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The Honourable GEORGE J. FUREY,
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Wednesday, May 3, 2023

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

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

THE HONOURABLE FABIAN MANNING

Hon. David M. Wells: Honourable senators, I rise today to pay tribute to our colleague — and he has no idea I'm doing this — the Honourable Senator Fabian Manning, who on this day exactly 30 years ago, at the tender age of 28, was elected as a member of the House of Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador in the district of St. Mary's-The Capes.

His time in the provincial legislature wasn't his first entry into politics, as his time as an MHA was preceded by three terms on the St. Bride's town council. He also served on the local regional development association, 15 years as a volunteer firefighter, as a member of the local parish council and much more. Senator Manning has been serving the people of his community, his province and his country for most of his life and all of his career.

Mostly everyone here knows Senator Manning as a tireless advocate for victims of abuse, as the skillful Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, a master storyteller of all things Newfoundland and Labrador and, of course, as a trusted colleague.

But, colleagues, there's more. Eighteen years ago this month he was kicked out of the provincial Progressive Conservative caucus for daring to voice his opinion on important fisheries policy. Publicly, he stood alone in his views on a critical issue — and Senator Marshall knows about that, but she won't tell me because of caucus confidence. His principled stand landed him outside the governing PC caucus in a high-stakes move filled with threats, ultimatums, political intrigue, a brief stand-off and, ultimately, a vote. Senator Manning didn't cross the floor and join another party. No, his principles were unshakeable, and they still are. He sat as an independent Progressive Conservative. If he had joined another party, he would also have been kicked out of his family — probably the staunchest PC supporters that our province has ever seen. They're generations deep in this game and all with the same team.

In the political realm, Senator Manning won more than he lost. He was elected in the 2006 federal election and lost in the 2008 election. He was appointed to the Senate in January 2009 and he resigned from the Senate two years later to run again in 2011 — and he lost. A short time later, he was reappointed to the Senate in what can only be described as winning the lottery twice. When he called his father to tell him the news, his father gave him wise advice: "Now Fabian, when you get up there this time, just sit down and shut up!" It's solid advice that he takes from time to time.

I've mentioned Senator Manning's upbringing. He maintains the values that his parents instilled in him. I know his family — his brothers, his wife, Sandra, and their children, Mark, Fabian and Heather. Heather in particular is following in her dad's footsteps with community service and outreach to those in need. She dedicates her time and raises funds for worthy causes. She is impressive and unstoppable, like her father. In fact, Heather received a Senate of Canada Sesquicentennial Medal for her outstanding community service. Of course, she wasn't nominated by Senator Manning; she was nominated by none other than Speaker Furey and received the award at a ceremony at Government House in St. John's. I was honoured to attend the ceremony for someone so deserving.

Finally, colleagues, while we regularly pay tribute to those deserving but who are no longer with us, it's nice to pay tribute to someone who is so deserving and still with us. Senator Manning, on this auspicious anniversary, you are most deserving. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Julia Hanigsberg, President and Chief Executive Officer of Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, and Emily Gruenwoltdt, President and Chief Executive Officer of Children's Healthcare Canada. They are accompanied by other senior pediatric leaders from Canadian hospitals. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Moodie.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

PEDIATRIC HEALTH CARE

Hon. Rosemary Moodie: Honourable senators, a few months ago, our country was in the grip of an urgent pediatric crisis. It can be easy to forget now how bad things were then. Respiratory infections ran rampant, causing children, including infants, to be intubated at staggering rates. Parents waited for hours with sick children in waiting rooms, and some had to go home only to return to hospital much sicker. Kids who had to wait months for important surgeries saw these surgeries delayed even more as major hospitals recommitted resources to overburdened ICUs. We were scared. We were angry. We were in a reality that should not be in this country of ours.

In the middle of it all, our health care workers kept us afloat. They demonstrated leadership, sacrifice and courage. They worked around the clock in extremely difficult circumstances, and because of their perseverance, we made it through the crisis. Today, I rise to say thank you to the thousands of Canadians who stepped up to take care of our children in a moment of desperate need. There is no doubt you saved many, many lives. Kids cannot be an afterthought. They cannot be a lesser priority. We saw this past fall and winter what happens when they are second-class citizens.

As legislators, we can't allow this trend to continue. The incoming injection of funds towards the pediatric system is a welcome step, but what we need is a sustained investment to grow the sector to the size it needs to be to take care of our kids. They deserve nothing less.

Thank you once more to our pediatric health care workers. I hope you find in Parliament the support that you have earned.

• (1410)

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of the Premier of Nunavut Pauloosie Akeegok, Deputy Premier Pamela Gross, and Minister of Justice and Minister of Economic Development and Transportation David Akeegok. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Patterson (*Nunavut*).

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

NUNAVUT

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: Honourable senators, this week, the cabinet of the Government of Nunavut has come to Ottawa to meet with their federal counterparts to discuss issues of importance to Nunavut. The meetings touched on everything from infrastructure to transportation, housing, fisheries, climate change, elder repatriation and child care.

Premier Akeegok also had meetings with the Minister of National Defence on issues relating to the important role that Inuit, Inuit-owned businesses and businesses in Northern Canada in general can contribute to NORAD modernization. The premier also met with the Prime Minister to discuss housing, health care, Arctic sovereignty, security and devolution.

I'm delighted that the premier and his cabinet were able to make this important trip here. It's difficult to prioritize the many urgent and interconnected needs of our territory. Housing is clearly our first priority in Nunavut, reflected in the Nunavut government's Nunavut 3000 initiative.

Improved housing and health care will lead to healthier children who will have a safe space to grow and learn. When they graduate, it will lead to more skilled workers and help ensure our economy grows, diversifies and thrives.

Supporting multi-user, multipurpose infrastructure will not only help support Arctic sovereignty and security initiatives — which are made more urgent as the world turns its attention to security in the circumpolar Arctic as the Ukraine war rages on — but it will also help us to follow through on domestic priorities like Canada's Critical Minerals Strategy and community resupply. I'm thinking of projects such as the Grays Bay Port and Road Project, a nation-building initiative that I know Premier Akeegok and Minister David Akeegok will be discussing tomorrow alongside me and other stakeholders at the U.S. embassy.

Again, I thank the premier, his cabinet and their hard-working staff for their hard work on behalf of all Nunavummiut. *Tungasuqassi. Qujannamiik. Matna. Koana. Taima.*

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of students and professors from the University of Ottawa and the University of Haifa. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Simons.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Anselm Ransford Sowah, High Commissioner for Ghana. He is the guest of the Honourable Senator Bovey.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

PAN AFRICAN HERITAGE MUSEUM

Hon. Patricia Bovey: Honourable senators, today I want to update you on the Pan African Heritage Museum. As I have said before, it is being built now in Accra, Ghana, and will open in the fall of 2024.

It is particularly fitting that the High Commissioner for Ghana is here with us today. I thank him, his country and the Ghanaian visionaries whose initiative is honouring and presenting the African global diaspora, including ours in Canada.

As a member of the international curatorial council on this project, I developed a Canada-wide discussion team of Black artists and historians from all artistic disciplines to develop the themes and approaches for Canada's virtual and in-person material exhibition in this museum. From that group, the content steering committee was formed. It is now a stand-alone independent charitable organization with a charitable tax number.

Thanks to a Foreign Affairs and International Trade Committee report titled *Cultural Diplomacy at the Front Stage of Canada's Foreign Policy*, the Canada Council for the Arts and Global Affairs Canada have been funders of this project.

Six Black Canadian professional curators have been hired, one for each region and two for central Canada, given the size of their diaspora. The virtual aspect is progressing really well, and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights has become their partner.

Next, they will engage with the creative challenge of the real exhibition, a challenge I know they will rise to. Canada's participation will be reflective of the honesty of Canada's Black history — multi-generational, refugee and immigrant — today's rich artistic expression by Canadian Black artists and will simultaneously set an exciting platform for our young people and generations to come.

I applaud the Canadian team and their initiatives that will bear positive, interesting fruit.

Your excellency, I want to thank you and Ghana for your foresight with this project, and I want to thank all those involved in the Canadian expression in it. I particularly want to thank Chantal Gibson, poet, visual artist, professor and chair of the content steering group, for her commitment, energy, vision and support.

Colleagues, this is an important expression of our cultural diplomacy in which music, dance, theatre, writing, film and visual art will excite visitors around the world. Canada's Black artists are major contributors in every aspect of Canada's arts and cultural life, and are core to the global creative sector.

Thank you.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of a group of Foreign Service officers from Global Affairs Canada. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Ringuette.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of our former colleague the Honourable Asha Seth, accompanied by Dr. Arun Seth. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Ataullahjan.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you back to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak on maternal and newborn health, an issue near and dear to my heart for many years.

In the past, I took the lead as the rapporteur for the IPU's Committee on Democracy and Human Rights in drafting a report on the role of parliaments in assisting women and children's health services. I also played a critical role in the landmark resolution on the matter, and I'm proud to say that it was the first time a resolution of its kind was adopted by the IPU.

For those of you who are not familiar with the IPU, it's the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which consists of 179 countries. It predates the League of Nations, which means it's older than the United Nations too.

I am particularly proud of my work on the accountability mechanism meant to monitor the progress of member parliaments in implementing the resolution. We cannot simply make commitments but forget about them as new issues arise. As a result, I was named IPU's Goodwill Ambassador for Maternal and Newborn Child Health.

Although my work on maternal and newborn health has fallen to the sidelines in the last few years, I am honoured to be hosting an event tonight, along with our former colleague the Honourable Asha Seth, who has done incredible work on nutrition. The reception will highlight Canada's leadership in global newborn and child health, and we will have the pleasure of hearing from Nutrition International's Director of Global Advocacy.

It will be a good occasion to remind ourselves of the importance of advocating for this often-forgotten basic human right. In Canada, about 50 to 85 women die each year in childbirth or during postpartum, and over half of those mothers' babies die as well. Our country still has a lot of work to do to ensure that Canadian mothers and their babies get a healthy start to life.

I am grateful to the former senator Seth for her continued advocacy for maternal, newborn and child health. Thank you.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Kim Mackenzie, Marianne Hasold-Schilter and Pat Krajewski. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Marwah.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

• (1420)

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Marc Leblanc, son of Senator Hartling; Jody Leblanc, her daughter-in-law; and Maxwell Leblanc, her grandson.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

INTERNATIONAL FIREFIGHTERS' DAY

THE LATE CAPTAIN RHEAL LEGER

Hon. Nancy J. Hartling: Honourable senators, May 4 is International Firefighters' Day, the day to remember the outstanding service of firefighters. Today, I rise to pay tribute to the late Captain Rheal Leger from my home region of New Brunswick. Rheal was a remarkable person who died too young from a work-related illness at the age of 57.

His career started as a volunteer firefighter in 1984. In 2014, he was promoted to captain of the Dieppe Fire Department. He served his community for 39 years and positively impacted many people through his work. His crew was like an extended family to him.

In 2000, he received the Canadian Firefighter of the Year bravery award for rescuing a mother and her two children from her car that was sinking in Babineau Creek. Even though he was off-duty at the time, when he saw the car in the water, he responded quickly and pulled the family to safety.

His wife Carol was the love of his life, and they enjoyed an extraordinary partnership as creators of their dreams, including building their cottage on the Richibucto River. His carpentry skills were impressive, and Carol enjoyed creating ideas for him to build. They travelled and enjoyed many pleasant memories.

Rheal's love for his four children was unshakeable, and he promoted their independence. Growing up in Dieppe, his siblings have countless stories of the ways he helped them along life's path. Rheal and Carol enjoyed life, and I remember attending a birthday party for Carol's sister Darlene at the beach where I met them, and there was singing, dancing and laughter — I could see the joie de vivre.

Following the protocol for death in the line of duty from the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs, a ceremony in the honour of Captain Leger was held at the campus of Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick in Dieppe on January 25, 2023. In lieu of flowers, the family asked that we do something nice for somebody unexpectedly and without explanation.

Dieppe's Fire Chief Marc Cormier said:

Rheal's departure allows us to reflect on what's important in life and reminds us all no matter what colour patch we wear on our shoulders, or what colour badge we put on our chest, we must support each other at times of need.

And Rheal has stood by us during stressful times in our careers and we must pay tribute to him by keeping that going.

Recently, Captain Glenn Miller, Ashley Graham and Brian Parker — New Brunswick delegates from the International Association of Fire Fighters, or IAFF, 30th Canadian Legislative Conference in Ottawa — met with me to discuss the importance of preventing and treating cancers and illnesses related to firefighting. It is estimated that 95% of deaths in the line of duty are attributed to cancers linked to firefighting.

On May 4, it's so important to remember the dedication and risk firefighters take in their occupation and to ensure appropriate legislation is in place.

As we remember Rheal and the sacrifice he made for the safety of our community, I want to extend my deepest condolences to his wife, Carol, their children, their siblings and family, and to his extended family, his firefighter colleagues.

[*Translation*]

We will always remember your sacrifice, and let us remember to thank our firefighters as well.

Thank you very much.

[*English*]

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of The Honourable Ranj Pillai, member of the Legislative Assembly and Premier of the Yukon. He is the guest of the Honourable Senator Duncan.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of a group of representatives from MS Canada. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Coyle.

On behalf of all honourable senators, I welcome you to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

[English]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**ADJOURNMENT**

NOTICE OF MOTION

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

That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, May 9, 2023, at 2 p.m.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO EXTEND
DATE OF FINAL REPORT ON STUDY OF THE CANADIAN
FOREIGN SERVICE AND ELEMENTS OF THE FOREIGN POLICY
MACHINERY WITHIN GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Peter M. Boehm: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That, notwithstanding the order of the Senate adopted on Tuesday, February 7, 2023, the date for the final report of the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade in relation to its study on the Canadian foreign service and elements of the foreign policy machinery within Global Affairs Canada be extended from September 29, 2023 to December 29, 2023.

ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE YUKON ACT

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Pat Duncan: Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of the *Yukon Act*, an Act of Parliament adopted on June 13, 1898.

QUESTION PERIOD**PUBLIC SAFETY**

FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): My question again is for the Liberal government leader.

Leader, in a meeting yesterday afternoon, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, or CSIS, confirmed to Michael Chong that he and his family were targeted by the Communist regime in Beijing after he sponsored a motion in the other place condemning the Uighur genocide.

CSIS also confirmed the name of the People's Republic of China, or PRC, diplomat involved, who, by all accounts, is still permitted by the Trudeau government to work in Beijing's Toronto consulate. The CSIS official told Mr. Chong that he was authorized to read from the report *The Globe and Mail* revealed on Monday, "because it relates to a threat to you and your family."

CSIS was authorized to provide this information by either the Prime Minister or Minister Mendicino. Why was this authorization given only yesterday and not two years ago?

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

As we now know, and as the Prime Minister has stated, the Prime Minister only recently learned of the specifics of the use of the case of Member of Parliament Michael Chong. He was asked in the other place when he was briefed. He said he received a briefing from the top security officials as soon as he heard of this.

As you would expect, matters of national security and intelligence are delicate matters, one that this government takes seriously.

Earlier today, the Prime Minister was asked whether information pertaining to Member of Parliament Chong was briefed up to him from CSIS. He answered that it was not. CSIS officials had made the determination that it wasn't something that needed to be raised to a higher level because it wasn't a significant enough concern in their judgment.

Upon learning of this, the Prime Minister did a number of things, colleagues. First, he scheduled a meeting between Mr. Chong, his National Security and Intelligence Advisor, Jody Thomas, and the head of CSIS, David Vigneault.

The Prime Minister is also now taking steps that will ensure that he receives more detailed briefings by our security officials in the future, and the government is in the process of issuing a direction to this effect.

Here I'm going to quote from the Prime Minister in his statements today. He said:

Going forward, we're making it very, very clear to CSIS and all our intelligence officials that when there are concerns that talk specifically about any MP, particularly about their family, those need to be elevated.

Even if CSIS doesn't feel that it's a sufficient level of concern for them to take more direct action, we still need to know about it at the upper government level.

• (1430)

Colleagues, remember, the CSIS director briefs the Prime Minister and ministers at their own discretion on issues of the day. But as the Prime Minister stated this morning, and as I repeat, he has instructed CSIS to lower that threshold so he will be given a fuller picture at an earlier time.

I hope that answers your question.

Senator Plett: Clearly, leader, again the Prime Minister's answers are in direct contradiction to what his own chief of staff said at committee meetings. "The Prime Minister," she said, "is always informed."

The Prime Minister is always looking for someone else to blame for his failures, and then, going forward, he will make changes. He blames whistle-blowers. Now he is blaming CSIS. He blames political polarization. He and you blame the opposition. He never wants the transparency that a public inquiry would provide.

I ask everyone who may be watching this today, especially all honourable senators in this chamber: How would you feel if threats were made against your family, and your government knew about it but kept it from you? Today it is Michael Chong, but one day it could be any one of us. You would be outraged. I certainly would be.

Do you want answers? Do you want better than the answers given so far? So does the opposition.

I have two questions, leader. Are there any other parliamentarians or their families under threat from Beijing? If a whistle-blower hadn't given those documents to *The Globe and Mail*, Mr. Chong would still be in the dark about Beijing's threats to his own family. Is that not right, leader?

Senator Gold: I have no information that other members of Parliament have been targeted.

With regard to the statement in your question, which clearly ignored my answer, I will repeat my answer from the first question. The Prime Minister did not know of the threats against Mr. Chong until he was so advised recently. The Prime Minister has made that clear. Therefore, the government did not fail to take action. The government did not know until it was so advised.

The action that the government is taking, as I have said and as the Prime Minister has said, is to insist that its security agencies, which are the ones to choose what to brief up to the Prime Minister, do so now under any circumstances where a member of Parliament or their family are targeted.

Hon. Leo Housakos: Government leader, while some members even in this chamber might feel uncomfortable when we ask questions about illegal police stations in Canada and foreign interference and intimidation of Canadians of Chinese descent — not because it is actually happening on our very soil; they are uncomfortable because we are even asking the question — the Trudeau government is doing absolutely nothing to combat foreign interference and to defend Canadians of Chinese descent from intimidation. On the contrary, we have members of this very institution, every time we ask a question, throwing up the accusation of racism, running interference for those very authoritarian regimes. We are not going to stop asking those questions. It does not matter if you are a member of Parliament or an ordinary Canadian citizen of whatever diaspora community; you deserve to feel safe in this country.

My series of questions are simple, and I will be clear. When will your government finally shut down the police stations in this country that are being run by the Beijing regime? When will your government expel the diplomats who are running this operation? When will your government put into place a foreign registry to combat foreign interference? When will your government call a public inquiry to deal with all of these allegations that are coming out on a weekly basis? When?

Senator Gold: I will answer your questions. I will answer them right away and then I will comment on your opening remarks.

As I mentioned yesterday, investigations continue to be under way by the RCMP. Those investigations are ongoing. When they are concluded, and action is taken, it will be made public.

Similar answer with regard to the issue of the diplomat to whom you made reference. That is a matter that the government is dealing with. It is a matter of their prerogative. They are analyzing it. Announcements will be made when they are made.

With regard to the foreign registry, consultations, as you know, are under way. Announcements will be made when decisions are taken, as will a decision on a public inquiry when we hear from the Special Rapporteur, the Right Honourable David Johnston.

I want to make it clear that I am not uncomfortable at all — and I do not purport to speak for other senators — when you ask questions about matters as important as foreign interference in our democratic institutions. I have said time and again these are serious matters that deserve to be treated seriously and responsibly.

If you ask me if I am uncomfortable with how you ask the questions, the assumptions that you package into your questions, the disrespect that you show for our institutions, that is another matter, which we can discuss on another occasion.

With regard to the other assertion in the preamble to your question — “When will the government do something and why is it not doing anything?” — I have repeated on many occasions, but I guess, since this is Question Period, I am going to give you the answer yet again, because it is clearly not being registered or taken into consideration. The Government of Canada is doing a great deal to combat the serious problem of foreign interference. It is investing serious money into combatting foreign interference, including the creation of a national counter-foreign interference office in the Department of Public Safety and providing nearly \$50 million to the RCMP to combat harassment of Canadians who are targeted by hostile actors.

It has mandated NSICOP, the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, to continue its work in assessing the state of foreign interference in our federal electoral processes.

The National Security and Intelligence Review Agency, NSIRA, will set its own mandate and scope for its study of the forty-third and forty-fourth parliamentary elections in regard to foreign interference. Their findings will be reported to Parliament.

I will not have to repeat, yet again, the appointment of the Special Rapporteur, whom I shall continue to name as the Right Honourable David Johnston, not the “made-up Special Rapporteur.”

Senator Housakos: You are going to lecture us about respecting this institution — someone the Constitution calls upon to serve as a government leader and does not want to call himself what the Constitution demands him to be in this chamber? You are going to lecture us about respect for the institution? Please.

Senator Gold: I just did.

Senator Housakos: I know you just did, but you should look in the mirror long and hard. Start answering some of our questions and stop calling into question our respect for this institution. That will be a starting point on behalf of this government.

Second, do you know the kind of respect you have for this institution, where we have information from CSIS itself that a member of Parliament and his family were targeted by an authoritarian regime two years ago, and he just sat down yesterday with CSIS to get that information, once we know that information was shared with the Prime Minister’s Office? And the only thing that we can understand are two possibilities: blatant partisanship — “We’ll just ignore it” — or incompetence on the part of this Prime Minister. It is high time that he takes some responsibility for his incompetence.

I will ask the question again: When will you call a public inquiry? When will you put into place a foreign registry, for which our party has been calling for three years? Even by your speed, you should be able to get that done in three years. Only then can you start lecturing us about respect of Parliament and this institution.

The question still stands: When will you take action? Enough rhetoric.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Gold: Senator Housakos, I answered each and every one of your questions. I stand by everything I said in my answers to you.

Let me be clear, colleagues. I will be very brief because, honestly, this is not the highest and best use of our time in this chamber. I’m not talking about Question Period, colleagues; I’m talking about having to repeat myself time and again.

I was appointed by the Prime Minister of Canada, in a letter dated January 23, 2020, as Leader of the Government. That was the first sentence of the letter. I would be happy to table the letter or send it to all of you. It makes great reading. The second sentence said, “You are to style yourself as ‘Government Representative.’”

• (1440)

From day one, for every single day, I have styled myself as Government Representative. But I have performed the functions, under the Parliament of Canada Act, as the Leader of the Government even though I have nobody to lead, hence the way in which I present myself.

With all due respect, Senator Housakos, it is not I who is not showing respect for the institutions of this place. Nor is it respect for the institutions, when I provide an answer and quote the Prime Minister’s direct answers to the direct questions, to hear members opposite mumbling — I hope it was not picked up in Hansard — and saying things that are distinctly unparliamentary.

[Translation]

BANKING, COMMERCE AND THE ECONOMY

BUSINESS OF THE COMMITTEE

Hon. Rosa Galvez: My question is for the Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Commerce and the Economy.

[English]

Senator Wallin, last month, I had the opportunity to speak at the Global Parliamentary Forum of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, or IMF, in Washington where the buzz was all about the opportunities around the race to net zero.

The U.S. Inflation Reduction Act, or IRA, has turbocharged both business investment and emissions reduction south of the border. I understand your committee is undertaking a study on business investment in Canada. Witnesses for this study have spoken both about how the U.S. IRA impacts us and about the opportunities associated with the transition to a low-carbon economy, which include technological and business innovation in renewables, energy efficiency, electric vehicles, agriculture and sustainable finance broadly. Investing in these areas cannot only help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate climate

change, but also can provide a competitive advantage and financial return for investors. This is happening in developing nations all over.

Considering the importance and relevance of these topics to business investment in Canada, does your committee plan to hear witnesses who specialize in these key areas? If yes, can you elaborate? Thank you.

Hon. Pamela Wallin: Thank you very much, Senator Galvez.

I appreciate the question. I'm glad that you are taking notice of our work, and we were glad to have you there last week sitting in at committee.

We are, indeed, looking at why Canada, with one of the largest energy-based economies in the world, is seriously lagging other countries in attracting investment. We are hearing repeatedly from private Canadian companies why they are not investing here — too much politics, too much red tape. The same concern is coming from foreign capital, making it reluctant to invest unless the government offers up millions or in some cases billions in incentives.

The problem with the subsidy approach for us, regardless of what sector you are looking at, is that it is costly and it too often offers only short-term gain.

One of our witnesses, James Hinton, an intellectual property lawyer and part of Own Innovation, explained:

You can't just fund your way into economic prosperity. For example, in clean technology, we own less than 1% of the global intellectual property. So unless you recognize the existing position of Canadian firms and intentionally ensure that Canadian-owned IP and data assets are part of the clean-tech value chain, you are initiating a generational wealth transfer out of the country because 99% of the foundation is already owned.

We see similar examples with Volkswagen and Ericsson — billions in subsidies without any assurances that the IP stays in Canada. Jobs are created, but what we've also heard from witnesses is that the jobs model — and this has been referred to frequently — is not one that incentivizes the private sector to come to the table and invest in Canadian companies as partners sharing IP.

The jobs model secures activity in the country, and it may even help shift activity toward renewables, but it is not an investment strategy that will work in the future.

The U.S. IRA strategy is putting billions into clean growth, repatriating production that was offshored. Ottawa's approach is, "Well, frankly it is hard to compete with big spenders and with countries that have no carbon tax."

Many of our witnesses have talked about an attitudinal issue — and I think that this troubles us all — that we tend to be risk-averse in this country. That too must change. Our start-ups are more likely to sell than grow, so they do not even look to secure their own IP.

Whether it is green technology, clean technology, agricultural technology, communications technology or even artificial intelligence, or AI, we need to have a strategy that will do more than create branch-plant jobs.

HEALTH

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS RESEARCH

Hon. Mary Coyle: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate, Senator Gold.

May is Multiple Sclerosis, or MS, Awareness Month. Today, our guests from MS Canada have brought us their red carnations to wear to demonstrate our solidarity with the 90,000 Canadians living with MS and to help spread awareness.

MS Canada does important work, and they are committed to achieving their bold vision which is a world free of multiple sclerosis. Multiple sclerosis is an autoimmune disease of the central nervous system. It is unpredictable. It is also known as an episodic disability.

Unfortunately, Canada has one of the highest rates of multiple sclerosis in the world. On average, 12 Canadians per day are diagnosed with MS, and typically the onset is between the ages of 20-49, so people in the prime of their lives. Women are three times more prone to be diagnosed with MS than men.

My colleague and friend Sarah Marquis, a University of Ottawa PhD student, is one of those young women.

Senator Gold, Harvard University research provides strong evidence indicating an association between the Epstein-Barr virus and the onset of MS. News of this groundbreaking study triggered an \$18-million investment by the Australian government in MS research. Not surprisingly, topping the list of policy priorities from MS Canada is securing a \$15-million investment by the Government of Canada in a research partnership with them. They have other priorities, including getting our disability benefit out in a timely manner and at an adequate level.

Could you tell me, Senator Gold, if the Government of Canada will join Australia in taking a leadership role in supporting this groundbreaking research on MS?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for this question. I was very privileged yesterday to meet with representatives from MS Canada. They brought me up to date on the important work they are doing. I met their very able spokespeople, including two extraordinary women who were diagnosed with MS a long time ago. Thanks to innovations in treatment, of which there are growing choices, they are leading healthy, productive lives despite having intermittent relapses as can be the case.

I have been made aware of the research recently published after the last round of funding was provided for research in these areas. I undertake to them, and now publicly to all Canadians, to carry this message to my colleagues in cabinet so that we in Canada can, indeed, contribute to a worldwide effort to find what very well may be a way to prevent MS, even as we make progress in managing this terrible disease to a greater extent. Thank you for your question. You have my commitment to follow it through.

ENERGY, THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

BUSINESS OF THE COMMITTEE

Hon. Percy E. Downe: Your Honour, my question today is for the Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources, and I will not have a supplementary.

Senator Galvez, the tourism industry was one of the most hard hit economic sectors during the pandemic. Planes were grounded, and ships were docked. As the world resumes its activities and people seek to travel again, familiar concerns are rising.

While it is important for tourism to once again provide a vital source of revenue to many regions in the country, it must also be done in a sustainable manner.

This brings me to a concern that was recently raised by a Prince Edward Islander regarding the weak waste water dumping regulations for cruise ships in Canadian waters.

The Canada Shipping Act, which regulates marine transportation and ship-sourced pollution, is far less strong in terms of federal dumping regulations than its U.S. counterpart. Cruise ships travelling north from the United States have an incentive to dump an enormous amount of waste water and toxic discharge in Canadian waters. Of particular concern to this Prince Edward Islander was the pollution from cruise ships caused by scrubbers, which are devices installed to remove exhaust gases from the heavy bunker oil used as marine fuel that create waste water containing a cocktail of chemicals.

• (1450)

Cruise ship pollution also includes sewage from toilets and grey water from sinks, showers and laundries. Could you please advise the Senate if the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources would consider studying the issue of Canada's weak pollution regulations for cruise ships in Canadian waters, as well as the enforcement of the existing regulations?

Hon. Rosa Galvez: Thank you, Senator Downe, for your question and for raising this issue.

Your question reminds me of when, invited by the Canadian Navy, I went to the Arctic and I asked sailors if they could identify cruise ships. They said, of course, they could because cruise ships leave a trail of garbage floating behind them.

It is essential that all sectors prioritize sustainable practices to ensure that, on one hand, they provide economic benefits, but on the other hand, that they prevent pollution and minimize the impact on the health of Canadians, the environment and vulnerable communities.

I believe you addressed your questions to me because we are talking about pollution and the environment. Your question raised a point on policy and regulations. I think it is important to note that.

In 2019, the Canadian Navigable Waters Act was adopted. It aimed to strengthen the environmental protection of navigable waters on which the public has the right to travel. Its implementation is under the responsibility of the Transport Department. In its mandate letter, the Minister of Transport must ensure that Canada's transportation system supports the government's ambitions, economic growth and job creation, while building a transportation system that is safe and reliable, facilitates trade and the movement of people and goods and is more environmentally sustainable.

On the other hand, the mandate of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans is to ensure that "Canada's oceans and other aquatic ecosystems are protected from negative impacts," including those of the tourism industry. The mandate letter of the minister mentions the priority of protecting Canada's three ocean waterways, ensuring they remain healthy for future generations, and providing economic opportunities to Canadian and coastal communities.

As you can see, ensuring pollution prevention and that polluters pay — in this case, pollution arising from solid and liquid waste produced and discharged by the tourist cruise ships — is a transversal issue under the responsibility of Transport Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Now, I speak for myself, but I believe that the Energy Committee members would all be concerned by the pollution caused by the tourist cruise ships. In fact, pollution, the environment and the economy are interconnected and transversal issues to several of the Senate committees' missions. In fact, I raised this point during my testimony to the Standing Senate Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament.

Senator Downe, your concerns are very real, and the situation should be redressed as soon as possible. Because it deals with the operation of cruise ships, the Transport and Communications Committee would be a more appropriate leader of what should be a pluri-disciplinary study involving three or more of our Senate committees.

Thank you.

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

THE FUTURE OF WORK

Hon. Andrew Cardozo: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate. It is about an issue that is of concern to a lot of Canadians, which is the changing nature of the economy and how it relates to the future of work.

The nature of work has been changing drastically in recent years with issues such as the growth of artificial intelligence, technological change, equity, inclusion and lifelong learning. I want to ask you about one specific issue, and that is remote work. It is an issue that has come to the fore and is being discussed a lot these days as a result of the agreement between the Treasury Board and the Public Service Alliance of Canada, or PSAC.

This is a time when we are seeing a lot of change in society and a lot of people who want to be able to work from home. Will the government consider leading a national discussion on this issue, both within government and outside?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. The government is very pleased and proud to have a modern workplace where employees can work from home up to three days a week. As part of this transformation, the government has agreed to work with the Public Service Alliance of Canada to modernize the government's telework directives and take steps to advance equity and fairness between employees. These measures are part of a tentative agreement that has been reached with a third of the government's workforce through collective bargaining.

These measures still need to be ratified by union members, so I think it is premature to speculate on the next steps, including what role the federal government might play going forward as our society continues to evolve.

Much of this is provincial and territorial jurisdiction — work and the regulation of businesses. I think a conversation has to take place at all levels of society going forward as we continue to evolve.

Senator Cardozo: I would just like to take this a little bit further. Yesterday, the Parliamentary Budget Officer told the Senate committee that, in his view, the Treasury Board should do a study on the productivity impact of public servants working from home. What are your thoughts on that? Should it be the Treasury Board? Again, I would like you to look at it from a wider perspective.

I take your point that it is a provincial issue as well. However, is it not time for us to have a national discussion on the future of work when a growing number of people across the country think that remote work is something we should do? We have talked about it for decades. It sort of came into sharp focus during COVID. This is an interesting time for us to have that national debate.

Senator Gold: In many ways, the national debate is ongoing in many circles, and I think the Government of Canada is participating in it just by virtue of its leadership with regard to its

own workforce. It will always take those recommendations and considerations to which you made reference under serious consideration.

Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 4-13(3), I would like to inform the Senate that as we proceed with Government Business, the Senate will address the items in the following order: second reading of Bill C-46, followed by all remaining items in the order that they appear on the Order Paper.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS ACT INCOME TAX ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Gold, P.C., seconded by the Honourable Senator Gagné, for the second reading of Bill C-46, An Act to amend the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act and the Income Tax Act.

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I rise today to speak as the critic of Bill C-46, An Act to amend the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act and the Income Tax Act, otherwise known by its short title as the "Cost of Living Relief Act, No. 3." This bill authorizes two initiatives contained in the 2023 federal budget. It amends the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act to provide a \$2-billion one-time payment for health care to the provinces and territories. As well, it implements the \$2.5-billion grocery rebate, which is a one-time payment to 11 million low- and modest-income Canadians.

The \$2-billion initiative stems from a February 7, 2023, announcement made by this government when it promised to increase health funding to the provinces and territories by \$196.1 billion over 10 years, including \$46.2 billion in new funding. This funding was to include:

. . . an immediate, unconditional \$2 billion Canada Health Transfer (CHT) top-up to address immediate pressures on the health care system.

. . . especially in pediatric hospitals and emergency rooms, and long wait times for surgeries.

Bill C-46 amends the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act to authorize this \$2-billion payment. Budget 2023 also announced that the government has called for a grocery rebate to be delivered through the goods and services tax credit.

Individuals and families who qualify for the GST tax credit will see their January 2023 payment tripled, providing them with an additional payment equivalent to six months of their GST tax credit payment.

• (1500)

The payment amount under the grocery rebate will be \$153 per adult, \$81 per child and \$81 for the single supplement. On average, this is the equivalent of up to an additional \$467 for eligible couples with two children, \$234 for single Canadians without children and \$225 for seniors. Bill C-46 introduces the necessary legislative changes to authorize this payment.

Colleagues, if you are feeling a bit of *déjà vu*, let me reassure you that it's not simply your imagination. You have been here before.

On September 20 of last year, the government tabled Bill C-30, known by its short title as the Cost of Living Relief Act, No. 1. With much fanfare, the government's press release announced that this bill would "make life more affordable for Canadians." How did it plan to do this? It did this by none other than providing an additional GST tax credit payment equivalent to six months of their GST tax credit payment. This was the equivalent of \$467 for a family with two children, or almost \$500. It was precisely what is happening in this bill.

In fact, if you take clause 2 from Bill C-30, and place it side by side with clause 3 from Bill C-46, which is before us today, you will find out that they are virtually identical. It was a simple exercise of copy and paste with a few minor tweaks.

The Cost of Living Relief Act, No. 1 provided 11 million people with a cheque equivalent to six months of their GST tax credit based on their 2021 tax return. Now, the cost of living relief act, no. 3 will provide 11 million people with a cheque equivalent to six months of their GST tax credit based on their 2021 tax return.

However, colleagues, please do not make the mistake of thinking that the government is lacking in ingenuity or creativity. Just because the two benefits look identical, it is important to point out that they are not. They are very different. The benefit provided under Bill C-30 was targeted tax relief, whereas this payment is a grocery rebate.

According to the government, they are two very different initiatives, but if you can't see the difference, do not despair; you are probably not alone.

All my life, I have thought that if it looks like a duck, walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it must be a duck. However, I am learning under this government that this is not necessarily the case.

This government claims that it is a grocery rebate, even though the payment is not tied to actual expenditures. It does not need to be spent on groceries, and requires no submission of receipts to

show that you ever bought groceries. It's not a rebate and has nothing to do with groceries. But they have chosen to call it a "grocery rebate."

This, colleagues, is a duck that cannot swim, waddle or quack; it has no feathers; it has no webbed feet and no bill. It does not look like a duck, sound like a duck or walk like a duck. Nonetheless, this government insists that it is a duck.

I have serious problems with this for a couple of reasons: First, our Prime Minister has repeatedly shown a complete and total disregard for accountability when it comes to sending cheques to people. We saw this during the COVID pandemic. The government provided much-needed relief in the form of various payments, and then balked at the idea of ensuring that it actually reached the people who needed it. He basically said, "Send the cheques. We'll deal with the corruption later." But he never dealt with it. Instead, taxpayers were defrauded out of billions of dollars that the government couldn't be bothered to try to collect.

This Prime Minister repeatedly demonstrates disdain for the responsible and efficient use of tax dollars. He seems to take pride in opening the spending spout as wide as he can and as often as he can, regardless of where the money runs to. It's like he doesn't even care.

The other problem I have with this grocery rebate is that it is blatantly misleading. If it's a rebate, there should be receipts to back up the payments. If receipts are not required, then let's not call it a rebate. Let's call it what it is: a tax rebate.

Yesterday, at the Senate's National Finance Committee, Senator Carignan asked the Parliamentary Budget Officer, or PBO, about this. This is what the PBO said:

There's no doubt that the cheques sent to people based on their income and family situation do not have to be based on particular types of expenses. So, there is no direct connection with grocery expenses, and young people living with their parents might receive it and might not be buying groceries

Colleagues, the question I have is this: Why does this government struggle so hard with being transparent and truthful? There is a solid pattern of either blatantly telling an untruth or intentionally distorting reality. I'm not sure that you could fit a piece of paper between those two, but I'm trying hard not to offend senators by calling it what it is — especially after yesterday's ruling on the issue of parliamentary language.

Colleagues, this is not a responsible way to run a government.

There is another pattern here as well with this government: Less than one month after announcing the Cost of Living Relief Act, No. 1, we were debating another bill entitled the Cost of Living Relief Act, No. 2. This bill introduced the dental benefit and the rental housing benefit. The dental benefit was worth \$650 per year and the rental housing benefit was — wait for it — \$500.

When the government announced the most recent measure — the cost of living relief act, no. 3 — the *National Post* penned a headline which summed it up nicely by saying, “The Liberal fixation on addressing complex problems with \$500 cheques.” The article went on to say:

For the third time in 12 months, the Trudeau government will be taking a complex policy problem and attempting to address it with a one-time \$500 cheque.

Colleagues, we support putting money back into the pockets of the hard-working people who earned it in the first place. What we don't support is the terrible government policies which have put so many Canadians into difficult financial circumstances.

It is no secret that the Prime Minister's inflationary spending has caused the price of everything to skyrocket, and makes life increasingly unaffordable.

Interest rates are higher than they have been in decades. Families that bought a typical home five years ago, with a typical mortgage that is now up for renewal, will pay \$7,000 more a year. Paycheques don't go as far as they used to. Canadians are cutting their diets. Mothers are putting water in their children's milk because they cannot afford yearly food inflations of 10%. Seniors cannot afford to heat their homes. Home prices have doubled since 2015, so 35-year-olds live in their parents' basements. According to Bloomberg, Canada has the second most inflated housing bubble in the world.

Food bank usage is at an all-time high. According to recent figures, food banks and other food-related programs across Canada served over 5 million people per month last year. That, colleagues, is expected to climb to more than 8 million people a month in 2023 — a roughly 60% increase.

• (1510)

Yet, in spite of these hardships, the Prime Minister's response has been to shrug and pile on by jacking up the carbon tax once again, in spite of the fact that the Parliamentary Budget Officer has noted the tax will cost the average family between \$402 and \$847 in 2023, even after the rebates.

The truth is, colleagues, that the so-called grocery rebate will not come close to covering the rising cost of food that Justin Trudeau's fiscal policy is fuelling. *Canada's Food Price Report 2023* predicts that a family of four will spend up to \$1,065 more on food this year. That is \$598 more than the \$467 rebate that they will receive.

Furthermore, as I noted when I spoke to the Cost of Living Relief Act, No. 1, this bill does not help people as much as the government makes it sound like it does. For starters, you need to understand that this money is only going to those who would

normally receive a GST credit benefit. So, if you don't file an income tax return, you will not qualify for the benefit. This means that many people who need it the most will not receive it.

Second, as Statistics Canada has pointed out in the past:

Since the economic well-being of an individual also depends on family income rather than just personal income, those who qualify for the GST credit are not necessarily disadvantaged. An example would be a young adult living with parents and working part time at a low-paying job. . . . the majority of recipients . . . are from multiple-earner families or those with more than one recipient (for instance, a child and another relative of the major income recipient living in the same family).

In other words, senators, as I said before in this chamber, don't think for one moment that there is some kind of surgical precision in the deployment of this money. There is not.

The third thing that I would point out is that the GST tax credit was designed to be a tax rebate of GST expenses, not some kind of a cost-of-living-reduction tool. Using the GST tax credit in this manner is a blunt instrument, which will not necessarily result in the lowest earners receiving the higher amounts. For example, the 9 million recipients who are single with no children will only receive the base amount of \$306, but if you earn more than \$9,900 a year, you will receive 2% of every dollar earned over and above that amount to a maximum of an additional \$161.

This means in practice that a single person earning just under \$10,000 a year will receive \$154 under this bill, whereas a single person earning twice that amount will receive \$234, which is 52% more. For a GST rebate, the program makes sense because those with higher incomes pay more GST. But for a measure which is supposed to provide targeted relief to those who need it the most, this is a poorly designed program.

Colleagues, this government is very good at creating problems and pretending to solve them. They are very much like a serial arsonist who occasionally shows up at a fire they started with a few buckets of water claiming to be a hero. I would suggest, colleagues, that Canadians are no longer buying it. As I mentioned earlier, the other part of this bill is the amendment to the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act to authorize a \$2-billion payment to the provinces. Once again, if you are having a flicker of déjà vu, it's probably because, last June, we were debating Bill C-19, the Budget Implementation Act, 2022, No. 1. Division 6 of Part 5 of that bill amended the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act to authorize — wait for it — a \$2-billion health care payment to the provinces.

Honourable senators, the provinces desperately need this money because, on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's watch, our health care system has become completely broken. There is a growing shortage of health care workers. Millions of Canadians cannot find a doctor. One of those Canadians emailed me just this morning from Kleefeld, Manitoba, just 10 miles down the road from where I live, saying that he had lost his family doctor and he could not get another one.

According to the Canadian Medical Association a few months ago, our health care system is collapsing. The deal that this government made with the provinces in February of this year is badly needed. But don't be fooled: it was the bare minimum. And while this \$2-billion initial payment sounds like a lot of money, it doesn't go very far when you divide it between 10 provinces and 3 territories.

For example, public health care spending in Prince Edward Island is over half a billion dollars per year. Prince Edward Island will get \$8.7 million from the \$2-billion pot. The Yukon expects to spend \$589 million on health and social services this year. They will receive just under \$2.3 million from this bill. My province of Manitoba has budgeted \$7.9 billion for health care this year, and will receive just over \$72 million, less than 1% of their annual budget.

Don't misunderstand me, colleagues. The provinces are happy to receive the support, but I want to point out that this payment amounts to a bucket of water on a four-alarm fire.

I suggest you save your applause for something more substantive. The fact is that much more must be done to fix our health care crisis, and it has become very clear that this Liberal government is not up to the task. I would point out, however, that if the government doesn't introduce a quick fix to Bill C-47 on the other side, the provinces will end up getting \$4 billion instead of \$2 billion and the grocery rebate will be doubled. That, colleagues, is because Bill C-46 is basically copied and pasted from Bill C-47. You'll find the grocery rebate at clause 29 of Bill C-47, and you'll find the federal-provincial transfer at clause 242. This duplication is a problem because there are no coordinating amendments between the two bills. This was brought up at both the House of Commons Finance Committee last week and our National Finance Committee yesterday.

So, colleagues, here we are once again. And I know — the government leader is shrugging already — even on this, the government will come along and say, "Just trust us. We will fix it. We will fix it."

Colleagues, here we are once again rushing through a bill that the government suddenly slams together at the eleventh hour. It's like they just woke up and realized that grocery prices have gone up, and they scrambled overnight to put something together — except even that doesn't make sense because the so-called grocery rebate and the health transfers to the provinces were included in the budget document. That means that they have been on the government's radar for a while.

Even though it was on their radar for a while, they still are left scrambling to throw the legislation together and then have to rush it through the other house with no debate and no examination by committee, and they'll expect us to expedite it as well, flaws and all.

I could go on and on, senators, but let me just make one more brief point. If you open up Bill C-46 and look at the inside page of the cover, you will find what is referred to as a "Royal Recommendation." Royal Recommendations only need to be included in money bills if the expenditure was not anticipated in the estimates. We just had Supplementary Estimates (C) and the Main Estimates in this chamber. The fact that Bill C-46 contains

a Royal Recommendation means that neither of these two expenditures were anticipated at the time that the estimates were being put together.

• (1520)

Colleagues, I would despair, except that I know for a fact that a Conservative government led by Pierre Poilievre will work tirelessly with our provinces to address the critical problems we are facing in order to find and implement real solutions.

Senator Martin: Hear, hear.

Senator Plett: The provisions in this bill are necessary and we will be supporting them, just as our colleagues in the House of Commons did. But make no mistake about it, colleagues: It is the incompetence of this government that has brought us to the unfortunate place we find ourselves in today where the government is scrambling for solutions to problems that it has created. To make matters worse, it is clear that this government has completely run out of ideas and is just recycling old ones. It is regrettable, colleagues, that Canadians are paying the price for this incompetence.

However, judging by the latest polls, there is hope. Canadians are anxious to rectify this situation, just as soon as the Prime Minister gives them the opportunity by having the courage to call a general election — in my view, the sooner the better, because in the meantime, the house is still burning and the Prime Minister is still fiddling. Thank you, colleagues.

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

Hon. Senators: Question.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and bill read second time.)

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

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

(On motion of Senator Gold, bill referred to the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance.)

**ROMAN CATHOLIC EPISCOPAL CORPORATION
OF OTTAWA
ROMAN CATHOLIC EPISCOPAL CORPORATION FOR THE
DIOCESE OF ALEXANDRIA-CORNWALL**

PRIVATE BILL TO REPLACE AN ACT OF INCORPORATION—
SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Leave having been given to proceed to Other Business, Private Bills, Second Reading, Order No. 1:

Hon. Bernadette Clement moved second reading of Bill S-1001, An Act to amalgamate The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Ottawa and The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation for the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall, in Ontario, Canada.

She said: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Bill S-1001, An Act to amalgamate The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Ottawa and The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation for the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall, in Ontario, Canada. Simply put, this bill will amalgamate two corporations into one.

Let's deal with the specifics right away.

We're dealing with a provincially incorporated diocese and a federally incorporated archdiocese. The archdiocese chose to maintain federal private act status and amalgamate under the laws of the Parliament of Canada.

The amalgamation will help the church to be more efficient. Right now, the Ottawa-Cornwall Archdiocese is filing paperwork under two jurisdictions.

This third point is big: Obligations and liabilities of the individual entities become the responsibility of the amalgamated entity. Any previous obligations carry over — including legal claims, such as claims of abuse.

I want to be very clear on this point: When two corporations amalgamate, they join into a single entity that is not a new corporation; it is a continuation of the two predecessor corporations, so any liabilities, known or unknown, of the amalgamating corporations become the responsibility of the newly formed corporation.

Over the next few minutes, I plan to tell you about this bill, why it is relevant to my community and the impact it will have. Since Senate private bills are so uncommon, let's dive into the history and procedure behind this type of legislation.

Public bills apply to the general community and deal with matters of public policy — so says my favourite bedtime read, *Senate Procedure in Practice*. If you are looking for something to help you sleep tonight, I recommend starting at Chapter 8.

[*Translation*]

Private bills confer particular powers, benefits or exemptions upon a specific person or group of persons. Prior to 1969, private bills were used to grant divorces. They can also be used to incorporate a private company or to amend existing acts of incorporation.

[*English*]

In this case, the bill is bringing a provincially incorporated entity — the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall — and a federally incorporated entity — the Archdiocese of Ottawa — under the same jurisdiction. The last time the Senate saw a private bill was in the fall of 2020, when my friend and colleague Senator Jaffer successfully sponsored Bill S-1001, An Act respecting Girl Guides of Canada.

In the session before that, the Senate considered three private bills. Senator Harder tells me that the project he sponsored at that time, An Act to amend The United Church of Canada Act, has similarities to this bill. I expect to lean on the expertise of these senators, and on the support of my colleagues in all groups, during the consideration of the current bill.

I am proud to facilitate the study of Bill S-1001, but I owe a debt of gratitude to Senator Ringuette and her team — specifically, Timothy Rosenburgh. They began work on this project but asked me to *prendre la relève* since both institutions involved include my home community.

Indeed, I have been working with familiar faces on this project who have done the background work required for private bills, including posting notices in the *Canada Gazette* and leading local newspapers.

Two weeks ago, with the expert help of Shaila Anwar, the Examiner of Petitions, we breezed through the first five steps of Senate procedure: tabling of petition, examination of petition, report on petition, reading of petition and introduction of the bill. An optimist would say we're halfway there. A realist would say that there is still some work to do to convince you, my colleagues, to move this bill forward.

Let's dive into the issue: the merging of corporations in Ottawa and in Alexandria-Cornwall.

The Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall was created in 1890, making it one of the oldest and smallest in Canada. It is located on the traditional territory of the Mohawk people of Akwesasne and of the Haudenosaunee. It has both francophone and Scottish roots and, like many religious institutions, was instrumental in the establishment of a local hospital and schools. Over a century after its founding, though, change was looming.

The process to amalgamate started six years ago with community consultations. I love effective consultations. If there is one thing that comes through from all my interventions over the coming years, I hope that it's the voices of the many people impacted by policy; they deserve to be heard loud and clear.

I was heartened to read in a 2017 article by *Cornwall Newswatch* that a public meeting about amalgamating was “. . . respectful but passionate.”

[*Translation*]

For two hours, people talked about preserving local history and meeting local needs. After all, the roots of the diocese date all the way back to the earliest Catholic settlements in Upper Canada. The diocese has unique needs. It serves a francophone community but has a hard time finding bilingual bishops.

[*English*]

I attended one such meeting. Parishioners from all parts of the diocese showed up to insist that they didn't want to get lost in the amalgamation with a larger archdiocese with bigger cities. They were respectful and friendly, but clear. The region and its people are tenacious. If you ask for their feedback, they are going to share it.

• (1530)

[*Translation*]

The Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall held five separate meetings to hear from the unique groups served by these churches, namely anglophone, francophone and bilingual parishioners and the urban and rural communities. I was told that there was no specific consultation with Indigenous peoples, some of whom are practising Catholics. However, I was also told that the truth and reconciliation work is under way.

[*English*]

In fact, I saw reconciliation and, more importantly, relationship building happening first-hand in June 2021 — when we learned of the discovery of children's remains at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. A temporary memorial was set up on the steps of St. Columban's Church in Cornwall. I walked with the community, starting on the grounds of that church where the bells rang 215 times. It was a powerful moment on an emotional day, and it was important for the church leadership to partner with the organizer Georgina Lazore. Participating in those difficult conversations and hosting the memorial walk were concrete actions of reconciliation taken by an institution that is reckoning with its obligations.

[*Translation*]

Three years after those consultations began, the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall and the Archdiocese of Ottawa have become the Archdiocese of Ottawa-Cornwall. Pope Francis made the announcement on May 6, 2020. At that time, the new archdiocese served more than 450,000 Catholics in 132 parishes and missions.

[*English*]

At the time of the announcement, an important step had yet to be taken: a civil merger in Parliament. Here we are, serving Canada in this very unique way by passing this private bill to conclude the amalgamation.

I want to conclude on the topic of my tenacious community — my region which is so proud of its roots. They have been gracious in the time it has taken to process the amalgamation. They have been hopeful, and they will continue to be. They won't be lost in this merger because they will continue to speak up and be vigilant. They have things to say about their parishes, and that input will make the archdiocese better. The Catholic Church needs communities that speak up. I'm confident that Akwesasne, Cornwall, Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry will do just that. Thank you, honourable senators, for your interest in this bill. *Nia:wen*.

Hon. Mary Coyle: I have a question if Senator Clement will take it.

Senator Clement: Absolutely.

Senator Coyle: It is not about this particular amalgamation. You have done some research on these sorts of Senate public bills, as well as handling issues such as this. I know that we had the Girl Guides here as well.

Are we expecting that there will be other amalgamations of other dioceses within the Catholic Church that will be coming our way? Is this the only mechanism for that to happen, or might it also be something from other churches?

Senator Clement: Thank you, Senator Coyle, for that question. I am going to lean on Senator Harder, and figure this out — when it goes to committee, hopefully — around how it worked for the United Church of Canada and why it was before the Senate.

This amalgamation needs the Senate for this process, and it really is an amalgamation. The Catholic Church and this archdiocese are taking care to do it this way so that claims remain. They are choosing this process so that the two predecessor corporations are not dissolved. If there are claims, they will continue after the amalgamation.

When I was approached by the archdiocese, they made sure to say that because it is federally incorporated, they needed an act of Parliament to do that. They needed it to be done here, but they were focusing on an amalgamation process. Other dioceses have gone through this process, and there was controversy because of the claims issue, and because the claims would have been affected by the change. This amalgamation is designed to not do that, and to make sure that people have their claims. They are doing it here — in this process — and we will flesh that out, of course, at committee. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Renée Dupuis: Would Senator Clement take a question?

Senator Clement: Yes.

Senator Dupuis: I see that Bill S-1001 ensures that the amalgamation of these two corporations meets the requirements of the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act. Do you have any guarantees, or would it be possible to get guarantees, that the requirements of the provincial legislation governing the

corporation for the diocese, which falls under provincial law, have been met? I am talking about the requirements to comply with the provincial legislation.

Senator Clement: I had the opportunity to work with the archdiocese's lawyer and the Senate's lawyers to prepare for the discussion that was held in committee. I did not get any official guarantees, but that is certainly a point that was raised, and we would like to confirm it in committee.

Thank you for the question.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-13(2), I move:

That the Senate do now adjourn.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(At 3:36 p.m., the Senate was continued until tomorrow at 2 p.m.)

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