



# DEBATES OF THE SENATE

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(HANSARD)

Thursday, June 13, 2024

The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,  
Speaker

## CONTENTS

(Daily index of proceedings appears at back of this issue).

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## THE SENATE

Thursday, June 13, 2024

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

Prayers.

### SENATORS' STATEMENTS

#### YUKON FIRST NATIONS GRADUATES

**Hon. Pat Duncan:** Honourable senators, I rise today on the one hundred and twenty-sixth anniversary of the Yukon Act and in celebration of National Indigenous History Month to share with you the celebration of Yukon First Nations graduates. Throughout Canada, students of all ages are now completing periods of study and considering the next steps in their learning journey. For some, especially the high schools, there are gowns selected, tuxes rented and appointments booked to ensure the graduates look their very best.

You have heard colleagues reference — and me celebrate — the document *Together Today for our Children Tomorrow*. Recently, at the Yukon University convocation ceremony, David Silas — himself a Yukon Selkirk First Nation citizen — stated, “. . . we are the Children of Tomorrow.”

For a number of years now, the Council of Yukon First Nations has held a special celebration to honour these Children of Tomorrow, the First Nations high school graduates.

The effort to truly celebrate these young individuals begins a year ahead of time with the gathering of mothers, aunts, grandmas and special people in the lives of the graduates. They come together to sew the distinct, special regalia worn by the graduates at the ceremony.

The graduation regalia — beaded moosehide dresses and vests — are a reflection of the student, their First Nation and the Yukon. These items are not simply clothing. They are works of art made with love, care and great skill.

Such works of art — 14 pieces, each a reflection of a Yukon First Nations student — have been gathered together in the exhibition *Honouring Our Future: Yukon First Nations Graduation Regalia*, which toured the Yukon from 2020 to 2023, and made available for everyone to appreciate.

Honourable senators, a picture is worth a thousand words — or, in speaking terms, about a minute and half. As I have limited time and mere words cannot do justice to the handiwork of these individuals, you have received a postcard with a picture of Sarah Telep's white tanned moosehide gown with fireweed beaded along one side. On the reverse, you will find Nevada Joe's vest. The beaded wolf on the upper back is taken from the baby belt that had been beaded for his mother. Truly Canadian, the hockey emblems and the number of his favourite player will be familiar to many colleagues, particularly Senator Loffreda, and reflect

this young man's passion for Canada's game and his pride in his Yukon First Nation. These are just two samples from the exhibition.

Honourable senators, you will also note that the postcard advises you of the dates of the next exhibit: June 15 to September 21, at Canada House in Trafalgar Square in London, England. Senators and other Canadians who find themselves there, please do stop by and see these pieces of living Yukon history, an opportunity to share our reconciliation journey, Honouring Our Future, and to celebrate the Children of Tomorrow, who are leading us into the future today.

Safe travels to these pieces and the curators who care for them.

Thank you. *Shàw níthän. Gùnálchìsh. Mahsi'cho.*

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

#### THE BANGOR SAWMILL

**Hon. Réjean Aucoin:** Honourable senators, today, I want to pay tribute to a cultural and historic treasure that we just lost in Nova Scotia. The Bangor sawmill on the Meteghan River at St. Mary's Bay was destroyed in a fire last weekend.

Built in 1870 by Joe Maillet, this water-powered sawmill was the last functioning mill of its kind when I visited it a few years ago. There used to be 10 such mills on the Meteghan River back in the day.

In 1993, it was purchased by the Bangor Development Commission. The mill and its museum served as an interpretive centre where locals, tourists and school groups came to immerse themselves in its history. The president of the commission, Denise Comeau Deshautels, says that she is saddened by the disaster. Recently, the community had raised \$50,000 to repair the dam.

The Bangor sawmill has a close connection with the Senate, since the late Senator Comeau worked there as student, and he also volunteered with the Bangor Development Commission after he retired.

St. Mary's Bay is part of the municipality of Clare, which was incorporated in 1879. After the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1763 and after the expulsion, many Acadians returned to Nova Scotia, but not to their former lands, which were now occupied.

Joseph Dugas and his family landed at Pointe-à-Major and founded the village of Grosse Coques in 1768. The French language, a cornerstone of Acadian identity, still resonates in the region's many villages, including Corberrie, Anse-des-Belliveau, Mavillette, Rivière-aux-Saumons, Petit-Ruisseau and Comeauville.

Expressions from fishing vernacular enliven the local language. You might hear “amarre tes souliers” for “tie your shoelaces,” “havre icitte que je débarque” for “stop here so I can get out,” “jette-moi” for “wait for me” or “rambri” for “wall.”

Fishing is a lucrative business nowadays, and the region boasts several fish plants and a shipyard. Clare is the only Nova Scotia municipality that operates in French, and it’s home to both the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial, the province’s Acadian school board, and Nova Scotia’s only French-language university.

Dear colleagues, I invite you to visit St. Mary’s Bay, and I’d like to leave you with lyrics from Jean-Louis Belliveau’s song about another Clare mill that burned down, the Clements Mill: “One summer’s eve in Concession, there was a deadly conflagration, down at the Clements Mill.”

Thank you.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

#### OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES 2024

**Hon. Chantal Petitclerc:** Colleagues, as you are well aware, the Summer Olympics in Paris kick off in 43 days, and the Paralympic Games begin in 76 days.

I retired in 2008, but I must admit that I still sometimes define myself as a proud Paralympian, with a pride that never fades and is revived every two years. Seeing our athletes work so hard to push their limits, realize their dreams and pursue ambitious goals reminds me why I’m proud to be Canadian.

[*English*]

June is also Pride Month, a month to commemorate all the contributions that 2SLGBTQIA individuals make to our country. This year, as always, that pride extends to so much more. Many of our Paralympic athletes are part of this community and deserve a whole lot of love and encouragement. This year, I want to highlight them.

Being a person with a disability comes with its share of obstacles. Being a Paralympian also has its challenges, even today. Being a Paralympic athlete belonging to the 2SLGBTQIA community adds a new level of challenges — and honestly, stigmas remain even now. Today, I want to highlight their determination in living their most authentic lives, in their way and how they want. I want to highlight their love of sport and the fact that anyone in Canada can chase a dream, no matter who they are, where they come from or what limitations, setbacks or obstacles they may have in their lives.

Colleagues, if you can, take the time this summer to communicate with an athlete from your region going to Paris this year by email or social media — if you know them personally, even better. Let them know how proud of them you are.

[ Senator Aucoin ]

• (1410)

During Pride Month, let’s not forget that pride is not only found within us for our own individual accomplishments, it’s also found — and mainly, probably — through others in how they inspire us and how they impact us. That, dear colleagues, is Canadian pride, and that is what our athletes will bring to us.

To all our athletes, know that we will be cheering loudly and that we can’t wait to see you perform in Paris.

Thank you, *meegwetch*.

#### NATIONAL INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH

**Hon. Paul J. Prosper:** Honourable senators, some say that culture is within language. I rise today to speak on National Indigenous History Month. Indigenous people are all about sharing stories. I will weave some stories together during my speech.

Last week, I spent some time with my dear friend Doug. Doug lost his mom, Kathlin Sorbey, last May 24. Kathlin attended various Indian day schools and, later, the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School. Despite this, she was viewed as a language and cultural ambassador of the Mi’kmaq.

Kathlin’s brother was Grand Keptin Alex Denny of the Mi’kmaq Grand Council. A strong proponent of the Mi’kmaq language, he would often say that everyone can return to their country of origin and learn their mother tongue. That is, everyone except the Mi’kmaq.

I grew up in Paqtnekek, beside my *kiju* — grandmother — Kaloline Prosper. Her English was very limited, and this was similar to my understanding of Mi’kmaq. Our awkward meetings left me feeling stupid, inadequate and disconnected from my identity as a Mi’kmaq person.

The Mi’kmaq language is carved from time, spirit and the geography of our traditional lands called Mi’kma’ki.

Now, Doug’s mom, Kathlin, spoke excellent Mi’kmaq and English. Every time I spoke to her, I would feel grounded and connected. Last Mother’s Day, Doug visited his mom in the hospital. He gave her this poem which reads:

#### MOM

Sometimes I feel the shame of not having the ability to comfort you in Mi’kmaw; nor the ability to be taught and hear your story in Mi’kmaw. But today I want to remind you that the greatest gifts you have given to me were never conveyed by word — whether in English or Mi’kmaw. Instead, your greatest gift to me is Your Example:

Your Example of Sobriety — within a community in need of healing;

Your Example of Generosity and Kindness — in the midst of poverty;

Your Example of Obstinate Fortitude — despite institutional abuse

Your Example of Equality — in a world tainted by racism

Your example of Joyfulness; in a world that takes itself too seriously.

*Wela'liog.* Thank you very much.

### THE AFRICADIAN EMPOWERMENT ACADEMY

**Hon. Wanda Thomas Bernard:** Honourable senators, I rise today on this unceded and unsundered territory of the Anishinaabeg Algonquin Nation to bring attention to the 10-year anniversary of The Africadian Empowerment Academy — AEA — formerly known as the East Preston Empowerment Academy. AEA is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

The AEA is a non-profit education and skills development-based organization, designed to empower and equip African Nova Scotians to pursue and fulfill their dreams and aspirations. As one of four founding members with a staff of one 10 years ago, I am excited to see how AEA has grown now to a staff of 14 and an active board of directors. In these 10 short years, AEA has served about 1,500 people in its various programs.

AEA strives to aid African Nova Scotians to become full participants and recognized in the fabric of Nova Scotia's vibrant economy. AEA inspires and helps people of African descent achieve their educational and professional development goals as a pathway to individual and collective empowerment through the skilled trades.

Their Shipbuilding Cohort, in partnership with Irving Shipbuilding and the Nova Scotia Community College, was the most successful of all the Irving cohort programs for equity-deserving groups, including women and Indigenous people. In 2021, The Africadian Empowerment Academy released an economic and social impact study which was conducted by Deloitte. It concluded that AEA graduates contributed more than \$1 million to the province's gross domestic product over a four-year period, and more than 70% of their graduates reported an increase in income after graduating from the program.

The AEA programs provide lead-in readiness and wraparound support for students in skilled trades. They offer Youth in Trades programming, with March break camps for trades and paid summer employment with both government departments and private companies. These programs introduce young Black youth to the trades and offer them meaningful summer jobs, and they actively engage community partners.

Colleagues, it is my privilege to publicly congratulate The Africadian Empowerment Academy for their decade of critical work, bringing economic prosperity to African Nova Scotians through professional development opportunities such as these.

*Asante,* thank you.

### NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

#### SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

**Hon. Donna Dasko:** Last week, honourable senators in this chamber and Canadians across this country commemorated the eightieth anniversary of D-Day, the Allied landing on the beaches of Normandy, the largest seaborne invasion in history and the final stage of the Allied push to defeat Nazi Germany.

Today, I rise to recognize an event that took place five years later which is inextricably linked to this monumental event. This year marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO.

The aftermath of World War II saw much of Europe devastated. Almost 37 million Europeans died in the conflict, and the continent was left with refugee camps, rationing and millions of homeless people and orphans.

In addition, the Soviet Union was threatening elected governments across Europe. Privation remained a grave threat to freedom and stability. Thus, to deter Soviet aggression and prevent the revival of European conflict, 12 nations signed the North Atlantic Treaty on April 4, 1949. In the Treaty's famous Article 5, the new allies agreed that, "an armed attack against one or more of them . . . shall be considered an attack against them all" and that following such an attack, each ally would take "such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force" in response.

Canada was a proud founding member of NATO, our main contribution being Article 2, which committed members to maintain a free political system and to promote economic cooperation. This marked the first peacetime alliance that Canada had ever joined.

NATO maintained peace and offered a successful deterrence to the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The alliance was transformed after the collapse of the Soviet Union, but instead of disappearing, it attracted the membership of most former Warsaw Pact countries, which says a lot. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 spurred Sweden and Finland to seek membership, which now includes 32 nations.

NATO, which has been called the most successful alliance in history, will celebrate its seventy-fifth anniversary at its summit next month in Washington, D.C. In his speech to the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association last month, which I attended

with our colleagues Senators Gignac, Patterson and Carignan, Secretary General Stoltenberg assured delegates that Ukraine will be an urgent priority at the summit.

[*Translation*]

Colleagues, before Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, it would have been unusual for me to make a statement about this or any other military alliance. Like many Canadians, I took many things for granted. But that terrible and brutal invasion has made it crystal clear to me how important NATO is to our country's peace and security and how important it will be to a free and democratic Europe and a free and democratic Ukraine as we go forward.

• (1420)

NATO offers more than a defence of territory; it is a vital force for peace, democracy and our way of life.

Thank you.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### STUDY ON THE CANADIAN FOREIGN SERVICE AND ELEMENTS OF THE FOREIGN POLICY MACHINERY WITHIN GLOBAL AFFAIRS

TWELFTH REPORT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL  
TRADE COMMITTEE—GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TABLED

**Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government response to the twelfth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, entitled *More than a Vocation: Canada's Need for a 21st Century Foreign Service*, deposited with the Clerk of the Senate on December 6, 2023.

(Pursuant to rule 12-23(4), this response and the original report are deemed referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade.)

[ Senator Dasko ]

## MISCELLANEOUS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2023

TWENTY-FOURTH REPORT OF LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL  
AFFAIRS COMMITTEE PRESENTED

**Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer**, Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, presented the following report:

Thursday, June 13, 2024

The Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs has the honour to present its

### TWENTY-FOURTH REPORT

Your committee, to which was referred Bill S-17, An Act to correct certain anomalies, inconsistencies, out-dated terminology and errors and to deal with other matters of a non-controversial and uncomplicated nature in the Statutes and Regulations of Canada and to repeal certain provisions that have expired, lapsed or otherwise ceased to have effect, has, in obedience to the order of reference of May 30, 2024, examined the said bill and now reports the same with the following amendments:

1. *Delete clause 137, page 50.*
2. *Delete clause 158, page 57.*

Respectfully submitted,

MOBINA S. B. JAFFER

*Chair*

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

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

**FALL ECONOMIC STATEMENT IMPLEMENTATION  
BILL, 2023**

[English]

SEVENTEENTH REPORT OF NATIONAL FINANCE  
COMMITTEE PRESENTED

**Hon. Claude Carignan**, Chair of the Standing Senate  
Committee on National Finance, presented the following report:

Thursday, June 13, 2024

The Standing Senate Committee on National Finance has  
the honour to present its

SEVENTEENTH REPORT

Your committee, to which was referred Bill C-59, An Act  
to implement certain provisions of the fall economic  
statement tabled in Parliament on November 21, 2023 and  
certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on  
March 28, 2023, has, in obedience to the order of reference  
of Tuesday, June 4, 2024, examined the said bill and now  
reports the same without amendment but with certain  
observations, which are appended to this report.

Respectfully submitted,

CLAUDE CARIGNAN

*Chair*

(For text of observations, see today's Journals of the  
Senate, p. 2918.)

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

(On motion of Senator Moncion, bill placed on the Orders of  
the Day for third reading at the next sitting of the Senate.)

**BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION BILL, 2024, NO. 1**

EIGHTEENTH REPORT OF NATIONAL FINANCE COMMITTEE ON  
SUBJECT MATTER TABLED

**Hon. Claude Carignan:** Honourable senators, I have the  
honour to table, in both official languages, the eighteenth report  
of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, which  
deals with the subject matter of Bill C-69, An Act to implement  
certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 16,  
2024.

**CANADIAN SUSTAINABLE JOBS BILL**

TWENTY-THIRD REPORT OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE AND  
TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE PRESENTED

**Hon. Ratna Omidvar**, Chair of the Standing Senate  
Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, presented  
the following report:

Thursday, June 13, 2024

The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs,  
Science and Technology has the honour to present its

TWENTY-THIRD REPORT

Your committee, to which was referred Bill C-50, An Act  
respecting accountability, transparency and engagement to  
support the creation of sustainable jobs for workers and  
economic growth in a net-zero economy, has, in obedience  
to the order of reference of May 23, 2024, examined the said  
bill and now reports the same without amendment but with  
certain observations, which are appended to this report.

Respectfully submitted,

RATNA OMIDVAR

*Chair*

(For text of observations, see today's Journals of the  
Senate, p. 2919.)

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

(On motion of Senator Yussuff, bill placed on the Orders of the  
Day for third reading at the next sitting of the Senate.)

**CANADA LABOUR CODE  
CANADA INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS BOARD  
REGULATIONS, 2012**

BILL TO AMEND—TWENTY-FOURTH REPORT OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS,  
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE PRESENTED

**Hon. Ratna Omidvar**, Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, presented the following report:

Thursday, June 13, 2024

The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs,  
Science and Technology has the honour to present its

TWENTY-FOURTH REPORT

Your committee, to which was referred Bill C-58, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Canada Industrial Relations Board Regulations, 2012, has, in obedience to the order of reference of Thursday, June 6, 2024, examined the said bill and now reports the same without amendment but with certain observations, which are appended to this report.

Respectfully submitted,

RATNA OMIIDVAR

*Chair*

*(For text of observations, see today's Journals of the Senate, p. 2921.)*

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

*(On motion of Senator Lankin, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for third reading at the next sitting of the Senate.)*

• (1430)

*[Translation]*

**CRIMINAL CODE**

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-332, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (coercive control of intimate partner).

*(Bill read first time.)*

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

*(On motion of Senator LaBoucane-Benson, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading at the next sitting of the Senate.)*

*[English]*

**CANADIAN NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION**

ANNUAL SESSION, NOVEMBER 18-21, 2022—REPORT TABLED

**Hon. Rebecca Patterson:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association concerning the Sixty-eighth Annual Session, held in Madrid, Spain, from November 18 to 21, 2022.

BUREAU MEETING AND JOINT MEETINGS OF THE DEFENCE AND  
SECURITY COMMITTEE, THE ECONOMICS AND  
SECURITY COMMITTEE AND THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE,  
FEBRUARY 19-22, 2023—REPORT TABLED

**Hon. Rebecca Patterson:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association concerning the Bureau Meeting and Joint Meetings of the Defence and Security Committee, the Economics and Security Committee and the Political Committee, held in Brussels, Belgium, from February 19 to 22, 2023.

BUREAU MEETING AND SPRING SESSION, MAY 19-22, 2023—  
REPORT TABLED

**Hon. Rebecca Patterson:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association concerning the Bureau Meeting and Spring Session, held in Luxembourg, Luxembourg, from May 19 to 22, 2023.

ANNUAL SESSION, OCTOBER 6-9, 2023—REPORT TABLED

**Hon. Rebecca Patterson:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association concerning the Sixty-ninth Annual Session, held in Copenhagen, Denmark, from October 6 to 9, 2023.

VISIT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON FUTURE SECURITY AND  
DEFENCE CAPABILITIES, MARCH 11-15, 2024—  
REPORT TABLED

**Hon. Rebecca Patterson:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association concerning the Visit of the Sub-Committee on Future Security and Defence Capabilities, held in Boston, Massachusetts, New Haven, Connecticut and New York, New York, United States of America, from March 11 to 15, 2024.



**CANADA-JAPAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY GROUP**

CO-CHAIRS' ANNUAL VISIT, NOVEMBER 13-17, 2023—  
REPORT TABLED

**Hon. Stan Kutcher:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group concerning the Co-chairs' Annual Visit, held in Hakodate, Sapporo and Tokyo, Japan, from November 13 to 17, 2023.

**CANADA-CHINA LEGISLATIVE ASSOCIATION  
CANADA-JAPAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY GROUP**

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC PARLIAMENTARY  
FORUM, NOVEMBER 23 TO 26, 2023—REPORT TABLED

**Hon. Stan Kutcher:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-China Legislative Association and the Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group concerning the Thirty-first Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum, held in Manila, Philippines, from November 23 to 26, 2023.

**LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS**

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO MEET DURING SITTING  
OF THE SENATE

**Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer:** Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-5(a), I move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs be authorized to meet on Tuesday, June 18, 2024, for the purpose of continuing clause-by-clause consideration of Bill S-15, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act, even though the Senate may then be sitting and that rule 12-18(1) be suspended in relation thereto.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

**NEED FOR SAFE AND PRODUCTIVE DEVELOPMENT AND  
USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

**Hon. Rosemary Moodie:** Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to the need for the safe and productive development and use of artificial intelligence in Canada.

[*Translation*]

**THE SENATE**

TRIBUTES TO DEPARTING PAGES

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I have some more tributes to pages who will be leaving us this year.

Isabelle Beauchesne will be starting her final year in an arts program at Carleton University, and she's very much looking forward to what the future has in store for her. She's incredibly grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in this amazing program, and she wants to thank everyone who made her past two years as a page so memorable.

Thank you, Isabelle.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Maxim François is honoured to have had the opportunity to represent Manitoba within the Senate Page Program over the past two years. He wants to thank the Senate for making this an unforgettable experience, and he specifically wants to thank the Office of the Usher of the Black Rod for giving him this incredible opportunity. Maxim is starting his fourth year in political science this fall at the University of Ottawa. Although his time in the Page Program is drawing to an end, he hopes to remain a member of the Senate family.

Thank you very much, Maxim.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Hechun Ouyang is proud to be the first page in the history of the Senate to study at the Université du Québec en Outaouais. Hechun will be completing his bachelor's degree in computer science as an exchange student in Spain next year. Should any senator need a virtual page, he'll be available. Hechun is grateful to all Senate staff for the rewarding year he has had with us in the Senate. He's looking forward to seeing where his experiences take him.

Thank you very much, Hechun.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

[English]

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Next is Siena Pacheco. Having had the privilege of being a page this past year, Siena finishes her time with the Page Program as she graduates from Carleton University next week. She will be graduating with an Honours Bachelor of Global and International Studies, specializing in global politics with a minor in music. In the fall, she will be returning to Carleton to complete a master's degree with the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, specializing in international organizations and global public policy. She would like to thank the Usher of the Black Rod's office, her fellow pages and her family for their unwavering support this past year. Thank you, Siena.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Mira Gillis is next.

After three years, Mira's time as a page, including her time as Deputy Chief Page, has come to an end. Mira is graduating next week from Carleton University with a Bachelor of Public Affairs and Policy Management. This upcoming fall, she will be pursuing a master's degree in media and communications governance at the London School of Economics and Political Science in England. Mira is forever grateful for her time in the Senate and for all the people she has met along the way. She would like to thank her family in Windsor and in Cape Breton, her fellow pages and the Usher of the Black Rod's office for all their love and support throughout her time in Ottawa.

Thank you, Mira.

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

• (1440)

## QUESTION PERIOD

### ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

#### CARBON TAX

**Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):** Congratulations to all of the pages.

Leader, in May the Trudeau government gave the Parliamentary Budget Officer secret information about the Prime Minister's carbon tax and then put him under a gag order not to reveal it.

Earlier today, this information was revealed to the CBC. A CBC report claims that the Trudeau government's data shows that the carbon tax costs Canada's economy \$20 billion. This would work out to approximately \$1,200 in lost gross domestic product, or GDP, for every Canadian household. Leader, is the CBC report correct? If so, how can this Trudeau government continue to claim that the carbon tax is revenue neutral?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question. Indeed, the CBC report is correct, though your statement of the facts is very selective and incomplete.

What the report reveals, among other things, is the enormous cost to the economy if climate change is not acted upon.

The numbers and figures that the government commissioned were not a complete analysis of this. It did not include the \$11 billion a year of rebates going back into the economy. It did not include the billions and billions of dollars more of no action on carbon pricing.

When all of the facts are taken into account, what it does reveal is that the price on pollution is an effective measure of the impact.

**Senator Plett:** On April 1, despite the ongoing affordability crisis hurting families right across Canada, this NDP-Trudeau government hiked the carbon tax by 23%, leader. Was the report on the economic cost produced before this incompetent government pushed ahead with raising the carbon tax, or after?

Will Canadians get to see the full report and not just the CBC report?

**Senator Gold:** Again, the figures to which you are referring were not a complete analysis of the costs and benefits of carbon pricing. That is why it is not correct to zero in on only one aspect of the figures.

As I said, the figures did not include the rebates to Canadians, their injection into the economy nor the investments that are being made as a result of our transition to a cleaner, more sustainable economy.

### FINANCE

#### TAX RATES

**Hon. Leo Housakos:** Senator Gold, you seem very bothered by slogans these days. I thought that I would bring home some you might be happier with.

Let's start, Senator Gold, with "sunny ways." After nine years of Justin Trudeau, it has been nothing but sunny ways for Liberal insiders, including the Prime Minister's own family and close personal friends.

Then there is, ". . . stand up for the middle class and those working hard to join it." How about that one? Canadians are working hard all right, but the only class that they are joining after nine years of Justin is the school of hard knocks.

We also have a few that did not catch on so well, such as “. . . grow the economy . . . from the heart outwards,” or “the budget will balance itself.” Or there is this, the *pièce de résistance*, “Thank you for your donation.”

Here is a slogan for you, Senator Gold: “Try,” as in, try to do the right thing for Canadians. Try to cut taxes instead of hiking them.

Do you think Justin Trudeau can do that, just try to give Canadians relief with some tax cuts?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Well, Senator Housakos, you have not lost your touch for providing a fairly entertaining set of slogans but rather thin gruel when it comes to policy.

The fact remains —

**An Hon. Senator:** As always.

**Senator Gold:** In a very revealing interview, your leader made it quite clear that he is cleaving to a rather libertarian view of what the role of the state should be in Canada, and that is a minimal state: yes, roads, perhaps, and some infrastructure and perhaps a social safety net. This government has invested in Canada, invested in Canadians through the pandemic, invested in our transition to a cleaner, more sustainable economy and will continue to do so for the benefit of our country, our children and our grandchildren.

**Senator Housakos:** Senator Gold, you do not like Conservative slogans; it seems as if you like Liberal slogans even less. Your government just introduced a job-killing, investment-killing, retirement-killing tax under the guise of fairness. You hold the record of increasing taxes on Canadians.

Why is it that not once in the interest of fairness has your government ever considered cutting a tax? Just try it. Why is your answer always to demonize hard-working Canadians and steal their money? Why won't you give them their money and let them do what they want with it?

**An Hon. Senator:** Hear, hear.

**Senator Gold:** I am not demonizing hard-working Canadians nor insulting their intelligence. I'm standing here and explaining to you the government's position and its overall vision for this country: a vision that is taking into account climate change and capital movements in the world in terms of investing in clean and sustainable energy. It will continue to stand on its record.

## INDUSTRY

### CANADA INFRASTRUCTURE BANK

**Hon. Tony Loffreda:** Senator Gold, a new report from the Canadian Urban Institute estimates that the average cost of infrastructure needed to support housing likely exceeds \$100,000 for each newly built home. These are the costs associated with public transit, roads, waterlines, schools, recreational facilities and more.

We need to build nearly 6 million homes from now until 2030 to meet current and growing demand, but much more is involved in building prosperous, family-oriented and affordable communities.

Considering all of the federal money being injected into housing, what role, if any, does the government play in helping to coordinate new housing projects and making sure housing-enabling infrastructure is not overlooked and is adequately funded?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question and for giving me the opportunity to elaborate on why. As I have said on so many occasions, municipalities, among other players, are on the front lines when it comes to confronting some of the greatest challenges Canadians face today with regard to housing.

That is why the federal government is delivering the support that municipalities need, including \$2.40 billion through the Canada Community-Building Fund for 2023-24 to help municipalities meet their infrastructure needs; a new \$6-billion Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund to accelerate the construction and upgrading of critical housing infrastructure, including \$1 billion for municipalities to support urgent infrastructure to unlock housing; and Canada's first-ever permanent public transit funding for cities starting in 2026-27.

The federal government will continue to work with mayors to build the communities that Canadians deserve.

**Senator Loffreda:** The institute's report was funded by the Canada Infrastructure Bank, or CIB, which could obviously play an important role in funding the various amenities needed.

As you know, the bank launched the Infrastructure for Housing Initiative in March 2024 to provide low-cost financing to enable municipalities and Indigenous communities to build housing-enabling infrastructure.

How much money has been earmarked for this program? What are the eligibility criteria? Have any investments been made so far?

**Senator Gold:** Broadly speaking, the eligibility criteria are that the project must require an investment of at least \$50 million and create incremental revenues for the municipality, the borrower must be a Canadian municipality or municipally owned corporation, and, finally, the project must be new or involve significant necessary upgrades. While still a relatively new initiative, the CIB has already made significant investments, including \$140 million in the City of Brandon and the Red-Seine-Rat Wastewater Cooperative located in southeastern Manitoba, which is expected to unlock development of up to 15,000 housing units in these growing communities.

## CANADIAN HERITAGE

### MUSEUMS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

**Hon. Pat Duncan:** Senator Gold, the federal funding for the approximately 2,700 existing museums throughout Canada has decreased, even though the need for that funding is higher than ever. Budget 2024 did not include the specific funding levels that the Canadian Museums Association recommended for the MAP, the Museums Assistance Program. Senator Gold, will you raise this serious oversight with the Minister of Canadian Heritage?

Please understand that I'm not talking about the large, mainly Ottawa-based, national museums. I'm speaking about the smaller museums that are very important to the knowledge of our history and who we are as Canadians, and about the critical need for increased funding for the Museums Assistance Program.

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Well, thank you for your question. Museums are an important part of our cultural landscape. They help Canadians of all generations learn about our history and our culture. I now live in a very small rural community, but it has a local museum. There are actually many local museums in the area, and it is fascinating to learn the stories from very much the ground up in terms of, in my case, the history of Loyalist immigration, settlement and change.

• (1450)

I will certainly raise that question with the minister at the first opportunity.

**Senator Duncan:** Thank you. It being National Indigenous History Month, I also want to highlight the growing call for the repatriation of more than 1.6 million artifacts taken from this land that are now scattered throughout the world.

Why did the government decide not to increase the funding for existing museums that they've called for? Do you know of any plans related to funding the repatriation of Indigenous artifacts?

**Senator Gold:** Thank you for this question. Advancing reconciliation has many facets and dimensions. One of them, of course, is working with First Nations and other Indigenous communities to help them celebrate and use their artifacts and art as they see fit in the transmission of their culture within their communities and beyond.

I cannot speculate on future funding. I will certainly raise it with the minister when I meet with him.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

### NATIONAL SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS

**Hon. Percy E. Downe:** Senator Gold, given the disparity of treatment between the party leaders in the House of Commons and the leaders in the Senate, have you spoken directly to Minister LeBlanc to make the necessary arrangements for the

group leaders in the Senate to read the same unredacted report of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, or NSICOP, that was read by Elizabeth May, the Leader of the Green Party? They only have two MPs, and they are not even a recognized party in the House of Commons. Will the same courtesy be extended to the Senate?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question. The opportunity to seek clearance to review the unredacted report has already been granted, as we know, to federal party leaders. However, access to an unredacted version of the report has been deliberately restricted to a very small number of individuals. I can confirm, for example, that I have not been offered access, nor have many cabinet ministers.

The government is engaged in a process of examining the issue of expanded access, notably for leaders and facilitators of recognized Senate groups and caucuses. I'm sure and I hope that we all understand that the question of access to unredacted documents of this nature is serious and extremely complex. A decision to grant access to classified information would not and should not be taken lightly by this government or any other government.

As Minister LeBlanc stated before the Standing Senate Committee on National Security, Defence and Veterans Affairs, he has been made aware of the issue and is working with me and my office to get the government to a well-reasoned decision point. Senators, please have confidence that when —

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Thank you, Senator Gold.

**Senator Downe:** Senator Gold, why is there such a double standard in the treatment of the two chambers? Leaders in the House of Commons have read or booked time to read the unredacted report, and in the Senate, nothing — no arrangements for any of them to read the report.

Can the leaders of the four groups in the Senate not be trusted like the leaders of the recognized groups — even Elizabeth May — in the House of Commons? Why the double standard?

**Some Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

**Senator Gold:** Colleagues, it's important to understand that the current approach of the government to the NSICOP report is consistent with the process that was taken with regard to earlier matters concerning foreign interference, notably the recommendations of the Independent Special Rapporteur, who recommended that the government work with the leaders of opposition parties in the House of Commons to obtain the requisite security clearances.

This is the process that was implemented with respect to his report and is now being implemented for the NSICOP report. I have raised it —

**An Hon. Senator:** Time. Time.

## PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS

**Hon. Marty Klyne:** On another note, Senator Gold, last week Senator Dasko shared a poll showing that 69% of Canadians want future governments to continue appointing independent senators. Only 5% of Canadians want a return to the partisan system. However, under our Rules, some senators —

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Senator Klyne, I am going to stop the clock. I would like everyone to respect the people who are speaking, either asking a question or answering a question. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

**Senator Klyne:** Thank you, Your Honour.

Senator Gold, last week, Senator Dasko shared a poll showing that 69% of Canadians want future governments to continue appointing independent senators. Only 5% of Canadians want a return to the partisan system. However, under our Rules, some senators currently hold a de facto veto on voting on independent senators' initiatives.

In a recent speech, Senator Dalphond also highlighted that the more independent Senate does not yet have rules to ensure fairness, transparency and due diligence in our process for House of Commons private members' bills. The previous Government Representative Office, or GRO, recommended taking action on this issue within the first year of the last Parliament.

Senator Gold, should our chamber explore such potential rule changes in the fall?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Senator, thank you for your question. The GRO is always open to good ideas to advance the modernization of the Senate and would, of course, welcome an open dialogue on how the Senate can best fulfill its duty to carefully review legislation.

I would note, colleagues, that a number of proposals have been made, and many senators have ideas about this. We're talking now about private members' bills coming from the other place. Examples include a lottery system such as the one they have in the other place. In that context, the issue would benefit from a more structured and results-oriented dialogue.

My office would be very supportive of the Rules Committee engaging this in order to zero in on an approach that would have broad support across the chamber.

**Senator Klyne:** Senator Gold, on this subject, my focus is Bill C-273, MP Peter Julian's bill to ban the use of corporal punishment on kids in Canada. It's currently at report stage in the other place, answering to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action No. 6.

If Bill C-273 comes to us, would the government like to see a timely and transparent voting process on that bill?

**Senator Gold:** Thank you. Let me be clear, the government is committed to implementing all of the Calls to Action stemming from the 2015 *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. Repealing section 43 would be one more step in accomplishing that commitment, as it would be in alignment with Call to Action No. 6.

More broadly, the government shares the view that private members' bills duly passed by the elected house ought to be debated, considered and voted on in this chamber.

## FINANCE

### CAPITAL GAINS INCLUSION RATE

**Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):** Leader, a Nanos poll released earlier this week reports that one in five Canadians know someone who has used a food bank in the last year. Groceries are unaffordable for many fellow Canadians, yet the Trudeau government thinks this is a good time to raise taxes on the farmers who grow the food.

Research released by the Grain Growers of Canada shows the average grain farm will see a tax increase of 30% due to the two-thirds capital gains inclusion rate. The organization said:

This hike targets farmers' retirement plans, complicates intergenerational transfers, and threatens the long-term viability of family farms across the country.

Taxing farmers drives up food costs for Canadians, leader. How much more expensive will food become as a direct result of this tax hike?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question. The change in the inclusion rate and the capital gains tax is a broad-based measure that is not restricted to any particular industry. Rather, instead, it seeks to return us to a tax situation that existed previously.

Let us recall, colleagues, that millions of Canadians don't have any capital gains. They might get a salary. They may be gig workers, and they pay a much higher marginal rate than those of us who are privileged.

• (1500)

This change in the inclusion rate is not expected to have a material impact on food prices or any other measure, just as the price on pollution only has a marginal impact on such costs, because of the true nature of the factors that unfortunately affect rising food costs in this country and around the world.

**Senator Plett:** The Canadian Federation of Agriculture said it was frustrated and disappointed. These are significant tax changes, and they are being rammed through while the farmers are out in the fields planting their crops. That's a good point, leader. Does anyone in this incompetent Trudeau regime have respect for farmers, leader? Does anyone even understand how they work? Did anyone think to consult these farmers before they implemented this?

**Senator Gold:** The government has respect for farmers and all Canadians who are struggling and working hard for their families. This measure is not being rammed through. This measure was announced in the budget. This matter is before the House of Commons and will be voted on democratically.

[Translation]

## FINANCE

### ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

#### CARBON TAX

**Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** As already stated, earlier today the Trudeau government released internal data to the CBC which shows the carbon tax cost Canada's economy \$20 billion. This information was first provided to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, or PBO, in a letter dated May 14, 2024, from the Deputy Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada. The letter states:

The data the department is providing contains unpublished information. As such, I request you to ensure that this information is used for your office's internal purposes only and is not published or further distributed.

Senator Gold, over the last nine years, how many times has your government sent a letter to the PBO with the same request? If you don't know, could you table it?

**Senator Plett:** Just how many times?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** As I've tried to explain — and I encourage all interested senators to read the material that is now public — the information to which you refer did not include a full analysis of the costs and benefits of the price on pollution. It failed to include not only the costs of inaction, which are enormously considerable — equal to the change in GDP that is projected — but also the over \$10 billion reinvested in the economy in terms of rebates given to Canadians, as well as investments into our economy as a result of clean energy.

**Senator Martin:** But the key point here is that the Canadian public needs transparency. Regarding these instructions to the PBO about keeping it internal versus open and transparent, Senator Gold, how many times over the past nine years has your government sent similar requests to other officers or agents of Parliament? Could you make inquiries and table that information in the Senate as well?

**Senator Plett:** How many times?

**Senator Housakos:** Just how many times?

**Senator Gold:** I'm not prepared to make that engagement, senator. I'm trying to explain that within government, many analyses are done in order to inform decision making and policy-making. It is not accurate to characterize it the way you have.

### SIMPLIFIED TAX RETURNS

**Hon. Éric Forest:** Senator Gold, the Parliamentary Budget Officer published a report this morning about Canadians who don't file tax returns.

I have been deeply concerned about this situation for a long time, because these people are missing out on a number of support measures linked to tax returns. The child benefit and GST credit immediately come to mind. According to data gathered by the Parliamentary Budget Officer, 3.2 million of the most disadvantaged Canadians do not file tax returns, leaving nearly \$1.7 billion in benefits owed to them on the table.

The most surprising part is that the Canada Revenue Agency has information on these people. In some cases, for example, T4 slips were issued. How does the government explain why so little effort is being made to reach out to these very economically vulnerable Canadians?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for the question. The government is closely monitoring the number of tax returns filed by people who have been invited to use the SimpleFile by Phone automated service. At tax time in 2022, nearly 97% of those invited to participate filed their tax returns and were able to receive the credits and benefits they were eligible for.

In February 2024, the CRA issued over 1.5 million invitations to eligible lower-income and vulnerable Canadians to use SimpleFile by Phone to file their 2023 income tax and benefit returns. The CRA will increase the number of people eligible for SimpleFile by Phone to 2 million by 2025. In addition, this summer, the CRA will be piloting a new automatic income tax filing service that will help Canadians in these particular situations.

**Senator Forest:** Efforts are indeed being made, but these services are not producing the expected results. Some of the 3.2 million people who don't file a tax return are known to the Canada Revenue Agency, but many are not, perhaps because of a language barrier or because they are experiencing homelessness. The new automated system the government promised is unlikely to reach these people. Would the Government Representative agree —

**Senator Gold:** Thank you for your question. The government has made the media aware of the need to inform Canadians about the many tools available to help them apply for benefits. In addition to these tools, the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program, or CVITP, helps thousands of people get the benefits and credits they are entitled to.

This year, organizations held free tax clinics in person and online. The CRA plans to consult stakeholders, community organizations and tax experts on the next phase of Canada's automatic tax filing program beyond 2025.

• (1510)

[English]

## PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

### PROGRESS OF LEGISLATION

**Hon. Julie Miville-Dechêne:** Senator Gold, the CRTC has announced that it is delaying the implementation of Bill C-11, An Act to amend the Broadcasting Act, by at least a year. It will not be implemented until the end of 2025, after the next election. I'm concerned about this major delay because it was hoped that this bill would make French-language content more discoverable on streaming platforms like Spotify. For years, a whole generation of young Quebecers and francophones have been listening to less and less music in their own language, and so they have less contact with their culture. Could we pick up the pace a bit?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question. The government's goal with the Online Streaming Act is to ensure that Canadians see themselves and their identity reflected in the movies, television shows and music that they consume on streaming platforms and to ensure that artists are compensated for their work. This is a very important piece of legislation that we studied in depth in this chamber.

As for your question, honourable senator, the CRTC is an administrative tribunal operating at arm's length from the federal government, and I am unable to respond on its behalf.

**Senator Miville-Dechêne:** That's precisely why I have this follow-up question. Speaking of picking up the pace, the Minister of Justice has refused to commit to ensuring that the new commission created under Bill C-63 to limit online harm against children is in place before the next election. On this issue too, we are already way behind countries like Australia and Great Britain. I see this as an urgent matter. What do you think?

**Senator Gold:** Thank you for your question. This is certainly a serious problem, and that's why the government is taking action. I understand that Bill C-63 is currently at second reading in the other place and, like many of you, I look forward to reviewing this important piece of legislation as soon as it arrives here.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR SENATORS

#### THIRD REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the third report of the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators, entitled *Examine and propose to the Senate, amendments to the Ethics and Conflict of Interest Code for Senators in relation to the membership of the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators*, presented in the Senate on June 11, 2024.

**Hon. Judith G. Seidman** moved the adoption of the report.

She said: Honourable senators, this report was adopted by your Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators, pursuant to an order of reference received on May 8 following the adoption of Government Motion No. 165 by the Senate. That motion was proposed by the Government Representative in the Senate, and amended rule 12-26(1) of the *Rules of the Senate* to add the leader or facilitator of the recognized party or recognized parliamentary group with the most members — other than the government or the opposition — to propose the membership of the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators in a new session. Government Motion No. 165 included an instruction to the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators to present a report to the Senate within 30 days of the adoption of the motion to propose changes to the *Ethics and Conflict of Interest Code for Senators* in order to take account of the amendments to rule 12-26(1). This report fulfills the committee's obligation exactly as specified in the motion by making the exact same change to section 35(5) of the code. I would say that given the motion was initiated by the Government Representative, I would suggest that he is best placed to answer any further questions regarding the justification or rationale behind this change. Thank you.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

### PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARIAN

#### THIRD REPORT OF JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the third report of the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament, entitled *Appointment of Christine Ivory as Parliamentary Librarian*, tabled in the Senate on June 12, 2024.

**Hon. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia** moved the adoption of the report.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

## PHARMACARE BILL

### SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

Leave having been given to revert to Government Business, Bills, Second Reading, Order No. 2:

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Pate, seconded by the Honourable Senator McBean, for the second reading of Bill C-64, An Act respecting pharmacare.

**Hon. Wanda Thomas Bernard:** Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Bill C-64, An Act respecting pharmacare.

Pharmacare is the missing piece of medical care in this country. When medicare was introduced between 1957 and 1966 as a nationally funded health insurance program, it was considered the first stage. Almost 70 years later, we are still waiting for the next stage.

What I hope to add to the debate today is a race equity lens. I'd like to give some insight into the importance of voting in favour of this bill as a way to bring more equity to our health care system.

In the social work field, when I was working closely with families living across Nova Scotia, it was always very difficult to see people forced to make the choice between paying for medications or paying for necessities like food and housing. The most challenging situations to witness were those families with children or family members with chronic illnesses who struggled to manage. With the cost of living rapidly rising, those tough decisions are even more of a struggle today.

We heard from our colleague Senator Simons about the significance of ensuring contraceptives are available to women and gender-diverse people as a means of gender equity, so I will not repeat that information. Another gendered perspective to consider, which I witnessed in my social work practice, is the experience of women leaving domestic violence situations. They would often leave and find employment which allowed them independence and sometimes enough to make ends meet. However, as soon as a medical emergency arose for them or their children, they would then be forced to choose between their employment with no benefits or going on income support, which would provide coverage for the prescriptions they needed.

In my own family, as we navigate my husband's health conditions through the Nova Scotia health care system, I have noticed that each time a new medication is suggested for him, the first question is always this: "Do you have a drug plan?" I quickly realized this is code for: "Which medication can you afford?" I think of the people who may not receive the most ideal medication for their illness, leaving them with subpar treatments, resulting perhaps in other implications for their overall health and well-being.

For most of us in this chamber, if we receive a diagnosis and treatment plan for an illness, we do not have to make the very hard decisions about whether we can afford the cost involved in that treatment plan to restore or manage our health. Honourable colleagues, I am sure you would agree that all Canadians deserve this privilege.

In preparing to speak to this bill, I decided to consult with the Health Association of African Canadians — commonly referred to as HAAC in Nova Scotia — about this bill so they could share their perspective about the essential nature of this legislation for many Black community members. Their response highlights the necessity for an equitable approach to health care for Black Canadians:

HAAC has a mandate to support the improved health of African Canadians across our diversity. This includes having access to affordable prescription drugs and related products. We hope that a universal, single-payer pharmacare plan will mean that African Canadians who are disproportionately affected by chronic disease, including diabetes, will have access to needed prescription drugs and related products regardless of income. HAAC is hopeful that removing affordability barriers to prescription drugs and related products, as outlined in the bill, will move us closer to the equitable health care we envision.

• (1520)

Starting with expansion of coverage for contraceptive and diabetes medication is a very exciting prospect for those of us advocating for equitable health care for marginalized groups, including women, Black Canadians, Indigenous persons and those with disabilities. In fact, describing it as "exciting" is an understatement. It will be life changing for so many marginalized Canadians. I spoke about the need for a national pharmacare program in Canada about 10 years ago at the Canadian Association of Community Health Centers conference entitled "The Second Stage of Medicare." Many Canadians have been advocating for this for decades. Is it not time, colleagues, for us to act on the promise?

Numbers around health equity and race can be challenging to pinpoint because we do not have a history of collecting race-based data in Canada. However, according to the Public Health Agency of Canada, the prevalence of diabetes among Black adults is 2.1 times higher than among White adults in Canada. This is why I urge the use of a race equity lens during the committee stage study of this bill, including consulting with witnesses like the Health Association of African Canadians, or HAAC. We must examine who is falling through the cracks when it comes to pharmacare and whether this bill has the ability to catch them.



Honourable colleagues, I hope this critical race perspective prompts you to consider how the health care we take for granted in Canada — the accessible, universal health care we are purportedly all afforded — is not so universal and still leaves people making impossible decisions for their families. As Senator Moodie indicated in her speech on this bill, access to drugs should be considered a human right. I will be voting for a more equitable health care system with the enactment of Bill C-64. I encourage you to join me.

Thank you. *Asante*.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

### CITIZENSHIP ACT IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROTECTION ACT

BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING—DEBATE

**Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer** moved third reading of Bill S-235, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, as amended.

She said: Honourable senators, I rise today as a sponsor of Bill S-235. The bill proposes to amend the Citizenship Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act to provide citizenship to children who have aged out of government agencies and care.

Before continuing, let me briefly summarize what Bill S-235 is about.

In essence, Bill S-235 seeks to provide a new pathway to citizenship for children who have aged out of government agencies or foster care systems. This bill is built on three pillars: first, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; second, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; and third, the state's parental responsibility toward children in its care.

However, at this very moment, when children are taken into government agencies or foster care, they are rarely granted Canadian citizenship despite having been raised on Canadian soil, in Canadian homes and schools and within Canadian culture.

Due to the government's failure to provide citizenship to children under its care — a responsibility that effectively falls to the state acting as their guardian — these children are vulnerable to deportation to unfamiliar countries if they encounter legal trouble.

Honourable senators, this is not a new issue. The question of citizenship for these children has been raised before in this chamber.

In 2017, Senator Oh brought forward an amendment to Bill C-6, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act. Thanks to the work of Senator Oh, the Senate successfully amended Bill C-6 to add the clarification that government or foster care agencies can apply for a child's citizenship. I quote Senator Oh:

Colleagues, restricting access to Canadian citizenship to children and youth who otherwise meet all requirements punishes our country's most marginalized groups for circumstances that are beyond their control. Highly marginalized minors with a less secure status risk deportation in their adult lives.

Bill C-6 and Senator Oh's amendment address the needs of children in government agencies and foster care. Presently, Bill S-235 is completing the circle by ensuring that children who have aged out of government agencies or foster care also have the opportunity to apply for Canadian citizenship.

To reiterate, Senator Oh's amendment in 2017 created a pathway for minors in government agencies or foster care to obtain citizenship. Bill S-235 will allow those who have aged out of government agencies or foster care to apply for citizenship.

Bill S-235 was first introduced in 2021 and went to committee on November 23, 2023. The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology has met five times to discuss Bill S-235 and worked very closely with government officials throughout the process.

Honourable senators, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Senator Omidvar and the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology for their dedication and hard work on this bill.

The improvements to Bill C-6 were an important step forward at the time, but unfortunately they were not enough. That is why we are here today.

A perfect example of how the law can still fail some of the most vulnerable children who were in foster care is Mr. Abdoul Abdi's story.

I have spoken to this before, but it's important that it be repeated because of the light it sheds on how our country currently treats children who do not have Canadian citizenship but were in its care, often for years on end.

• (1530)

In 2000, Mr. Abdi arrived in Canada from Djibouti with his aunts and sister as sponsored refugees. They were soon moved to Halifax to allow them to access additional services. In 2001, at the age of eight, Mr. Abdi was taken into custody by the Department of Child Welfare Services. Under the care of the Department of Child Welfare Services, Mr. Abdi was placed in 31 different foster homes. Senators, I want to empathize this:

31 different fosters homes. He endured severe physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Grade 6 was the highest level of education he obtained. By 13 years of age, he had a youth criminal record.

Mr. Abdi's aunt attempted to apply for citizenship for him and his sister Fatouma, but the Department of Child Welfare Services intervened on the basis that as they were a ward of the government, only they could apply for their citizenship.

Despite their aunt's efforts to obtain custody through the Nova Scotia courts, the citizenship pathway remained blocked. As Mr. Abdi reached adulthood, he faced the daunting prospect of deportation to Somalia, a country utterly unfamiliar to him because he was born in Djibouti, but his citizenship was Somali. Prior legal battles had already overturned decisions based on protected youth records, but this time, Mr. Abdi challenged the minister's delegate on the grounds of Charter rights violations. Ultimately, the federal court concluded that the minister's delegate neglected to consider Charter values in its decision.

The courts found that there was discrimination against Mr. Abdi. Indeed, the court explained that Mr. Abdi's history as a ward of the state, his aunt's effort to apply for his citizenship, his family's situation and his past status as a UN refugee had to be considered. The judgment added that this is particularly true with respect to section 15 of the Charter and non-discrimination.

This matter is now in the hands of the government. The courts said they could not go any further. Just like that, a child who spent more than a decade under state care faced deportation to Somalia, a country entirely unknown to him — its language, the culture or its customs — nor did he have any family there. His deportation meant being separated from the only family he had left: his sister and aunt.

Honourable senators, how can we accept to live in a country that does not take care of children in its own care? How can we continue a system that deports children who are all things but in name Canadian?

Mr. Abdi was raised in our schools with our children, with our parents and in our care. I know you will also agree that this is unacceptable. How can this be acceptable in a country that prides itself on the respect of international law, of its Constitution and obligations to minors under its care? It calls on parliamentarians to be able to obtain Canadian citizenship for these children.

Now, I know that concerns have been raised about the amendments that passed at the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. Some members of the committee noted that the bill is now, as amended, different in nature or out of scope from the original intent. In other words, the bill I am presenting to you now would not be the same one as the one I presented to you at second reading.

Indeed, it has been claimed that because every paragraph in the bill has been amended and because the scope of the bill now includes informal agreements between the government and private parties that care for its wards that the bill is of a fundamentally different nature.

Honourable senators, I won't deny that both these reasons underlying these claims are true. They are. However, these changes do not mean that the original intent of the bill is lost. On the contrary, experts in committee revealed that it is more appropriate to adopt a citizenship-by-grant process as opposed to a citizenship-by-right process, which was initially suggested in the bill. This was a government official's suggestion. In fact, if this bill has been amended, it is actually to bring it closer to its original intent, which is to create a pathway for non-citizen children who are now adults who have spent substantial time under government care.

Honourable colleagues, if anything, this bill is now closer to its nature than it has ever been before. Furthermore, under this version of the bill, individuals who seek Canadian citizenship may apply for it. Those who do not, simply won't. The question of retroactivity and voluntariness is now irrelevant. Those who want Canadian citizenship and who fit the criteria may simply ask for it.

As Andrew Brouwer, Senior Counsel at the Refugee Law Office for Legal Aid Ontario mentioned in committee:

... Rather than individuals becoming citizens immediately upon Royal Assent, they would become eligible to apply for citizenship if they fit into the same category. I think that's a relatively simple fix . . . that would resolve a lot of the concerns that were raised by the department, including with respect to their concerns around voluntariness and consent. If we switched this into an application process by grant, you are expressing your voluntariness or your consent by making the application. . . .

He later continued:

... The way I see this proposal and bill is that it goes hand in hand with the changes made previously that would allow applications for citizenship to be made by child welfare authorities while kids are in care. This bill, as I see it, applies to those for whom that didn't happen and who have aged out; they are 18 or adults, and that is the point at which they could apply.

Kate Webster, Vice President of the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers, approved, as well as other witnesses to the committee.

Honourable senators, all amendments approved in committee were in line with the same position to move Bill S-235 from rights-based to grants-based. As you will notice, most of the changes relate to capitalizing letters and adjusting the bill to section 5 of the Citizenship Act.

Other changes are a bit more substantial. To start, informal agreements made between state and private entities are included in the bill. In other words, the condition that the child was not residing with a relative under an agreement made with an agency appointed by the province was taken out.

Second, a child who does not return to their parents' custody for 365 days upon leaving state care may now be granted citizenship.

• (1540)

Third, the requirement of 365 days spent in state care is now cumulative and does not need to be continuous.

Fourth, now the child cannot have lived outside of Canada for more than 10 years after reaching the age of 18.

Finally, the bill maintains that the removal order be stayed when a foreign national applies for citizenship under section 5.3 of the Citizenship Act. This is until a decision has been made, as opposed to when the applicant receives citizenship. Therefore, all amendments are in line with the original intent of the bill and correlate with the shift from a rights-based to a grants-based process.

This process would have greatly helped Fliss Cramman, whose story was shared in support of Senator Oh's amendment to Bill C-6. Ms. Cramman arrived in Canada at the age of 8, but, due to experiencing violence and abuse, she was placed into government agency care at age 11.

Ms. Cramman had come from the U.K., and, despite growing up in Canada, the government — her legal guardian — never applied for citizenship on her behalf. In 2014, as a professional chef and a mother of four, Ms. Cramman found herself sentenced to prison for drug-related offences, unaware that she was without Canadian citizenship. Facing deportation to the United Kingdom — a country she has no ties to and one that was foreign to her after growing up in Canada for 25 years — Ms. Cramman represents the countless individuals who only discover the lack of citizenship when it is too late. Thankfully, the Minister of Immigration intervened at that time to prevent her deportation.

While Ms. Cramman's story played a pivotal role in Senator Oh's amendment to Bill C-6, the challenges she faced serve as a reminder that there are still gaps in the system that must be addressed. Like Mr. Abdi, she spent most of her life in Canada, where she now has children, family and an occupation. But with no money and no support, she feared she would be homeless and alone in the United Kingdom.

The Elizabeth Fry Society rightfully claimed that Fliss Cramman was being punished by a system that was supposed to care for her — a system that failed her. This is the void that Bill S-235 would fill.

Ultimately, unlike with Mr. Abdi, then federal minister John McCallum stepped in to prevent Ms. Cramman's deportation on compassionate grounds. She was also given Canadian citizenship. You may ask why Mr. Abdi did not appeal to the minister's compassion. Nonetheless, Ms. Cramman's situation should not have been as problematic as it was. Again, like Mr. Abdi and his sister, Ms. Cramman is being punished by a system that was supposed to take care of her — a system that failed her. This is the void that Bill S-235 would fill.

Certain members claim that private members' bills should not amend the Citizenship Act nor the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, perhaps because we are not fully aware of the consequences of the amendment. I appreciate that sentiment. However, I would like to make an analogy between this bill and Senator Oh's amendment to Bill C-6. At the time, Senator Oh suggested a sizable amendment to the Citizenship Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act — as mentioned earlier — and these amendments are now law. Since that amendment has been put in place, the provinces and the organizations with whom children are placed take very careful steps to ensure that children in their care who have not yet reached 18 years old obtain citizenship.

At the time, Senator Omidvar said this about the amendments:

These are outstanding examples of the Red Chamber exercising its ability to improve legislation and uphold the Charter, in particular on behalf of minorities.

There is no reason to believe that Bill S-235 should be treated differently. Indeed, had the contents of Bill S-235 been amended at the same time as Bill C-6 was being discussed, then this issue would not have been raised. Nothing in our constitution prohibits this kind of amendment, nor is it the first time the Chamber has spoken out to modify or refine some of our most important laws.

Honourable senators, the Senate's purpose is to refine Canadian laws and ensure that the rights of minorities and vulnerable populations are protected. I do not understand how Bill S-235 stands against that purpose. On the contrary, it seems to me that this bill precisely fulfills that role.

I believe that Bill S-235 serves the rights of the marginalized population who came here as refugee or immigrant children but are Canadians in all ways except for citizenship.

On that point, we welcomed Mr. Abdi's sister, Fatouma Abdi, at the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology as a witness to speak to that reality. Fatouma explained that if Bill S-235 passed, she would immediately apply for citizenship with her brother. She added that receiving citizenship would change her life completely.

Honourable senators, Ms. Abdi, a child who spent a decade in state care, has been refused health care as she does not have her health card. Because she does not have the funds to see a doctor, she is deprived of an essential service and, potentially, of her fundamental right to life. Ms. Abdi cannot work. She cannot go to school. She cannot be treated if she is ill. She is always worrying about being sick and in fear of leaving her children without care as she was when she was a child. She should not have to worry about these things. Ms. Abdi is a Canadian in all respects except that she does not have citizenship. It is our responsibility, senators, to reflect on that.

Ms. Abdi has a right to have access to what everyone in this room has access to. As a matter of fact, she only learned that she did not have Canadian citizenship when the Canada Border Services Agency was working to deport her brother. She couldn't believe, after years of trauma and suffering, and despite living in Canada just like other Canadians and in government care for over a decade, that they still did not have full status in Canada. She testified that our child welfare services had caused separation and lasting harm to her family. She was separated from her younger brother, 7 years old at the time, and she faced traumatic situations, abuse and neglect. She carried the emotional and mental weight of all that alone.

Honourable colleagues, children in care should not have to worry about earning citizenship. The Prime Minister agrees. Six years ago, Ms. Abdi asked the Prime Minister what he would have done had his son been in her brother's place. He answered:

• (1550)

. . . when we saw how the care system failed your brother, how we saw how the challenges he's facing have impacted upon him and we saw the real challenges that we're facing in the system.

It has opened our eyes to something that many of us knew was ongoing in many communities, but we continue to need to address.

So far, the government has not addressed it. That is the reason for Bill S-235. The situation has not been addressed for Fatouma and Abdoul Abdi as well as others who do not have citizenship. In Ms. Abdi's case, it is because she does not have the right documentation, not because she committed any crime.

Senators, imagine this: Ms. Fatouma Abdi changed homes 31 times. She was in 31 different care homes. In the process, her parents or whomever was in charge of her lost all of her documentation. Today, she has ended up with no documentation to apply for citizenship.

Like her and her brother, other children whose stories have not been told to you today don't have the opportunity to speak up and suffer the same fate.

In closing, senators, please note that the Minister of Immigration supports this bill and believes that this change should have happened at the same time as Bill C-6 to align our laws with our international, constitutional and national obligations. The minister would also like to see this bill in the other place soon.

Honourable senators, the stories I have shared with you today are just a few of many. In silence, our children bear the weight of a system that was meant to protect them but instead fails them by threatening them with deportation.

When they are welcomed here as children, non-citizen wards expect Canada to be their home. They have heard stories of peace, security and freedom in Canada. Although the world has already taken so much from them, they still have hope for a better future.

[ Senator Jaffer ]

Honourable senators, it's up to us to give these children a second chance and make sure they do not hope in vain. They have grown up in Canada, have made friends in Canada, have been educated in Canada and have found a home in Canada. These children belong to Canada. I call upon you to support this bill and fill the void, albeit one that could have an enormous impact upon the lives of many children like Fatouma Abdi.

Senators, I want to explain to you what belonging means. I also came to this country as a refugee. I also did not have citizenship. Not having citizenship meant I could not practise as a lawyer. At that time, the law society's rules were that if you were not a citizen, you could not practise. Those rules have now changed.

I can tell you that when we went to the citizenship ceremony, it was the proudest day of our lives. We stood tall. We still remember the ceremony. When we came out of the ceremony, my young son who was around seven years old had a Canadian flag; in fact, he had a number of them. He would stop anybody that we met and say, "I am a Canadian. I am a Canadian."

Senators, that is what I am asking for children who have no parents. My son was able to obtain citizenship because he was in our care and we made sure he got citizenship. There are many children who have grown up here, gone to our schools and become Canadian, except for a piece of paper. Senators, I ask you to now consider their fate and support this bill.

Thank you for listening so intently.

**Some Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

## COUNTERING FOREIGN INTERFERENCE BILL

### FIRST READING

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore** informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-70, An Act respecting countering foreign interference.

(Bill read first time.)

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** 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.)

[English]

## ADJOURNMENT

### MOTION ADOPTED

Leave having been given to revert to Government Business, Motions, Order No. 183:

**Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate)**, pursuant to notice of June 12, 2024, moved:

That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Monday, June 17, 2024, at 6 p.m.;

That rule 3-3(1) be suspended on that day; and

That, notwithstanding rule 9-10(2), if a vote has been or is deferred to that day, it take place at the end of Question Period.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

## CITIZENSHIP ACT

### IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROTECTION ACT

#### BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Jaffer, seconded by the Honourable Senator Pate, for the third reading of Bill S-235, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, as amended.

**Hon. Paula Simons:** Senator Jaffer, would you accept a question?

**Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer:** Yes.

**Senator Simons:** I heard concerns raised that this bill might accidentally strip children of a second citizenship because not all countries allow people to carry dual citizenship. I wonder if you could tell me if the amendments at committee have addressed that concern?

**Senator Jaffer:** Thank you for that very important question, Senator Simons.

Yes, that is why, when I was originally reading the bill at second reading, I had said that it should be automatic citizenship. If it were automatic citizenship, a person who wanted to retain their previous citizenship might lose it. Now, after the

government officials' suggested amendments, it is as a grant, which means that the person has to apply for citizenship, so that is not possible. It is now a choice — you apply for citizenship — and it is not automatic.

**Hon. Kim Pate:** Honourable senators, I'm also pleased to rise today to speak in support of Bill S-235.

As you have heard, this bill aims to address some glaring deficits and injustices in our citizenship and criminal legal systems. It establishes a pathway to citizenship for people who came to Canada as children and then were removed from their families by child welfare authorities who thereby became their guardians in place of their parents. However, they failed in that parental role to fulfill their responsibility to secure the citizenship of their "children." If an individual — a person, not the government — were their parent, we would clearly identify this as irresponsible and possibly even parental neglect.

Too many newcomer children experience the legacy of colonialism in Canada, which has resulted in the mass institutionalization of racialized children in child welfare and prison systems. Poor, Indigenous and Black children are among those disproportionately taken — often forced — into care, intensifying the intergenerational effects of poverty and inequality.

When children are apprehended by the state, the government legally becomes their parent. Bill S-235 seeks to apply to all forms of such state parenting, including placements in institutions, foster care, kinship agreements and support agreements. In all such cases, as the parent, the state has the legal responsibility to act in the best interests of the child. This parental responsibility includes securing citizenship status and the protections and rights it affords. All too often, child welfare authorities fail in this duty.

• (1600)

Circumstances within the child welfare system contribute to the likelihood of children being marginalized, victimized and criminalized. Historically, beds in group and foster homes sometimes double as both child welfare and juvenile justice placements. This creates a slippery slope from child welfare involvement to criminalization for youth who would otherwise be highly unlikely to be criminalized by their own families for irritating and sometimes risky but very much age-related and circumstance-related behaviours.

In Manitoba, for instance, as many as one in three children who spent any time in the child welfare system ended up charged with at least one criminal offence before the age of 18.

Without citizenship, children formerly in care who are criminalized are at risk of being deported to countries where they have no connections or supports, as you've heard from Senator Jaffer. In situations where state borders have changed, some even end up stateless. Most have grown up in Canada, reasonably assuming that they are Canadian and unaware that they do not have citizenship.

Those who do find out that the state has failed in its parental duties usually find out too late — most often when they are told that they will be deported because of a criminal conviction, and that conviction then makes them ineligible to apply for citizenship.

Parenthetically, many criminal lawyers are unaware that criminality and certain penalties can preclude an appeal of immigration status and mandate deportation.

At the Social Affairs Committee, many witnesses, including — as you've heard — Andrew Brouwer of Legal Aid Ontario, urged the government to pass Bill S-235 as a commitment to anti-racism. He said:

In large measure, any criminal offences committed [by children formerly in the care of the state] were the natural and predictable outcome of circumstances, of being funnelled from child welfare to the criminal justice system. Youth become criminalized while in government care. Once criminalized, extracting oneself from the criminal justice system is no easy feat, especially for those who are racialized, impoverished, may be dealing with addictions or mental health issues and have no family supports around them beyond the state. For these individuals without citizenship, this turns from the criminal justice system to the next step and the greatest indignity, which is the expulsion from the only country they know. This bill tries to stop that pipeline.

The Black Legal Action Centre emphasized:

. . . Canada's child welfare policies are oppressive, discretionary practices are biased and culturally safe service responses are lacking. Parenting responsibility in Canada is shifted to law enforcement when a child goes into care. Law enforcement is responsible for things such as dispute resolution, discipline and enforcing the rules of the home. Often, this is where Black children first encounter the criminal justice system.

From the data available, we know that gaining full Canadian citizenship is difficult if you're from a predominantly Black country. We know that Black families face far more scrutiny and apprehensions from child welfare authorities. We know that Black people historically receive harsher sentences within the criminal justice system. And we know that deporting these children whom we have already failed to protect is not the solution. Children should not be penalized for their lack of immigration status. This is an issue over which children have little or no control.

Honourable senators, the government should not be permitted to speak out of both sides of their mouth by saying that although they assume parental responsibility for a child, they can then abandon and deport that child. Children who are placed in the care of the state should not be denied Canadian citizenship because their state parent neglects them and fails to ensure that they have citizenship. The resulting injustices and inequalities are what Senator Jaffer's bill seeks to address.

Recent actions by the federal government essentially acknowledge the special obligations it has with respect to children in care who lack citizenship status. In July 2023, the government instituted a policy to allow the grant of temporary resident permits to foreign nationals who were in the child welfare system.

In January 2024, the government added a temporary three-year avenue for children formerly in care to apply for permanent resident status.

In both circumstances, applicants are not required to pay the usual fees, and are not subjected to the usual prohibitions on applying relating to past criminalization. Unfortunately, as committee witnesses highlighted, these measures are not a solution on their own, but rather provide stopgap measures until such time as we pass Bill S-235.

In particular, permanent resident status — while a more promising step than a mere temporary resident permit — is still revokable and, therefore, is not a sufficient protection against deportation.

Bill S-235 would remedy these long-standing injustices. It allows people formerly in the child welfare system to apply directly for citizenship. It ensures that they can make this application even if they have been ordered deported, and that they will not be removed from the country because of such an order while their application is being processed.

As introduced at first reading, Bill S-235 would have provided citizenship automatically to children in state care — by right — without requiring them to make an application. Government witnesses, as you've heard, at committee raised hypothetical concerns about this approach, notably without concrete evidence or data to support their suppositions. Senator Jaffer, nonetheless, worked with immigration law experts advocating for children formerly in care to create thoughtful amendments to respond to the albeit unsubstantiated concerns of the government.

The application requirement that was added to the bill as a result of these amendments will undoubtedly mean additional barriers to citizenship for children in care, who must now be informed about the need to make such an application and navigate the requirements it imposes. These barriers were added to the bill because of fears raised by the government, so the government must now also take all necessary steps to alleviate the barriers that these changes will impose.

In particular, as the Social Affairs Committee emphasized in its observation on Bill S-235, the government must ensure that the bill's application process is cost-free, in line with its recent policies on temporary and permanent resident applications for children formerly in care.

The government must also ensure flexibility with respect to documentation requirements, particularly given the reality — again as Senator Jaffer outlined — that the child welfare system too often fails to ensure children retain their crucial personal documents as they are moved from placement to placement until they eventually age out of care.

Honourable colleagues, please understand clearly that Bill S-235 is not about creating special privileges or a fast track within the immigration system. Rather, it is seeking to fill a gap in the law that has prevented children raised in Canada by the state from being recognized as the Canadians they are.

As Senator Jaffer underscored, this chamber has long known about this injustice. In 2017, when Senator Omidvar was leading work on amendments to the Citizenship Act through Bill C-6, Senator Oh introduced an amendment that aimed to help those formerly in the child welfare system. At the time, he spoke about the situation of Fliss Cramman, a woman whose case I had been involved with prior to my appointment to this place. Ms. Cramman arrived in Canada, as you've heard, at the age of 8 and was taken into the care of the state at age 11 as a means of extracting her from a home rife with violence and sexual abuse.

She only discovered her lack of citizenship in her thirties when she was serving a prison sentence and correctional authorities inquired into her immigration status as part of the preparations for her conditional release from prison for the purpose of community integration.

Unfortunately, as some of you will recall, the amendments made to Bill C-6 did not help Ms. Cramman, nor many other children in care, including individuals like Abdoul Abdi and Abdilahi Elmi and Mark Wollery Surgeon.

Senator Oh's amendments created more options for minors to apply for citizenship, but did not address the primary systemic barrier for those formerly in the child welfare system who do not know that they lack citizenship status. Why? It's because the reality is that they do not know that they must make an application until it is too late for them to do so.

The content of this bill began as a friendly amendment that I worked on with Senator Oh in order to ensure his amendment achieved his stated goal. I naively believed that working across party lines in a collaborative manner would be welcomed. Unfortunately, other colleagues were not of the same opinion, and some threatened to stand in the way of the immigration reforms in Bill C-6 if we proceeded. Therefore, I was asked to not proceed and instead to make the changes via a private bill to address the gap in both the bill and Senator Oh's amendments. Seven years on, my friends, we finally have Senator Jaffer's bill. In the meantime, we have continued to fail to ensure justice for children whom we have neglected for far too long.

• (1610)

For people who came to Canada as children, often fleeing war or persecution, and who know no other country or home, deportation is an unthinkable punishment. People removed as children from caregivers and families and placed in systems not equipped to address their needs, much less fulfill full parental responsibilities, should not subsequently suffer the further

punishment and indignity of being abandoned after being jettisoned into the criminal legal system. When the state that was supposed to act as their parent fails to secure citizenship, former children in care should not be abandoned to be sent to countries where they have no hope, no family, no connections and no means of supporting themselves.

Canada needs to take responsibility and remedy our role — our role, honourable colleagues — in marginalizing, victimizing, criminalizing and institutionalizing those whom we fail as children. Let's pass Bill S-235 and begin to remedy these wrongs for future generations.

*Meegwetch.* Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

### NATIONAL STRATEGY RESPECTING ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE BILL

#### THIRD READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator McCallum, seconded by the Honourable Senator Al Zaibak, for the third reading of Bill C-226, An Act respecting the development of a national strategy to assess, prevent and address environmental racism and to advance environmental justice.

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Are honourable senators ready for the question?

**Hon. Senators:** Question.

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

**Some Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**Some Hon. Senators:** No.

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** All those in favour of the motion will please say "yea."

**Some Hon. Senators:** Yea.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

**Some Hon. Senators:** Nay.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** In my opinion the "yeas" have it.

*And two honourable senators having risen:*

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Do we have an agreement on a bell?

**An Hon. Senator:** Fifteen minutes.

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Do we have consent, honourable senators?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** The vote will occur at 4:27. Call in the senators.

• (1620)

Motion agreed to and bill read third time and passed on the following division:

#### YEAS

##### THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Anderson	LaBoucane-Benson
Arnot	Loffreda
Aucoin	MacAdam
Bernard	McBean
Boyer	McCallum
Burey	McNair
Busson	McPhedran
Cardozo	Mégie
Clement	Miville-Dechêne
Cordy	Moncion
Cormier	Moodie
Cotter	Omidvar
Coyle	Osler
Dagenais	Oudar
Deacon ( <i>Nova Scotia</i> )	Pate
Dean	Patterson
Downe	Petitclerc
Duncan	Prosper
Forest	Quinn
Francis	Robinson
Gerba	Ross
Gold	Simons
Greenwood	Smith
Jaffer	Sorensen
Kingston	Verner—51
Klyne	

#### NAYS

##### THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Ataullahjan	Marshall
Batters	Martin
Boehm	Plett
Carignan	Richards
Housakos	Seidman—11
MacDonald	

#### ABSTENTIONS THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Harder	Saint-Germain
Ringuette	Woo—4
• (1630)	

#### SPECIAL ECONOMIC MEASURES ACT

##### BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Omidvar, seconded by the Honourable Senator Petitclerc, for the second reading of Bill S-278, An Act to amend the Special Economic Measures Act (disposal of foreign state assets).

**Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** With leave of the Senate, I would like to move adjournment for the balance of my time.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Debate adjourned.)

#### STUDY ON THE STATUS OF SOIL HEALTH

##### THIRTEENTH REPORT OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY COMMITTEE AND REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the thirteenth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, entitled *Critical Ground: Why Soil is Essential to Canada's Economic, Environmental, Human, and Social Health*, deposited with the Clerk of the Senate on June 6, 2024.

**Hon. Paula Simons** moved:

That the thirteenth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, entitled *Critical Ground: Why Soil is Essential to Canada's Economic, Environmental, Human, and Social Health*, deposited with the Clerk of the Senate on June 6, 2024, 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 Agriculture and Agri-Food being identified as minister responsible for responding to the report, in consultation with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources.

She said: Honourable senators, today I have the honour and pleasure of presenting to you and to all Canadians *Critical Ground: Why Soil is Essential to Canada's Economic,*



*Environmental, Human, and Social Health*, which is the result of our committee's two-year study into the state of soil health in Canada.

I could try to impress you with numbers by telling you that we heard from more than 150 witnesses and received more than 60 written briefs. I could tell you that we heard from farmers, ranchers, producers, foresters, agronomists, economists, environmental groups and soil scientists of every type imaginable, including experts in soil biology, soil geology, soil mapping, soil data analysis and soil pollution and remediation.

We learned about everything from the state of Canada's primordial permafrost to the latest developments in gene editing to increase crop yields and reduce the need for fertilizers and herbicides. We learned about traditional Indigenous agriculture techniques and the role of satellite and artificial intelligence technology in precision agriculture.

We learned about compost and earthworms, heavy metal toxicity, the threat of microplastics and the vital roles of grassland grazing and agri-forestry in sequestering carbon and mitigating climate change.

• (1640)

We heard from expert witnesses and government representatives from all 13 provinces and territories, as well as from the European Union, the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia and New Zealand.

Our committee visited the University of Guelph, the University of Saskatchewan, Olds College of Agriculture & Technology and the Canada Agriculture and Food Museum, along with a half-dozen farms and ranches in three provinces.

Senators Black and Cotter had the opportunity to take part in the 2022 World Congress of Soil Science in Glasgow. Senators Black, Oh and I had the privilege of attending the Eleventh Plenary Assembly of the Global Soil Partnership hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome. At that UN conference, we had the remarkable chance to meet with soil experts, farmers and advocates from nations ranging from Thailand to France, to Türkiye, to Ghana, to the Dominican Republic.

In short, we dug deep. We plowed new paths, and this groundbreaking report is the result of all that passion and all that research. We released it to coincide with the fortieth anniversary of the Sparrow report, also known as *Soil at Risk*, a landmark report which the Senate published in June of 1984.

Our new report has 25 recommendations. It starts by asking the government to declare Canadian soil a strategic national asset, to appoint a national soils advocate and to work with provinces, territories, Indigenous governments and the agriculture and forestry industries to establish a national soils institute and database. But there are more granular, nitty-gritty recommendations, too, about everything from standing up trustworthy carbon markets to improving public education at every level about the essential importance of soil to Canada's economy and to our environmental, human and social health.

We want this report to be a call to action for government, but even more than that, we want it to be a call to action for Canadians. We didn't just write the report for you, my fellow senators. We didn't just write it in order to induce a response from the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food or the Minister of Environment and Climate Change or the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, although we look forward to hearing from all of them. No, we wrote this report to inspire everyone in Canada who wants to fight climate change, everyone in Canada who wants to clean up pollution and, perhaps most importantly, every Canadian who wants a secure and reliable supply of healthy, affordable, delicious homegrown food.

I want to thank all the members of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry past and present for their committed and enthusiastic work on this report. I want to thank all of our witnesses and all of our dedicated staff. But most of all, I want to thank our chair, Senator Rob Black, for his passion, leadership and generosity of spirit, which made this report possible.

Thank you and *hiy hiy*.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Question.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

## INTERNAL ECONOMY, BUDGETS AND ADMINISTRATION

### THIRTEENTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the thirteenth report of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration (*Budget—pursuant to rule 12-7(1), consideration of financial and administrative matters—power to hire staff*), presented in the Senate on June 6, 2024.

**Hon. Scott Tannas** moved the adoption of the report.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Question.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

## INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

### BUDGET—STUDY ON THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT’S CONSTITUTIONAL, TREATY, POLITICAL AND LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO FIRST NATIONS, INUIT AND MÉTIS PEOPLES—EIGHTEENTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the eighteenth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples (*Budget—examine the constitutional, treaty, political and legal responsibilities to First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples—power to hire staff*), presented in the Senate on June 6, 2024.

**Hon. Brian Francis** moved the adoption of the report.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Question.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

## ONGOING CONCERNS WITH RESPECT TO CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL, WETLAND, AND FOREST LAND REALLOTMENTS

### INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Black, calling the attention of the Senate to the ongoing concerns with respect to Canadian agricultural, wetland, and forest land reallocations, as well as potential food, economic, and social insecurities as a result of reduced capacity for farming, pasture, forestry, and food production both domestically and internationally.

**Hon. Paula Simons:** Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Inquiry No. 16, instigated by Senator Rob Black, calling the attention of the Senate to the ongoing concerns respecting Canadian agricultural wetland and forest land reallocations, as well as potential food, economic and social insecurities as a result of reduced capacity for farming, pasture, forestry and food production domestically and internationally.

In Canada today, we begin most public events with a land acknowledgment, a pointed, sometimes powerful reminder that our country is built on the traditional territory of the Indigenous nations who first called this place home.

I want to begin this speech with a different but related kind of land acknowledgment. I want to acknowledge the actual land on which we sit, the soil that gives life to our boreal forests, our

prairie grasslands, our crops, our gardens. I want us to acknowledge the fragile essential layer of topsoil, which is perhaps Canada’s most important, least valued natural resource.

Once, we understood the debt we owed to the land that gave us life, to what many cultures call our mother earth. The name of Adam, the Bible’s first man, comes from the Hebrew word *adamah*, meaning “earth” or “soil.” And Jewish tradition teaches that God shaped man from the soil, made him of earth.

The word “human,” which we use to describe ourselves, comes from the Latin word *humus* or “earth.” The ancient Romans, too, recognized the numinous sense of our relationship with the soil.

I myself come from Treaty 6 territory, one of the traditional homes of the Cree people. The Cree have a legend of their own about a great flood that swept away all the land. Various animals attempted to dive to the bottom of the water to bring up some soil from which to form the land anew. The various animals tried and failed and tried and failed, until finally a brave little muskrat dove down deep, deep into the waters and made his way back to the surface with a fistful of soil, almost drowning in the attempt. It was the courage of that little muskrat, we are told, which allowed the terrestrial world to begin anew.

But over generations and centuries of urbanization and industrialization, many of us have forgotten our roots and the soil that gave us life. Not to put too fine a point on it, we treat it like dirt.

Here is the irony: Our cities and towns tend to be built where the land is most fertile. That makes sense. It has been that way ever since mankind built the cities along the banks of the Tigris, the Euphrates, the Nile, the Indus, the Yellow River. It makes perfect sense. As we changed from hunter-gathers to farmers to urbanites, we settled on the land that was best able to feed us. But as we built our cities, we paved over some of the richest soil on earth.

When colonizers and settlers came to Canada, they did the same thing, building towns and cities right beside and then on top of the most fertile ground in this new world. We’re still doing it, building subdivisions, shopping malls, factories, airports, university campuses and highways upon some of the most valuable farmland of all and atop other important land resources, from wetlands to forests. But we do so at a cost.

Canada is huge. Look at a map — all that pink. But only about 5% to 7% of our land mass is ranked as prime agricultural land suitable for cultivation. Put another way, only about 6.8% of this entire country is currently under cultivation. That number may surprise you. Canada seems so vast, but once you subtract the Canadian Shield, the northern boreal muskeg, the Rocky Mountains, the Arctic tundra, the permafrost and all the lakes, well, there just isn’t that much soil where we can grow food or raise cattle and sheep.

A full one third of all of Canada’s arable land is found in my own province of Alberta, yet between 2011 and 2020, some 52,000 hectares of prime Alberta agricultural land was taken out of agricultural production, primarily to make way for urban infrastructure and housing developments. And while urban sprawl around Calgary and Edmonton is taking out a lot of good

farmland, the pace of development in Alberta pales beside what we see in the Greater Toronto Area, where farmland as far away as Guelph is being gobbled up for residential development.

When we on the Agriculture and Forestry Committee were working on our recent soil report, I learned a new term: “soil sealing.” Now, that’s not the kind of sealing they do in Newfoundland — sorry, my friends from the Fisheries and Oceans Committee.

• (1650)

“Soil sealing” is a euphemism for paving over soil with something impermeable, such as concrete or asphalt. The challenge isn’t just that soil sealing takes land out of cultivation; it also disrupts the ability of the soil to do its ecological work. Healthy soil helps to filter, purify and store water. Healthy soils are more resistant to drought and erosion, better able to absorb water in times of flood. Healthy soil is a natural carbon sink, essential to our efforts to slow the impact of climate change. Soil is home to more than 25% of the planet’s biodiversity with more than 40,000 different organisms in a gram of healthy living soil, organisms essential to the biogeochemical processes that make all life on earth possible.

Soil sealing puts paid to almost all of that. When we seal our topsoil with asphalt or concrete, we fragment soil habitats and cause a loss of biodiversity. Sealed soil can’t absorb water, which leads to more runoff and flooding. Sealing can have a more profound impact on water movement, which also compromises soil’s natural ability to purify water. Sealed soil can’t do its work to regulate climate or sequester carbon, and the more soil we seal, the more we speed up the pace of climate change and global warming.

This isn’t just a question of paving over farmland. Indeed, some of the most dire environmental consequences of soil sealing come when we pave over wetlands and bogs or chop down trees to put up apartment buildings or industrial plants.

Frankly, I think that we might have liked to have written at greater length about urban sprawl and soil sealing in our new soil health report *Critical Ground*, but we faced a constitutional conundrum, the same one I face today as I look at the terms of this inquiry.

Land use planning? It is not in federal jurisdiction. It is properly the role of provinces and even more the role of municipalities, the cities and towns and counties that derive their authority from the provinces. It is simply not the federal government’s place, nor the Senate’s place, to tell municipalities where to put their subdivisions, malls and roads.

At a time when Canada has a desperate shortage of housing and when many middle-class Canadians can no longer afford homes in city neighbourhoods and are fleeing to the suburbs in an effort to find a house they can actually afford, the pressure on municipalities to allow more suburban sprawl is acute.

There are new challenges in rural Canada too. As we work hard to transition away from fossil fuels, there is new demand for solar and wind power and even industrial-scale biodigesters. And we need that clean green power, especially on the prairies, where hydroelectric power is simply not an option, but we also need to find a balance so that we’re not building this essential new power infrastructure atop our very best farmland or our most important riparian zones.

Yet, at the same time, we must be wary of politicians who seek to stop the construction of new solar and wind farms in the name of protecting the environment while at the same time encouraging and valorizing oil and gas production, which are far more polluting and toxic to soil in their own ways. The hypocrisy might be amusing if the stakes weren’t quite so high.

These are, again, issues that have to be left to provinces, counties and municipalities to resolve, although perhaps with a few helpful hints from us. We have three interrelated challenges, if not crises, facing us as Canadians. We must preserve our prime farmland in the name of food security and food affordability. At the same time, we need to create more housing — affordable housing — so that young Canadians and new Canadians and all the other Canadians can have a place to call home. We also have to transition to green energy, even if that means building green energy infrastructure on rural land.

This means we need to be creative, whether that means building on existing brownfield sites, encouraging affordable urban infill or just engaging in smart land use planning that balances the competing needs of our municipalities. Maybe this inquiry — alongside my own earlier inquiry into the role of municipalities in Confederation — can help spark some important, long overdue conversations.

I want to thank our colleague Rob Black for launching this inquiry and for turning me into something of a “soils evangelist.” His passion for this subject is infectious and has been an inspiration for many of us in this chamber.

What we as Canadians need now is to find the courage and determination of that indefatigable muskrat to hang on tight to the soil that gives us all life and to acknowledge the land to which we all owe so much. *Hiy hiy.*

(On motion of Senator Clement, debate adjourned.)

(At 4:56 p.m., the Senate was continued until Monday, June 17, 2024, at 6 p.m.)

## CONTENTS

Thursday, June 13, 2024

	PAGE		PAGE
<b>SENATORS' STATEMENTS</b>		<b>Criminal Code (Bill C-332)</b>	
<b>Yukon First Nations Graduates</b>		Bill to Amend—First Reading . . . . .	6654
Hon. Pat Duncan . . . . .	6649	<b>Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association</b>	
<b>The Bangor Sawmill</b>		Annual Session, November 18-21, 2022—Report Tabled	
Hon. Réjean Aucoin . . . . .	6649	Hon. Rebecca Patterson . . . . .	6654
<b>Olympic and Paralympic Games 2024</b>		Bureau Meeting and Joint Meetings of the Defence and Security Committee, the Economics and Security Committee and the Political Committee, February 19-22, 2023—Report Tabled	
Hon. Chantal Petitclerc . . . . .	6650	Hon. Rebecca Patterson . . . . .	6654
<b>National Indigenous History Month</b>		Bureau Meeting and Spring Session, May 19-22, 2023—Report Tabled	
Hon. Paul J. Prosper . . . . .	6650	Hon. Rebecca Patterson . . . . .	6654
<b>The Africadian Empowerment Academy</b>		Annual Session, October 6-9, 2023—Report Tabled	
Hon. Wanda Thomas Bernard . . . . .	6651	Hon. Rebecca Patterson . . . . .	6654
<b>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</b>		Visit of the Sub-Committee on Future Security and Defence Capabilities, March 11-15, 2024—Report Tabled	
Seventy-fifth Anniversary		Hon. Rebecca Patterson . . . . .	6654
Hon. Donna Dasko . . . . .	6651	<b>Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group</b>	
<hr/>		Co-Chairs' Annual Visit, November 13-17, 2023—Report Tabled	
<b>ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS</b>		Hon. Stan Kutcher . . . . .	6655
<b>Study on the Canadian Foreign Service and Elements of the Foreign Policy Machinery within Global Affairs</b>		<b>Canada-China Legislative Association</b>	
Twelfth Report of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Committee—Government Response Tabled		<b>Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group</b>	
Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson . . . . .	6652	Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum, November 23 to 26, 2023—Report Tabled	
<b>Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023 (Bill S-17)</b>		Hon. Stan Kutcher . . . . .	6655
Twenty-fourth Report of Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee Presented		<b>Legal and Constitutional Affairs</b>	
Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer . . . . .	6652	Committee Authorized to Meet During Sitting of the Senate	
<b>Fall Economic Statement Implementation Bill, 2023 (Bill C-59)</b>		Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer . . . . .	6655
Seventeenth Report of National Finance Committee Presented		<b>Need for Safe and Productive Development and Use of Artificial Intelligence</b>	
Hon. Claude Carignan . . . . .	6653	Notice of Inquiry	
<b>Budget Implementation Bill, 2024, No. 1 (Bill C-69)</b>		Hon. Rosemary Moodie . . . . .	6655
Eighteenth Report of National Finance Committee on Subject Matter Tabled		<b>The Senate</b>	
Hon. Claude Carignan . . . . .	6653	Tributes to Departing Pages . . . . .	6655
<b>Canadian Sustainable Jobs Bill (Bill C-50)</b>		<b>QUESTION PERIOD</b>	
Twenty-third Report of Social Affairs, Science and Technology Committee Presented		<b>Environment and Climate Change</b>	
Hon. Ratna Omidvar . . . . .	6653	Carbon Tax	
<b>Canada Labour Code</b>		Hon. Donald Neil Plett . . . . .	6656
<b>Canada Industrial Relations Board Regulations, 2012 (Bill C-58)</b>		Hon. Marc Gold . . . . .	6656
Bill to Amend—Twenty-fourth Report of Social Affairs, Science and Technology Committee Presented		<b>Finance</b>	
Hon. Ratna Omidvar . . . . .	6654	Tax Rates	
		Hon. Leo Housakos . . . . .	6656
		Hon. Marc Gold . . . . .	6657
		<b>Industry</b>	
		Canada Infrastructure Bank	
		Hon. Tony Loffreda . . . . .	6657
		Hon. Marc Gold . . . . .	6657

## CONTENTS

Thursday, June 13, 2024

	PAGE		PAGE
<b>Canadian Heritage</b>		<b>Citizenship Act</b>	
Museums Assistance Program		<b>Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Bill S-235)</b>	
Hon. Pat Duncan . . . . .	6658	Bill to Amend—Third Reading—Debate	
Hon. Marc Gold . . . . .	6658	Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer . . . . .	6663
<b>Public Safety</b>		<b>Countering Foreign Interference Bill (Bill C-70)</b>	
National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians		First Reading . . . . .	6666
Hon. Percy E. Downe . . . . .	6658	<b>Adjournment</b>	
Hon. Marc Gold . . . . .	6658	Motion Adopted	
<b>Privy Council Office</b>		Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson . . . . .	6667
Private Members' Bills		<b>Citizenship Act</b>	
Hon. Marty Klyne . . . . .	6659	<b>Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Bill S-235)</b>	
Hon. Marc Gold . . . . .	6659	Bill to Amend—Third Reading—Debate Adjourned	
<b>Finance</b>		Hon. Paula Simons . . . . .	6667
Capital Gains Inclusion Rate		Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer . . . . .	6667
Hon. Donald Neil Plett . . . . .	6659	Hon. Kim Pate . . . . .	6667
Hon. Marc Gold . . . . .	6659	<b>National Strategy Respecting Environmental Racism and Environmental Justice Bill (Bill C-226)</b>	
<b>Environment and Climate Change</b>		Third Reading . . . . .	6669
Carbon Tax		<b>Special Economic Measures Act (Bill S-278)</b>	
Hon. Yonah Martin . . . . .	6660	Bill to Amend—Second Reading—Debate Continued	
Hon. Marc Gold . . . . .	6660	Hon. Yonah Martin . . . . .	6670
<b>Finance</b>		<b>Study on the Status of Soil Health</b>	
Simplified Tax Returns		Thirteenth Report of Agriculture and Forestry Committee and Request for Government Response Adopted	
Hon. Éric Forest . . . . .	6660	Hon. Paula Simons . . . . .	6670
Hon. Marc Gold . . . . .	6660	<b>Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration</b>	
<b>Privy Council Office</b>		Thirteenth Report of Committee Adopted	
Progress of Legislation		Hon. Scott Tannas . . . . .	6671
Hon. Julie Miville-Dechéne . . . . .	6661	<b>Indigenous Peoples</b>	
Hon. Marc Gold . . . . .	6661	Budget—Study on the Federal Government's Constitutional, Treaty, Political and Legal Responsibilities to First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples—Eighteenth Report of Committee Adopted	
<hr/>			
<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b>		Hon. Brian Francis . . . . .	6672
<b>Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators</b>		<b>Ongoing Concerns with Respect to Canadian Agricultural, Wetland, and Forest Land Reallotments</b>	
Third Report of Committee Adopted		Inquiry—Debate Continued	
Hon. Judith G. Seidman . . . . .	6661	Hon. Paula Simons . . . . .	6672
<b>Parliamentary Librarian</b>			
Third Report of Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament Adopted			
Hon. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia . . . . .	6662		
<b>Pharmacare Bill (Bill C-64)</b>			
Second Reading—Debate Continued			
Hon. Wanda Thomas Bernard . . . . .	6662		