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The Honourable GEORGE J. FUREY,
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Wednesday, April 6, 2022

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

Prayers.

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I understand that Senators' Statements today will address the lives of two former parliamentarians. Our former colleague the Honourable Leonard Gustafson passed away on March 18, 2022. A few days later, on March 26, a former member of the House of Commons and minister of the Canadian government the Honourable Claudette Bradshaw also passed away.

I would ask colleagues to rise for a moment of silence in memory of those late parliamentarians before we proceed to Senators' Statements.

(Honourable senators then stood in silent tribute.)

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

THE LATE HONOURABLE LEONARD J. GUSTAFSON, P.C.

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, today I wish to pay tribute to the Honourable Leonard Gustafson.

Senator Gustafson's outstanding career in public life is one that Canadians and, more specifically, Saskatchewanians recognize with gratitude. The Honourable Leonard Gustafson served four mandates as a member of Parliament for Assiniboia, a riding that became Souris—Moose Mountain, Saskatchewan, from 1984 to 1991. During this time, he was entrusted with the role of parliamentary secretary to former prime minister Brian Mulroney, who later appointed our former colleague to the Senate in 1993 until his retirement on November 10, 2008.

While in this chamber, Senator Gustafson was a member of several Senate committees. In particular, he served with distinction on the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry. Although our tenure in the Senate did not coincide, his passion and determination to champion and advocate for Canadian farmers generates my respect, admiration and appreciation.

He never missed an occasion to represent the working class. As a businessman and farmer himself, he knew exactly the value and worth of hard-working people and understood the challenges they face better than almost anyone else. With nearly 30 years of service to our great country, he contributed to making Canada better without a doubt, and yet he remained humble and down-to-earth.

Colleagues, I doubt that anyone in this chamber could say:

My grandfather came to Canada in 1909 and began farming; my father farmed; I farmed; and I have ridden tractor with my grandson.

Senator Gustafson said those words in his maiden speech, which was in the middle of a labour dispute that caused serious repercussions and had grain products backed up due to the West Coast port operations strikes of 1994.

He was a man well ahead of his time. He understood the importance of food security — an issue that is still very current today. He would often say that Canada needs to move its agricultural products into the international marketplace. He was proud of his rural roots and understood Canada's great capacity to produce and feed not only ourselves but the world. He spoke with authority, hands-on knowledge and integrity on behalf of farmers.

He could not only identify the challenges they faced — indeed, the challenges our country faced — but also work with tenacity in finding solutions for the betterment of us all. He was a man with strong Christian values who showed kindness with a gentle smile and discreetly gave time and money to many charities near and dear to him, such as Feed the Hungry.

His dedication to Canada was remarkable. As a matter of fact, he was recognized for it by the Right Honourable Stephen Harper, who appointed him to the Privy Council in 2009.

On behalf of the official opposition in the Senate, I wish to express my deepest sympathies to his wife, Alice, and to all of his family members. Thank you for sharing your husband, your father and grandfather with all of Canada.

May God bless you. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: Honourable senators, I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words about our dearly departed colleague and friend Senator Gustafson, who was a farmer, a businessman and a Tory — and a proud one at that.

First elected to the other place in 1979, he went on to be re-elected three times, until his appointment to the Senate in 1993. His service to this country was also recognized by his appointment to the Privy Council in 2009, an honour bestowed upon the few and the worthy.

When you are appointed to the Senate, there is a steep learning curve, as many of you know. Back then, there were two caucuses, and Len and I were on opposite sides of the chamber.

It was in committee, though, where those divisions were less pronounced. Len and I still played for different teams, but I saw him as a coach, with me as the rookie, especially on the Agriculture Committee. I knew nothing about agriculture. For a city boy from North End Halifax to serve on the Agriculture

Committee, it was an even steeper learning curve than for most. I do not think that Senator Gustafson knew then just how much I was paying attention to him, the only farmer on the committee at the time.

• (1410)

I and many others learned a lot from Len, and we are all the better for it. He was a great teacher and a steadfast mentor. His passion for farming, his home province of Saskatchewan and the country were on display every day.

Honourable senators, my condolences go to his spouse of 70 years, Alice, their children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and all his family and friends. May he rest in peace.

Hon. Denise Batters: Honourable senators, I rise today to mark the passing of Senator Len Gustafson, a true prairie son of southeastern Saskatchewan. He was a seasoned politician who won four elections as the member of Parliament for the Assiniboia, and later Souris—Moose Mountain riding before being named to the Senate. He never became “Ottawashed.” Senator Len Gustafson was a down-to-earth and unpretentious man, a dedicated farmer who believed in kindness, loyalty and service to others.

Len Gustafson hailed from a farm in Macoun, Saskatchewan, and by the time he finished his lengthy parliamentary career, he had helped put Macoun on the map. He served as an MP from 1979 to 1993, defeating Liberal Ralph Goodale not just once in his first MP election, but twice — a man after my own heart. As a member of Parliament, he quickly proved his skill, and in 1984 he was named Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, a designation he held throughout the remainder of his time as a sitting MP.

In 1993, former prime minister Brian Mulroney named him to the Senate, where he served capably until his retirement in 2008. He was appointed to the Privy Council by former prime minister Stephen Harper in 2009 in recognition of his long record of service to Canada.

A passionate advocate for rural issues, Senator Gustafson was known especially for his work as the chair and deputy chair of the Agriculture Committee. He was always armed with the latest daily statistics on agricultural commodity prices. Often, Len would relate the topic of the committee back to his life on the farm in Macoun. It eventually became a running gag, with other members on the committee stopping to ask, “How are things in Macoun today, Len?”

Len Gustafson was devoted to his family, his community, his faith and his principles. He was the kind of parliamentarian that inspired others to want to become involved in politics. My late husband, former member of Parliament Dave Batters, was one of the young people inspired by his MP, Len Gustafson. Growing up in nearby Estevan, Dave worked on Len’s federal campaigns when Dave was a kid in high school. When Dave and I attended

political conventions together as young adults, Len Gustafson always made a point to take time out of his schedule to stop and visit with us and the other Progressive Conservative youth delegates. I remember being very impressed that Dave knew him.

Senator Len Gustafson was generous with his time, his charity to others and his commitment to the people of Saskatchewan. He never forgot where he came from, and he would not let Ottawa forget it either. His strong roots in rural Saskatchewan grounded him and motivated him to always stand up for the rights of farmers and rural Canadians.

Senator Len Gustafson had a long and distinguished parliamentary career, logging over 10,000 days in service of the public. His accomplishments are many but, above it all, he was a farmer, a man of the land with a kind heart and generous spirit, and this chamber and Canada are better for his service.

Our prayers and condolences today are with Len’s wife, Alice, his children, his 12 grandchildren and 27 great-grandchildren — his greatest legacy of all. Thank you for sharing Len Gustafson with Canada.

THE LATE HONOURABLE CLAUDETTE BRADSHAW, P.C., O.N.B.

Hon. Nancy J. Hartling: Honourable senators, today I rise to pay a special tribute to the late Honourable Claudette Bradshaw from my home in Moncton, New Brunswick. I have known Claudette for over 40 years, and she was a trailblazer and a fierce advocate for marginalized people, especially children.

Her unique personality and passion for social justice is being remembered by many at home in New Brunswick and across Canada. Tributes from prime ministers, former staff and friends have been pouring out as we grieve this huge loss. Last Friday, hundreds attended her funeral mass while others watched it by video — a tribute to how much she was loved.

[*Translation*]

Claudette grew up in Moncton in an Acadian family and began her career at the Boys & Girls Club of Moncton, where she met the love of her life, Doug Bradshaw. They were married for 54 years and raised two sons, Nicholas and Christopher. She adored her family, her community and Moncton.

[*English*]

In 1974, Claudette founded the Moncton Headstart. Beginning as a small daycare for low-income families, it grew under Claudette’s capable leadership into a family intervention centre serving families and children at risk. Claudette worked around the clock for these families. She cared deeply about people. She was selfless, and she loved giving big hugs. Her large yard sales were a trademark fundraiser for her non-profit. She had a lot of community support, as it was very hard to say no to Claudette.

[Translation]

Claudette was known throughout Canada. Our colleague, Senator Saint-Germain, who met Claudette at the organizing committee for the Francophonie Summit in 1999, had this to say about her:

Claudette was generous, easygoing and open-minded, with a great sense of humour. We must always remember to carry on her social justice work.

[English]

In 1997, she entered the political arena and ran for the federal riding of Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, my home riding. Claudette had a large support base, and she not only won the seat, but she stayed in politics for 10 years. She held several significant portfolios, including Minister responsible for Homelessness.

After she retired from politics, she continued working on issues such as mental health and homelessness, including a special project, At Home/Chez Soi. Often I would see Claudette and Doug at events in Moncton. She was always keen to discuss issues of homelessness, poverty and mental health. Claudette and Doug were a great team.

Her son, Nick, said:

Mom loved Moncton and being home in her community. She really took our lives through lots of ups and helped us through the downs, too. She was our captain.

My heartfelt sympathy to Doug, Nick, Chris and her family for their great loss, but also to her community at home for their loss of such a remarkable, generous and faithful woman. Claudette gave so much to so many, and we will remember her legacy. I sincerely believe that we must continue social justice work in her memory.

Thank you.

[Translation]

Hon. René Cormier: Colleagues, ever since Claudette Bradshaw's death, heartfelt testimonials have poured in for this Canadian and Acadian politician.

People spoke of her tireless dedication to serving the most vulnerable, her remarkable work as a member of Parliament and minister and, especially, her humanism and her deep love of people and of life.

Serge Comeau put it so well when he wrote in *Acadie Nouvelle* that Claudette Bradshaw put the lie to the idea that leadership is about wielding power and strength. She was noble and compassionate. She had a big heart, she put her heart into everything she did, she wore her heart on her sleeve, she had a heart of gold.

Born Claudette Arsenault, she was known simply as "Claudette" in Acadia, much like people know instantly whom we are talking about when we say "Malala" or "Teresa." The first time I met her was when she was a minister. Sitting face-to-face

in her big ministerial office on the Hill, we talked about art, culture, the French language and Acadia. Our conversation was very formal.

Somewhat desperate, I talked to her about struggling artists, many of whom live below the poverty line. Right in the middle of our conversation, Claudette interrupted me, stood up, opened her arms wide and said, "C'mere, you!" just as we would back home. She hugged me so hard that I almost couldn't breathe.

That hug had a transformative effect on me, because Claudette put more than simple affection into it. It was full of compassion, solidarity, support and so much love. With a simple gesture that day, she reassured me, encouraged me, motivated me and showed that she valued me. That was Claudette. By hugging people, she made them feel that they were valued and their actions mattered, regardless of their origins, social status, gender or identity.

Colleagues, political life can sometimes change those who choose this path. In the parliamentary arena, we often put up walls and sometimes take refuge in our convictions, but not Claudette Bradshaw. Her generosity knew no bounds, and she remained herself, authentic and human. She always presented her ideas and convictions with respect, determination and a lot of love.

The last time I saw Claudette, we danced a two-step together on stage at the Capitol Theatre in Moncton. It was during Les Éloizes, a gala event to recognize the contributions that artists make to our society. I was the host of the gala, and she was a special guest. I spoke with her again that evening about her hug, the one that had given me the courage to fight for artists and for Acadia. She simply smiled and opened her arms to me again, with a familiar "C'mere, you!"

Claudette was a woman of deep faith, with immense admiration for Mother Marie-Léonie. I am sure that Claudette is dancing somewhere today in that paradise she believed in. She must be hugging the entire universe with those legendary hugs of hers.

Colleagues, in today's world, where there is so much suffering and helplessness, if we think of all the human beings on this planet who are suffering from senseless wars, my wish for them is that they meet someone like Claudette. May they all find loving, comforting and reassuring arms to snuggle up in, like I did in Claudette Arsenault Bradshaw's. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

• (1420)

Hon. Pierrette Ringuette: Honourable senators, we were saddened to learn of the passing of the Honourable Claudette Bradshaw on Saturday, March 26.

To me, Claudette was the most humane and modest woman to hold a position in the federal cabinet for New Brunswick.

Born in Moncton, she always worked to help children, including by founding the Headstart organization and supporting the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization.

[Senator Hartling]

Although she was specifically interested in helping children, Claudette was also devoted to the less fortunate, the homeless, the illiterate.

She was a minister and an MP for Moncton, and she did extraordinary work for the economic development of Moncton, to get that city a modern airport befitting a fast-growing region.

In short, Claudette was comfortable helping both the less fortunate and entrepreneurs, knowing full well that the economic well-being of Moncton would have positive spinoffs for the less fortunate in the region.

Those who had the good fortune of having Claudette in their life, close by or occasionally, were the recipients of unconditional love and friendship and, as many of you have pointed out, a big hug to prove it.

Yes, honourable senators, we are sad about her passing, but grateful to have known this extraordinary woman. In 2022, 72 is too young for succumbing to an illness, but what Claudette gave and accomplished is simply phenomenal to those around her.

I extend my deepest condolences to her husband, Doug, and her sons, Christopher and Nicholas, and I thank them for supporting her in her efforts to build a better society. I also thank them for sharing this extraordinary woman with us all. We will miss you so much, dear Claudette, but know that we are giving you a hug to last for all time.

Rest in peace.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

FIGHTING AGAINST FORCED LABOUR AND CHILD LABOUR IN SUPPLY CHAINS BILL

FIRST REPORT OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan, Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, presented the following report:

Wednesday, April 6, 2022

The Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights has the honour to present its

FIRST REPORT

Your committee, to which was referred 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, has, in obedience to the order of reference of December 14, 2021, examined the said bill and now reports the same with the following amendments:

1. *Clause 6, page 4:* Add the following after line 21:

“(d.1) any measures taken to remediate the loss of income to the most vulnerable families that results from any measure taken to eliminate the use of forced labour or child labour in its activities and supply chains;”.

2. *Clause 11, pages 6 and 7:*

(a) On page 6, add the following after line 25:

“(d.1) any measures taken to remediate the loss of income to the most vulnerable families that results from any measure taken to eliminate the use of forced labour or child labour in its activities and supply chains;”;

(b) on page 7, replace line 12 with the following:

“(b) the signature of one or more members of”.

Respectfully submitted,

SALMA ATAULLAHJAN

Chair

(*For text of observations, see today's Journals of the Senate, p. 446.*)

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this report be taken into consideration?

(On motion of Senator Ataullahjan, report placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting of the Senate.)

[*Translation*]

RULES, PROCEDURES AND THE RIGHTS OF PARLIAMENT

THIRD REPORT OF COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Diane Bellemare: Honourable senators, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report (interim) of the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament, entitled *Amendments to the Rules — Committee mandates*.

(*For text of report, see today's Journals of the Senate, p. 446-9.*)

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this report be taken into consideration?

(On motion of Senator Bellemare, report placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting of the Senate.)

[English]

ADJOURNMENT

NOTICE OF MOTION

Leave having been given to revert to Notices of Motions:

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Acting 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, April 26, 2022, at 2 p.m.

QUESTION PERIOD

FINANCE

CANADA'S INFLATION RATE

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question today is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Leader, Canada's inflation rate is currently at a 30-year high and shows no sign of climbing down on its own. This means that it is very likely that the Bank of Canada will be raising rates again, putting increased pressure on Canadians who are trying to pay off their mortgages.

On Tuesday, the Parliamentary Budget Officer testified before our National Finance Committee and said the following:

. . . it's clear that the fiscal policy that tends to be expansionary, such as deficit financing, makes the job of the Bank of Canada more difficult when the economy is already running close to or at full capacity, employment growth is very strong and the unemployment rate is low. So running deficits that are significant makes the job of the Bank of Canada in taming inflation much more difficult.

Leader, does this NDP-Liberal government realize that its uncontrolled spending is fuelling inflation, or do you believe that the Parliamentary Budget Officer is misleading senators?

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

Of course I do not believe that the Parliamentary Budget Officer is misleading senators. He is expressing his opinion based on his experience and in recognition of the challenge, which we all recognize, of coming through the pandemic and responding to the calls of industry, businesses, individuals, working Canadians and Canadians who are unable to find work for assistance through these difficult times, coupled, happily, with a strong economy — as you pointed out properly, colleague — and low unemployment.

• (1430)

It is an enormous challenge to balance all the competing needs, desires, aspirations and responsibilities of government. The Government of Canada, which will be presenting its budget tomorrow, believes that it is firmly on track to provide what Canadians and our economy need to move forward and to build a better future for all Canadians.

Senator Plett: We are all anticipating this NDP budget that we're going to receive tomorrow.

According to the Canadian Real Estate Association, the average price of a home in Winnipeg has gone up almost 30% in three years. According to Statistics Canada, the cost of household appliances has gone up over the last year. The cost of a refrigerator increased by more than 15%; ovens, dishwashers, and laundry appliances all went up more than 9%. And, of course, the cost to feed a family went through the roof last month, up over 7%, the largest yearly increase since 2009.

Leader, these are not just statistics. These are real costs borne by real Canadian families. The PBO says your government's uncontrolled spending is going to make life harder for him. Is this NDP-Liberal government listening to the Parliamentary Budget Officer?

Senator Gold: Yes, it is. Thank you.

CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Hon. Salma Atallahjan: Honourable senators, my question is for the government leader in the Senate. According to the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board, in March of 2021 the average selling price of a home in the Greater Toronto Area was just under \$1.1 million. Last month, in March of 2022, the average price was \$1.29 million, an increase of over 18% in just a year. Our youth are giving up on their dream of owning their own homes. I think of my own daughter, who was distraught because she couldn't find anything for \$600,000, not even a cubbyhole in Toronto.

The program put forward by the Trudeau government to help them has failed. In its recent pre-budget submission, Mortgage Professionals Canada had this to say about the First-Time Home Buyer Incentive program:

The . . . FTHBI doesn't assist anyone to qualify to purchase a home who would not have already otherwise qualified.

Leader, your government changed the criteria for this program, yet it made no difference. Will you scrap it and bring forward a program that actually helps Canadians?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question and for underlining the very challenging problem — there is no better word for it — for the younger generation seeking the same advantages we had when we were at that stage of life.

The government has put forward programs to help and will continue to work closely with provincial, territorial and municipal governments to do what it can within its jurisdiction to assist young people to be able to find and acquire their homes.

Senator Ataullahjan: Leader, last month it was reported that just 66 homebuyers in Toronto have qualified under the First-Time Home Buyer Incentive program since it was created in 2019. This is despite the fact that the Trudeau government made changes in the 2020 Fall Economic Statement that it claimed would increase eligibility for Toronto homebuyers.

Leader, when this program was created, the Trudeau government said it would help up to 100,000 Canadians become homeowners, but as of last November, fewer than 14,000 have been helped. Has your government done an analysis or review of the program to determine why it has been such a failure?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question. I'm not sure that the 14,000 who were assisted would characterize it as a failure, but there is no question that the challenges facing first-time homeowners and, more broadly, Canadians if they own a home and wish to change homes are real and pressing and have been for some time. The Government of Canada evaluates the efficacy of its programs and makes changes where it is appropriate and will continue to do so.

FINANCE

BUDGET 2022

Hon. Tony Loffreda: Honourable senators, my question is for the Government Representative in the Senate.

Senator Gold, I would like to address Canada's efforts to boost productivity. Like many Canadians, particularly from the business community, I am eagerly awaiting tomorrow's budget to see what concrete measures the government will take to reduce Canada's productivity gap with our major trading partner, the United States. In last year's budget, the government did address the issues of increasing productivity and connecting people and businesses and unleashing innovation. It said:

While no single initiative in this budget accomplishes the government's mission, the potential payoff from acting now in a broad range of policy areas is substantial, as measures tend to reinforce themselves over time and build momentum for further action to boost Canada's growth trajectory.

What exactly is the government's mission in terms of boosting its productivity growth? Is there an actual plan with specific priorities and targets?

We need a clear and concise strategy with industry buy-in, but I feel we may not have that right now. This must be a priority for the government to ensure Canada's economic prosperity.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you, senator, for the question. The government knows very well that boosting Canada's productivity growth is an essential step toward ensuring economic prosperity.

Almost two years ago, the government put in place an economic response plan with unprecedented measures to meet the challenges to Canadians and to our economy that arose from the pandemic. As we emerge from the pandemic, the government believes that our national focus must be on economic growth and on making life more affordable for Canadians. I have been advised that these priorities will form the foundation of Budget 2022. The government looks forward to tabling Budget 2022 on April 7 and presenting its plan, moving forward, to all Canadians.

Senator Loffreda: Thank you for the answer, Senator Gold, but I think the links with the business community have to be stronger. I want to pursue this idea further.

Canadians are expecting major announcements in tomorrow's budget that will necessitate significant public funds. I won't comment on these big-ticket items, but I do want to stress how important it is for the government to generate wealth which it can then use to reduce the deficit and cover the cost of its spending priorities. If the government wants to generate wealth and grow the economy, it needs to pivot its approach and make economic expansion and productivity top priorities. To do that, we need a strategy. We need to incentivize businesses to invest in new technology, innovation and, above all, to invest in its people.

Since the Liberals came to power in 2015, what specific measures have been implemented to attract investment and reduce Canada's productivity gap?

You made mention of that in your first answer, but how are these results being assessed? I've always said that what you measure improves. Do we have an assessment of these results? Where are we at? We need to know if policies are achieving their intended results and recalibrate if these intended results are not being met.

Senator Gold: Senator, thank you for your question. The government has delivered unprecedented support to help keep Canadian families and Canadian businesses solvent throughout the pandemic. It continues to implement a responsible fiscal plan to support the Canadian economy.

Last week, the government announced investments exceeding \$7.5 million for nine initiatives in support of businesses in Parry Sound and the Muskoka region in Ontario. These projects are designed to create new jobs, enhance productivity and help businesses grow.

I might also add that the Economic and Fiscal Update shows that the size of the Canadian economy last year would be \$2.48 trillion, almost exactly what was predicted in Budget 2018, and this was prior to grappling with the global pandemic.

With respect to detailed productivity measures and the monitoring efforts, I will seek an answer from the government and report back to the chamber.

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKER PROGRAM

Hon. Ratna Omidvar: Honourable senators, my question is for the Government Representative in the Senate.

Senator Gold, yesterday or the day before, employers received a magnificent gift with the very rapid expansion of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. Employers experiencing talent shortages in a number of sectors, such as agriculture, will be able to hire more temporary foreign workers more easily and for longer periods of time. These changes come into effect immediately or at the end of April. However, what is notably absent is the accompanying acceleration of protections for workers. Despite ample evidence of problems in the last two years, the government is at this point choosing to consult more. When will the expansion of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program include more rights and protections for workers? Why the delay?

• (1440)

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. It is an important one. As we all know, temporary foreign workers have played a very important role in ensuring our food security and the stability of it, and they deserve to be safe. As you pointed out, there were far too many examples in the last few years of employers falling short of their responsibilities. That's why I am advised that the government is ensuring that employers are prepared to safely welcome workers through working with the provinces; ensuring that employers meet program obligations to strengthen inspections; improving the temporary foreign workers tip line to provide services in multiple languages; providing direct assistance to workers through migrant worker organizations and responding to quickly to emerging issues through coordination with its partners.

With all of that said, the government knows there is still much more work to do, and that's why the government is committing to strengthening its integrity measures further to ensure that temporary foreign workers work in a safe and decent environment.

Senator Omidvar: Thank you, Senator Gold, for that update. It is encouraging.

Buried in the announcement was a tiny line that the government will consider providing pathways to permanency for temporary foreign workers, or as I like to call them, essential workers. These are essential workers. I will remind us all that this chamber unanimously passed a motion last year, I think, to provide pathways to permanency for these essential workers. But the government is moving slowly on this promise. Will those in so-called low-skilled sectors have an easier path to permanency soon, or should Canadians simply accept that this program is class-based?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question. I think what Canadians should accept — and I hope understand, as I will try to elaborate in my answer — is that Canada is working on many fronts to address this important issue. Indeed, the government has

chosen to focus its efforts on ensuring that our immigration plans support our economic growth in this post-pandemic era and our economic resurgence. To ensure Canada has the workers it needs to fill crucial labour market gaps, the government's 2022-2024 Immigration Levels Plan aims to continue welcoming immigrants at an historic rate, including 431,645 permanent residents in 2022.

Honourable senators, last year, the government launched three new pathways for international graduates, workers in health care and workers in other essential sectors. The government has also created a new pathway to permanent residency for asylum claimants working in health care during the pandemic. It also introduced the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot and Agri-Food Pilot, and the government is working with provinces, territories, business groups and municipalities to develop a new municipal nominee program.

[Translation]

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

INDEPENDENT ADVISORY BOARD FOR SENATE APPOINTMENTS

Hon. Diane Bellemare: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate.

Senator Gold, there are currently 15 vacant seats in the Senate, which represents 14% of all seats. There are four vacancies for Ontario, five for the Western provinces and six for the Atlantic provinces. More and more vacancies keep popping up. By May we will be up to 16 vacancies.

We all know that Canadians may apply through an open application process. The website currently indicates that there were some provincial and territorial members appointed to the Advisory Board recently, but there are still positions open.

What stage are we at with the appointment of members to the Advisory Board and, most importantly, appointments to the Senate? Is the process ongoing?

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

I will begin by noting that on March 23, the Independent Advisory Board for Senate Appointments launched an official call for new applicants to fill Senate vacancies for British Columbia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The government makes sure that all provincial and territorial advisory boards are established efficiently and quickly to ensure that all applicants are assessed and that all provinces and regions are properly represented in this place.

As you know it is an arm's-length process. The Government Representative does not have much say in the process. That said, I am hopeful that the process will move along efficiently and that several appointments will soon be announced. I have no further information to give you.

Senator Bellemare: Senator Gold, can you tell us how new senators will be received and what training they will be given? Will the various groups and caucuses be invited to give presentations to new senators and to help develop an onboarding program?

Senator Gold: Thank you for the question. As you know, colleagues, the Senate administration already provides orientation and administrative support for each new senator. That includes setting up a temporary office to welcome them.

My understanding is that recently each group and caucus has been taking care of their members' orientation as soon as they join a group or caucus. That being said, I would be very happy to work with you, with the leaders of the Senate, to see if there are ways that we could change or improve our approach to orientation for new senators to make it more useful for both the Senate and those who are joining us and to help new senators more easily transition into their role. Thank you.

[English]

LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

BUSINESS OF THE COMMITTEE

Hon. Larry W. Campbell: Honourable senators, it being Wednesday, I will be directing my question to the chair of the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee. Chair, would you take a question?

• (1450)

Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer: Yes, I would.

Senator Campbell: My question is pretty simple, but probably complex once you start drilling into it. Could you tell the chamber how hybrid sittings have affected your committee? Your committee is one of the busiest in the Senate, so I would like you to give us an idea of how things are working under the hybrid system.

Senator Jaffer: Thank you, Senator Campbell, for your question and for letting me know beforehand that you were going to ask me this question.

As you know, our committee meets once a week unless we have government business. The Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, as you indicated, is a committee with a high volume of work. Whenever we need time, the Senate leadership enables us to find time for government business. For example, last week we needed more time, and the Senate leadership allowed us that time. That is how we are dealing with this at the Legal Committee.

Senator Campbell: Can you advise the chamber on the level of cooperation we get with government ministries and, in particular, the justice ministry?

Senator Jaffer: Thank you, Senator Campbell. Our committee follows the Marjory LeBreton rule of "no minister, no bill," and we operate under that rule generally.

Our committee, through our clerk, works as closely as we can with departments to secure ministerial appearances. We have had issues securing ministers for appearances, most recently on our study of Government Motion No. 14 regarding the Saskatchewan railway. Officials were made available to us, but not the ministers. The only reason the committee decided to continue is because we had a very short time to report back to the Senate.

We continue to push for ministerial appearances. Most importantly, I can always rely on the Government Representative, Senator Gold, and his staff. They go out of their way to help us with the attendance of ministers at committee. I can assure this chamber that we will work hard to ensure that ministers appear in committee to defend their bills.

Senator Campbell: Thank you.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

UNSPENT FUNDING

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question is for the government leader in the Senate.

As Senator Marshall noted recently, last year's public accounts were not tabled by the Trudeau government until December 14, which is much later than usual. These public accounts showed the Department of Veterans Affairs lapsed over \$634 million in spending last year. This is a tremendous amount of money to leave unspent at Veterans Affairs, especially in light of a backlog in processing disability claims that stood at over 40,000 applications at the end of June 2021.

Leader, given the long wait faced by our veterans for benefits they have earned by serving our country, why did the Trudeau government allow \$634 million to go unspent at Veterans Affairs last year?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. I will have to make inquiries about the monies to which you have referred. I will be happy to report back to the chamber as soon as I can.

Senator Martin: I have another question about lapsed spending. In November 2018, the Trudeau government supported a motion in the other place that called upon the government to automatically carry forward all annual lapsed spending at Veterans Affairs to the next fiscal year, until the department meets its own service standards.

Instead of fixing the problem, this government has made the situation worse. Over the first four years of this Liberal government, about \$477 million went unspent at Veterans Affairs Canada. The funding that lapsed at Veterans Affairs last year alone far exceeds that amount.

Leader, why did the Prime Minister not live up to his 2015 election promise to end this practice? And why hasn't your government respected the motion passed in 2018? Does the Prime Minister still believe that veterans are asking for more than his government is willing to give?

Senator Gold: With regard to your last question, I have nothing to say except that I do not believe that is the government's position. The government values veterans, as I've said on many occasions, and I will say it because it is true. The service that veterans have provided to our country is to be honoured.

I will have to make inquiries, however, with regard to the earlier part of your question — namely, the status of unused funds, the reasons for them, and what the government's plans may be to address this going forward.

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

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

Leader, there was some good news for the economy today. The occupancy rate in Montreal hotels sits at 80%. These hotels have been rented out by the Montreal Integrated University Health and Social Services Centres, or CIUSSS. The occupancy rate is 80% because these hotels are being used to house the illegal refugees crossing at Roxham Road. As of early December, there were 8,000 of these illegal refugees.

How does the government plan to put an end to this illegal immigration?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): The government is taking measures to protect our borders. The government is also assuming its responsibilities. People are treated humanely when they arrive, no matter how they get here, as is appropriate in a democratic country like ours.

[Senator Martin]

UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

Hon. Claude Carignan: How many Ukrainians have been welcomed over the past three months with such care?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Canada is working with its international partners, the provinces, municipalities and organizations here in Canada not only to invite and welcome refugees, people who are in danger because of what is happening in Ukraine, but also to give them what they need, whether they want to start a new life here in Canada or just stay here for the duration of the crisis in Ukraine. Canada will continue to do this until it is no longer necessary.

DELAYED ANSWERS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

STRENGTHENING ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FOR A HEALTHIER CANADA BILL

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Kutcher, seconded by the Honourable Senator Duncan, for the second reading of Bill S-5, An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, to make related amendments to the Food and Drugs Act and to repeal the Perfluorooctane Sulfonate Virtual Elimination Act.

Hon. Pierre J. Dalfond: Esteemed colleagues, I am pleased to speak at second reading of Bill S-5, Strengthening Environmental Protection for a Healthier Canada Act. This bill would make various amendments to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, which came into force on March 31, 2000. Those who were here at the time will remember it.

First, I congratulate the government and in particular Minister Guilbeault, who, at the invitation of the Government Representative in the Senate, chose to introduce this important bill in the Senate. I also commend Senator Kutcher for agreeing to sponsor the bill.

As I mentioned in my speech on Bill S-4, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Identification of Criminals Act and to make related amendments to other Acts with respect to the COVID-19 response and other measures, when the government chooses to begin the legislative process in the Senate, we are called on to play a slightly different role than usual, that is, to carefully review a bill that has received the support of a majority in the House of Commons.

The fact is that we can make legislative amendments in keeping with the government's intent and in cooperation with the minister responsible.

• (1500)

Bill S-5 proposes adding to the preamble of the Canada Environmental Protection Act the recognition that every individual in Canada has a right to a healthy environment.

As a Quebec senator, I am pleased to see this principle recognized. In Quebec, the right to a healthy environment is recognized by the Environment Quality Act, which makes citizens the key concern and focus of all important decisions, including the protection of the quality of the air we breathe, the water we drink and the noise around us.

[*English*]

Bill S-5 will enhance the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, or CEPA, an important statute that has already been used to ban plastic microbeads in toiletries, to prohibit asbestos and to prevent the use of dangerous chemicals in baby bottles.

As drafted, Bill S-5 also presents the Senate with an opportunity to strengthen the legislation regarding toxicity testing on animals. This is a cruel practice that we should look to minimize and hopefully eliminate in our society. Indeed, during the 2021 election, the Liberal Party pledged to phase out chemical testing on animals by 2035.

However, Bill S-5 falls a bit short on that promise. As a matter of fact, it contains only a reference in the preamble, which is proposed to be added to CEPA. It reads as follows:

Whereas the Government of Canada recognizes the . . . importance of promoting the development and timely incorporation of scientifically justified alternative methods and strategies in the testing and assessment of substances to reduce, refine or replace the use of vertebrate animals . . .

However, Bill S-5, as I mentioned, does not contain any specific provisions to achieve that goal.

On March 3, in this chamber, I asked Minister Guilbeault whether the government was open to including in the bill specific provisions regarding animal toxicity testing. I was delighted to hear this response from the minister:

As a legislator, I'm always open to making my bills better, and I would invite you or any member of the Senate to come forward with proposals to improve and strengthen the bill as it moves forward.

. . . I welcome your proposals to improve the bill . . .

Today, I'm pleased to report that four Canadian animal welfare organizations are working cooperatively to help us develop amendments to Bill S-5 regarding chemical testing on animals. They are Animal Justice, the Canadian Society for Humane Science, Humane Canada and Humane Society International/Canada.

I commend to you their policy expertise, including relevant scientific backgrounds, and suggest that representatives of these animal welfare organizations be invited to participate in the committee's study.

From these groups, I have learned that toxicity testing is the most harmful and painful use of animals in scientific research. Toxicity tests impacted approximately 90,000 animals in 2019 alone. Moreover, such tests fall into the Canadian Council on Animal Care's Category E tests. This is the most severe category of harm that animals can experience. Category E tests cause death, severe pain and extreme distress, and may include procedures such as inflicting burns or trauma on unsedated animals and forcing ingestion or topical application of deadly substances.

Personally, I was shocked to learn of the scale of this testing in Canada. I was also surprised to learn of the range of species involved in Category E testing. That includes guinea pigs, rabbits, mice and other small mammals, pigs, sheep, beavers, chickens, turkeys, hummingbirds and many species of marine and freshwater fish.

Despite all this suffering, it is noteworthy that animal testing is often a poor predictor of human outcomes, and alternatives are increasingly available. According to Dr. Elisabeth Ormandy, Executive Director of the Canadian Society for Humane Science:

Non-animal testing methods are becoming increasingly available, and are often more reliable, as well as more time- and cost-effective. . . .

The methods include in vitro testing of human cells, computer models, open source data and bioinformatic methods.

In this context, south of the border, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has committed to reducing its request for, and funding of, mammal studies by 30% by 2025 — two years from now — and to ending the use of chemical testing on mammals by 2035. In Europe, the Netherlands has committed to phasing out most types of animal testing by 2025, and the European Union has developed strong legal tools to reduce and replace the use of animals in toxicity testing.

Canada can take guidance from these examples in implementing the governing party's undertaking to phase out toxicity testing on animals by 2035. The Senate now has the opportunity to help to achieve this goal.

Changes to strengthen the bill could include, for example, the following five ideas: a statutory recognition of the principle that toxicity testing on animals should be a last resort in considering scientific alternatives; a legally mandated strategic plan to reduce and replace testing on animals for chemical safety assessments under CEPA towards 2035; legally mandated reporting tools on progress, such as required annual reporting to Parliament by the minister; consideration as to whether Bill S-5's language should cover all animals, not just vertebrate animals, and in the context of any potential harmful testing, such a change could recognize evolving scientific knowledge about creatures like the amazing octopus, as profiled in the Academy Award-winning Netflix documentary *My Octopus Teacher*; and finally, the committee could consider establishing an enforcement mechanism in the legislation with a coming into force of 2035, such as a prohibition on toxicity testing with a requirement for ministerial authorization for exceptional cases after that target date. In the U.S., the Environmental Protection Agency plans that any mammal studies beyond 2035 would require approval on a case-by-case basis.

It will be very helpful to have the input of government on the best approach to achieve the shared goal of a 2035 phase-out as well as incremental progress in the meantime. Collaboration with the government can serve senators well in providing — in this case — not sober second thought, but rather more proactive policy contributions to Bill S-5 with no need for amendments to go back and forth between both chambers.

[Translation]

With Bill S-5, we have the opportunity to put an end to the terrible suffering inflicted on tens of thousands of animals each year in Canada and to become a society that is more humane and respectful of the other living beings around us that complete our ecosystem.

[Senator Dalphond]

As I said before, some categories of animals that are used for testing product toxicity are also pets for children and even adults. This has to stop.

In 2015, the Quebec National Assembly unanimously passed Bill 54, An Act to improve the legal situation of animals, which took effect on December 5, 2015.

• (1510)

That legislation, based on provisions that already exist in Manitoba, Ontario, British Columbia and France, changes the legal status of pets from “things,” or property, to “sentient beings.” Accordingly, it states that owners must ensure that animals are cared for based on their biological needs, including exercise — which is good for us, too.

Right here in the Senate, over the past few years, bills that have put an end to animal abuse have been passed into law. I am thinking of the legislation to end the captivity of whales and dolphins, sponsored by Senator Sinclair and, before him, Senator Moore.

I also want to acknowledge the work done by Senator Carolyn Stewart Olsen, whose Bill S-214 called for a ban on the use of animals for testing cosmetic products. This initiative was included in the Liberal Party's platform during the last election campaign, and the government has promised to implement it by amending the Food and Drugs Act shortly.

One of the bills currently being studied by this chamber, sponsored by Senator Klyne and entitled the Jane Goodall act, proposes measures to protect wild animals in captivity and ensure their conservation and welfare.

The fact is that, as scientific knowledge about animals increases, the circle of empathy towards them widens. In that regard, the Senate has played, and I hope will continue to play, an important role in enhancing respect for the species around us and in recognizing that, in the ecosystem that sustains us, they deserve our respect, as First Nations peoples understood long before us.

In conclusion, I invite all senators to pass Bill S-5 at second reading as soon as possible so that it can be referred to committee for further study, including consideration of proposed amendments, particularly with respect to animal testing. Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

(At 3:13 p.m., pursuant to the orders adopted by the Senate on November 25, 2021 and March 31, 2022, the Senate adjourned until 2 p.m., tomorrow.)

APPENDIX

HEALTH

DELAYED ANSWERS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

CANADA'S ACCESS TO MEDICINES REGIME

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Marie-Françoise Mérieux on December 17, 2021)

INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

ACCESS TO HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND NETWORKS

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Dennis Glen Patterson on December 15, 2021)

In its recently launched consultations on the upcoming 3800 MHz auction, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) is advancing a rigorous set of requirements for new license holders, including consequences for non-compliance.

In its consultation document, ISED proposes rules that will require spectrum license holders to build out their networks. These rules include ambitious population and geographic coverage requirements that increase over time, and ISED will actively monitor compliance with these requirements. Failure to meet these requirements can have serious consequences, including warnings, administrative monetary penalties, license amendments, suspensions, or revocation of the license in question.

ISED also recently consulted on measures for making new licenses available for unused spectrum in commercial mobile bands, as well as implementing more aggressive deployment requirements on existing mobile bands, and will continue to put rules in place so spectrum is used for the social and economic benefit of Canadians.

The government is committed to enforcing the approach outlined above as a key instrument in ensuring the connectivity of our rural and remote communities.

CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Vernon White on December 16, 2021)

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC):

In response to the question, no analysis has been provided by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) directly to the Senate leader's office regarding the government's fiscal update.

The government supports the availability of existing intellectual property (IP) regime flexibilities and will consider their use in Canada on a case-by-case basis. In making any decision, the government will consider, amongst other things, the urgency of the need, domestic and international production capacity, the time required to establish new sources of supply, public safety, and the importance of developing new therapies to meet tomorrow's challenges.

With respect to the proposed IP waiver at the World Trade Organization (WTO), the government remains committed to finding solutions and reaching an agreement that accelerates global vaccine production and does not negatively impact public health, and continues to work closely with all WTO Members in seeking a consensus-based multilateral outcome to address any IP challenges related to COVID-19.

At the same time, the government is actively pursuing practical, near-term solutions that support access to vaccines and therapies. Canada has committed to sharing its own supply of vaccines with low- and middle-income countries and, as a leading donor to the ACT-Accelerator, has committed \$1.3 billion to ensure equitable access to key medical interventions. Canada is also leading the Ottawa Group and other WTO members to address supply chain constraints and export restrictions.

CANADIAN RADIO-TELEVISION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

ACCESS TO HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND NETWORKS

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Robert Black on February 8, 2022)

In its recently launched consultations on the upcoming 3800 MHz auction, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) is advancing a rigorous set of requirements for new license holders, including consequences for non-compliance.

In its consultation document, ISED proposes rules that will require spectrum license holders to build out their networks. These rules include ambitious population and geographic coverage requirements that increase over time, and ISED will actively monitor compliance with these requirements. Failure to meet these requirements can have serious consequences, including warnings, administrative monetary penalties, license amendments, suspensions, or revocation of the license in question.

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The government is committed to enforcing the approach outlined above as a key instrument in ensuring the connectivity of our rural and remote communities.

FINANCE

DEBT MANAGEMENT REPORT

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Elizabeth Marshall on March 1, 2022)

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS):

The Estimates documents, as well as reporting mechanisms such as Departmental Results Reports (DRRs) and the Public Accounts ensure parliamentarians and Canadians have details on the government's spending.

In a non-election year, the Public Accounts of Canada are tabled by mid-October. Due to the election, and a compensation decision by the Federal Court, tabling was delayed to December. It is not unusual for Public Accounts to be tabled in December in years where there was an election. In all instances, tabling respects the legislative timeline of December 31.

The DRRs serve as the minister's attestation to parliament of the results achieved and resources used in a particular fiscal year. They are not deemed to be ready until the minister has approved the contents. There is no legal deadline for the tabling of the DRRs. Tabling timelines take into account the time needed for new ministers to review and approve the reports for their portfolios, as well as the House of Commons calendar.

Annual financial reporting is complemented by monthly financial results in the Fiscal Monitor and quarterly financial reporting by departments. Furthermore, the government tabled the 2022-23 Main Estimates on March 1, 2022, and Departmental Plans on March 2, 2022.

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