported by an external Expert Advisory Group (EAG), who released the *Building Canada's Health Data Foundation* report in November 2021. Improving data collection and sharing will enable us to design the right evidence-based interventions at the right time to improve uptake of public health measures and reduce risks.

PHAC also developed a set of short-term COVID-19 data priorities to address critical data gaps. Once key foundational issues around data collection are addressed, work on these data priorities will continue.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

CANADA-CHINA RELATIONS

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Marilou McPhedran on December 7, 2021)

Global Affairs Canada (GAC)

The Government of Canada is deeply concerned about the health and safety of Peng Shuai and continues to monitor the situation closely.

Allegations of sexual assault must be thoroughly and transparently investigated. Canada condemns all forms of violence against women and girls. Gender equality is at the heart of everything we do as a Government, and Canada supports the efforts of women's rights organizations and women human rights defenders across the globe.

Canada calls upon China to comply with its human rights obligations under international law.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

WORKLOAD OF CASE MANAGERS

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Yonah Martin on December 8, 2021)

Veterans Affairs Canada

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) provides case management services to support veterans facing complex challenges, to identify needs, set goals, and create a plan to help clients achieve their highest level of independence, health and well-being.

The Minister of VAC met with the President of the Union of Veterans Affairs Employees (UVAE) on December 13, 2021; and on behalf of the minister, the deputy minister responded in writing to the President of the UVAE on January 5, 2022, on improvements to case management services.

The government committed to more than \$192 million over two years in additional funding (2020-2022). This additional funding was used to extend resources from Budget 2018, and to hire 300 temporary staff to work on the most common disability benefit applications and an additional 50 ancillary staff to provide further support. The new staff have been making disability benefit decisions since January 2021.

On February 23, 2022, the government announced funding of \$139.6 million to extend the temporary staff until March 31, 2024, as part of action to reduce processing times

for disability benefit applications at VAC. These trained staff will continue to help reduce processing times for Veterans who are applying for disability benefits.

HEALTH

OPIOID CRISIS

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Vernon White on December 8, 2021)

Health Canada

The Government of Canada is committed to expanding access to, evaluating, and supporting the programs that provide pharmaceutical grade substances as a safer supply to the contaminated drug supply. This includes investments of over \$60 million in direct financial support for 17 projects delivering safer supply services in British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick, as well as a national community of practice. These innovative projects, funded through Health Canada's Substance Use and Addictions Program, will help people at risk of overdose access safer alternatives to the toxic illegal drug supply in order to save lives.

The federal government has also taken other steps towards reducing barriers to safer supply including:

- Making prescription opioids used in the treatment of severe opioid use disorder more easily accessible to health care practitioners;
- Reducing regulatory barriers so that medications used for the purposes of safer supply can be more easily transported where needed to provide access to much needed medications;
- Funding national clinical guidelines for injectable opioid agonist treatment in 2019; and
- Publishing a toolkit for health care providers with guidance on providing prescription medications as an alternative to the highly toxic street drug supply, for those most at risk of overdose.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

FISH HARVESTER BENEFIT AND GRANT PROGRAM

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Rose-May Poirier on December 8, 2021)

The Fish Harvester Benefit and Grant (FHBG) Program supports self-employed harvesters and self-employed crew affected by COVID-19. To expedite first payments, applicants attested to their status, income, and estimated COVID-related losses when filing their phase-one applications. That information was subsequently compared to applicants' Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) information when it was available near the launch of phase two.

The program issued overpayment letters to phase-one applicants that had attested to being self-employed, but whose tax information indicated they were wage-earning employees, and therefore ineligible for the monies they had received. Recipients of those overpayment letters were given until October 15, 2021 to appeal.

It has always been explicit that wage-earning employees are not eligible for the Program.

For appellants who felt that their CRA data did not reflect their employment status, the program worked with CRA to implement a process to enable appellants to work with employers, CRA, and the program to seek an adjustment to their tax information while simultaneously advancing their FHBG file.

In addition, the program is waiving interest payments on overpayment amounts owing until January 1, 2023.

There are no plans at present to expand the scope of the Fish Harvester Benefit and Grant Program to include wage-earning employees.

PUBLIC SAFETY

CANADA BORDER SERVICES AGENCY— PANDEMIC RELATED TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Leo Housakos on December 8, 2021)

Public Health Agency of Canada

The use of ArriveCan has been mandatory for air travellers since November 2020, and for land travellers since February 2021.

To be considered fully vaccinated, travellers entering Canada are required to:

1. Follow pre-entry testing and entry requirements.
2. Declare their vaccination status.
3. Submit information via the ArriveCan application or website.

Travellers who do not meet these requirements must quarantine for a full 14 days and undergo two COVID-19 tests, one on the day they arrive in Canada and one on day 8.

No changes have been made to requirements related to ArriveCan. However, there are exemptions in place from the use of ArriveCan for persons with a disability, service disruptions, inadequate infrastructure, and natural disasters. To accommodate persons who do not have access to, or are not comfortable using technology, information can be submitted in ArriveCan by someone on their behalf, up to 72 hours before entering Canada.

HEALTH

TESTING FOR COVID-19

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Julie Miville-Dechéne on December 9, 2021)

Public Health Agency of Canada

When the World Health Organization classified Omicron, as a variant of concern on November 26, 2021, there was little known about its transmissibility, potential severity of disease or vaccine effectiveness. Given the rapid spread of Omicron in South Africa and evidence of spread in some neighbouring countries, as well as high border testing rates for some of these countries, the Government of Canada put forward a cautious approach to help slow the spread of the variant.

Temporary border measures were implemented for travellers who had been in countries where there was an outbreak, or a risk of an outbreak, of the Omicron variant, including the requirement for pre-entry molecular testing in a third country. This requirement was introduced so that the risk of a traveller being exposed to the variant between the time of testing and boarding the plane was reduced. Now that the variant has been detected in many countries, as of December 19, 2021, these country-specific measures are no longer in force. Canada's border measures will continue to evolve as new science and evidence becomes available.

CITIZENSHIP, IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEES

AFGHAN REFUGEES

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Marilou McPhedran on December 9, 2021)

Insofar as Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) is concerned:

IRCC's humanitarian commitment includes a focus on priority vulnerable groups, including women leaders, human rights advocates, persecuted religious minorities, LGBTI individuals, and journalists. Individuals in these groups are targeted by the Taliban and are at high risk of persecution, including torture and death. These individuals experience multiple and intersecting identity factors relevant to Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+).

In respect to the resettlement of these vulnerable groups, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada will continue working with existing and new partners to identify and refer these at-risk individuals, including the UNHCR, and Front Line Defenders/Protectdefenders.eu. Such organizations collectively focus on human rights defenders, including journalists, LGBTI defenders, and women leaders who are human rights defenders.

GBA + is built into all of the work that IRCC does, including the current initiative in respect to resettling vulnerable Afghans.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

UKRAINE INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES FLIGHT PS752 TRAGEDY

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Yonah Martin on December 9, 2021)

Global Affairs Canada (GAC)

Canada and its Coordination Group partners are focused on holding Iran accountable in accordance with international law. With respect to the International Court of Justice, Canada and the Coordination Group's position is that Iran committed violations of international law in the downing of Flight PS752 and, as a result, has an international legal obligation to make full reparations to the affected states. There are specific rules of international law that parties must follow in the context of available dispute settlement mechanisms. After many good faith attempts to negotiate with Iran, the Coordination Group determined on January 6, 2022, that further attempts to negotiate on the matter of reparations with Iran at this time are futile. The Coordination Group is now focused on subsequent actions to take to resolve this matter in accordance with international law.

INDIGENOUS SERVICES

ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Renée Dupuis on December 14, 2021)

The Government of Canada is committed to reliable access to safe drinking water in First Nations communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has extended completion timelines of infrastructure projects, including projects aimed at addressing long-term drinking water advisories. Other challenges common to infrastructure projects have also impacted timelines.

The settlement hearing for the Safe Drinking Water Class Actions has concluded and on December 22, 2021, the courts approved an agreement to settle. The appeals period of approximately 60 days has commenced. The number of First Nations included in the settlement will be determined through the claims process.

The class action settlement includes:

- \$1.5 billion in compensation for individuals;
- \$400 million for Economic and Cultural Restoration Fund;
- renewed commitment towards long-term drinking water advisories;
- First Nations Advisory Committee;
- support for First Nations safe drinking water by-laws and governance initiatives;
- \$6 billion for reliable access to safe drinking water on reserve; and
- planned modernization of legislation.

Any unallocated compensation for individuals will be distributed for the benefit of class members. The \$6 billion is for all First Nations across Canada.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

CANADA-BULGARIA RELATIONS

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Yonah Martin on December 15, 2021)

Global Affairs Canada (GAC)

Canada and Bulgaria enjoy excellent bilateral relations, including as allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization committed to preserving peace and security in Europe, and as members of the Organization for Security and

Co-operation in Europe and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie. Defence cooperation includes Royal Canadian Navy ship visits to Varna, on Bulgaria's Black Sea coast, as well as joint land and air force exercises.

Canada's Ambassador to Bulgaria, Annick Goulet, resides in Bucharest, Romania. Ambassador Annick Goulet is active in working with Bulgarian partners, including during her visit to Sofia in January 2022 to attend the inauguration of Bulgarian President Rumen Radev. Engagement with Bulgaria, and consular services for Canadians, are supported by our Honorary Consul in Sofia.

HEALTH

COVID-19 VACCINE ROLLOUT

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Jane Cordy on December 15, 2021)

Public Health Agency of Canada

The Government of Canada has successfully pursued a strategy to engage and encourage other countries and international partners to recognize Canadians who have received mixed vaccine schedules as fully vaccinated.

Initial engagement focused on national health and scientific decision-making authorities with whom we have close, trusted relationships, including with the United States, United Kingdom, and the European Union.

Following these engagement efforts, the Government of Canada has confirmed that at least 40 countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Japan and Australia, as well as most popular sun destinations, consider individuals who have received mixed doses as fully vaccinated. This list is not exhaustive, and the Government of Canada continues to monitor and engage, as needed.

The Government of Canada has also engaged with the World Health Organization (WHO), given its global influence. On December 16, 2021, the WHO released interim recommendations for heterologous COVID-19 vaccine schedules. The WHO recommends a flexible approach to mixed vaccine schedules and considers two mixed doses of any Emergency Use Listing (EUL) COVID-19 vaccine as a complete primary series. The Government of Canada has also successfully added supportive commitments to recognizing mixed-dose recipients in recent G7 and G20 Health Declarations.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

AFGHAN REFUGEES

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Salma Ataullahjan on February 8, 2022)

Insofar as Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) is concerned:

IRCC has been made aware of complex cases of Afghan citizens currently in Ukraine, seeking resettlement to Canada. IRCC streamlined the application process for Afghan applicants, and processed these cases as quickly as possible. Depending on an individual's circumstances, however, every step of the process can bring unique challenges.

We cannot comment on specific cases, but can say that a full admissibility assessment – including security screening – must be completed before a decision can be reached on any application. Some cases are complex, thus the screening aspect of the process can take additional time to ensure rigorous assessment.

Canada is working to bring as many vulnerable Afghans as possible, as quickly as possible, to safety in Canada.

IMMIGRATION PROCESSING BACKLOG

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Tony Loffreda on February 10, 2022)

Insofar as Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) is concerned:

IRCC is identifying key positions to be filled and to develop the necessary capacities to recruit, onboard, and train these new hires.

Ongoing pandemic-related challenges, including limitations in the labour market and office equipment supply chain issues, have required comprehensive efforts to ensure that the Department can hire as quickly as possible and also ensure that new staff have the necessary support in place once they are hired.

We are currently finalizing plans for hiring additional staff in total using this additional funding throughout fiscal year 2022-23.

Each year, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) conducts stakeholder consultations to inform the development of the Immigration Levels Plan. Stakeholder consultations typically include: a national online consultation survey, public opinion research, and direct engagements with the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship or the Parliamentary Secretary.

This engagement includes outreach to a wide range of organizations, including from non-governmental organizations, settlement/resettlement organizations, educational institutions, economic development organizations, First Nations, Métis and Inuit serving and/or representing organizations to industry/sector councils, regional or municipal government and academia.

Separately, IRCC also undertakes extensive annual engagement with provincial and territorial representatives on levels planning, as required by the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

RESOLUTION ON MYANMAR

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Marilou McPhedran on February 10, 2022)

Global Affairs Canada (GAC)

Canada is concerned by the escalating violence against civilians in Myanmar and protracted Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh, and has unequivocally condemned the military coup in Myanmar, including through high-level statements and multilateral fora including the UN General Assembly.

Canada announced its intention to intervene with the Netherlands in support of The Gambia's case of Genocide against Myanmar at the International Court of Justice. These efforts on accountability also include repeated calls for the UNSC to refer the situation to the International Criminal Court (ICC), support for the ICC's investigation into the forced deportation of the Rohingya people and support for human rights monitoring, evidence collection, and holding perpetrators accountable.

Canada has imposed four rounds of targeted sanctions since the coup and is working with partners to stem the international flow of arms to Myanmar. The 2nd phase of Canada's Strategy to Respond to the Rohingya Crisis dedicated \$288.3 million (2021-2024), for aligned programming in Myanmar and Bangladesh.

Canada will continue to call for an end to violence, release of those arbitrarily detained, restoration of democratic rule, and unhindered humanitarian access in Myanmar. Canada stands with the people of Myanmar, who continue to fight courageously for democracy.

PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY

DIGITAL PRIVACY

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Michael L. MacDonald on February 10, 2022)

Public Health Agency of Canada

The Public Health Agency of Canada's (PHAC) internal privacy assessment on this initiative determined that the mobility data in question did not contain personal information. PHAC did brief the Office of the Privacy Commissioner (OPC) in April 2020 to provide assurances that it had undertaken a privacy analysis, which determined

the data was not personal information. PHAC routinely kept the OPC apprised of various files on a biweekly basis, including mobility data.

The commissioner's statement appears to refer to interactions between his office and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada — Communications Research Centre in April 2020.

Pursuant to the related motion adopted in the House of Commons on Feb 8, 2022, PHAC determined that it was not possible to suspend the mobility data Request for Proposal (RFP). It would have had to be either cancelled, and then reissued, or closed. As such, the RFP closed on February 18, 2022. PHAC will take into account the study findings of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics in its decision on whether it is in the public interest to award the contract.

CONTENTS

Wednesday, March 23, 2022

	PAGE		PAGE	
SENATORS' STATEMENTS		Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration		
The Late Alexa McDonough, O.C., O.N.S.		Business of the Committee		
Hon. Wanda Elaine Thomas Bernard	890	Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson	895	
National Social Work Month		Hon. Sabi Marwah	895	
Hon. Nancy J. Hartling	890	Finance		
Hate Crime in Canada		Economic and Fiscal Update 2021		
Hon. Victor Oh	891	Hon. Elizabeth Marshall	896	
S.H.A.R.E. Agriculture Foundation		Hon. Marc Gold	896	
Hon. Robert Black	891	Defence Budget		
Action Week against Racism and for Equal Opportunities		Hon. Claude Carignan	896	
Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie	891	Hon. Marc Gold	896	
The Honourable Salma Ataullahjan		Special Joint Committee on the Declaration of Emergency		
Hon. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia	892	Business of the Committee		
<hr/>		Hon. Scott Tannas		896
ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS		Hon. Gwen Boniface		896
Radiocommunication Act (Bill S-242)		Foreign Affairs		
Bill to Amend—First Reading		North Atlantic Treaty Organization		
Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson	892	Hon. Leo Housakos	897	
<hr/>		Hon. Marc Gold	897	
QUESTION PERIOD		Delayed Answers to Oral Questions		897
Foreign Affairs		<hr/>		
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights		ORDERS OF THE DAY		
Hon. Leo Housakos	892	Public Sector Integrity Commissioner		
Hon. Marc Gold	893	Motion to Reappoint Incumbent Adopted		
Environment and Climate Change		Hon. Marc Gold		897
Bay du Nord Development Project		APPENDIX		
Hon. David M. Wells	893	DELAYED ANSWERS TO ORAL QUESTIONS		
Hon. Marc Gold	893	Health		
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship		Proof of Vaccination—International Travel		898
Raif Badawi		Citizenship, Immigration and Refugees		
Hon. Julie Miville-Dechéne	893	Immigration Processing Backlog		898
Hon. Marc Gold	894	Public Safety		
Natural Resources		COVID-19 Pandemic—Travel Restrictions.		898
Trans Mountain Pipeline		Health		
Hon. Rosa Galvez	894	COVID-19 Pandemic Response Plan		899
Hon. Marc Gold	894	Foreign Affairs		
Innovation, Science and Economic Development		Canada-China Relations		899
Access to High-Speed Broadband Networks		Veterans Affairs		
Hon. Marty Klyne	894	Workload of Case Managers		899
Hon. Marc Gold	894	Health		
		Opioid Crisis		900
		Fisheries and Oceans		
		Fish Harvester Benefit and Grant Program		900

CONTENTS

Wednesday, March 23, 2022

	PAGE		PAGE
Public Safety		Foreign Affairs	
Canada Border Services Agency—Pandemic Related Travel Restrictions	900	Canada-Bulgaria Relations	902
Health		Health	
Testing for COVID-19	901	COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout	902
Citizenship, Immigration and Refugees		Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship	
Afghan Refugees	901	Afghan Refugees	903
Foreign Affairs		Immigration Processing Backlog	903
Ukraine International Airlines Flight PS752 Tragedy	901	Foreign Affairs	
Indigenous Services		Resolution on Myanmar	903
Access to Safe Drinking Water.	902	Public Health Agency	
		Digital Privacy	904