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The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Thursday, October 19, 2023

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

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

COMPETITION IN CANADA

Hon. Colin Deacon: Honourable senators, this morning, the Competition Bureau released a review of various measures of competition and economic activity in Canada between 2000 and 2020. The bureau found that concentration rose in our most concentrated sectors because of consolidation and fewer firms entering those sectors. Consequently, our biggest firms are less and less challenged by competitors, resulting in increasing markups and profits.

Colleagues, the state of competition in Canada is threatening our prosperity, contributing to our rising cost of living and entrenching the dominance of incumbents. Weak competition laws have created oligopolies in banking, telecom, airlines, groceries and beyond. Many oligopolies have become so dominant that they have the luxury of serving the interests of their shareholders without having to first concern themselves with the interests of their customers.

Colleagues, you can never regulate a company into being customer-centric. Only competition makes that happen.

We've reached the point in Canada where our oligopolies are actually protected from competition because innovative new entrants can't afford the cost of our country's complex and cumbersome regulatory burden. It's a sad irony that in many sectors our regulations, initially intended to protect citizens, now do a better job of protecting the interests of incumbent oligopolies.

Conversely, a lack of regulatory protections in the area of personal data privacy has increased the dominance of some of the largest companies, both domestic and foreign. Specifically, once we press "I accept," our personal data is vacuumed out of the country by big tech or into the control of our oligopolies. To give you a sense of the scale, it is estimated that each Canadian produces an average of 1.7 megabytes of data per second, equivalent to about 850 pages of text.

All of this can change if Parliament begins to prioritize the passage of Bill C-27, the digital charter implementation act. The bill includes a data mobility right, enabling Canadians to securely move their data from those who currently control it to organizations that they trust will better serve their needs, tilting the currently uneven playing field away from oligopolies and big tech toward Canadian consumers.

But implementing that right takes a whole-of-government approach. For example, only the Minister of Finance can grant Canadians the ability to use their financial data for their benefit

versus the banks'. Canada needs to take a whole-of-government approach to ensure that every policy and regulation is pro-competitive. The Competition Bureau's report illustrates the results of inaction.

Urgent change is needed.

Thank you, colleagues.

AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

Hon. Leo Housakos (Acting Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, as you know, October is Autism Acceptance Month in Canada.

Autism is a lifelong neurodevelopmental spectrum condition that affects 1 in 50 Canadian children aged 1 to 17 years. Bill S-203, which received Royal Assent earlier this year thanks to all of you, is an important step in ensuring a brighter future for autistic Canadians, their families and caregivers.

As we move forward, I am pleased to see more autistic individuals being included in the conversation about autism and acceptance, which was one of the biggest takeaways from our study on Bill S-203. However, the involvement of autistic individuals is crucial in terms of research to better inform on what questions and priorities are most relevant and urgent. Solutions need to be developed and knowledge generated that respond directly to the needs established by the community.

One organization doing just that is the Transforming Autism Care Consortium, or TACC, a research network that connects and mobilizes Quebec's strengths in autism research to improve the quality of life of autistic people and their families. The goal of TACC's team of 80 researchers and more than 350 professionals, clinicians, autistic individuals and their families is to accelerate scientific discovery, build capacity and integrate evidence into practice and policy.

I also want to take this opportunity to draw attention to another pillar of the autism community in my hometown of Montreal: Giant Steps. Giant Steps — a leader in education, community training and advocacy for the lifelong inclusion of autistic individuals in all sectors of society — recently inaugurated a \$54-million state-of-the-art facility to meet the changing lifespan needs of autistic individuals, their families and professionals in the field. Senator Boehm and I had the privilege of visiting that wonderful centre.

Home to many firsts since 1980, Giant Steps, which I know very well, is a shining example of many stakeholders coming together from both the public and private sectors to envision a more inclusive society and take concrete actions to achieve it.

A little more than a year and a half after being announced, the Giant Steps Autism Centre opened its doors in September to more than 250 autistic individuals, teachers, educators, researchers and staff members. Unique in Canada, the centre is already attracting worldwide attention and recently hosted a visit

by the Belgian government, which was looking for inspiration as they plan to build an autism centre of their own in the next few years.

I'd like to close by saying that this month of autism acceptance is about the importance of respecting and celebrating everyone's individuality, creating pathways for growth and success, and promoting meaningful inclusion for all individuals. I look forward to seeing a Canadian national autism strategy where all Canadians will be able to flourish and receive consistent services, from coast to coast to coast.

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 Gail Hamamoto, Chief Executive Officer of Special Olympics Canada. She is accompanied by members of Canada's Sports Hall of Fame. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Deacon (*Ontario*).

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

SISTER DOROTHY MOORE, O.C., O.N.S.

Hon. Mary Coyle: Honourable senators, during this Mi'kmaw History Month, I rise today in this chamber on the unceded lands of the Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation to speak to you about a remarkable woman leader from Mi'kma'ki. She is a force of nature, a respected 90-year-old educator and an elder: Dr. Sister Dorothy Moore. Our colleague the Honourable Dan Christmas introduced the Senate to Sister Dorothy last year when he said:

. . . it can and must be said that there are indeed angels among us, tapped into something bigger than you or me.

He described Sister Dorothy as a “. . . productive, gentle, faith-filled, determined and helpful example of servant leadership . . .” focused on the benefit of all.

Colleagues, I met Dr. Sister Dorothy Moore, a Sister of St. Martha, when she helped us at the Coady International Institute recruit an Indigenous woman director for our new Indigenous Women in Community Leadership program. Her wisdom, depth of experience and generosity of spirit helped us tremendously.

On September 28, I had the good fortune of attending, along with our new colleague Senator Prosper and the Honourable Dan Christmas, a Learning Lodge at St. Francis Xavier University entitled “Celebrating the Life, Work, and Wisdom of L'nu Elder Dr. Sister Dorothy Moore.”

The Schwartz Auditorium was filled with students, staff, faculty and community members, including many Mi'kmaw leaders from far and wide. My good friend Dr. Jane McMillan, former partner of Donald Marshall Jr., was the mastermind

behind the celebration. Donald Marshall Jr. was from the same community as Dr. Sister Dorothy Moore and as the Honourable Dan Christmas — Membertou First Nation.

• (1410)

Dr. Sister Dorothy Moore, who experienced extreme racism when she “jumped the fence” to attend the white kids' school in town, was described by those honouring her as a pioneer, as a female Mi'kmaw mentor, as a champion for Mi'kmaw language, culture and education, and as saucy, relentless and courageous. Our colleague Senator Prosper said that her love, spirit and legacy are like the Centennial Flame on Parliament Hill. Hers is an eternal flame that will never go out. Dr. Don Julien of the Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre described Sister Dorothy as the most valuable asset in Mi'kma'ki right now.

Sister Dorothy, in her typical fashion, said:

I never want to stop what I am doing. I do what I can every day. There is so much to be done.

Colleagues, Dr. Sister Dorothy Moore made sure that Mi'kmaw children knew they were seen and valued and that our Canadian society recognizes that, in fact, every child does matter. Thank you. *Wela'liog*.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Her Excellency Lindita Nikolla, Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Albania; His Excellency Ermal Muça, Ambassador of the Republic of Albania in Canada; and Agron Gjekmarkaj, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Albania. They are accompanied by other members of a delegation from Albania.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

THE LATE SONIA BOISVENU

Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu: Colleagues, her castanets and heels are forever silenced. Nicknamed Quebec's flamenco ambassador, Sonia del Rio made an international name for herself in classical Spanish dance.

Last Friday, surrounded by her loved ones, my cousin Sonia Boisvenu, better known by her stage name, Sonia del Rio, left us at the age of 83.

Sonia was born in Rouyn-Noranda on January 29, 1940. That's the same part of the province I was born in. She was very proud of her Abitibi roots. As the magnificent ambassador of flamenco to Quebec, Sonia led a remarkable career both here and abroad, living and working for many years in Europe and collaborating with the greatest masters of the vibrant Iberian dance. She

became an international star of classical Spanish dance and flamenco, an art she also taught, in addition to performing castanet concerts.

In the 1950s, she studied classical ballet and Spanish dance. Her career took off in that same decade with numerous performances in Montreal cabarets. She shared the stage with Michel Louvain, Muriel Millard, les Jérolas, Monique Gaube and Jean Grimaldi, as well as actors such as Olivier Guimond, Manda Parent and Claude Blanchard. All were charmed by her grace and talent.

In 1960, my cousin Sonia went off to Europe to perfect her art and pursue her career there. She settled in Paris, where she performed at the Théâtre de L'Étoile, before moving to Spain, where she studied classical dance, folk dance and flamenco.

In 1974, she became the first and only Canadian to graduate from the Advanced School of Dramatic Arts and Dance in Madrid. Upon her return to Quebec in the 1990s, she taught ballet at Les Grands Ballets canadiens, a dance that was part of every fibre of her being.

I have very fond memories of my cousin Sonia, who was very proud of her Boisvenu family, her home in Abitibi, her province of Quebec and her country, Canada, which she put on the map overseas. I am very proud of her unique career, but I am especially proud of the woman and cousin she was.

She made every family gathering an emotional, caring and happy time, even though it was rare for her to attend such gatherings when she was living in Europe. The whole family was overjoyed when she returned to Canada in the 1990s. She had so many stories to tell about her career in the “old countries,” as our parents liked to say.

Sonia was laid to rest yesterday in Sainte-Adèle, and I want to once again express my condolences to her husband Claude, her son Sébastien, and all her loved ones who are with us or who are watching right now.

Rest in peace, my dear cousin, and go dance with the many members of the Boisvenu family who have already passed on to the other side. I am sure that you are already surrounded by loved ones.

[English]

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of participants in the Parliamentary Officers' Study Program.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[Senator Boisvenu]

THE HONOURABLE JANE CORDY

CONGRATULATIONS ON HONORARY DOCTORATE

Hon. Brian Francis: Honourable senators, I am pleased to rise today to celebrate the achievement of a colleague and a friend. This weekend, Mount Saint Vincent University, or MSVU, will bestow an honorary degree on one of our own, Senator Jane Cordy. She joins another colleague, Senator Wanda Thomas Bernard, who was also recognized by the university in the spring.

As Senator Cordy told us last month when congratulating her alma mater on its one hundred and fiftieth anniversary, Mount Saint Vincent University is dedicated to the advancement of women and girls. Their Doctor of Humane Letters:

. . . honours worthy recipients who have contributed to the betterment of society and humanity in any field, but in particular, improvement of the status of women, contribution to higher education, humanitarian and social service, involvement with and fostering of culture and the arts, or leadership in a field of endeavour. . . .

In announcing this distinction, MSVU highlighted some of the past work of Senator Cordy, including her teaching career before she was appointed to this chamber. Her work on various landmark Senate reports was noted, particularly the report of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology titled *Out of the Shadows at Last*, and her commitment to seniors, like her role on the Special Senate Committee on Aging.

As the current dean of the Senate, it's no surprise that Senator Cordy, the third woman to represent Nova Scotia in this place, has made a sizable contribution here, and she is not done yet.

She has been a mentor to me since I joined the Progressive Senate Group. You have truly shown what it means to be a leader. I hope you know how much I appreciate your guidance and your friendship.

Jane, we are all so proud of you and will be thinking of you on October 22. I invite all honourable senators to join me in congratulating Senator Cordy on this honour. *Wela'lin*. 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 the Braun and Strand families from Manitoba. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator McPhedran.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

AUDITOR GENERAL

2023 FALL REPORTS TABLED

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 2023 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada to the Parliament of Canada, pursuant to the *Auditor General Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. A-17, sbs. 7(3).

[English]

PROTECTING CANADA'S NATURAL WONDERS BILL

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate) introduced Bill S-14, An Act to amend the Canada National Parks Act, the Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act, the Rouge National Urban Park Act and the National Parks of Canada Fishing Regulations.

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

• (1420)

[Translation]

COPYRIGHT ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-244, An Act to amend the Copyright Act (diagnosis, maintenance and repair).

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

[English]

QUESTION PERIOD

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

COMMENTS OF PRIME MINISTER

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Senator Gold, on Tuesday, news outlets worldwide repeated a claim by Hamas that Israel had attacked a hospital in Gaza, killing innocent civilians. The rush to judgment that followed the CBC included Prime Minister Trudeau. He said both in the House and outside to reporters that the strike was unacceptable, illegal and international law must be upheld.

The timing of these comments implied he believed Israel was responsible, a story spread by a group our country officially recognizes as terrorists.

Prime Minister Trudeau is simply not worth the cost to Canada's reputation. Is it too much to expect him to show common sense, leader, and speak with sober second thought, especially at such a dangerous time as this?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Well, thank you for your question. Regardless of who launched an attack on a hospital, we would all agree that the bombing of a hospital is a deplorable and shameful crime against humanity, and an act to be condemned. Even if the bomb was accidental, it is still one that tears our hearts out, and our hearts and compassion go out to all of the victims and their families.

The Prime Minister did not attribute responsibility. He reacted as all human beings would in the face of this horrible circumstance. The Prime Minister is clear and states that, today, I believe, he is working with his allies to determine exactly what happened. When that becomes clear to the satisfaction of the Prime Minister, he will so announce.

Senator Plett: The implication was very clear, Senator Gold. It wasn't just Prime Minister Trudeau that did it; Minister Joly did it as well. They both are not worth the cost.

Tuesday night, just down the street, people leaving an anti-Semitism conference were told to exit through the back door for their safety due to angry protesters outside. That's the context in which the Prime Minister used such poor judgment.

After eight long years, he has no common sense and provides no serious leadership. Isn't this a time that requires both?

Senator Gold: I was at that conference. Sadly, it was not the first time that I had to be escorted out of a public event for fear of the violence of protesters. It occurred in Hamilton when convoy protesters barricaded us within a meeting, and we had to be escorted for our lives.

This is a deplorable situation, and the Prime Minister did the right thing by condemning the damage and harm that was done.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Hon. Michael L. MacDonald: Senator Gold, next month Canadians and veterans will gather on Remembrance Day to honour those who served in war, with particular emphasis on those who made the eternal sacrifice in the defence of freedom for this country. I'm always reminded of John McCrae's "In Flanders Fields." There are three stanzas in that poem, and the third and most evocative stanza has six lines. The last five lines of stanza three are as follows:

To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

The Government of Canada that you represent has declared these prayers to be forbidden at Remembrance Day ceremonies. But in the Senate, we start every day with prayers. Why are prayers okay for living senators but not okay for our war dead?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Well, thank you. Once again, I would ask that when senators ask questions, they make sure their factual assumptions are correct. It does dishonour to this chamber and to the veterans.

The answer is simply that there was no banning of prayers. The answer is that it is misrepresenting to say there is no banning of prayers. The directive simply said that, whether it's prayers or symbols, they be inclusive of diversity, religious and otherwise, in this country. I would ask honourable members, who can hold me to account, as is your right — and it is my duty and privilege to respond — to at least not be misleading in the factual assumptions.

I have one minute to answer, and I am answering you now clearly. I would also like to not be heckled when I am answering previous questions. Thank you, colleagues.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator MacDonald: Senator Gold, the first line of that third stanza reads, "Take up our quarrel with the foe . . ."

Honourable senators, I never thought I'd see the day when the foe would be the Government of Canada. Since you represent the government in this place, can you please tell this chamber if you support this directive of the government, and tell Canadians if you support this directive of the government?

Senator Gold: Let me ask senators whether they support the following directive — I'm answering the God — the question. Well, I used a religious term, "God," and I hope I did not offend those who do not believe.

[Senator Gold]

The directive says that:

. . . chaplains must "endeavour to ensure that all feel included and able to participate in the reflection . . . no matter their beliefs . . ."

I would be astounded if anyone here objected to that respectful and inclusive directive, given the diversity in this country that we all celebrate.

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

ONLINE NEWS ACT

Hon. Julie Miville-Dechêne: Senator Gold, as you know, Meta has blocked hyperlinks to news sites on its platform, and Google recently reiterated its plan to do the same when Bill C-18, the Online News Act, comes into force at the end of December.

Our media outlets are suffering from these decisions. They are less visible and have lost up to half of their users. Many are devastated by the apparent impasse between the government and Google about Bill C-18 regarding online news. Even the organization News Media Coalition has reversed its position and is now calling on the Minister of Canadian Heritage to accept some of Google's demands in the final regulations that will be adopted. Google, however, believes that the fundamental problems are in the legislation itself.

My question is this: Is the government willing to amend Bill C-18 in order to find a solution to this impasse?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. The decisions you highlighted are unfortunate; however, I have received assurances that the Government of Canada will continue to work with these organizations through the regulatory process.

Essentially, the Online News Act is a bargaining system that encourages news organizations and tech giants to come to the table and negotiate fair agreements.

Canada needs a strong, free and independent press, which is a fundamental part of our democracy. Canadians also expect tech giants to abide by our country's laws. We will not be intimidated. I would also point out that many countries are facing the same challenge as they implement and consider legislation designed to protect freedom of the press.

• (1430)

The government will examine all proposals received. I have been given assurances that we will continue to work in that direction.

Senator Miville-Dechêne: I would point out, however, that Europe has managed to reach a compromise with Google.

Here at home, if we don't find a compromise quickly and Google carries out its threat — and I hope it doesn't — Canadian media will suffer significant consequences. Does the government have a plan to deal with that possibility?

Senator Gold: As my late father wisely taught me, we don't negotiate in public.

That said, the government is certain it can address these issues through regulatory processes and ongoing discussions with tech giants. It remains in contact with stakeholders. Updates will be provided in due course.

[English]

FINANCE

EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP TRUSTS

Hon. Tony Loffreda: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate.

Senator Gold, in Budget 2023, the government committed to introducing tax changes that would take effect in 2024 to facilitate the creation of employee ownership trusts. I am a strong supporter of employee ownership trusts as they would provide business owners an alternative succession option that would allow employees to share in the success of their work.

We know that 76% of Canada's business owners plan to exit their business within the next decade, and only 1 in 10 has a formal succession plan in place. The timing for employee ownership trusts is now. Senator Gold, can you assure us that this remains a top priority, and when might we expect the government's legislative proposal?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question, senator. You're absolutely right, employee ownership trusts have a number of benefits. They enable employees to share in the success of their work, they support participation in business decisions and they allow workers to receive their share of the profits.

Budget 2023 announced the government's commitment to create these trusts while consulting, as properly they should, with stakeholders to address remaining barriers. Budget 2023 proposed to introduce tax changes to facilitate the creation of these trusts. The government has consulted with stakeholders to see how best to enhance employee rights and to enhance their participation in the governance of employee ownership trusts, and will have more to say in due course.

Senator Loffreda: Thank you, Senator Gold, for that answer.

Fiscal responsibility is key, but I continue to believe that the government needs to give serious consideration to including tax incentives for business owners to embrace employee ownership trusts. Senator Gold, can you commit to sharing my views with the government and encourage them to make tax incentives part

of their upcoming legislative proposal? Otherwise, I'm afraid the take-up rate will be minimal and the policy won't achieve its intended objective.

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question. It would be my great pleasure to communicate your suggestions to the minister.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

MODERNIZATION OF ARCTIC DEFENCE SYSTEMS

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: Senator Gold, in June of 2022, then defence minister Anita Anand announced \$38.6 billion to modernize the North American Aerospace Defense Command, or NORAD. The funding is meant to be spent over 20 years and is focused on modernizing our surveillance systems, the technology we use and our air-weapon systems while also investing in new infrastructure and support capabilities as well as science and technology aimed at future proofing our capabilities to defend North America.

The President of the U.S. and Prime Minister Trudeau released a joint statement on March 24, 2023, stating:

Our highest priority is to protect our citizens and our sovereign territory. We will invest in the modernization of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) . . .

They specifically agreed to accelerate the procurement of the Over-the-Horizon Radar to 2028, and Canadian investment in Arctic infrastructure to support the arrival of the first F-35 aircraft in Canada.

Senator, can you give this chamber an update on the contract for specific investments?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. It's an important one. Thank you for underlining the historic investment that the government made in 2022 to modernize NORAD capabilities.

I'm not sure that the minister that we had in Question Period would be in an even better position to answer your question, but I will do my best notwithstanding that.

It's my understanding that the government has already released the timelines for all 19 projects proceeding under this plan. My understanding as well is that the majority of these projects will have reached initial operational capability over the next decade. I have no further information at this juncture, senator.

Senator D. Patterson: Thank you.

Senator Gold, the Auditor General's 2022 report to Parliament on Arctic water surveillance included a recommendation to address delays in the delivery of equipment to replace and improve the key federal capabilities used for maritime surveillance in the Canadian Arctic and the risk that several types of equipment may cease operating before being replaced.

A March 2023 statement by Public Services and Procurement Canada stated that:

... the P-8A Poseidon is the only currently available aircraft that meets all of the CMMA operational requirements ...

Senator Gold: I'm not sure I know fully what the question is. It is true that the P-8A Poseidon is the only readily available military with off-the-shelf capability; however, there has not been a final decision yet. The issuance of a letter of request itself does not commit Canada.

The decision to accept or decline the offer detailed in the letter of acceptance will be based on the capability offered in the matter, availability, pricing and the benefits.

[*Translation*]

FINANCE

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

Hon. Clément Gignac: Senator Gold, I would like to talk about fiscal discipline.

Most experts agree that your government did the right thing at the beginning of the pandemic by injecting tens of billions of dollars into the economy to avoid an economic depression. However, those same experts also think that this was made possible by the fiscal discipline of previous governments, which resulted in Canada having a AAA credit rating and a 30% debt load.

At the beginning of the summer, the International Monetary Fund, the IMF, issued its report and recommended that the government adopt fiscal anchors, noting that good intentions to reduce the deficit in the medium term were not enough.

Senator Gold, the government will be presenting its fall economic statement in the coming weeks. Does the Minister of Finance intend to consider the IMF's recommendations?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Certainly, we are taking recommendations from reliable sources into consideration.

The Government of Canada's economic plan will continue to strike a balance between the need to support Canadians today and the need to invest in our economic future. The government will continue to do so in a fiscally responsible way.

The International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development anticipate that Canada will have the strongest growth of any G7 country in 2024. The government is therefore taking a responsible and balanced approach to budget management while supporting the most vulnerable Canadians, strengthening the public health care system, investing in Canada's future prosperity and ensuring its long-term fiscal sustainability.

[Senator Patterson (Nunavut)]

Senator Gignac: Senator Gold, according to National Bank economists, Canada's monetary policy is the most restrictive of the G7. At his last appearance before the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Commerce and the Economy, David Dodge, former Governor of the Bank of Canada, said that the government would be well advised to adopt fiscal anchors to support monetary policy.

Can you reassure the Senate that your government is going to submit a responsible fiscal framework before moving ahead with the New Democratic Party shopping list?

Senator Gold: Thank you for the question. I will reiterate that in the weeks and months to come, we expect to receive an interim report from the government. I am sure it will be prudent, responsible and balanced.

[*English*]

HEALTH

REGULATION OF VAPING FLUIDS

Hon. Judith G. Seidman: My question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Modifying the Tobacco and Vaping Products Act to include vaping in 2018 was said to be to protect the health and safety of Canadians, with the objective to reduce smoking in Canada to a prevalence of 5% and reduce smoking and nicotine addiction among young people.

• (1440)

This legislation was passed with very little supporting scientific evidence. The promise by the government was that the legislation would be updated as the science became available. We now have the data and scientific evidence at our disposal. We know that vaping is not a successful smoking cessation tool, that vaping is a gateway to youth cigarette smoking and that vaping liquids are toxic.

When will the legislation be updated in accordance with the data?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question, for your continuing leadership and work on this file and for bringing these matters to our attention — as you did as a critic, if I recall. You continue to do this to your credit.

As evidence accumulates, the government will continue to evaluate the implications of that evidence for changes or amendments, whether it's with legislation, regulations or other policy directives. I am not aware of the status of those deliberations, much less where they will lead. However, as soon as more information is available, I will certainly be pleased to share it in this chamber, as I know the government will be sharing it with the Canadian people.

Senator Seidman: Thank you. We would all appreciate that, I'm sure.

Despite the 2021 consultation — which there was — we have yet to ban vaping flavours, which are said to be most appealing to youth. Senator Gold, of Canada's 13 provincial and territorial governments, 6 have adopted legislation or regulations to ban the sale of vaping flavours other than tobacco. When does the federal government plan to ban flavours in vaping products?

Senator Gold: Thank you. I do not know, and I am not in a position to predict what the government's plan is. As you point out, provinces acting within their jurisdiction have taken that step, and I think the evidence that will accrue over time with that experience would, and certainly should, inform decisions made at the national level.

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA—PRISON SYSTEM

Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu: Honourable senators, last Monday, *La Presse* informed us of the recent seizure of a record amount of drugs, cell phones and homemade weapons at the Cowansville Institution, valued at \$700,000 over three months. We are talking about \$2 million for 2023.

In light of this information, it is obvious that the safety and rehabilitation of inmates are not a priority for your government. Why does the government plan to spend a billion dollars to buy back guns from law-abiding hunters under Bill C-21 when it has invested very little in security and the control of illegal weapons in prisons?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question and for pointing out the problem and the real challenge that the Correctional Service of Canada and the police are facing, with respect to contraband and trafficking in our federal and provincial penitentiaries. It is a real problem. Everyone knows that. It is a bit difficult to respond to how that connects with Bill C-21. Fortunately, the committee responsible for this bill will begin its study next week. We, as senators, will have the opportunity to follow that study with interest. We will thoroughly examine the issues surrounding this bill, as we always do in the Senate.

Senator Boisvenu: These illegal weapons have entered penitentiaries by way of drones. For the past eight years, the Union of Canadian Correctional Officers has been asking your government to provide modern, effective equipment to detect these drones, given that correctional officers aren't detecting even 1 in 100 of them right now. Why are you going to invest a billion dollars in buying back legal weapons that you've made illegal when you haven't invested a penny in penitentiaries to control illegal weapons for eight years?

Senator Gold: I'm not denying that the problem you described exists in penitentiaries. I would like to emphasize the importance of Bill C-21, which seeks to ensure that weapons used solely to kill people are better controlled.

[English]

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

ACCURATE PUBLIC INFORMATION

Hon. Stan Kutcher: Senator Gold, in the words of U.S. senator Hiram Johnson, "The first casualty when war comes is truth." In this post-truth age and with the pernicious impact of social media in spreading disinformation, making sure our leaders have factually correct information before making public statements is vitally important.

How is Canada ensuring that our leaders have valid, independently verified and fully fact-checked information to inform their public announcements?

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

Disinformation is a problem in our society. It undermines peace, prosperity and our individual freedoms. It erodes trust in democracy and reinforces polarizing viewpoints that are not used for the common good. Especially in time of crisis, this information is dangerous and harmful.

The Government of Canada works in close collaboration with its allies, and it shares pertinent intelligence to counter the global threats. It has also established the Strategic Coordination Centre on Information Sharing to help support timely, effective and responsible sharing of such information between institutions of this government.

The government is taking steps and considering steps to counter state-sponsored disinformation in Canada. It has created a dedicated team to help increase Canada's capacity to understand, monitor and detect disinformation, and decisions will continue to be based on the best interests of Canadians.

Senator Kutcher: Thank you for that, Senator Gold. Given the rampant disinformation being shared widely on social media during this Israel-Hamas war — and indeed during other wars such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine — Canadians need to have access to valid and fully fact-checked information in a timely and trusted way.

What plans does Canada have to ensure that Canadians can have this kind of access? When will that happen?

Senator Gold: In a free and democratic society, there are serious limits to what the government can or should even attempt to do to guarantee so-called truth information. We rely upon citizens and others. The Government of Canada works with its international partners, including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO, the G7 Rapid Response Mechanism, the Media Freedom Coalition and the Freedom Online Coalition to share accurate information. That is on the supply side. It is working with its international partners and partners here to detect, correct and call out disinformation, whatever its source.

PUBLIC SAFETY

SENATE MODERNIZATION

Hon. Chantal Petitclerc: Senator Gold, on October 3, in response to Senator Plett, you told us that it is the wish of the government you represent that the Senate become more modern and less partisan. The following can also be read on your website:

. . . The GRO shepherds government legislation through the Upper Chamber, ensuring that it is thoroughly and efficiently reviewed. A major focus of the GRO is to support Senate modernization by advocating for a more independent, accountable, responsible and transparent Senate — one that conducts its deliberations in a less partisan manner.

Senator Gold, can you tell us if you consider your government to be well on its way to achieving its goal of a modernized Senate? Is this part of your mandate nearing completion?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. It's an important question. The truth is, we have taken some steps — both in the Senate internally and through legislation — toward a less partisan Senate that still, importantly, reflects the current reality that there are groups in the Senate not affiliated with political parties. However, we are not so far along that there is not more work to do.

We have been on record, both in the Rules Committee and in other forums, to argue that it is important that our *Rules of the Senate* now be brought into line with the Parliament of Canada Act that was passed and that governs our structures, deliberations and activities here. That job is not finished yet.

In addition, I would hope, whether it's in my time or others, that more steps are taken to make this a more efficient, inclusive, family-friendly environment for all of us to work in.

• (1450)

HEALTH

AUTISM STRATEGY

Hon. Leo Housakos (Acting Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Senator Gold, as it is Autism Awareness Month, I would be remiss if I did not ask about your government's progress concerning its legal obligations under Bill S-203, which received Royal Assent earlier this year. This legislation was non-prescriptive to ensure that the government and stakeholders — including autistic Canadians themselves — were the ultimate authority on what the framework should look like. To that end, the legislation requires the ministry to convene a meeting with stakeholders and provincial counterparts within a year. Of course, that's in the law. It's an important part of the legislation because it ensures that autistic Canadians are not left out of drafting the framework.

Senator Gold, can you please tell us where the government — specifically the Ministry of Health — is on this issue? When will it be convening the conference? It is, of course, of interest to everyone in this chamber.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you. I am certainly going to make inquiries about the progress, but I first want to take the opportunity to congratulate you on the work you have done now for decades in support of these important initiatives. Indeed, I will add my voice, if it's not inappropriate, to support the Giant Steps program to which you alluded and with which my family and I are very familiar.

This is an important question. It's an important and necessary step — but only the first step — toward providing resources, health and support for those in the autistic community so they can live a fruitful and productive life and, indeed, contribute to society and benefit us with what they have to offer. So, thank you for the question.

Senator Housakos: As I mentioned, Senator Gold, of course, the legislation is non-prescriptive. We don't want to handcuff the government, but there are measures needed in terms of putting the framework together. I really want to ask, on behalf of this chamber, that a gentle and polite reminder be sent to the minister that there is a timeline; the time is ticking. The bill was unanimously supported in this chamber and in the House. We will follow this closely and make sure that they follow the guidelines of the bill.

Senator Gold: As you properly should. Of course, I'm always gentle and polite with ministers, especially those with whom I've had the privilege of working for many years. The current Minister of Health — a former House leader — and I have a good relationship. I would be pleased to mention this to him at the next suitable occasion.

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

ANSWERS TO ORDER PAPER QUESTIONS TABLED

EXPORT PROMOTION, INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT—CANADA EMERGENCY BUSINESS ACCOUNT PROGRAM

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the reply to Question No. 229, dated May 30, 2023, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding the Canada Emergency Business Account program.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT—PROPORTION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES TELEWORKING

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the reply to Question No. 234, dated June 6, 2023, appearing on the *Order*

Paper and Notice Paper in the name of the Honourable Senator Carignan, P.C., regarding the proportion of federal employees teleworking.

DELAYED ANSWERS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table the answers to the following oral questions:

Response to the oral question asked in the Senate on May 4, 2023, by the Honourable Senator McPhedran, concerning the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise.

Response to the oral question asked in the Senate on May 10, 2023, by the Honourable Senator Martin, concerning the Canada Emergency Business Account.

Response to the oral question asked in the Senate on June 13, 2023, by the Honourable Senator Martin, concerning the Canada Emergency Business Account.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

CANADIAN OMBUDSPERSON FOR RESPONSIBLE ENTERPRISE

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Marilou McPhedran on May 4, 2023)

Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE)

The Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE) has not received any complaints about Canadian garment, mining or oil/gas companies in Myanmar. The CORE suspects that other companies likely face similar challenges.

The CORE recommends that the Canadian government introduce mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence (HREDD) legislation. This would require Canadian companies in Myanmar to put in place HREDD processes. When companies operate in high-risk contexts like Myanmar, there is a heightened risk their operations or business relationships may result in or contribute to gross human rights abuses, including those committed by the Tatmadaw. Companies should therefore identify human rights risks throughout their supply chain and put in place an HREDD framework. If HREDD is not possible, companies should apply collective leverage over suppliers to address and remediate human rights abuses, or plan a responsible exit from the country.

FINANCE

CANADA EMERGENCY BUSINESS ACCOUNT

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Yonah Martin on May 10, 2023)

Export Development Canada (EDC)

From the inception of the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) program (through April 30, 2023), Accenture has been awarded \$208 million in contracts, including upcoming work for the 2023-2024 year to build out the collections phase.

Export Development Canada (EDC), not Accenture, was directed by the Government to design, deliver and administer the CEBA program. Many of the capabilities required to develop and administer the CEBA program fall outside EDC's core expertise as an export credit agency. As such, EDC informed the Government that it would outsource the extensive work required for CEBA given its scale, complexity, and timing requirements, necessitating third-party expertise and resources to deliver. EDC would not have been able to deliver CEBA without vendor assistance. Accenture's capacity augmented EDC's staff and provided technology services, not solely consultant advice.

EDC is aware of Government guidelines requiring regular disclosure/reporting of contracts by Departments. As a crown corporation, EDC does not fall under federal procurement processes. EDC does have a separate disclosure process for award notices for applicable procurement contracts. This process was implemented in December 2021, subsequent to the Accenture award for CEBA.

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Yonah Martin on June 13, 2023)

In March 2020, Export Development Canada (EDC) was directed by the Governor-in-Council, upon recommendation of the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, to take all measures necessary to support Canadian businesses, as part of the Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, the Government requested that EDC administer the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) program through authorities under the *Export Development Act*. These actions were taken to ensure that EDC could act in the national interest and rapidly deliver a high volume of emergency assistance to Canadian businesses.

Cost estimates for CEBA loan collections have not yet been finalized. EDC will continue following its procurement practices in accordance with trade agreement obligations and commits to providing details of all Accenture contracts as Parliament requests them.

EDC, as Canada's export credit agency, would not have been able to deliver CEBA without vendor assistance. Accenture had already been onboarded as one of its technology providers prior to EDC being directed to deliver CEBA. A complex, competitive procurement process takes a minimum of 6-8 months and, given the urgent nature of the CEBA program, would not have allowed EDC to deliver at the speed required.

[*Translation*]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

REAPPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE— MESSAGE FROM COMMONS

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I have the honour to inform the Senate that a message has been received from the House of Commons which reads as follows:

Wednesday, October 18, 2023

EXTRACT, —

That,

- (a) the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying be re-appointed, in accordance with Recommendation 13 in the second report of the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying;
- (b) five members of the Senate and 10 members of the House of Commons be members of the committee, including five members of the House of Commons from the governing party, three members of the House of Commons from the official opposition, and two members of the House of Commons from the opposition who are not members of the official opposition, with two Chairs of which the House Co-Chair shall be from the governing party and the Senate Co-Chair shall be determined by the Senate;
- (c) in addition to the Co-Chairs, the committee shall elect three vice-chairs from the House, of whom the first vice-chair shall be from the Conservative Party of Canada, the second vice-chair shall be from the Bloc Québécois and the third vice-chair shall be from the New Democratic Party;
- (d) the quorum of the committee be eight members whenever a vote, resolution or other decision is taken, so long as both Houses and one member of the

governing party in the House, one from the opposition in the House and one member of the Senate are represented, and that the Joint Chairs be authorized to hold meetings, to receive evidence and authorize the printing thereof, whenever six members are present, so long as both Houses and one member of the governing party in the House, one member from the opposition in the House and one member of the Senate are represented;

- (e) the House of Commons members be named by their respective whip by depositing with the Clerk of the House the list of their members to serve on the committee no later than five sitting days after the adoption of this motion;
- (f) changes to the membership of the committee, on the part of the House of Commons, be effective immediately after notification by the relevant whip has been filed with the Clerk of the House;
- (g) membership substitutions, on the part of the House of Commons, be permitted, if required, in the manner provided for in Standing Order 114(2);
- (h) where applicable to a special joint committee, the provisions relating to hybrid committee proceedings contained in the Standing Orders of the House of Commons shall also apply to the committee;
- (i) the committee have the power to:
 - (i) sit during sittings and adjournments of the House,
 - (ii) report from time to time, to send for persons, papers and records, and to print such papers and evidence as may be ordered by the committee,
 - (iii) retain the services of expert, professional, technical and clerical staff, including legal counsel,
 - (iv) appoint, from among its members such subcommittees as may be deemed appropriate and to delegate to such subcommittees, all or any of its powers, except the power to report to the Senate and House of Commons,
 - (v) authorize video and audio broadcasting of any or all of its proceedings and that public proceedings be made available to the public via the Parliament of Canada's websites;
- (j) the committee submit a final report of its review, including any recommendations, to Parliament no later than January 31, 2024; and
- (k) following the presentation of the final report in both Houses, the committee shall expire; and

that a message be sent to the Senate requesting that House to unite with this House for the above purpose and to select, if the Senate deems advisable, members to act on the proposed special joint committee.

ATTEST

Eric Janse

Acting Clerk of the House of Commons

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

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

• (1500)

[*English*]

THE SENATE

MOTION TO AFFECT THURSDAY SITTINGS FOR REMAINDER OF CURRENT SESSION—DEBATE

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate), pursuant to notice of October 18, 2023, moved:

That, for the remainder of the current session and notwithstanding any provision of the Rules, when the Senate sits on a Thursday, it stand adjourned at the later of 6 p.m. or the end of Government Business, as if that time were, for all purposes, the ordinary time of adjournment provided for in rule 3-4.

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

Some Hon. Senators: No.

Some Hon. Senators: Agreed.

The Hon. the Speaker: It is moved by the Honourable Senator Gold, seconded by the Honourable Senator LaBoucane-Benson, that, for the remainder of the current session and notwithstanding any provision of the Rules, when the Senate sits on a Thursday, it stand adjourned at the later of 6 p.m. or the end of Government Business, as if that time were, for all purposes, the ordinary time of adjournment provided for in rule 3-4.

Are senators ready for the question?

Some Hon. Senators: Question.

Some Hon. Senators: No.

QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE—SPEAKER'S RULING RESERVED

Hon. Mary Jane McCallum: If there will be a standing vote, I have a question of privilege.

The Hon. the Speaker: You are raising a question of privilege, so you may speak.

Senator McCallum: Thank you. Your Honour, I rise pursuant to rule 13-4(a) to raise a question of privilege without notice. This rule reads:

If a Senator becomes aware of a matter giving rise to a question of privilege either after the time for giving a written notice or during the sitting, the Senator may either:

(a) raise it during the sitting without notice at any time, except during Routine Proceedings, Question Period or a vote, but otherwise generally following the provisions of this chapter

When my office raised my attention to this subject matter this afternoon — after reading the scroll that was circulated to my office from the Chamber Operations and Procedure Office today at 12:27 p.m., and cross-referencing Government Motion No. 132 against the Order Paper — this activity fell within the three-hour minimum for notice to be given prior to the sitting, as required under rule 13-3(1). As such, this question of privilege falls legitimately under the aforementioned rule 13-4(a).

Your Honour, I am very concerned about Government Motion No. 132, and the ramifications it will have on effectively limiting the time for debate on non-government or other business — items that are already afforded precious little time for consideration in this place.

Based on the seeming lack of concern or urgency surrounding this motion, I am led to believe that this item most likely came about through conversations and agreement between the Government Representative Office, or GRO, and the four leaders, or their representatives, on the matter.

However, since these leaders do not represent non-affiliated senators, such agreements are not applicable to us, as we have no involvement in or forewarning of such discussions, or the decisions they lead to.

As a senator, I made the difficult choice to become non-affiliated because of the marginalization, inequity and lack of support I felt as a member of an established group. I find that I now continue to be treated as unequal — this time due to my conscious decision to sit as non-affiliated — even though the Senate prides itself on the principle of equality of senators. I have written numerous letters to the four leaders about such concerns surrounding the lack of involvement of myself and my fellow non-affiliated senators in decisions that greatly impact not only us but also the people we represent. Is such marginalization not representative of the status quo of how things were done 100, 50 or even 10 years ago?

Further meaningful change is needed in light of enduring policies and processes that are outdated and, frankly, discriminatory. I was yet again not consulted before this decision

was reached. This instance continues a dangerous exclusion of non-affiliated senators wherein I continue to be excluded from the meaningful process of negotiation. This reality continues to impact my duties as a senator — a senator who is Cree, First Nations and a woman that brings critical life-and-death issues to the floor for the people I serve.

There is other business that is critical to the people we represent — those segments of the population that are excluded from the majority represented in the other place. This other business is extremely important, and often broadens our perspectives of incoming legislation to ensure that we do the right thing for Canadians. As senators, we have a sacred responsibility that comes with the term “honourable” — to debate on issues so we can increase our awareness, knowledge and wisdom, and act accordingly.

As this motion will result in the foregoing of countless hours’ worth of time that would typically be set aside to discuss other business for the duration of this session, we continue to marginalize the very people we are supposed to represent.

As such, Your Honour, I would like to request your ruling on this matter of whether my privilege is being breached when I am forced to be party to a deal that I was not involved in and gave no agreement to, and which limits my ability to listen, to speak and to raise questions on matters of critical import to those I represent in this chamber. Thank you.

The Hon. the Speaker: Do any other senators want to participate in the discussion?

Hon. Marilou McPhedran: I shall be very brief. I want to speak in support of the concerns that have been set out very well today by Senator McCallum. She certainly speaks for me in the comments that she made.

I would ask all of us in responding to this point — and I realize this is something that will have to be ruled on by you, Your Honour — to think about the fact that every time we come into this chamber and begin a sitting, you start with a prayer. We are all part of that. I just want to remind us of the import of the comments made by Senator McCallum about the kind of representation that we have taken on as our responsibility — which takes time. The nature of this motion is to reduce time and opportunities.

The prayer that I’m referring to points out that we ask the following:

. . . let your spirit preside over our deliberations so that at this time assembled, we may serve ever better the cause of peace and justice in our land and throughout the world.

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Raymonde Saint-Germain: Given what we heard from our colleagues, Senator McCallum and Senator McPhedran, I see a need for clarification about the scope of this government

motion, because the interpretation we’re hearing is not accurate. Other colleagues have said things that lead me to the same conclusion.

With your consent, I think we could ask the Government Representative to provide more information about the scope of the motion and to confirm whether it means that, on Thursdays, there will no longer be any study of non-government bills unless we’re done with Government Business before six o’clock. Thank you.

[*English*]

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the opportunity to clarify the intent and the consequences of the motion that I’m asking the Senate to consider and vote on.

I will address the question of privilege. Thank you, though, for your invitation. In passing, I hope that I clarify certain things, but I really think it’s appropriate — since a question of privilege was raised — to respectfully register my view that no privilege of any senator has been infringed by the motion before us.

• (1510)

The leadership representatives of the organized groups and caucuses meet regularly to discuss many matters, and in particular, how government legislation shall proceed. That is my primary responsibility, and I convene those meetings for those purposes. In such a case — and we met, and I’ll come to the rationales for the suggestions that were made to me by others for considering how we could manage some of the challenges that many of you are facing on Thursdays — we brought forward a motion for the consideration of the Senate as a whole. It is simply not the case that deals by the leaders bind those who are either in the groups or not affiliated with any groups. The issue before us is whether the Senate as a whole supports or not the motion that is before you. No one is bound by the deals that I may make with Senators Plett, Saint-Germain, Cordy or Tannas in matters like the one before us.

Second, non-government business is a staple and an important part of what we do in the Senate. Just look at the Order Paper. Forgive me for imperfect mathematics, but I believe there are over 75 Senate public bills on the Order Paper. When you add to that motions and inquiries, it is hard to deny that a significant part of what we do and the contribution we try to make is in areas of non-government business.

I mention that, Your Honour, because this order, if it’s approved, affects all senators in all groups. They may not necessarily be happy to have time somewhat limited, though not taken away, for non-government business on Thursdays. If the motion is passed, it will affect all senators because the majority of senators so decreed, and I do not believe in circumstances like that the privileges of senators can be said to be infringed when collectively we have decided to change the rules for the purposes — and what are the purposes?

The purposes are to address a real challenge for those of you — not me personally, who has it easy because I’m two hours by car from Montreal — to get home in a timely fashion because

of the decreasing number of flights available and the increasing challenges and unpredictability of those flights. Therefore, it was proposed around the leadership table to find an equitable way to at least give some predictability to those of you who have to make those arrangements and often find yourselves stuck, with no ability to get home, with all of the costs, personal and financial, that may accrue.

This motion simply proposes that the Senate rises at the later of six o'clock or the end of Government Business. Today being Thursday, we're going to be doing non-government business, as we have been doing many Thursdays and we may continue to do many Thursdays. To be sure, there will come a time, as there always is, towards the end of the fall, as we approach the break for the holidays, and, of course, in June, when we will be consumed with government business. That will probably take us well into the evenings on Thursdays, if not many other nights. But under those circumstances, as we know from past experience, time runs out for non-government business in any event.

In conclusion, thank you for raising the question and for underlying the impact that a motion like this will have on all of us who have non-government business that we want to advance. Again, I submit that no privilege has been breached, that this is a classic example of the Senate being responsible for its own affairs. I do hope after your ruling, Your Honour, that we can bring this to a vote and the Senate shall decide. Thank you, Your Honour.

The Hon. the Speaker: Do any other senators wish to add anything? The question would be to whom, Senator McCallum?

Senator McCallum: Senator Gold.

The Hon. the Speaker: I will take this under advisement and I will come back with a ruling. Thank you.

Hon. Yuen Pau Woo: Are we finished with the point of privilege?

The Hon. the Speaker: I asked if there were any other senators. Yes, I am. I will take it under advisement.

Senator Woo: If I may? On the motion.

The Hon. the Speaker: I'm taking it under advisement. Sorry, I didn't understand your question. Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION ADOPTED

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate), pursuant to notice of October 18, 2023, moved:

That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, October 24, 2023, at 2 p.m.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

UKRAINIAN HERITAGE MONTH BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Stan Kutcher moved second reading of Bill S-276, An Act respecting Ukrainian Heritage Month.

He said: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Bill S-276, An Act respecting Ukrainian Heritage Month. When passed, it will designate September of every year as Ukrainian heritage month across Canada, a time to celebrate from coast to coast the contributions Ukrainian Canadians have made to the tapestry of our country.

• (1520)

We all know what the word “heritage” means, but it is worthwhile to take a moment and consider its importance. Our heritage is what we have inherited from the past, those things that we value and enjoy in the present and that which we strive to preserve and pass on to future generations.

Heritage is a mixture of things — ideas, memories and hopes. It is something that each of us as a member of Canadian society brings to the tapestry that is our place. It is something that each of us uses to understand and respect ourselves, to share that understanding with others and to help us better understand and respect our fellow travellers through sharing and discovering their heritage. In short, our heritage is a celebration of who we are, who we aspire to be and part of the glue that binds us to each other.

I am bringing forward this bill to honour my Ukrainian heritage, with the support and encouragement of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, the Ukrainian diaspora, recently arrived Ukrainians seeking refuge here and MP Yvan Baker, who has brought forward similar legislation in the other place.

As I do this, I want to confirm to all who are listening that I also take this time to acknowledge that I respect and want to learn more about your heritage — for in that mutual journey of discovery, we can hope to better understand each other and, by so doing, define and reach for a better common tomorrow.

I am privileged to stand here in this chamber to share with you the story of my parents and grandparents. They came to this country from Ukraine, having lost all their property, many of their friends and most members of their own families to Russian and Nazi forces that sought to destroy them, their identity and their futures. They were among numerous Ukrainians who sought refuge in Canada following World War II and found a safe landing for their families so that they could live in peace, without fear, and flourish for generations to come.

Once here, they became part of a much larger and established Ukrainian diaspora that traces its roots to the call for “men in sheepskin coats” issued by Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior, who chose to welcome Eastern European farmers to Canada as an immigration strategy to settle the West between 1896 and 1902. His remembered phrase stating what he believed Canada needed to settle the Prairies was “. . . a stalwart peasant in a sheep-skin coat, born on the soil, whose forefathers have been farmers for ten generations”

Thousands living in what is now Western Canada answered this call and, by their sweat and toil, helped turn Canada into the agricultural powerhouse that it is today. Indeed, some members of this chamber can trace their family stories back to this time.

The bond between Canada and Ukraine has been forged over many decades and is still being moulded. Since February 2022, all Canadians have become keenly aware of these bonds between Canada and Ukraine.

Russia’s genocidal and illegal war on Ukraine has reminded us of the historic tragedies that we hoped were long gone but that are now re-emerging. This invasion not only threatened to destroy Ukraine but is also an attack on the shared values that bind us together — values such as human rights, democracy and the international rule of law.

Although I anguished over the loss of my mother, who died with COVID in a nursing home during the height of the pandemic, I am in some way thankful that she passed before the Russian invasion. I could not imagine how horrible it would have been for her, at her advanced age, to relive the traumas of her childhood and the memories of how those family members who survived the war suffered horribly under Stalin and subsequent Russian dictators.

This history is part of the heritage that defines Ukrainian Canadians and binds them to others living in this country whose heritage includes similar memories. It is a history with deep and tragic roots, including about 4 million deaths during Holodomor, the Stalin-imposed famine, and between 8 and 14 million killed in World War II.

As our previous colleague senator Paul Yuzyk stated in his 1964 speech in this chamber, it is:

. . . the living human spirit of truth, justice and liberty, which ultimately must prevail for Ukraine and all oppressed peoples who are still struggling for their freedom against Russian communist imperialism. The free countries of the world, including Canada, must mobilize world opinion against the largest existing totalitarian empire

Sadly, friends, this challenge still confronts us today.

There are now more than 1.3 million people of Ukrainian heritage living in Canada, close to about 4% of our population. My family is counted among those numbers, beginning with my grandparents, parents, myself, my two brothers and then our children and grandchildren. As a boy, I didn’t speak English until I started elementary school. As was the case in many refugee

homes, the mother tongue was the language of the household. For us, it was Ukrainian. Since my grandparents never learned to speak English, that was the language that bound me to them.

The years passed, and due to family circumstances and economic realities, I became more and more removed from my language of origin. My familiarity with my language and culture was nourished by my Baba and Dido — grandmother and grandfather. Unfortunately, after they died, I stopped speaking Ukrainian. I had nobody in my life with whom I needed to use my mother tongue anymore.

Since the genocidal Russian war on Ukraine began and Canada started to welcome displaced Ukrainians, I have been privileged to meet many people from my homeland again seeking refuge on our shores. I have come to know a number of these recent arrivals, and these events have encouraged me to renew my cultural ties. That is why I’m bringing forward this bill.

This has also been an opportunity to reconnect with my mother tongue. It has provided me with a renewed appreciation of my roots and has rekindled an interest in understanding more about the contributions that Ukrainians have made to the history and fabric of Canada. In fact, colleagues, I have been taking Ukrainian lessons from a young professional who, along with her family, is making a difference through their work and community involvement since arriving in Canada. I am improving with every lesson and soon hope to be able to speak Ukrainian at the age of 71 almost as well as I spoke it when I was 6.

Part of what I hope to accomplish by bringing this bill to our chamber is to encourage all of us to learn more about our own heritage, as I have been learning about mine, and to use that journey to help us better know ourselves and better understand each other.

September is a notable month for Canadians of Ukrainian heritage, as it was in September over 125 years ago, when it is believed the first Ukrainian immigrants arrived in Canada. As I mentioned earlier, this was during the time when Canada was promoting the immigration of farmers from Eastern Europe to settle the West. Ivan Pylypiw and Vasyl Eleniak arrived in Canada on September 7, 1891. This day is marked in Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario as Ukrainian Heritage Day.

Marking the month of September nationally would include these days while concurrently allowing for celebrations to occur from coast to coast at times that would serve the needs of various communities.

Many of these early arrivals settled in the Prairie provinces and farmed before moving to urban settings and taking on other jobs. Many served in our Armed Forces in both world wars and, like so many other ethnocultural groups in this country, paid for their place in Canada with their blood.

There are also many stories of these early Ukrainian Prairie settlers being helped by their Indigenous neighbours. Indeed, these bonds between Indigenous and Ukrainian communities are symbolized by the kokum scarf. I have noticed, as have many of you in this chamber, that some of our colleagues have been wearing this symbol of appreciation and mutual respect.

We are fortunate in Canada to be part of a tapestry that was woven by many hands. The important contributions made by Ukrainian Canadians, throughout our history and in our present, have helped form the country that we live in today.

This bill is an opportunity to recognize that heritage and celebrate the impactful role that Ukrainian Canadians have played in our social, economic, political and cultural fabric. It would also provide opportunities for learning and education on the shared values of rules-based governance and democracy that are the foundation of Canada's support for Ukraine during this challenging time.

• (1530)

There are countless Canadians of Ukrainian heritage who have made contributions to our country in the fields of science, the arts, the Canadian Armed Forces, athletics, business and politics. They have played a part in weaving the tapestry of the Canada of yesterday, today and tomorrow.

I will take a moment to highlight only a few here:

Individuals such as Roberta Bondar — the first Canadian woman and second Canadian in space — a neurologist, who is a pioneer in space medicine research. She is also an accomplished nature photographer. Dr. Bondar is a role model to many who dream big.

Sylvia Fedoruk was another medical pioneer who worked as a medical physicist in the area of the uses of radioactive isotopes and cancer treatment. She was a professor who became the first woman named chancellor of the University of Saskatchewan in 1986. Fedoruk also excelled at baseball, track and curling. She is an inductee into the Canada's Curling Hall of Fame, and was the president of the Canadian Ladies Curling Association. Maybe Senator Plett's granddaughter will one day be in that same position. This trailblazer accomplished many firsts over her lifetime, including becoming the first female lieutenant governor of Saskatchewan in 1988. She wove many threads into the fabric of our country's history.

Ray Hnatyshyn was also from Saskatchewan. His father was Canada's first Ukrainian-born senator. Ray served as a member of the House of Commons from 1974 until 1988, and served in the cabinets of both Joe Clark and Brian Mulroney. On January 29, 1990, he was sworn into office as Canada's Governor General where he transformed that office into one that celebrated his phrase, "The governor general belongs to the people of Canada."

For decades, Canadian households tuned in to test their knowledge with "Jeopardy" host Alex Trebek. Trebek, whose father came to Canada as a boy from Ukraine, worked at the CBC before taking up the helm of "Jeopardy."

Playwright and novelist George Ryga tells us about the Canadian experience in his writing. Raised in a northern Alberta farming community, he rose to prominence despite little formal education. *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* and *The Other Plays* are his depiction of the plight of Indigenous peoples struggling to be heard.

Musicians from all genres draw from their Ukrainian heritage, such as Randy Bachman, Paul Brandt, Chantal Kreviazuk, LUBA and Ivan and Stefan Doroschuk from Men Without Hats. I know my seat mate will know all about that.

There are countless athletes of Ukrainian descent that have represented Canada, especially NHL hockey players including Wayne Gretzky and my own cousin Mark Osborne. Mark is much less known than Mr. Gretzky and, sadly, he spent more than a decade-and-a-half playing for the Maple Leafs. What can you do? It should have been the Canadiens.

Senators, this chamber has several current members of Ukrainian descent. There have been many before us. I remember making this connection with Senator Andreychuk before her retirement.

One such distinguished senator was Paul Yuzyk, who was a leader within the Canadian Ukrainian community and has been called the "father of multiculturalism." He set the stage for a shift in the underlying ethnocultural values of the Canada we see today. His first speech in the Red Chamber was centred around the concept of multiculturalism. He insisted that all ethnic groups deserved to be recognized as partners in the Canadian mosaic. In his March 3, 1964, speech entitled "Canada: A Multicultural Nation," he pointed out that Indigenous peoples were in Canada long before the coming of French and English settlers. He saw our multicultural reality as "unity in our diversity" and challenged our nation to embrace and celebrate that reality. In that speech, he pointed out this journey, if successful, would benefit not only Canada but the world community as well. He said:

If we succeed . . . to evolve the pattern of unity in continuing diversity . . . this will serve as a precedent (model) for other states in the world . . . It will be Canada's contribution to the world.

I hope that all of us in this chamber recognize the value of unity in our diversity. Our task is to better learn how we can harness the good in the ties that bind us while avoiding the incitements of those who would use our diversity as an excuse to rend us asunder.

The vyshyvanka is a symbol of that call for understanding, respect and a willingness to work together for the common good. Traditionally, the vyshyvanka is a handmade blouse sewn of natural materials and embroidered with threads of various colours. Ukrainians believe embroidery has a talismanic meaning, the power to protect a person from harm and to bring good luck.

The vyshyvanka is a symbol of the beauty that is created when threads of many colours are woven together. It is a symbol of how every one of us can link with others to create something much greater than the sum of our parts.

Senators, we are living in a time that calls for more celebration of the things that bind us together in the face of the things that pull us apart. This is why I am seeking your support to move this bill celebrating Ukrainian heritage quickly through this chamber and over to the other place.

D'akuju. Thank you. *Wela'liog.*

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Andrew Cardozo: Thank you, Senator Kutcher, for that speech and for introducing this bill. I happen to think that heritage months dedicated to various communities are extremely important because they really place the community in Canada as opposed to simply looking at, for example, national days of other countries.

As you have outlined in brief — because you could have spoken for hours about the contributions of the Ukrainian-Canadian community — there has been a significant contribution. Certainly, the contribution of our late colleague senator Paul Yuzyk in terms of multiculturalism back in 1964 was an important one in developing what was then the multiculturalism policy introduced in 1971 and the act in 1988, I believe.

During the years of Soviet domination of Ukraine, I think it's fair to say that Ukrainian language and culture were more alive, well protected and growing in Canada than it was in Ukraine. And here we are in another situation where there is another attempt by Russia to stamp out Ukrainian culture, language and people. Are we back into that space? Is there a sad similarity to that period? How do you see the role of Ukrainian Canadians, not only in that situation, but reminding us of our role as citizens of the world in understanding the various cultures?

Senator Kutcher: Thank you, senator. One of the most important things about cultural appreciation is that, as we learn to appreciate our own heritage, we have the opportunity to equally appreciate everybody else's heritage. That is one of the gifts, as Senator Yussuff pointed out, that Canada can give the world.

We are all too aware of different places in the world and, indeed, in our own history where we have vigorously stamped out the culture of others, where we have not treated other people with respect and dignity, where we have “othered” them and discounted their humanity, language and identity. We're better than that.

We can't avoid that we have had that history in Canada. We can't avoid that history happens over and over again in the world. However, we can say that we can learn from those terrible atrocities and the difficulties of the past, and that we have a responsibility here — in our own country — to bring healing to the damage that we have caused. Also, as you point out, it's important to stand up for other countries who are faced with similar circumstances.

• (1540)

Thank you for your question.

Hon. Michael L. MacDonald: That was a great speech; I really enjoyed it. I want to make a clarification for the chamber. You talk about how identity can be dismissed. You mentioned both the French and the English, but you probably should have said the French and the British — because although the English

are British, the British aren't necessarily English. The British are a multicultural people. I know this because most of my ancestors are British, but very few of them are English.

As you talk about the eradication of culture and language, Cape Breton is filled with the eradication of both. My grandparents were all fluent Gaelic speakers. It is the third most common European language in this country. In fact, it was the third most common language in the country at the time of Confederation. In Cape Breton, my father and all of my grandparents had their language suppressed.

One of the most remarkable things about it is the following: In school, usually the person doing the suppression spoke the language themselves, so it was a strange dichotomy. I just wanted to put that on the record.

Do you agree?

Senator Kutcher: Thank you for that question, Senator MacDonald.

You very poignantly pointed out to us how important this is, and I thank you for doing that.

Senator Cordy and I had the privilege of being at the opening of the Celtic Colours International Festival just last week. It is amazing and joyous to see the revival of the Gaelic culture, and the incredible richness that culture brings to all of us.

It's with great disappointment that we look at what we lost — because just think of what we could be, had we not lost it. Now we have to get it back.

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Hon. René Cormier: Thank you very much, Senator Kutcher, for your eloquent speech on the importance of culture — specifically Ukrainian culture, of course, but also culture in general. I had the immense privilege of welcoming a group of Ukrainians who had arrived in New Brunswick to my francophone region. Through music, we were able to create an incredible bond between our two communities.

We know that culture is a provincial jurisdiction, but wouldn't it be a good idea to have more programs at the federal level to help different cultures come together, since it is these kinds of engagements that strengthen our country culturally? Would you agree with that?

[*English*]

Senator Kutcher: Thank you very much for your question, Senator Cormier, and also for your leadership in improving the Franco-Canadian culture — the Canadian culture. It is just so important. Thank you for that, and also for your musical talents, which we wish we heard more of.

When I first learned to play the harmonica, the first song that I played — and it just came out of nowhere — was the “Kolomeyka,” which is a Ukrainian dance.

I completely agree with you; frankly, I would like to see much more federal investment in everything that we can do to help us better understand each other, and I think it must begin with our young people. I would like to see investment in Canada so that our young people can go from coast to coast to coast in order to live and experience culture and community from people who are not like the people that live down the street from us — rather it's people we need to get to know better. I think we would have a lot fewer conflicts in this country amongst ourselves — this internecine warfare, which is not necessary — if we had the opportunity to spend more time living and learning with each other.

Thank you.

Hon. Donna Dasko: Thank you very much, Senator Kutcher, for your wonderful comments. I share your Ukrainian heritage, and I very much value what you have said today, especially your emphasis on the positive. Of course, we are now in a terrible situation that's facing Ukraine. Both of us spoke last night to Senator Omidvar's bill with respect to the seizure of Russian assets. I appreciate your mention of the Holodomor — this is an example of Soviet terror on Ukraine.

This is supposed to be a question, so I'll ask it this way: One of the places that I find tremendously inspiring is the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg. That's my hometown. There is a wonderful exhibit there about the Holodomor, as well as the Holocaust, and many other stories of terror.

Would you encourage all of our colleagues to visit the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in my hometown of Winnipeg? Thank you.

Senator Kutcher: Thank you very much for that question, Senator Dasko.

An Hon. Senator: Say “no.”

Senator Kutcher: Of course, I am going to say “yes,” but I want to put a caveat in here while everyone is listening. I would expect that you would arrange for a wonderful meal of *varenyky*, *holopchi* and everything else, which would make it much better for us to visit — and definitely the music.

Thank you for that suggestion, and thank you for offering your hospitality.

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): I'll start, but first of all, let me echo Senator Dasko's invitation. Although it may be her hometown, she fled Winnipeg — I'm not sure why.

I am still there, but I would also encourage you to come and visit the wonderful Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

Thank you, Senator Kutcher, for your speech — I agree with all aspects of it. I'm not Ukrainian; I'm Mennonite. But, of course, after the Mennonites left Holland, they went to Poland. They fled communism there and went to Ukraine, and many of them suffered and died during the Holodomor as well.

There are many similarities between Mennonites and Ukrainians — certainly *varenyky* being one of them.

Senator Kutcher, thank you; I do want to speak to this. I appreciate what you have said.

Your Honour, with that in mind, I will prepare my notes, and I would like to adjourn for the balance of my time.

(On motion of Senator Plett, debate adjourned.)

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS BILL

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Leo Housakos (Acting Deputy Leader of the Opposition) moved second reading of Bill C-281, An Act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act, the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act (Sergei Magnitsky Law), the Broadcasting Act and the Prohibiting Cluster Munitions Act.

He said: Honourable senators, today I rise to speak about Bill C-281, the international human rights act.

This bill was authored and introduced in the other place by my Conservative colleague Philip Lawrence who is the Member of Parliament for Northumberland—Peterborough South. I want to commend MP Lawrence for bringing this bill forward, and for his commitment to upholding human rights around the world. This bill will strengthen Canada's ability to say that we are walking the talk on upholding and promoting human rights on a global scale — a cause that resonates to the core of our Canadian values.

Bill C-281 has several provisions, including amendments to the Sergei Magnitsky Law, the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act, the Prohibiting Cluster Munitions Act and the Broadcasting Act. Each provision addresses a gap in Parliament's ability to hold the government accountable in Canada's defence of human rights around the world, a cause that I'm sure senators can agree transcends party lines and the government of the day.

• (1550)

Let me first speak to the amendment to the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act, colloquially referred to as the Magnitsky Act. The Magnitsky Act equips our government with another tool to levy sanctions against human rights violators. However, I am disappointed to say that this tool has not been utilized as effectively as it could and should be, especially in recent years. Astonishingly, not a single entity or individual from China, for instance, has faced sanctions by Canada under the Magnitsky Act, despite repeated calls for such actions.

Take the situation in Hong Kong, a glaring example of why Bill C-281 is so necessary in today's world. The ongoing human rights crackdown in Hong Kong, as senators know, continues despite repeated calls for the regime in Beijing to uphold its commitment to “one country, two systems.” We have seen ample evidence and many accounts of the situation on the ground in Hong Kong, but the current government has yet to lay sanctions on any official, whether it be a Hong Kong official or a PRC — People's Republic of China — official. That's despite many of

those officials having ties to Canada, whether through property ownership, family members holding Canadian passports or having been educated here.

Simply put, no one has been held accountable by our country for the human rights abuses happening in Hong Kong.

What Bill C-281 seeks to do in amending the Magnitsky Act accomplishes two things: allowing parliamentary input and providing parliamentary oversight. Essentially, it will create a mechanism through which parliamentarians will be able to recommend foreign officials, like those involved in human rights violations in Hong Kong and other places in the world, to be included on sanctions lists.

That is something I had tried to do with my own bill amending the Magnitsky Act, but it can be done with this one instead. It is all the same to me.

Part of the rationale for this measure is that parliamentarians are in touch with human rights organizations and NGOs in a way that the ministers of the day might not be. It is therefore logical that parliamentarians should be able to recommend individuals for sanction to the minister.

It is important to note, however, that the minister is not obligated to comply with such recommendations. The minister remains free to accept or refuse those recommendations — and here is where the second part comes in — but they will have to provide an explanation why. It has been the tradition of this country that ministers are individually accountable to Parliament for their own actions and those of their department.

The amendment proposed in this bill will ensure that, within 40 days of either the House of Commons or Parliament passing a motion to sanction an individual or a group of individuals, Global Affairs Canada, or GAC, will have to report back to Parliament. This would enforce a greater and, I believe, more reasonable degree of accountability. If, in fact, either the Senate, the House of Commons or both have deemed that Magnitsky Act sanctions should be enforced, it is not unreasonable for Global Affairs Canada to come to a parliamentary committee and explain why they have determined otherwise.

To be abundantly clear, I want to reiterate that this amendment to the Magnitsky Act does not force GAC to take orders from Parliament regarding sanctioning. We, as parliamentarians, appreciate that there might be other considerations to be made in issuing such sanctions and do not want to be seen as impeding or interfering with the work of government.

As I said at the start, this amendment simply allows parliamentarians to have input and to be provided an explanation when that input is not acted upon. Colleagues, this isn't about ego, a power struggle or some belief that parliamentarians know better than everyone else. I certainly do not believe so.

The author of this bill and I, as its sponsor in the Senate, genuinely believe that this measure of reporting and accountability will result in the sanctioning of more human rights abusers around the world in a more efficient and effective process. I think that's everyone's goal.

In the initial months after the Magnitsky Act came into force in Canada, we sanctioned a flurry of individuals in Myanmar, Russia and Venezuela. Since then, we have had very little activity from the government on that front. In fact, no one has been sanctioned under the Magnitsky Act since that initial flurry.

We want to put this reporting and accountability mechanism in place to encourage the government to utilize the tools it has to sanction those individuals who are committing the vilest of crimes and human rights atrocities around the world. If they aren't utilizing those tools, we should know why so we can fix whatever needs to be fixed.

Another accountability provision in this legislation also places certain reporting requirements on the Minister of Foreign Affairs in relation to the work being done by our government in protecting international human rights, requiring the publication of a report outlining those activities. Initially, this provision called for the report to include the names and circumstances of individuals that the Canadian government and Global Affairs Canada are advocating for and working to get released.

However, to address concerns that such a disclosure could actually place some of these individuals or their families in harm's way, an amendment was adopted at committee in the other place that gives the minister discretion regarding the disclosure of those names. The bill now states that the minister must make all reasonable efforts to consult with family members or representatives of the prisoners of conscience, and may decide not to include certain information in the list if a person consulted by the minister requests that the information not be included or the minister is satisfied that not including it would be in the best interests of the advancement of human rights or the personal safety of the prisoner.

That amendment was adopted in the spirit that, again, these reporting obligations are not in any way meant to restrict or obstruct GAC and the important work it does. Rather, it is designed to support the department.

We believe it will ensure that NGOs and the public will be better positioned to pressure governments around the world to release prisoners of conscience — people who are being held simply because of the beliefs and thoughts they have about the betterment of their countries. They are people who are fighting for human rights, freedom of expression and freedom of speech.

By raising public awareness in Canada and abroad about the incarceration and, sometimes, sadly, the torture of prisoners of conscience, we can give those people hope. More importantly, we can help drive out that evil, leading to the freedom of prisoners of conscience and advocates of democracy, women's rights, LGBTQ2 rights and freedom.

The next provision of this bill restricts investments in companies that violate human rights or exploit developing nations with respect to cluster munitions. These provisions underscore our commitment to upholding international standards, our responsibility that we have previously passed on the matter and international treaties to which we are signatories.

Considering that the United States is not a signatory to the Dublin Convention and does, unfortunately, manufacture these types of weapons, there was a question raised in the other place about whether we would be running the risk of being lobbied by American weapons retailers to ensure that shareholders or people involved in those companies, for example, are not targeted by the bill. My colleague in the House, MP Philip Lawrence, responded with the following:

Political pressure has been shown to be incredibly powerful. Textron, which is one of the largest arms manufacturers located in the United States, stopped producing cluster munitions and specifically stated it was because of political pressure. Therefore, with things like this legislation, which would prevent the funding through Canadian businesses of cluster munitions, not only do we have a hard line in stopping them but we also continue to ramp up the political pressure. I would be glad to work alongside the member to stop the manufacturing of cluster munitions throughout the world.

That brings us to the fourth and final provision: empowering the government to ban state propaganda outlets that operate in Canada and spread disinformation, interfering in our public debate.

In the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, we saw RT, Russia's state propaganda network, taken off Canadian airwaves. On March 16 of this year, the Government of Canada formally removed Russia Today and RT France from our airwaves on the basis that the distribution of those services were not in the public interest, as their content appears to constitute abusive comments or is likely to expose the Ukrainian people to hatred or contempt on the basis of race, or national or ethnic origin, and that their programming is antithetical to the achievement of the policy objectives of the Broadcasting Act.

Russian propaganda has no place on Canadian airwaves. In fact, no state propaganda should have a place in the Canadian broadcast system at all. Senators may recall the controversies surrounding CGTN, Beijing's state propaganda arm, with its denial of the Uyghur genocide and the broadcasting of forced confessions from dissidents.

• (1600)

The Broadcasting Act amendments in this legislation are crucial to align Canada with like-minded partners, such as the U.K., which banned CGTN in 2021. State propaganda that aims to spread disinformation is acting against Canadian interests. While I support the CRTC's decision to pull those licences, they shouldn't have had to take such a broad approach in doing so. There should have been a more straightforward mechanism put in place to support this. This bill would give the CRTC a specific tool to say that country X or Y is committing genocide and spreading its propaganda in our country and, therefore, loses its right to broadcast in Canada.

This amendment simplifies the matter for the regulator instead of requiring it to sort of gerrymander around existing rules. We believe this is a modest but necessary amendment that would allow the CRTC to protect vulnerable Canadians and fight against misinformation.

To conclude, Bill C-281, the international human rights act, is a step in the right direction. It won't solve all problems, honourable senators, but it will add another tool to Parliament's toolbox. Canada has historically had a strong commitment to upholding human rights around the world. The provisions in this bill allow us to make sure that these are not just words, but the very principles by which we stand. This bill gives parliamentarians tools to compel the government of the day to take action, and to hold it accountable for the actions it does take in upholding human rights around the world. This bill passed with unanimous consent in the House, supported by all parties, and I hope that it will also pass unanimously and in a timely fashion in this place. Thank you, colleagues.

Hon. Frances Lankin: Senator Housakos, will you take a question? Thank you very much. First of all, thank you for your effort on this and for the remarks that you have delivered today. I have two questions.

The first is with respect to the Broadcasting Act. You taught me something today in terms of the challenges that exist, which you alluded to. You talked about a more straightforward way of administering the intent of the amendment to the Broadcasting Act than the workarounds that have to be done now. I just wonder if you can provide me with a little more information on what the current situation is.

My second question is more of a comment, to say that I appreciate the sensitivity with which you described the discretion allowed to ministers, whether it's a matter of foreign relations and a Global Affairs Canada, or GAC, or government consideration about what steps might harm those relations and why those relations are important as an executive branch decision. I'm also going to ask you, with your legal background, about the challenge of intelligence to evidence. Do the processes inherent in these amendments allow for the decision makers to have full information? Considering the reasons why intelligence is not made public — protection of sources, statecraft, other sorts of things — how do we get around those sensitivities and the fact that many parliamentarians have, of late, insisted on full transparency without giving any sensitive consideration to those matters that you raised in your speech?

Senator Housakos: Thank you, Senator Lankin, for both of those questions. They are very important. You're absolutely right — when you're dealing with questions of intelligence and national security, there are things that we're not privy to as parliamentarians, nor should we be. That's why this bill is not prescriptive in that regard. It was amended to make sure ministers have the flexibility to be able to work within the confines of the information that they have.

Of course, I can go on and we can have a whole debate about our intelligence and security structure. You know very well from the position you sit in how efficient, agile, open and transparent it is. These are not easy solutions to resolve in a debate on the floor, but I hope they will be resolved because I believe they are causing challenges. We have seen far too often members of Parliament who are part of the executive branch and seem to not obtain certain information in a timely fashion, as they should have. That's another debate for another time.

I think the bill is non-prescriptive. It gives full flexibility to the minister to share whatever information they want to share when they appear before a parliamentary committee, and they won't be bound by recommendations from parliamentarians. What I think they will have is another intelligence source, because parliamentarians, especially those interested in human rights, work with various NGOs. We work with parliament-to-parliament relationships with democracies around the world, and also with countries that fall on the list of less democratic or, in some cases, even rogue countries. Even those parliamentarians in this chamber and in the House will be able to provide, I hope, added value and intelligence to the executive branch of government.

As you know from our debates on Bill C-11 and Bill C-18, I am a hawk on freedom of speech and not censoring any opinions, but even I believe there comes a point in time when we have to draw a line in the sand. That includes when we're dealing with countries that are not aligned with our values, or with blatantly undemocratic tyrants who are trampling all over rights, privileges and democracy in their own countries. I'll name some of those countries: China, Iran — Russia, of course, is right up there. I could go on. There comes a point in time when we say that enough is enough. When we see that they engage in deliberate cyberattacks and infiltration to gain influence over our economies, intellectual properties and institutions, we have to make those collective decisions, even though they go against unfettered freedom of expression. Of course, we have to do it in a diligent fashion.

Even in these latest updated amendments made to the Broadcasting Act, we took deliberate steps to try to create a framework for what the CRTC will find acceptable or not acceptable for Canadians to post and read. I don't want to relitigate that debate, but we did not address what I believe is a far more serious issue — giving the CRTC the tools to act diligently and with the speed required to combat the misinformation coming from these rogue nations.

Hon. Rebecca Patterson: Senator Housakos, would you take a question?

Senator Housakos: Absolutely.

Senator R. Patterson: This is specifically related to the "prohibiting cluster munitions" element of the act. I think this act is very supportable, but I am struck by our last speaker, who talked about our Ukrainian heritage and our support for Ukraine. While we understand that Canada will not use cluster munitions as part of how we move forward in defence, we are also supporting nations who are using cluster munitions, such as Ukraine.

How prescriptive is the act in terms of accountability provisions for those countries that do use cluster munitions? Right now, we have a bit of a balancing act to do. Thank you.

Senator Housakos: That is another very good question, senator. Canada, as you know, is a signatory to a number of treaties, particularly the Dublin treaty. We have no time for cluster munitions. We recognize that when countries enter a time of war, sometimes you even have signatories to these conventions that take drastic steps. We can get into a debate

about how justified this is at various times; I'm always of the opinion that war and violence are never justified, except in self-defence. If someone attacks my home, family and people, with all due respect to treaties and other commitments we have, all bets are off.

These are case-by-case decisions for our government and our Parliament when it comes to those particular times. You are absolutely right — we trade economically and have allies around the world who are not always completely aligned with us on everything. Cluster munitions is one of them. As we know, our largest trading partner and strongest political ally has engaged in constructing, building and selling them. I believe what this bill does is reinforce in our bilateral relationship with them that this is not something that we will tolerate. We won't tolerate being pressured into reversing our position, and my understanding and sense is that, hopefully, it will help reinforce those on the other side of the border of the forty-ninth parallel who are of the view that the Americans can defend themselves in an appropriate fashion without using this hugely destructive tool in the art of war. There are many weapons in the art of war that can be used in self-defence, and, for that matter, in offensive operations as well.

(On motion of Senator Patterson (*Nunavut*), debate adjourned.)

• (1610)

STUDY ON EMERGING ISSUES RELATED TO ITS MANDATE

FOURTH REPORT OF ENERGY, THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL
RESOURCES COMMITTEE—DEBATE ADJOURNED

On Other Business, Reports of Committees, Other, Order
No. 40, by the Honourable Bernadette Clement:

Consideration of the fourth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources, entitled *Hydrogen: A Viable Option for a Net-Zero Canada in 2050?*, tabled in the Senate on May 9, 2023.

Hon. Bernadette Clement: Honourable senators, I note that this item is at day 15. Therefore, with leave of the Senate, I ask that consideration of this item be postponed until the next sitting of the Senate.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Debate postponed until the next sitting of the Senate.)

STUDY ON ISSUES RELATING TO SECURITY AND DEFENCE IN THE ARCTIC

SIXTH REPORT OF NATIONAL SECURITY, DEFENCE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AND REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Dean, seconded by the Honourable Senator Boniface:

That the sixth report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security, Defence and Veterans Affairs, entitled *Arctic Security Under Threat: Urgent needs in a changing geopolitical and environmental landscape*, deposited with the Clerk of the Senate on June 28, 2023, be adopted and that, pursuant to rule 12-23(1), the Senate request a complete and detailed response from the government, with the Minister of National Defence being identified as minister responsible for responding to the report, in consultation with the Minister of Northern Affairs, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs and the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard.

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to the sixth report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security, Defence and Veterans Affairs.

I'd like to begin by thanking Senators Dean and Anderson and the other members of the committee for joining me alongside some of my Canadian Senators Group colleagues for the Arctic Sovereignty and Security Summit that I co-sponsored with Inuit development corporations in Iqaluit last September. I can very clearly see many of the themes raised by participants at that Summit reflected throughout the report and recommendations. I also thank the committee for going to great lengths to ensure that Arctic Indigenous voices are well represented in this report as well.

The report, entitled *Arctic Security Under Threat: Urgent needs in a changing geopolitical and environmental landscape*, touches on many issues that I have been engaged with for years, and I was very happy to see that it contained such clear, strong and compelling recommendations.

While I agree with all of the recommendations, I wanted to focus my limited speaking time today on one in particular. Recommendation 4 states:

That the Government of Canada, in the next defence policy, outline Canada's approach to deterring adversaries in the Arctic, including during the expected "gap period" between when adversaries could deploy new weapons systems and when the North American Aerospace Defense Command will have the technology to detect them.

This recommendation speaks to questions I asked of the government leader, Senator Gold, earlier today. We need to continue moving forward with our ambitious plan to strategically

invest \$38.6 billion over the next two decades on North American Aerospace Defense Command, or NORAD, modernization. Part of that includes making sure we are able to keep the North secure now, not just in 20 years. With the ongoing instability brought on by Russia's illegal war in Ukraine, and given the sadly deteriorating state of peace in other regions of the globe, we must preserve and defend the peace we currently enjoy in the Arctic.

Colleagues, I was recently in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, on Victoria Island in order to be present for the visit of U.S. Ambassador David Cohen. During the luncheon held there, he gave a speech during which he described the U.S. views on the Arctic region. He said:

In one sentence, the United States sees the Arctic region as a place free of conflict, where nations act responsibly, and where economic development and investment take place in a sustainable, secure, and transparent manner that respects the environment and the interests and cultures of Indigenous peoples.

That really spoke to me. We have a duty to Canadians and to our allies to maintain a strong, stable and secure Arctic. That is why I am so convinced that we need to focus our attention on acquiring a fleet of the P-8A Poseidon aircraft to replace our aging CP-140 Aurora aircraft. The Auditor General's 2022 report on Arctic Waters Surveillance clearly stated:

Action is needed to close gaps and put equipment renewal on a sustainable path to provide a full picture of what happens in the Arctic, which is essential to developing the actions needed to monitor maritime activities and respond to threats and incidents.

As I said in the preamble of my question today, the P-8A is currently employed by all other Five Eyes nations — namely the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand — as well as by Indo-Pacific nations such as India and South Korea.

The Canadian Multi-Mission Aircraft capability is vitally important to Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy, NATO responsibilities and maritime challenges in the Arctic. Until the Over-the-Horizon Radar is in place, the aircraft is also essential to NORAD's all-domain awareness.

The letter of acceptance to officially acquire these aircraft is set to expire on November 30, 2023. The timeline for the P-8A provides overlap with the existing capability in the CP-140 — overlap that is crucial to maintain coverage. Any other solution will, I fear, require years of development and testing. Any further extension of the CP-140 would involve risk and billions of dollars in additional cost. The P-8A will remain the only currently available aircraft that meets operational requirements for years to come. Therefore, I am anxious to see this solution secured as soon as possible.

I do know and acknowledge that there is still substantial pressure from Bombardier to have the contract go out to tender. However, I fear that opening up a competitive process could put Canada in a position where it will not be part of the coalition we have struck with our allies of interchangeable Multi-Mission

Aircraft. It is also noteworthy — and a fact — that the Bombardier aircraft simply exists on paper, while the P-8A is tested and proven. Public Services and Procurement Canada's own statement from March 27, 2023, stated that the P-8A is "... the only currently available aircraft that meets all of the CMMA operational requirements"

So why are we delaying? In my opinion, this is urgent.

Once we make this investment, Canada should also turn its attention to the variety of coordinated investments that must take place to support this modernization of our fleet. Currently, our Forward Operating Locations do not have hangars that could sufficiently house the incoming fleet of F-35s we purchased. We need longer and paved runways in the Arctic for them. As well, we desperately need to improve and modernize the telecommunications infrastructure in the North.

During that same visit, I had a chance to tour a North Warning System location — that's CAM-MAIN — in Cambridge Bay with the ambassador. I have to share with you, colleagues, that entering it was like entering a time warp. I'm old enough to remember staying at those sites when they were relatively new when I was part of Nunavut's travelling court system. I can tell you that 40 years later, they haven't changed much at all. That is frightening to me, given that we need to have a heightened awareness of what is happening in our Arctic, and we need to be able to respond to a potential threat that has spent the last few decades strategically investing in their military presence in the North.

• (1620)

The Russian North and coast are bristling with military bases, air bases and ports. I don't say this as an alarmist, but as a pragmatist. The time for action is now. It is not enough to simply announce the funding. We need to start spending it immediately and wisely.

The title of this report of the Senate Standing Committee on National Security, Defence and Veterans Affairs speaks clearly on the importance and timeliness of this study: *Arctic Security Under Threat: Urgent needs in a changing geopolitical and environmental landscape*. I wholeheartedly endorse every one of its 23 thoughtful and welcome recommendations and urge its quick adoption by the Senate.

Thank you. *Qujannamiik*, honourable senators.

Hon. Frances Lankin: Senator Patterson, will you take a question?

Senator D. Patterson: Yes.

Senator Lankin: Thank you very much. I'm sorry, colleagues, it appears I have my voice back in this place. Senator Plett's not clapping. I just want that noted on the record.

Senator Patterson, I was away when this report was tabled. I know of the work that the committee was doing and the general reputation that this report has as being thorough and very good. Recently, I had an opportunity to have a number of conversations with Senator Duncan, who, like you, shares these concerns

around Arctic security. We did, in fact, speak about the matters that you've raised, so I'm going to refer to that broadly as capital infrastructure required at this point in time.

With the reports that we have seen about foreign investment in the North in resource extraction as well as post-extraction manufacturing, and with the intersection with First Nations governments and the concerns that First Nations have about not having all of the information about these investment approaches, did your committee look at that? Are the recommendations with respect to that contained in this report? If not, is that something that the committee might consider continuing, given the timeliness of these concerns of foreign investment and the risks to national security but placed within the Arctic situation?

Senator D. Patterson: I don't have the privilege of being a member of this committee, although as a senator, I'm resident in the largest region in the Arctic. Today, I wanted to fully endorse the report.

Yes, it is clear that the committee did speak of the threats to North America from not-so-friendly nations. China considers itself a near-Arctic state, absurdly. Chinese vessels have sailed in our Northwest Passage. Russia is monitoring and threatening our airspace and, as I said, has developed weapons such as over-the-horizon supersonic missiles and torpedoes that threaten our current surveillance capabilities. I am keenly aware of these threats.

I had a chance to speak briefly to President Biden about our concern in the North about these threats not only to Canada but also to North America. So yes, the report addresses this in a timely fashion. It builds on work that has been previously done by Senate committees, including a previous report of the Senate Defence Committee and a report of the Special Senate Committee on the Arctic, which also deals with these security threats. Yes, these are issues that have been addressed in a timely manner by the committee.

I urge the Senate to adopt the report so that we can get the government response. Thank you for the questions.

(On motion of Senator Housakos, debate adjourned.)

CONTRIBUTIONS AND IMPACTS OF MÉTIS, INUIT, AND FIRST NATIONS

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Boyer, calling the attention of the Senate to the positive contributions and impacts that Métis, Inuit, and First Nations have made to Canada, and the world.

Hon. Bernadette Clement: Honourable senators, I move that further debate be adjourned until the next sitting of the Senate.

(On motion of Senator Clement, debate adjourned.)

THE SENATE

MOTION CONCERNING THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN NAGORNO-KARABAKH—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Leo Housakos (Acting Deputy Leader of the Opposition), pursuant to notice of September 28, 2023, moved:

That the Senate take note of:

- (a) the deteriorating humanitarian crisis occurring in Nagorno-Karabakh as a result of Azerbaijan's ongoing blockade of the Lachin corridor and increased military aggression against indigenous Armenian civilians in the region; and
- (b) the actions of the Aliyev regime as being dictatorial, and in violation of international law; and

That the Senate call on the Government of Canada:

- (a) to support the liberty of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh and their right to self-determination;
- (b) to immediately impose sanctions against the Azeri regime;
- (c) to demand the immediate reopening of the Lachin corridor and the release of Armenian Prisoners of War;
- (d) to provide a significant aid package through NGOs to those Armenian people forcefully displaced from their indigenous land; and
- (e) to protect the Armenian people of Nagorno-Karabakh through the presence of international peacekeeping forces.

He said: Honourable senators, today we find ourselves facing a grave and urgent situation that demands our immediate attention and action. The Indigenous Armenian population living in the Republic of Artsakh, known by some as Nagorno-Karabakh, is currently enduring a crisis of unimaginable proportions. It is our moral duty to respond to their plight — not just with words but with meaningful action. What we cannot do is continue to look away or bury our heads in the sand.

Since the end of the 44-day war in September 2020, and particularly since December 12, 2022, when Azerbaijani government violated international agreements by blocking the Lachin corridor, a humanitarian catastrophe has been unfolding. This act severed Artsakh's only connection to Armenia and the outside world, cutting off vital supplies of food, medicine, natural gas, electricity and the internet. The consequences have been dire, leading to cases of famine, malnutrition and death.

On September 19, 2023, Azerbaijan escalated this crisis with brutal military force by shelling civilians and civilian infrastructure. This resulted in more than 200 casualties in just 24 hours, including children, women and elderly. Villages have

been cut off, roads taken under Azerbaijani control, and the gruesome acts of violence have shocked those of us who are actually taking the time to watch.

In just one week, more than 120,000 innocent civilians have been forced to flee their homes, creating a humanitarian catastrophe not only in Artsakh but also in Armenia, which has had to absorb these refugees almost overnight.

• (1630)

Genocide Watch and the Lemkin Institute have classified this situation as genocide. Legal expert Luis Moreno Ocampo, former International Criminal Court chief prosecutor, asserts that what happened in Artsakh amounts to genocide.

Our own ambassador to the United Nations, the Honourable Bob Rae, called it a total failure of global diplomacy, forcible deportation and a potential crime against humanity. The Honourable Bob Rae was absolutely right, and one of the few who had the courage to stand up and call this out.

Canada, guided by its commitment to the United Nations' Responsibility to Protect, or R2P, has a moral obligation to intervene and protect populations from ethnic cleansing and genocide. This is a defining moment for Canada and, for that matter, democracies around the world. It is a test of our dedication to upholding the UN R2P commitment and supporting democracies like Armenia, Artsakh and so many that are under siege right now around the world.

Our response must extend beyond mere words and expressions of concern. It requires concrete and meaningful action. It also sometimes requires sacrifice, such as diplomatic and economic sanctions against the Azerbaijani government officials; legal action against President Aliyev at the International Criminal Court; humanitarian assistance for genocide survivors in Armenia; and the recognition of the self-determination of the Indigenous Artsakh population.

We must not repeat the mistakes of history. The Indigenous Armenian community of Artsakh, with a heritage spanning over 4,000 years, inherently possesses the right to self-determination and remedial secession.

Canada must impose sanctions against Azerbaijan government officials and enhance coordination with like-minded states. Canada must participate in an international peacekeeping force in Artsakh to ensure the safety of Artsakh Armenians as they return to their ancestral homes; provide substantial humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of innocent populations; and recognize the right to self-determination of Artsakh's Armenian population.

These actions require political courage and a commitment to establish procedures to get it done, and a real commitment if we believe in the international rule of law and human rights and democracy.

Canada has an opportunity to lead on the global stage, to be a beacon of hope and justice, as we once were a few decades ago. We must regain our status as leaders — not followers — and leave a lasting legacy that reflects our commitment to democracy, freedom and human rights.

Colleagues, democracy has never lived such difficult and precarious moments as we're going through right now. I don't need to remind anyone in this institution that there are more countries that are not democratic than countries which respect democracy, international rule of law and human rights.

Today, we are seeing tragedy unfolding in so many parts of the world. We see tyrant regimes like China putting the boot to the throat of the people of Hong Kong, threatening a vibrant democracy — a beautiful democracy just over the Taiwan Strait — just because they want to for their own political and economic ambitions.

We see the treachery going on against the Ukrainian people by a brutal dictator called Russia. The truth of the matter is we have waited too long to call out Mr. Putin and to hold him to account. That's why we're suffering the consequences that we are today, and the people of Ukraine are suffering those consequences. Sanctions should have been placed on that brutal regime years ago before they went to Ukraine.

The Indigenous people in Artsakh are being exterminated and thrown out of their homes just because they are Armenian. This is the second tragedy in a century. We stood up and gave gallant speeches in the House of Commons and in this chamber when we recognized the Armenian genocide. We said we'll stand steadfast so these tragedies never occur again. They are happening right now as we speak, but everyone has forgotten about them because there are so many crises to pick from; the media entertains us with them.

There will be other crises that pile on because there never seems to be a resolve on the part of democracies to fight back against these tyrants with tangible actions, not just press releases of concern or "We're monitoring the situation." Perhaps, after this tragedy, we can send a few million dollars in humanitarian aid — it's too late. These people are suffering those consequences, and a few million dollars announced by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to help these displaced people — it is shameful to be honest with you; it's embarrassing.

What is happening in Israel today? We have a terrorist organization going against an Indigenous people and trying to brutally remove them from their homeland just because they are Jews.

It amazes me how this movie replays itself over and over again. We never seem to learn from history that if you don't push back on dictators and tyrants, punch them in the nose and tell them we're not going to accept this, they will continue to be emboldened and move the yardsticks forward.

I want to draw attention to just one more crisis going on in the world and call on our government and those of western democracies to show some resolve. Just because the people of Artsakh and the people of Armenia don't have oil and gas, they shouldn't be less important to us than other regimes.

The action we can take is obviously going to be a sacrifice on our side because a lot of these rogue countries — if it's China, Russia, Iran, Cuba or Turkey — we do business with them. We're facing a crisis right now in Israel. Hamas didn't occur last week. Hamas has been supported by nations like Qatar from where we are importing hundreds of millions of dollars of their oil and gas. We're buying it in Quebec when I go to the gas pump. What do you think they are doing with the proceeds of that revenue? They are funnelling it to organizations like Hamas.

Hamas has no food, water and medication for the Palestinian people in Gaza, but they have tons of rockets. They are not running out of rockets, are they? Why? We are contributing to that process.

The people of Cuba are suffering, but we are still doing business in Cuba because it's helping a few of our investors and a few of our companies are profiting from it.

Right now, we're still dealing with nations like Turkey, which has more journalists in prison than any other country on earth, but we close a blind eye to all this.

Colleagues, if I'm a little bit passionate about it, it's because I really believe that we need to be consistent. If we do genuinely care about democracy, freedom, human rights and the cause of humanity, we have to stand up and fight for these values. It doesn't matter if it's in Ukraine, in Hong Kong or in defending Taiwan or Israel, legitimately, we have to also defend the people of Artsakh who are being displaced.

I remind every single person that when Adolf Hitler was sitting around the table with his final brutal solution, they asked him, "If we carry on with this extermination of innocent people just because they are Jews, what is going to happen?" Hitler said, "Who remembers the Armenians?" Right? That genocide happened only 25 years earlier.

This is what is going on again. We are repeating history. We are forgetting these people again. I repeat: Why? Because they are surrounded by bullies and it's a too much of an effort? I think we have to stand up as parliamentarians. We have to draw attention to this human tragedy. We have to take action and call on our governments.

This cannot be resolved only by the Government of Canada. Every single western democracy that genuinely believes in democracy — not just navel-gazing — has to take action. It is called economic action, diplomatic action and even more if required to protect these innocent people in Artsakh. Today, they have been moved out of their homes, and no one around the

world is talking about it. Thank you for listening to me on this Thursday afternoon. I thought these people needed to have a voice. Thank you so much.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

(On motion of Senator Clement, debate adjourned.)

(At 4:39 p.m., the Senate was continued until Tuesday, October 24, 2023, at 2 p.m.)

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