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(HANSARD)

Tuesday, September 17, 2024

The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,
Speaker

This issue contains the latest listing of Senators,
Officers of the Senate and the Ministry.

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THE SENATE

Tuesday, September 17, 2024

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

Prayers.

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, there have been consultations and there is an agreement to allow a photographer in the Senate Chamber to photograph the introduction of new senators.

Is it agreed, honourable senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

[*English*]

NEW SENATORS

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I have the honour to inform the Senate that the Clerk of the Senate has received certificates from the Registrar General of Canada showing that the following persons, respectively, have been summoned to the Senate:

Victor Eric Boudreau

Sandor Adler

Daryl Fridhandler

Kristopher David Wells

INTRODUCTION

The Hon. the Speaker having informed the Senate that there were senators without waiting to be introduced:

The following honourable senator was introduced; presented His Majesty's writ of summons; took the oath prescribed by law, which was administered by the Clerk of the Senate; and was seated.

Hon. Victor Boudreau, of Shediac, New Brunswick, introduced between Hon. Marc Gold, P.C., and Hon. Joan Kingston.

• (1410)

The following honourable senator was introduced; presented His Majesty's writ of summons; took the solemn affirmation, which was administered by the Clerk of the Senate; and was seated.

Hon. Charles S. Adler, of Winnipeg, Manitoba, introduced between Hon. Paula Simons and Hon. Marc Gold, P.C.

The following honourable senator was introduced; presented His Majesty's writ of summons; took the oath prescribed by law, which was administered by the Clerk of the Senate; and was seated.

Hon. Daryl S. Fridhandler, of Calgary, Alberta, introduced between Hon. Marc Gold, P.C., and Hon. Scott Tannas.

• (1420)

The following honourable senator was introduced; presented His Majesty's writ of summons; took the solemn affirmation, which was administered by the Clerk of the Senate; and was seated.

Hon. Kristopher Wells, of St. Albert, Alberta, introduced between Hon. Marc Gold, P.C., and Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson.

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that each of the honourable senators named above had made and subscribed the declaration of qualification required by the Constitution Act, 1867, in the presence of the Clerk of the Senate, the Commissioner appointed to receive and witness the said declaration.

CONGRATULATIONS ON APPOINTMENTS

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, on behalf of the Government Representative Office, welcome back. It is with great pleasure that I warmly welcome our newest colleagues to the Senate of Canada: Senators Boudreau, Adler, Wells and Fridhandler.

[*Translation*]

Senator Boudreau, the decades that you spent serving your community and New Brunswick, at both the provincial and municipal levels, are very impressive, and it is quite appropriate that you will be continuing that service here in the Senate. I look forward to the contribution and perspective that you will bring to our many debates in this chamber.

[English]

Senator Adler, it gives me great pleasure to welcome a fellow Montrealer and McGill University alumnus to the Senate. Having worked across the country, you bring a wealth of experience, and your fierce defence of human rights will be a great asset to the Senate.

Senator Wells, I greatly admire your work to advance equality and diversity in Alberta and across this great country. As a champion of the 2SLGBTQI+ community, the Senate will benefit from your expertise and voice in this chamber now more than ever.

Senator Fridhandler, as another alumnus of McGill, I take great satisfaction in welcoming you to the Senate. Your work as a lawyer, arbitrator and especially as a mediator will serve you well in the Senate. Given your extensive experience on numerous boards, ranging from the Alberta Ballet Company to the Calgary Public Library, I have no doubt that you will bring an invaluable perspective to this chamber.

As new senators there will be a very steep learning curve, and the work ahead will not always be easy. However, every one of us in this chamber has been in your place before, and I believe I speak for all of us when I say this: Please, don't hesitate to reach out for advice and support whenever you need it and from whomever you seek it.

I look forward to working with all of you in the weeks and months ahead. Once again, on behalf of the Government Representative Office, welcome, dear colleagues, to the Senate of Canada.

• (1430)

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, on behalf of the opposition, I am pleased to rise in this chamber to welcome our new colleagues who were just sworn in a few minutes ago.

Senator Victor Boudreau of New Brunswick, Senator Charles Adler from my home province of Manitoba, Senator Daryl Fridhandler and Senator Kristopher Wells both from Alberta, welcome to the Senate of Canada. As you take your seat for the first time, it can be surreal as you adjust to your new surroundings. On the one hand, you feel proud to have such an incredible opportunity to serve your country. And yet, at the same time, you feel humbled to have been chosen.

I wish to reinforce a point here, colleagues. You were chosen by the Prime Minister who appointed you. As a matter of fact, 76 out of the 99 current senators in this chamber were appointed by Justin Trudeau. For nine long years, we have been hearing the purported narrative that the Trudeau Senate is apparently more independent than it was previously. I don't know how an institution that is already independent becomes more independent because one person claims it to be.

Colleagues, as we welcome you to the Senate family, let's be honest with ourselves: The Senate has always been an independent chamber because all senators are independent. The Senate has always been an independent chamber, as it draws its

independence from section 18 of the Constitution, and not from the goodwill of the Prime Minister. Independence in the Senate wasn't created the day Justin Trudeau kicked his Liberal senators out of caucus. The independence of senators comes from the fact that all senators are appointed until the age of 75.

There have been some pretty incredible claims made by Prime Minister Trudeau about his so-called reforms and improvements of the Senate, but those same claims have been contradicted by the following facts: the fact that the Trudeau Senate is more expensive today than ever; the fact that the Trudeau Senate does less work today and less valuable committee studies and reports; the fact that Trudeau's senators support and vote in favour of the government 96% of the time; the fact that Trudeau's Senate advisory board is more costly, combined with the fact that it has demonstrated negligence in ensuring a proper vetting process of individuals brought forward; the fact that, at the end of the day, Prime Minister Trudeau can appoint whomever he likes to appoint — the *Calgary Herald* recently said that Prime Minister Trudeau's Senate appointments showcase individuals who have a "... history of involvement in the federal Liberal party," while the *National Post* has referenced the fact that Trudeau has gone back on his promise by appointing a party bagman — and the fact that Prime Minister Trudeau chose to appoint two partisan individuals instead of recognizing the electoral mandate of senators-in-waiting. This not only demonstrates his decision to play political games — also known as partisanship — but his actions also demonstrate his disregard for the interest of Albertans who, in 2021, voted and elected three new senators-in-waiting.

The reality, colleagues, is that partisanship is a good thing, but let's not be disingenuous about it. Let's drop the Prime Minister's narrative about the Senate. Conservatives are under no illusions and, frankly, Canadians are under no illusions that you have been appointed to move the Liberal agenda forward, just as I was appointed 15 years ago on September 15, 2009, to move the Conservative agenda forward.

Colleagues, this is not a "chamber of drunken second chances." It is a chamber that can offer hope to Canadians when they need it the most. Therefore, it is my hope that we all exercise our responsibilities with integrity so that, collectively, our voices and perspectives ensure a better tomorrow for all Canadians. Thank you.

[Translation]

Hon. Raymonde Saint-Germain: Madam Speaker, colleagues, my speech will be a real welcome speech.

I am pleased to see you all again today now that the Senate is back in session. On behalf of the Independent Senators Group, I have the privilege of welcoming four new colleagues to this chamber.

[English]

With the time that has been given to me today, I can only gloss over the great accomplishments and achievements that have led you to this chamber. What struck me is the commitment you have shown to public service, whether in elected positions, academia,

health care, community involvement or media. I'm glad you have all chosen to continue this commitment by joining the Senate of Canada.

[*Translation*]

Senator Boudreau, you epitomize dedication to public service, as we can see from your remarkable 30-plus years of service to the people of New Brunswick and to the Canadian and international Francophonie.

Your skill as a parliamentarian and your experience in provincial and municipal governance are major assets for the future of our deliberations and our work. I'm sure that for a seasoned parliamentarian like yourself, the transition to your new federal duties will be a smooth one, and that you will have the pleasure of discovering a certain subtlety, shall we say, in the rules and practices of the Senate, some of which date back to 1868.

[*English*]

Senator Adler, what can I say that has not yet been said about your nomination? We are not used to so much attention toward a Senate appointee, but I believe it is a testament to the success you had in your public career. You have described yourself as a storyteller, which made me reflect on what is a good story within the Senate of Canada. I do believe it is an unbiased, fact-based and documented inquiry — not necessarily sensationalist, but solid and well researched. I look forward to your contribution to those stories.

Senator Fridhandler, it is truly a pleasure to welcome such an outstanding lawyer and jurist as you to our chamber. The work of parliamentarians is varied and multi-faceted, but it is always precious to be able to count on the expertise of our lawyer colleagues. I'm glad we will now be able to count on yours. You have been, all your life, deeply involved in boards from your communities in Calgary and the whole province of Alberta, and I'm glad to see they have a new champion in the Senate.

Senator Kristopher Wells, it is great to have in the Senate another strong advocate for human rights and the 2SLGBTQI+ community. Your experience as a scholar and an educator will be precious in the context of our deliberations. You said the following in a recent interview:

. . . we get the communities we're willing to build. That means we need to step up and be part of the solution, rather than just always pointing out the problems and the challenges.

This gives me the assurance that your work in the Senate will be efficient, engaged and collaborative. I look forward to working alongside you and witnessing your contribution to this chamber.

As of now, you can count on your colleagues from the Independent Senators Group to work alongside you in a collaborative and collegial manner. I wish you all a warm welcome to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[Senator Saint-Germain]

Hon. Scott Tannas: Honourable senators, on behalf of my colleagues in the Canadian Senators Group, I welcome Senators Victor Boudreau, Charles Adler, Daryl Fridhandler and Kristopher Wells to the Senate. One of the great strengths of the Senate is to attract greater diversity of professions than our colleagues in the other place. Today, we welcome four individuals with varied experiences and professional careers. Senator Boudreau was an administrator, marketing manager, provincial legislator and senior executive. Senator Adler was a journalist, commentator and radio host. Senator Fridhandler comes to this place as a lawyer, arbitrator, mediator and business person. And finally, Senator Wells was an educator and passionate human rights advocate.

This is quite a mix of different backgrounds. Of the 1,014 senators who have been named to the Senate so far in our country's history, there has always been a great diversity of backgrounds. Common professions represented in this chamber are lawyers — surprise, surprise — farmers, teachers, physicians and business people.

• (1440)

Having quite a few physicians right now has proved to be most useful when dealing with health policy. But as recent events have shown us, they're great to have around in a medical emergency. However, the list of past physicians has also included several coroners, which all senators hope to stay away from for as long as possible.

Considering this country's origins, the Senate has had 32 lumber merchants among its members, but only two fur traders. Our history includes several millers as being senators — more than you would believe actually. I'm pleased to report that there have been a few insurance executives like myself who have served in this House, the first one appointed way back in 1892.

According to the Library of Parliament's database, there have only been three realtors, including our Senator Ataullahjan. There have been two distillers and one brewer, but no winemakers — something we should see corrected soon. In these benches have sat musicians, artists, actors, scriptwriters, elite athletes — both amateur and professional — and coaches. Some senators have even been members of the clergy. Some senators have been tradespeople, and my colleague Senator Plett would probably be in agreement with me that we should have more. My point is there's been a great mosaic of careers and vocations, which is a great strength, and something that many in the public don't appreciate.

My message to our new colleagues is that I hope you will bring your knowledge, experience, expertise and perspective in your interventions in this chamber and to your questions in committee. Never hold back. Some have described political debate today as at times toxic, but we should take some inspiration from the Honourable James Arthurs, the Honourable Gustave Benjamin Boyer and the Honourable Robert William Gladstone who listed their profession simply as gentlemen. In this place, we should all strive to be gentlemen and women. Senators Boudreau, Adler, Fridhandler and Wells, welcome to the Senate.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond: Honourable senators, one aspect of my duties as leader of the Progressive Senate Group that I enjoy the most is welcoming new members to this Chamber. Today is a good day, a day when four new colleagues with vastly different life experiences have come to join us, each of them eager to contribute to our work.

As the fifth person to rise today, I hope I won't repeat too much of what's already been said. If I do, please forgive me.

The Honourable Victor Boudreau is a proud Acadian who has spent no less than 30 years serving the people of New Brunswick. His time as an MP's assistant, provincial MLA, minister and now, an active member of many community organizations and associations, makes him an authority on Acadian and New Brunswick realities as well as the needs of citizens living in this beautiful region of the country. I have no doubt that he will happily share his knowledge with us.

[*English*]

You don't have to fear the bumps along the road as you said when you left the cabinet in 2017.

The Honourable Charles Adler from Winnipeg was born in Hungary, the son of a Holocaust survivor. His family immigrated to Montreal where he started his broadcasting career, which found him living in various cities across the country. Over time, he became an influential commentator on many issues. We're all interested to see how he'll approach his new role. I wonder if in his case we should expect some bumps on the road. But to be more serious, if in the past you have been rather critical of this place, now you will have a chance to contribute to its ongoing improvement for the benefit of all Canadians.

The Honourable Daryl Fridhandler is a Canadian with roots across the whole country. Born in Montreal, he grew up in Nova Scotia. He attended three Canadian universities — McGill, Université de Moncton and Dalhousie Law School. In 1983, he moved to Calgary to practise law, and the law firm he joined at the time is still the law firm he's practising with today. Aside from a busy law practice, he's been a founder, director and investor in numerous start-up enterprises. On top of that, he's managed to find time to be active in business, cultural and political organizations provincially and federally. With such a background, it is fair to say that there will be plenty of Senate committees where he will feel rapidly at ease.

Finally, the Honourable Kristopher Wells is another Albertan but from the other city, Edmonton, home of the Oilers, who were the pride of all Canadians last June. Dr. Wells is a renowned scholar and researcher in Canada and around the world on sexual and gender diversity. His advocacy for diversity, equality and human rights in his own province and across Canada will provide him a very relevant background for his work on these issues here in the Senate. Speaking of hockey, I commend him for his participation in the Pride Tape initiative which has been adopted by all the National Hockey League's teams.

In conclusion, new colleagues, welcome to the Senate, and rest assured that the independent senators in the Progressive Senate Group look forward to working with you. Thank you, and welcome.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Michelle Arsenaault, wife of the Honourable Senator Boudreau, their daughters, Gabrielle and Dominique, and his parents, Vicky Jefferies and Paul Boudreau. They are accompanied by other members of the Honourable Senator Boudreau's family and friends.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[*English*]

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Jaqueline Adler, spouse of the Honourable Senator Adler, and Michael Kowalson, friend of the Honourable Senator Adler.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Ellen Fridhandler, spouse of the Honourable Senator Fridhandler, and their daughter Rachel. They are accompanied by Sheryl Simon and Jordan Simon, Arnie Fridhandler, Rachael Wolf Fridhandler, Eli Fridhandler and other family members of the Honourable Senator Fridhandler.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Cheryl Wells, Arthur Wells, Heather Wells, Phil Wells and Lori Miller-Wells, family members of the Honourable Senator Wells.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of our former colleagues the Honourable Percy Mockler and the Honourable Dennis Dawson.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

• (1450)

[*English*]

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

THE LATE HONOURABLE CHARLES (CHUCK) STRAHL

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, last month, Canada lost a great man. Chuck Strahl served in the House of Commons for over 17 years, with the utmost of integrity, proudly representing the people of the Fraser Valley in British Columbia. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

First elected as a Reform MP in 1993, Chuck came to see the need for a strong national Conservative party and was an important figure in reuniting our two legacy parties. In 2004, he was appointed Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole in the other place, a sign of the respect and admiration in which he was held by colleagues from all sides of the House.

On August 22, 2005, Chuck's regular newsletter to his constituents contained terrible personal news. After his lung had collapsed twice that summer, doctors discovered cancer in the lining of the lung, likely caused by an exposure to asbestos while he was working as a logger in his youth. Chuck told his constituents:

Cancer is a serious disease, but those of us diagnosed with cancer don't want to be rushed off the playing field and sidelined any too soon.

Chuck made the decision to stay in federal politics, and Canada is better for it. He went on to win re-election two more times and became the first agriculture minister in prime minister Stephen Harper's Conservative government, giving marketing choice to western barley producers. As Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, he signed a historic apology given

by Prime Minister Harper to former students of residential schools. Last month, the Manitoba Métis Federation remembered Chuck:

... as a man who believed in our cause and included us in conversations, at a time in our history when very few federal politicians had the knowledge and education to understand the unique role of our Nation in Canada's history

After taking on his final cabinet portfolio as Minister of Transport, Chuck stepped away from politics in 2011, yet he remained a respected voice within our party and our country.

There are so many reasons why Chuck will be missed: his kindness and decency, his humble spirit, his unflinching positivity and wonderful sense of humour. Chuck spoke with a distinctive baritone voice, which he put to good use singing in a barbershop quartet with fellow Conservative MPs, along with another caucus member who left us too soon due to cancer, Mark Warawa.

When Chuck revealed his cancer diagnosis 19 years ago, he wrote these words:

I simply can't be bitter about it, because so many people are expressing their love in so many ways to me and Deb, and we are so glad our Christian faith is mature and well-grounded. Things will be fine.

Honourable senators, it's my hope that his family continues to draw on their deep faith at this time of great sorrow. On behalf of the Conservative caucus in the Senate, I extend our sincere condolences to Chuck's wife of nearly 50 years, Debby, and their four children, Karina, Loni, Kyla and Mark, who followed in his father's footsteps as a Conservative member of Parliament for B.C.

May Chuck rest in God's eternal peace. Until we meet again.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

CONGRÈS MONDIAL ACADIEN 2024

Hon. René Cormier: Honourable senators, the World Acadian Congress has been held every five years since 1994. This international event celebrates the resilience, imagination and ingenuity of the Acadian people.

With its conferences, family gatherings and cultural events, the congress is an opportunity to celebrate one of Canada's francophone populations, while enabling it to reflect on and imagine its future.

This important event brings together the Acadian diaspora from around the world in a festive yet reflective atmosphere.

[*English*]

Over the past 30 years, whether in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Quebec or the States of Louisiana and Maine, the Acadian world congresses have shaped the economic, cultural and social fabrics of the communities that

have hosted them. The Acadian regions of Clare and Argyle in Nova Scotia, which hosted the Congrès mondial acadien, or CMA, last August, are no exception. The economic impact of this event on the region is estimated at \$20 million.

[*Translation*]

The 2024 congress was an opportunity for thousands of Acadians and friends of the Acadian people to attend inspirational gatherings like the one hosted by the remarkable Cajun artist Zachary Richard, to take part in the popular Tintamarre parade, and to leave the event with a renewed sense of solidarity and hope for the future of the Acadian people and their common language, French.

[*English*]

But the Congrès mondial acadien 2024 was much more than that for us parliamentarians, with several Acadian colleagues from different political parties and parliamentary groups in both houses, we took advantage of this major gathering to undertake a consultation with Acadian civil society to reflect on the Acadian people's place in our Canadian federation and the ways in which it could be better equipped, recognized and positioned to contribute both to its own development and to that of Canada.

[*Translation*]

To encourage multi-party discourse, we presented a workshop during which researchers shared a rigorous and visionary analysis of the Acadian people's current reality and its future.

I'm grateful to MPs Stéphane Bergeron and René Arseneault for attending the workshop and to MPs Chris d'Entremont and Darrell Samson and our honourable colleague Réjean Aucoin for their exceptional contributions to organizing the event, which was very well received by the Acadian and francophone communities.

Colleagues, the French-speaking Acadian people of North America are hardly ever named in federal constitutional and legislative texts. We still have a long way to go before we achieve full recognition for them and ensure they have all the tools they need to thrive.

That said, welcoming my compatriot, the Honourable Victor Boudreau, to this chamber and congratulating Acadian actor Robin-Joël Cool on the prestigious award he just received at the Gala des prix Gémeaux simply strengthens my resolve to advocate energetically for the interests of the Acadian people and all minorities here in this place. I also wish you, honourable colleagues, a new parliamentary session that is everything you want it to be.

Thank you. *Meegwetch*.

[*English*]

CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Hon. Robert Black: Honourable senators, I rise today to highlight that September is Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. This is a time dedicated to shining a light on the youngest and

most vulnerable members of our society who are courageously battling cancer. It's a time to raise awareness, to honour the children and their families who are affected and to advocate for continued research and support.

Every year, approximately 1,500 children in Canada are diagnosed with cancer, making it a leading cause of death by disease among Canadian children past infancy. Despite significant advancements in treatment, many childhood cancers remain incurable, and the journey for those diagnosed is often long and arduous. Families are thrust into a world of uncertainty, fear and unimaginable challenges. I'm certain that some of you, if not many of you, can relate to these feelings.

Childhood Cancer Awareness Month is symbolized by the gold ribbon, representing the preciousness of children and the resilience they exhibit. I rise today to ask that you join me in supporting this initiative and in raising awareness by wearing the gold pin that I've sent to each of your offices. This month, we join together to support these brave children, their families and the health care professionals who work tirelessly to provide care and hope.

It's also a time to acknowledge the critical need for ongoing research. Pediatric cancer research is crucial, yet it remains underfunded compared to adult cancers. By increasing our commitment to research, we can aspire to not only improve survival rates but also enhance the quality of life for survivors.

Organizations and charities across the country play an essential role in providing support services to our youth, and they also deserve recognition and support. For example, Childcan is an organization dedicated to providing emotional support as well as social and financial relief for families working through cancer treatments with their children. They are the organization that provided the pins that you, my honourable colleagues, received.

Honourable senators, let's use Childhood Cancer Awareness Month as an opportunity to reflect on the impact of this devastating disease and renew our commitment to making a difference. Together, we can support those who need it most and work towards a future where no child must face cancer.

Thank you, *meegwetch*.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

CANADA DISABILITY BENEFIT

Hon. Andrew Cardozo: Thank you, Senator Black, for raising the issue of childhood cancer. I wear the gold ribbon with pride, as do many of our colleagues today.

• (1500)

Colleagues, as we return from the summer break, I want to take us back to a topic that I and many others have raised several times in recent months: the Canada Disability Benefit. Parliament passed the Canada Disability Benefit Act in June of this year.

[Translation]

This is the act to reduce poverty and to support the financial security of persons with disabilities by establishing the Canada Disability Benefit and making a consequential amendment to the Income Tax Act.

[English]

A key part of the preamble of the act is as follows:

Whereas, in the spirit of “Nothing Without Us”, the Government of Canada recognizes the importance, in developing support measures for persons with disabilities, of engaging with the disability community, in accordance with the Accessible Canada Act, which specifies that “persons with disabilities must be involved in the development and design of laws, policies, programs, services and structures”;

I read that section because what followed was not according to plan. The announcement of the details in the spring budget was disappointing, to say the least, so I encourage the government to rethink the announcement, increase the amount from the paltry \$200 a month, begin payments early in 2025 rather than late next year and make such an announcement in the Fall Economic Statement.

The government has had many other measures to reduce poverty. In its current form, the benefit will have little effect on the poverty level of Canadians with disabilities. Canada can and must do better.

[Translation]

THE SALMON OF THE MITIS RIVER

Hon. Éric Forest: Honourable senators, this evening, the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, the NAC, will present a symphonic version of *The Salmon of the Mitis River* by Christine Beaulieu, accompanied by the NAC Orchestra conducted by Alexander Shelley.

In this ecological fable, the creator invites audience members to put themselves in the skins of wild salmon, discover their impressive journey and imagine how humans have transformed their reality. This show was presented at Les Jardins de Métis in 2021 and 2022 by Mr. Legris, who is with us today, and the performances were very well received.

Following this evening’s show, audience members will be invited to a talkback on stage in Southam Hall hosted by the artistic director of the NAC French Theatre. Architect Pierre Thibault and actor Roy Dupuis, cofounder of the Fondation Rivières, will also be part of the conversation.

As you know, the Atlantic salmon is threatened. In eastern Quebec, salmon runs have been declining precipitously for the past two years. The species’ future looks grim because there are no juveniles. Part of the problem is that surface waters in the Gulf of St. Lawrence are warming. However, more research is needed to better understand what’s going on.

[Senator Cardozo]

The Salmon of the Mitis River is incredibly timely. Our futures intertwined, both humankind and salmon must contend with climate change. We must adapt or perish.

As legislators, it is our duty to demand science-based public policy. A better understanding of the mechanisms threatening the salmon of the Mitis River and the Atlantic salmon is crucial to better understanding where the human species is going. Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

[English]

THE HONOURABLE LILLIAN EVA QUAN DYCK, O.C.

CONGRATULATIONS ON APPOINTMENT TO ORDER OF CANADA

Hon. Yuen Pau Woo: Honourable Senators, I want to share with you some happy news about our former colleague the Honourable Lillian Eva Quan Dyck.

Lillian retired in August 2020 but continues to rack up accolades and awards. For example, in October 2022, she was inducted as a member of the Order of Canada, and exactly one month ago, Lillian Dyck received the Chinese Canadian Legend Award, along with former Governor General Adrienne Clarkson and a handful of other outstanding Chinese Canadians from across the country. I had the honour of receiving the award on her behalf at a banquet in Toronto on August 17.

Lillian dedicated the award to her father, Quan Leen Yok, from whom she derives her Chinese ancestry. Her mother, however, was Cree from the George Gordon First Nation in Saskatchewan. The circumstances that led to a marriage between an Indigenous woman and a Chinese man are, on the one hand, the stuff of romance novels and, on the other hand, a cruel reminder of the trying circumstances facing both Indigenous and Chinese people in the first half of the 20th century.

Lillian grew up thinking she was pure Chinese because her mother, who was a residential school survivor, did not want her daughter to be burdened by the knowledge of being Indigenous and to face the prejudice that would have come with it.

Chinese people, however, were hardly a privileged class in the middle part of the last century. In fact, during the 22 years before Lillian was born in 1945, there was virtually no Chinese immigration to Canada thanks to the Exclusion Act of 1923. Even so, Lillian’s mother judged that the misery of being Chinese in Canada was better than the misery of being Indigenous. It is a sad commentary on the state of affairs in Canada at that time, but it is also in some ways an uplifting one about how many Chinese immigrants in Canada found solidarity, succour, friendship and, indeed, love from their First Nations brothers and sisters.

Lillian eventually learned about her Cree roots and grew to embrace her Indigenous heritage with gusto. Among her many accomplishments as a senator, she is remembered for her role as a long-serving chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, which produced many groundbreaking studies under her leadership. She did all this without turning her back on her Chinese roots.

Some years ago, she made a pilgrimage to Guangdong to see her father's birthplace and visit the ancestral home. She mused with me that the house would still be in the family if her dad had gone back to China, perhaps with her in tow. Imagine an alternate universe where Lillian Dyck is unleashed on post-revolution China. What a great movie that would make.

But we do have a movie and it is *Café Daughter*, which was released last year. It is based on a play by Kenneth Williams about Lillian's early years and it has been performed numerous times across the country. If you are looking for a way to celebrate our former colleague's latest achievement and understand how she did it against all odds, I suggest you watch *Café Daughter*. You can stream it for free on CBC Gem.

Congratulations, Lillian.

[Translation]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

THE SENATE

RULES OF THE SENATE OF CANADA—SEPTEMBER 2024
VERSION TABLED

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the *Rules of the Senate of Canada*, dated September 2024.

This version includes the index prepared by the Clerk of the Senate. The pages can provide copies to honourable senators on demand and copies will be distributed to honourable senators' offices as soon as possible. The online version has been updated.

[English]

STUDY ON THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S CONSTITUTIONAL, TREATY, POLITICAL AND LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO FIRST NATIONS, INUIT AND MÉTIS PEOPLES

TWENTIETH REPORT OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES COMMITTEE
DEPOSITED WITH CLERK DURING ADJOURNMENT OF THE SENATE

Hon. Brian Francis: Honourable senators, I have the honour to inform the Senate that pursuant to the orders adopted by the Senate on March 3, 2022, and June 7, 2023, the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples deposited with the Clerk of the Senate on July 25, 2024, its twentieth report (Interim) entitled *Missing Records, Missing Children* and I move that the report be placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting of the Senate.

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

• (1510)

QUESTION PERIOD

PUBLIC SAFETY

FIREARMS BUYBACK PROGRAM

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Leader, in March, I received a response to one of my written questions on the Senate's Order Paper concerning the so-called buyback program for firearms. It revealed that the incompetent NDP-Liberal government had spent over \$41.9 million on this program, and it hasn't even begun.

I recently received a response to another question of mine asking for the updated cost of this boondoggle. The response shows that Public Safety Canada has now spent \$56.1 million, and the RCMP has spent just over \$11 million. Leader, this adds up to a grand total of \$67.2 million — absolutely not worth the cost.

How is it possible for a gun-confiscation program that does not even exist? Is there anyone with common sense in the NDP-Liberal government who will put a stop to this waste?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you, Senator Plett. It's a pleasure to be back in this role.

The important thing about the buyback program is to get it right. The buyback program for firearms is an important measure and a central part of the government's plan to combat gun violence. Every effort is being made to launch the program in the coming months. It will include weapons that have been used in some of Canada's and, indeed, the world's most deadly shootings, like the AR-15.

Again, I repeat: This is part of the government's plan to reduce the impact of unnecessary and tragic gun violence. It's important that we get it right.

Senator Plett: Well, let's certainly get it right. This incompetent and wasteful NDP-Liberal government has no respect for taxpayers and no respect for law-abiding gun owners. They have plenty of regard for outside consultants trying to get it right. Consultants have received \$11.5 million of the \$67 million spent so far. Leader, is that not yet another example of why this government needs to go?

Senator Gold: No. The short answer is no. I would also encourage you to update your talking points because the way that you've characterized the government was never accurate and is certainly even less so now.

FINANCE

APPOINTMENT OF FINANCIAL ADVISER

Hon. Leo Housakos: Senator Gold, your leader-in-waiting, Mark Carney, has just signed on as Justin Trudeau's financial adviser, but he isn't a member of cabinet or even a Privy Council appointment. He has been hired by the Liberal Party of Canada. This is extremely troublesome because it means he's not subject to the Conflict of Interest Act. It is not that Justin Trudeau believes he's subject to it either, but it raises the question as to Mr. Carney's loyalties. Are those loyalties to Canadians or to the Liberal Party, or are they to the boards on which he sits, whose best interests he has a fiduciary obligation to put first?

Which is it, Senator Gold: the Liberal Party of Canada, the financial firm PIMCO, the online payment firm Stripe, the investment firm Brookfield Asset Management or maybe the World Economic Forum, on whose board he has been serving since 2010? Which one, Senator Gold?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your question, senator. Mr. Carney has had an exemplary career serving Canadians and, indeed, serving others, with his extraordinary blend of economic competence and commitment to combat the existential crisis of climate change. Canadians are well served by Mr. Carney being willing to provide advice to this government as it charts a measure forward.

I encourage all, especially those who see themselves as the government-in-waiting, to learn a little more economics from someone so well placed to advise us.

Senator Housakos: Senator Gold, what we learned is that last year "Carbon Tax Carney" made close to US\$1 million in deferred shares from Brookfield — one of the biggest investors in the People's Republic of China, which is one of the world's worst polluters and human rights violators. Yet Mr. Carney supports the carbon tax on hard-working Canadians.

Tell me, Senator Gold: How can that be seen as anything other than putting one's fortunes ahead of Canadians? Justin Trudeau and "Carbon Tax Carney" are really two sides of the same coin, aren't they?

Senator Gold: No, they are not. I gather that the summer break did not calm your tendency to use any efforts to smear an important Canadian who has offered to make a contribution to this country. I think it's regrettable that we start this session with that same tone.

CANADIAN HERITAGE

CANADA MEDIA FUND

Hon. Donna Dasko: Senator Gold, TIFF, the Toronto International Film Festival, was planning to screen *Russians at War*, which is a propaganda film that shows Russian soldiers in a sympathetic light, with no mention of the war crimes or atrocities that they have committed.

Many, including Senator Kutcher, myself and others, have publicly criticized TIFF. Although the screening was temporarily paused, the film is now apparently back in theatres. It has been widely reported that the film was funded in part by the Canada Media Fund, or CMF, which provided \$340,000. As we know, the CMF receives taxpayer dollars from the Government of Canada.

Minister Freeland has said, "It's not right for Canadian public money to be supporting the screening and production of a film like this."

I want to build on this point. How is it that taxpayer dollars went into the making of this propaganda film? How did this happen? Do the funders understand —

The Hon. the Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question, senator. While I cannot speak for the Canada Media Fund, it's my understanding that the CMF provided \$340,000 in funding for the film through TVOntario, now known as TVO, under the Broadcaster Envelope Program. My understanding is that the CMF has stated:

We rely on our trusted and CRTC-regulated broadcasters to ensure the project conforms to the programming standards endorsed by the CRTC.

I also understand that TVO has stated:

TVO's Board of Directors has decided to respect the feedback we have received, and TVO will no longer be supporting or airing *Russians at War*.

Senator Dasko: Thank you, Senator Gold. Can you advise whether the CMF will undertake a review of the way it allocates funds to ensure that in the future public money will not be spent on propaganda films like this?

Senator Gold: Although I can't speak for the CMF or TVO, it's my understanding that TVO has said that it will review the process by which the project was funded.

PUBLIC SAFETY

CRIME PREVENTION

Hon. Tony Loffreda: Senator Gold, Montreal is our home. Like you, I love our city, but I am increasingly worried that people in the city are not feeling as safe as they should. This is also the case in other major cities across the country.

The Macdonald-Laurier Institute released a report today on violent crime in urban centres. Its authors analyzed 10 years of police-reported violent crime data in nine major cities. One of the conclusions is that certain crimes — most notably, sexual assault and robbery — are rising nearly everywhere. What is the federal government doing to support major cities across Canada in addressing this troubling trend? What investments have been made in crime-prevention programming?

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

Police across the country are continuing to collaborate across jurisdictions to tackle this challenge. The Government of Canada is supporting their work through multiple investments, such as \$121 million to Ontario through the Initiative to Take Action Against Gun and Gang Violence; \$28 million to support the work of CBSA, the Canada Border Services Agency, and to strengthen our borders against stolen vehicle exports; and \$50 million to support police coordination across jurisdictions, including internationally.

• (1520)

This is in addition to the National Crime Prevention Strategy, an integral part of the federal government's efforts to tackle crime and to build safer communities. With an investment of \$63 million annually, the National Crime Prevention Strategy assists communities in developing projects that will reduce crime by reducing the personal, social and economic factors that lead some individuals to commit criminal acts.

Senator Loffreda: In your assessment, what role could the federal government play in streamlining data collection and ensuring uniform reporting requirements in a shared nationwide database?

The Macdonald-Laurier Institute, or MLI, report also documents the challenges of collecting, verifying and analyzing urban violent crime data in Canada. It argues that the publication of consistent, transparent and timely crime data is essential and necessary.

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question. My understanding is that Statistics Canada is working on several initiatives to better streamline data collection. These include initiatives such as working with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police to collect data, through the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, on the Indigenous and racialized identity of all victims and accused persons involved in criminal incidents.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

CARBON SEQUESTRATION

Hon. Colin Deacon: My question is for the Government Representative.

Senator Gold, the government has recognized the need to create regulatory and financial incentive structures for scaling carbon-removal technologies. These include Finance Canada's Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Storage Investment Tax Credit;

Environment and Climate Change Canada's, or ECCC's, development of a protocol for direct air capture of carbon dioxide; and Natural Resources Canada's, or NRCAN's, responsibility to approve qualifying projects.

Canada has a natural competitive advantage in carbon removal and storage, yet other countries are attracting the bulk of investment. Sophisticated investors who want to scale carbon-removal technologies and organizations wanting to buy the resulting carbon credits are concerned with our slow progress and complex web of protocols and approvals.

Senator Gold, which department or entity will bring clarity to Canada's efforts and be accountable for our country's success so we can begin to attract the billions of dollars in global investment that are already going to the U.S. and Europe?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): I refer all senators to Natural Resources Canada and its release of Canada's Carbon Management Strategy. This strategy outlines five priorities guiding the government's approach to promoting a competitive and robust carbon-management sector here in Canada. I would note that attracting investment and trade opportunities is one of those five priorities. The strategy also includes the enabling federal programs, policies and regulations.

Senator C. Deacon: How many projects have been approved so far under the ITC for carbon capture utilization and storage by this government? If the answer is zero, what would be the best way to advance and accelerate progress?

Senator Gold: The answer is not zero. In fact, I understand there are over 90 current and proposed projects under the investment tax credit for carbon capture, utilization and storage.

FINANCE

COST OF LIVING

Hon. Andrew Cardozo: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate.

First, I want to quote from a column by David Coletto of Abacus Data in *The Hill Times*:

Parliament and the federal government need to find ways to instill confidence in Canadians that there is a clear economic strategy in place to create wealth, grow the economy, and secure their future.

To be fair, on some indicators, the economy is doing well with the reduction of inflation — announced at a low of 2% today — the reduction in the Bank of Canada interest rate and a consistent affordability agenda covering tax rates, pensions, national child care and dental care.

However, the housing crisis is worsening. The overall unemployment rate is inching up, while the rate for youth unemployment is more worrisome.

Focusing on the issue of confidence, what are the government's top priorities that speak to increasing the confidence that Canadians will have in their economy?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): The government is focused on boosting productivity by investing in the technologies, incentives and supports critical to increasing innovation, attracting more private investment to Canada and investing in our people and workforce. These include improving access to training and re-skilling programs for our workforce with increased funding for Youth Employment and Skills Strategy programs; \$207.6 million for student work placement programs; investing \$2 billion to launch a new AI Compute Access Fund and Canadian AI Sovereign Compute Strategy to help Canadian researchers and start-ups access the computational power they need to compete and scale up; allowing businesses to write off the full cost of investments in patents and data processing equipment; building on past reforms to the Competition Act, which will lead to a more productive economy; and delivering a \$93-billion suite of major tax credits to give the clean economy a boost.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Hon. Andrew Cardozo: Senator Gold, I would like to drill down on two economic issues, namely housing and immigration.

While the housing crisis and shortage has been growing over the last couple of decades, there are some who believe the increase in immigration, especially over the last couple of years, to be the sole reason for the problem with housing.

Could you share your views on the relationship between immigration and housing? What is the government doing with regard to the housing crisis we face?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Time doesn't allow me to elaborate on everything the government is doing in both of those areas or their complicated interrelationship, but you are right to point out there are some.

There have been changes — you are all aware of them — announced in our immigration protocols and procedures, as well as major continuing investments in the housing sector. These are designed to increase the stock of housing and reduce the pressure on it.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Hon. Salma Atallahjan: Leader, for nine long years, the NDP-Liberal government has failed to build enough homes for Canadians and, as a result, the cost of housing has doubled.

A monthly report on the cost of rents across the country shows that in August the average cost of a one-bedroom apartment in Toronto stood at more than \$2,400.

[Senator Cardozo]

Across the GTA, rent remains unaffordable. The average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Etobicoke rose almost 1% month over month and now stands at more than \$2,200. In Mississauga, the average rent is more than \$2,300, which is virtually unchanged from a year ago despite many housing announcements made by the NDP-Liberal government since then. Leader, who can afford this?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): There is no question that Canadians, especially younger Canadians, have been feeling the pinch and pressure for some time. That's why this government has introduced a series of initiatives in its area of jurisdiction, and is also working closely with provinces, municipalities and the private sector to address this multi-faceted challenge we face in Canada with a growing population and the pressures you properly underline.

Although there is no magic bullet and no one quick fix, the suite of measures the government has introduced, along with the collaboration they are enjoying with many municipalities and provinces, will bear fruit.

Senator Atallahjan: Senator Gold, unaffordable rent isn't only a problem in the GTA. Asking rents for residential property types in Canada averaged \$2,187 in August, increasing by 3.3% over the past year. Leader, why should Canadians have to live like this? When will we see a meaningful reduction in the cost of rent?

Senator Gold: There is a supply-and-demand issue, as everyone understands. The government has delivered measures that will unlock over 600,000 new rental homes, including tens of thousands of affordable homes across the country. It is also cracking down on short-term rentals to rapidly unlock up to 30,000 more apartments for families to live in. These are some measures being introduced to address this issue.

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

RATE OF UNEMPLOYMENT

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

In the month of August, 44,000 Canadians lost their full-time jobs. Other than during the pandemic, Canada has not seen such a high unemployment rate since May 2017. In the meantime, the unemployment rate in the United States is going down. It is harder than ever for young Canadians to find work. The unemployment rate for students returning to classes is 16.7%. Excluding the pandemic, that is the highest unemployment rate for the summer months since 2022.

The Liberals' economic policies have failed. In August, the Prime Minister held his annual caucus retreat in Vancouver. Who did he blame for this disaster?

• (1530)

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question and for pointing out the challenges related to Canada's unemployment rate. With all due respect, esteemed colleague, it is not true that the federal government is solely responsible for the highs and lows in the unemployment rate. The seasons play a role. When it comes to the Government of Canada's fiscal and monetary policies, at the macroeconomic level, the inflation rate has continued to fall and is now at 2%, as our colleague recently pointed out. We hope that interest rates will continue to drop, which will help to improve our economic situation.

Senator Carignan: Leader, Canadians' paycheques are getting smaller. Statistics Canada recently indicated that the GDP per capita has dropped for the fifth consecutive quarter, falling by 3.6% since 2022.

Economist Trevor Tombe said, and I quote, "If Canada had simply kept pace with the U.S. over the past two years, our economy would be 8.5 percent larger."

Will the Prime Minister take responsibility for this and step down?

Senator Gold: The government will continue to work hard to do its best to improve the standard of living for all Canadians.

HIRING OF UNIVERSITY FACULTY

Hon. Julie Miville-Dechêne: Senator Gold, on August 30, Canada's special representative on combatting Islamophobia, Amira Elghawaby, wrote to the presidents of Canadian universities and recommended that they hire more Muslim, Palestinian and Arab professors.

Senator Gold, do you consider it appropriate for a special representative appointed by the federal government to advise Canadian universities to hire professors of a specific religion, whatever that religion may be?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. I think the Prime Minister was very clear on the government's position. Let me say it again: Each university is responsible for deciding who it wants to hire.

Senator Miville-Dechêne: That doesn't really answer the question I asked you. Everyone agrees that diversity is very important, especially among university staff.

However, don't you think that professors should be hired based on merit, not religion? Canada is a neutral, secular nation, isn't it?

Senator Gold: As the Prime Minister has said, every university has its own rules for hiring and dismissing employees, and the government clearly respects these rules.

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

NATIONAL SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS

Hon. Percy E. Downe: Senator Gold, as you are aware, many senators are concerned about the unequal treatment afforded the Senate and the House of Commons when it comes to access to the unredacted version of the report of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians on foreign interference in Canada. Of particular concern was the conclusion in the report that foreign actors cultivated relationships with members of the House of Commons and senators, with a view to having Canadians act in favour of the foreign actors and against Canada's interest.

When asked about the four Senate group leaders receiving and reading the report, you said that the government is considering how to respond to this request and is taking it seriously.

Can you give an update to senators if, like the leaders of the various groups in the House of Commons, the leaders of the groups here in the Senate will also be given the opportunity to read the unredacted report? Have you been able to read it as Leader of the Government in the Senate?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): The short answer is no, I have not been invited to, and most cabinet ministers are not privy to it either, as you may know, and I think you do. But senator, your question is a good one.

The request has been made to the government; we have been following up diligently. We know that this is an important issue. We anticipated the question today, and we've made every effort to get an answer. Regrettably, and I say this — I say everything sincerely. Regrettably, we have not been successful in receiving a final decision despite very consistent and persistent follow-ups. I will continue and my office will continue to push the government to come to a decision point, and you can rest assured I will communicate it as soon as I receive it.

Senator Downe: Thank you, Senator Gold. Without disclosing any names, have you been personally advised by any government minister or official of the Government of Canada that any senator has been named in the report?

Senator Gold: No, I have not. As Government Representative, I'm not considered to be one who has a need to know these issues, which I believe is the standard that was adopted. So I have neither been briefed nor read it, nor do I expect to.

FINANCE

[Translation]

CARBON TAX

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Leader, the carbon tax has made it difficult for families all across Canada to afford their daily lives. Last Thursday, the NDP premier of British Columbia claimed that his government would remove the carbon tax on individuals in my province if the Trudeau government removes its requirement to have one. The Liberal premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, the NDP premier of Manitoba and Conservative premiers across Eastern and Western Canada have all spoken against the inflationary carbon tax.

Leader, what is your government's response to this request from the Premier of British Columbia?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): The price on pollution, as all credible economists agree, has not been inflationary. If we're going to disagree on policy and disagree on the role of politics in this place, let's at least get our facts straight.

The fact remains that the government continues to be of the view that a price on pollution is the most effective, efficient and market-appropriate tool — amongst others — to address climate change. We understand the politics of provinces whose citizens and others are feeling the pinch generally, and the Government of Canada has great respect, whether for the Premier of British Columbia — indeed, for all premiers — but it is my understanding that the government remains committed to this tool to address climate change. It's the most effective and efficient market-sensitive tool, and it's acknowledged to be as such.

Senator Martin: Well, the fact is that all the premiers disagree with this failed policy.

Leader, last October, the Prime Minister gave the Atlantic provinces a carve-out from his carbon tax. Shortly after, one of his cabinet ministers told CTV News that voters in the Prairies needed to elect more Liberals to get an exemption. Is this what your government expects voters in B.C. to believe now as well?

Senator Gold: This government remains committed to a serious, evidence-based plan to combat climate change. It regrets the misinformation that is spread, wittingly or unwittingly. It regrets very much that other parties in the opposition have not come forward with any plan whatsoever. The politics will be the politics, but this is good policy for the future of Canada.

PUBLIC SAFETY

NATIONAL SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS

Hon. Raymonde Saint-Germain: Senator Gold, my question relates to speculation following the publication of the report by the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians.

I heard Commissioner Hogue explain quite clearly that the information obtained from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, or CSIS, is protected information because some of these cases could eventually be prosecuted, and those proceedings would also fall under national security and state secrets.

Commissioner Hogue has therefore indicated that she will not publish the names of any parliamentarians.

Do you consider this to be in line with the rule of law, and do you think it confirms that parliamentarians' names can't be included in the committee's unredacted report?

• (1540)

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): If I understand the question correctly, the government's position is that it respects Justice Hogue's decision. It's always important to strike an appropriate balance between unlimited transparency and legal requirements, including protecting national security and privacy, under circumstances such as these.

I believe Justice Hogue struck an appropriate balance in that respect.

Senator Saint-Germain: Does that mean you recognize that, in this context and in a country governed by the rule of law, the basic principle of respect for privacy and the right to the presumption of innocence has been and must continue to be fundamental?

Senator Gold: I couldn't agree more.

[English]

ANSWERS TO ORDER PAPER QUESTIONS TABLED

FINANCE—ASIAN INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT BANK

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 5, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

FINANCE—AIR CANADA

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 6, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding Air Canada.

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE—RESIDENCES SITUATED AT HARRINGTON LAKE

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 47, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding the residences situated at Harrington Lake — Privy Council Office.

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE—SECURITY OPERATIONS DIVISION

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 78, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding the Privy Council Office.

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE—PUBLIC SERVICE

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 79, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding the public service.

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE—TASK FORCE ON SERVICES TO CANADIANS

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 184, dated December 13, 2022, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding the Task Force on Services to Canadians.

DELAYED ANSWERS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Response to the oral question asked in the Senate on May 17, 2022, by the Honourable Senator Plett, concerning the transfer of small business.

Response to the oral question asked in the Senate on March 22, 2023, by the Honourable Senator Deacon (*Nova Scotia*), concerning open banking.

Response to the oral question asked in the Senate on May 10, 2023, by the Honourable Senator McPhedran, concerning the safety of Indigenous women and girls.

FINANCE

TRANSFER OF SMALL BUSINESS

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Donald Neil Plett on May 17, 2022)

Department of Finance Canada

Budget 2022 announced a consultation process to allow stakeholders to provide feedback on how the amendments introduced by Bill C-208 could be strengthened to protect the integrity of the tax system. As a result of this consultation, the government released draft legislative proposals in Budget 2023 and on August 4, 2023. The final version of the proposed legislative changes was included in Bill C-59 (44th Parliament, 1st session), which received royal assent on June 20, 2024, and is deemed to have come into force on January 1, 2024.

Budget 2023 estimated the revenue gains associated with the legislative changes, which can be found at the following link, on page 4: [tm-mf-2023-en.pdf](https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/finance/mf-2023-en.pdf) (canada.ca).

OPEN BANKING

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Colin Deacon on March 22, 2023)

Department of Finance Canada

Following the 2023 Fall Economic Statement announcement that it would implement a framework for consumer-driven banking that would regulate the sharing of financial data, Budget 2024 announced the details of the framework. The government mandated the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada (FCAC) to supervise and enforce the framework and established the legislative foundations of Canada's Consumer-Driven Banking Framework in the first Budget Implementation Act. Bill C-69 received royal assent on June 20, 2024. The remaining elements of the Framework will be included in future legislation.

CROWN-INDIGENOUS RELATIONS

SAFETY OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

(Response to question raised by the Honourable Marilou McPhedran on May 10, 2023)

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)

Our government is committed to improving Indigenous housing outcomes, and to building a new relationship together with Indigenous peoples, based on recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnerships.

As part of the 2020 Fall Economic Statement, the Government announced an investment of \$724.1 million to expand supports for Indigenous women, children, and Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual plus (2SLGBTQIA+) people escaping gender-based violence.

Projects under the Indigenous Shelter and Transitional Housing Initiative are selected by an Indigenous-led committee comprised of representatives from organizations representing First Nations, Métis, Indigenous 2SLGBTQIA+ and urban communities as well as CMHC, Indigenous Services Canada and subject matter experts and people with lived experience of shelter and/or transitional housing needs.

As of March 31, 2024, \$159.34 million have been conditionally or financially committed toward the construction of 20 shelters and 14 transitional homes for Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQIA+ survivors through the Indigenous Shelter and Transitional Housing Initiative.

Please note that since the date of this question the Government of Canada has released both its Housing Plan (<https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2024/04/12/announcement-canadas-housing-plan>) and Budget 2024 (<https://budget.canada.ca/2024/home-accueil-en.html>).

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, pursuant to the order adopted December 7, 2021, I would like to inform the Senate that Question Period with the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, P.C., M.P., Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, will take place on Thursday, September 19, at 4:55 p.m.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Marilou McPhedran: Your Honour, I wonder if I might raise a point of order now that we have completed Question Period on our first day back after the summer break.

I would like to note that on many occasions today, senators asking questions and Senator Gold responding to those questions had our clerk standing and noting that the time was up, but — and I'm very grateful for this — the senators were all allowed to complete what they had to say. It only took a few seconds longer than the time period.

I don't know if their microphones were cut off at the points when the clerk stood. I would like to have that clarified, please.

I'm raising it as a point here largely because, as our new colleagues will soon learn, unaffiliated senators operate under a range of discriminatory practices in this chamber, one of them being that we have far fewer opportunities to speak. One of the opportunities is during Question Period.

On a number of occasions before the summer break, my questions were cut off; the mic was cut off. Senator Dasko's research and that of others has demonstrated there is an increased trust and — as measured by a range of surveys — an increased interest in the Senate of Canada from the public in this country. I have heard from a number of people who care very much about the human rights issues I typically address in my questions — and about being able to hear the questions and responses.

My request and my point of order are for clarification on cutting off my and other senators' mics — as was the practice up to the summer break but did not appear to be today — so that we all, including those who join us by watching, know what degree of information will be allowed to be shared while balancing this with overall respect for timely and efficient Question Periods.

Thank you very much, Your Honour.

The Hon. the Speaker: Thank you for the question and point of order.

I want to clarify that the clerk will usually stand when there are 10 seconds left for the question and then 10 seconds before the end of the period allowed for the answer. There are 60 seconds for the question and 60 seconds for the answer from the Government Representative. Then, for the supplementary question, there are 30 seconds for the question and 30 seconds for the answer. That is just to clarify the clerk will stand 10 seconds before the end of the 60-second or 30-second period.

Thank you for the question. I could certainly clarify again, because I've done it more than once before Question Period, as to what the — I would not say the rule — but the understanding or agreement pertaining to questions and answers is, in that there are both 60-second and 30-second questions and answers.

Senator McPhedran: Thank you very much for that explanation, Your Honour. I wonder if you could also at some point — not necessarily now — address the part of my point about cutting off our microphones.

The Hon. the Speaker: Usually when the Speaker stands, the mic is cut off, because the person is usually asked to sit when the Speaker stands. That is the reason why the mic is cut off.

Hon. Percy E. Downe: I rise on a point of order. I was not going to get up, but given Senator McPhedran's important intervention — and it is the first day back — we noted as well that, notwithstanding the very important statements people gave, two of the statements ran longer than others. We always try to have our statements stay within the time limit. Senator Black had an equally important statement today on a very important subject, and he was within the time frame. Then we noticed that others were allowed to go over that.

So we are requesting, as we have in the past, that either the rules that we all understand are enforced or we change the rules — whatever the will of the Senate is. But we all need to know what those rules are and if they're going to be enforced; otherwise, we'll be over all the time, not only with statements but with questions.

The Hon. the Speaker: I agree that the rules are for three-minute statements. I must admit that I have been quite generous, especially when there's a tribute to someone in the community who has passed on or regarding a former colleague. I've been flexible.

The rules specify three minutes. If you want me to cut everyone off after three minutes, I can do that, but I'd like to have a little leeway as to how I manage the statements.

Senator Downe: Further to that point, Your Honour, in my view, that actually muddies the waters. If we're going to have flexibility, we'll ask for flexibility in every statement, and that means it's more time, regardless of what the topic is.

• (1550)

We tried, as I indicated in the example today of Senator Black, who got in all his comments within three minutes. That's what we're asking. If you have something to say, and you know your time is three minutes, say it within the three minutes. If it's going to be longer, that's a completely different story, or if the rules aren't going to be enforced, maybe we change the rules.

The Hon. the Speaker: Thank you for those comments.

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): I would at least like to make this point. Senator Downe has been here for enough years to know that we have rules on speeches. Some speeches are 15, some 30, some 45 minutes, and he's very well aware that we're regularly giving people an extra two minutes or an extra five minutes to finish their speeches. He's very well aware of that. Now, all of a sudden, something affects him, and all of a sudden we're going to play by the rules.

And when Senator Downe says all Senate statements are equally important, I take offence to that. Senator Black had an important statement today. I very much supported what Senator

Black had to say, but when a colleague passes away, somebody who has been in the Commons for a lot of years, I think that's a little more important than some statements that we have here celebrating some event. I don't agree with that, and I agree, Your Honour, that there needs to be some flexibility.

I will be transparent here — maybe I shouldn't be, Your Honour, but I will be. I took the opportunity, because I had an important statement to make, to call the Speaker, as I have done in the past with other Speakers, and said, "Your Honour, I'm going to be a little bit long; I hope you're going to allow me a little bit of slack." And she did. I think we need to give the Speaker that latitude, and if we're going to try to be, "Absolutely, this is it; we won't allow anything more," Senator Downe, trust me, when somebody asks for an extra minute, that will be denied from this chair if that's the way we want to play this game. There has to be some flexibility allowed in certain speeches. We do it regularly with speeches. Why wouldn't we do it with statements?

Senator Downe: Often the rules are whatever we intend them to be. Those are no rules at all. I have no problem at all with the statement today from Senator Plett. In fact, I read Monte Solberg's tribute, which was even better, I might say, than yours, Senator Plett, to an outstanding parliamentarian. I have no trouble with that.

But what are the rules? Do we go through the back door and call directly? That's the first I've heard you could do that. I've been here for many years, and I've never called the Speaker and said, "I need a little more time." What rules do we want? Do we want to change the rules, as I said at the beginning, for more flexibility? Tell us what the rules are so we are all treated fairly.

Senator McPhedran: Thank you very much, Your Honour. If I may just add to the important points made by my colleagues to ask to please address my question in all aspects that have been raised, and that is the cutting off of our microphones. If we could please understand when that is happening and who is doing it. And I know because we made a study of this in my office because of the number of times I heard from people about my being cut off when others were not. So on this point, let me please strongly emphasize how much respect I have for your office, for your judgment as the Speaker of this chamber, but at the same time to strongly reinforce the points made by my colleagues about equitable treatment of all senators and my question, in particular, about the cutting off of our microphones. Thank you.

The Hon. the Speaker: Thank you very much for all your comments. Again, the microphones are cut off usually when I stand. It's a question of coordinating with the people who are cutting off the mic, and maybe there are a couple of seconds that might not be — you have to have a little bit of understanding as to how this is coordinated.

[Translation]

Thank you for your comments. I appreciate your questions, and I'll take them into consideration as I decide how to conduct routine proceedings and other matters on the scroll in future sittings.

Thank you very much.

[English]

POINT OF ORDER

SPEAKER'S RULING RESERVED

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I'm rising on a point of order as well today, and I'm going to share some facts. It's a point of order about events that happened during the summer break. Let me just summarize some of what happened, Your Honour.

This summer, I was approached by *The Hill Times*, asking if I would submit an op-ed on the "new Trudeau Senate." I was asked to do this as the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate and the leader of the Conservative caucus.

On August 21, 2024, *The Hill Times* published my opinion piece under the title "Trudeau's experimental Senate changes are turning out to be a dud."

On August 26, Alison Korn, Issues Management and Media Relations Advisor for the Senate, sent an internal memo to 32 people, saying:

For your awareness, an edit has been made to an opinion piece in *The Hill Times* that incorrectly compared actual expenditures vs. budgets.

The email provided a link to my op-ed. At no point before contacting *The Hill Times* did Ms. Korn contact me or my office to discuss the content of the op-ed. Contact with *The Hill Times* was made without my authorization or even my knowledge. It was done secretly and behind my back.

Learning that my op-ed had been changed, Karine Leroux, the Communications Director in my office, contacted *The Hill Times* to inquire why they made a change to the text without the author's authorization. Representatives of *The Hill Times* said they thought Ms. Korn had coordinated the changes with me and presumed she was acting on my behalf.

After learning that they had been duped in making the change, *The Hill Times* apologized to me and reinstated the original text of the op-ed on its website. When asked why she had made the request to change the text of my op-ed, Ms. Korn said it was the Chair of Internal Economy Committee, Senator Moncion, who had instructed her to call *The Hill Times*.

Neither Senator Moncion nor her office ever communicated with me or my office before or after ordering Ms. Korn to secretly change the op-ed. Senator Moncion did not even ask Ms. Korn to communicate with me before making the change.

[The Hon. the Speaker]

As Issues Management and Media Relations Advisor to the Senate, Ms. Korn officially reports to the Chief Corporate Services Officer and Clerk of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration. At this juncture, I cannot say if Ms. Pascale Legault was involved in the decision to ask for changes to the op-ed without my knowledge. It seems Ms. Korn took her orders directly from Senator Moncion.

In her capacity as Issues Management and Media Relations Advisor for the Senate, Alison Korn often sends emails to a select group regarding news article corrections. As a matter of fact, my office was able to locate 75 of those emails going back to 2017. Until this particular situation, the subject line for those emails was always "MEDIA CORRECTION." The email that addressed the change to my op-ed is the only email out of all of the ones that we found that had the words "MEDIA EDIT" as the subject line. The change in subject line reflects that Ms. Korn wanted to make a distinction between this unique situation and her usual practice. It shows that there was a change in practice and demonstrates that the changes to the op-ed were made with intention and purpose.

What did Ms. Korn change?

• (1600)

My op-ed said that the Senate expenditures were \$85.4 million in 2014-15. She ordered the text to be changed to say that the Senate budget in the Main Estimates was \$91.5 million in 2014-15. Both numbers are correct, Your Honour. What Ms. Korn and Senator Moncion did not like was the fact that I used the lower number for the 2014-15 year — the actual expenses. They did not correct the mistake I made. They wanted to change the meaning of the text, trying to minimize the increase in the Senate expenses since Justin Trudeau took power.

Your Honour and colleagues, this is outrageous. We now have a Senate communications police that will not only fact-check what senators say or write outside the chamber, but they will also — in secret — change how you present your thoughts. This situation has opened the door to a dangerously slippery slope.

Imagine, Your Honour, if, in a few years, a Conservative is the chair of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration, and such chair orders the Issues Management and Media Relations Advisor to rewrite Senator Moncion's op-ed in which she said that Justin Trudeau was a good Prime Minister. The Conservative chair of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration could easily argue that is factually incorrect; I would argue that. I don't think Senator Moncion would be very happy about that correction.

No one in this chamber should experience changes made to their opinion pieces, and no one should have to experience what I had to endure here.

Even if I had used incorrect numbers, Senator Moncion and Ms. Korn had absolutely no business changing the text of my op-ed behind my back. Again, the proper way to ask for a change would have been to contact me or to write a rebuttal in *The Hill Times*.

Before I go any further, I'd like to go over what an op-ed is. An op-ed is not a news article. It is an opinion piece written by a specific author. As a matter of fact, newspapers and news outlets will clearly make the distinction between news articles and opinion pieces in addition to indicating the name of the author. An op-ed is a short newspaper column that represents an opinion put together by the author. It represents someone's views, values, expertise, political opinion, et cetera. Op-eds provide the opportunity for the author to bring forward nuances, vision and insight. And, last but not least, newspapers and news outlets will typically offer other authors the opportunity to provide a response and different perspective to an opinion piece that they have published, allowing for public discussion.

What Ms. Korn changed, under the orders of Senator Moncion, was my text, my opinion, that I submitted as an individual senator — the Leader of the Opposition — not as a representative of the Senate or of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration.

Like any other Canadian, I enjoy the rights and freedoms recognized by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, specifically the freedoms listed in section 2(b): "freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication . . ."

Ms. Korn and Senator Moncion's actions were, plain and simple, equivalent to censorship. They did not like or agree with what I wrote, and, using subterfuge, they managed to change my text. It is clear that they wilfully restricted my rights and freedoms.

In a paper commissioned by the Public Order Emergency Commission, Professor Richard Moon of the University of Windsor summarized what freedom of expression is:

A commitment to freedom of expression means that an individual must be free to speak to others and to hear what others may say, without interference from the state. It is said that the answer to bad or erroneous speech is not censorship, but rather more and better speech. . . .

There are several court decisions that deal with freedom of expression. I will not delve into the details, but allow me to use Professor Moon's paper to highlight some of the Supreme Court decisions.

The Supreme Court has said that protection is given to expression ". . . irrespective of the particular meaning or message sought to be conveyed." It has also said:

. . . in a free, pluralistic and democratic society we prize a diversity of ideas and opinions for their inherent value both to the community and to the individual . . .

And finally:

The court has said that it will not exclude an act of expression from the scope of the freedom simply because the act is thought to be without value.

I submit that the Senate, its Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration Committee and its administration do not have the power to restrict any Canadian's rights under the Charter or those of a senator.

Even if one could argue that the Senate can indeed restrict the rights and freedoms of Canadian citizens, including a senator, it is clear to me that the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration, its chair, an individual senator or an employee of the Senate cannot do so on their own outside of the law and the *Rules of the Senate*.

Allow me, again, to quote Professor Moon:

To be prescribed by law, the restriction must have the form of law, such as a statute, regulation, or binding policy, and it must not be vague, although it is sufficient if the restrictive rule provides "an intelligible legal standard" for determining when conduct is caught by the ban . . .

There is no statute, regulation or rule that allows the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration, an individual senator or an employee of the Senate to restrict a senator's freedom of expression. Nowhere in rule 12-7 of the *Rules of the Senate* or in section 19 of the Parliament of Canada Act — which both set out the powers of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration — is there the right to censor what a senator may say outside the chamber.

What Ms. Korn and Senator Moncion did was, therefore, clearly outside of their powers.

I think senators will agree that the normal procedure for a senator who wishes to correct what another senator is saying in an op-ed is to either contact the author to point out the error or write — themselves — a rebuttal to the opinion piece that they disagree with. Senator Moncion had every right to disagree with me. She had every right to think that the facts I presented were incorrect; although, in the present case, they were indeed correct. But she did not have the right to go behind my back and order Ms. Korn to ask *The Hill Times* to change my text, and Ms. Korn had no right to let *The Hill Times* believe that she had the power to change my text or that, in doing so, she was representing the Senate.

Senator Moncion, as the chair of the committee — especially the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration which is so important for all of us — should act professionally, fairly and equitably.

Ms. Korn, as a member of the Senate Administration, should also act professionally and remain, at all times, non-partisan. By doing what they did, Senator Moncion and Ms. Korn were not only acting ultra vires of their powers under our Rules, but they also failed to act professionally and fairly. They failed their duties to me and to the Senate.

Let me quote Speaker Furey in his decision of June 13, 2019:

We have the enormous privilege of being members of the Upper House of the Parliament of Canada. With this enormous privilege comes enormous responsibility. Together, we all work for the good of our country. We can certainly disagree with each other. Indeed the exchange of conflicting ideas is vital to the health of our parliamentary system of government. We should, however, always approach one another with civility and respect, valuing the range of experiences and diverging views that we bring to Parliament. All of us are responsible for ensuring the proper functioning of this institution, and we must avoid undermining it, or undermining each other.

It is obvious that when she ordered Ms. Korn to change my op-ed without my knowledge, Senator Moncion wanted to undermine me. I must say I cannot imagine in which circumstances a senator would feel empowered to simply order a rewrite of a letter published under the name of another senator, unless, of course, this senator feels a dangerous sense of superiority, as if they owned the truth, and that any dissenting opinion must not be debated; it must be erased.

- (1610)

What Senator Moncion and Ms. Korn did is part of a larger pattern with this Liberal government of doing anything to silence dissent and opposition. This event came only weeks after the Trudeau-appointed senators adopted under time allocation a package of rule changes designed to reduce the powers of the Conservative opposition, and of course, Senator Moncion sided with the Trudeau government and voted to reduce the opposition powers.

Senator Moncion is a staunch supporter of the Liberal government that adopted Bill C-11, which gave two government bodies the ability to regulate user-generated content. She voted in favour of that bill. The Liberal government tabled Bill C-63, another bill that would give the government the power to control what is said on the internet. I have no doubt that if the bill comes to the Senate, Senator Moncion will support it.

The Liberals voted at their last national convention for a policy that calls for online news to only use sources the government can verify. Again, we see this pattern of wanting only the Liberal side of a story to be published, and the media has found out about several requests from the Liberal government to social media companies to take down comments that paint the government in a bad light. What Senator Moncion and Ms. Korn did is, apparently, done through ministerial offices.

With all that in mind, it is no wonder Senator Moncion thought it would be okay to suppress the thoughts of a Conservative senator. Those Liberals own the truth and can't stand having an opposition.

In a Leger poll this spring, Canadians were asked about the current state of free speech in our country. Shockingly, 57% of the people surveyed felt that free speech is somewhat or seriously under threat in Canada. They have good reason to think that. What happened to me this summer proves it.

In conclusion, Your Honour, I think that you will find the actions of Senator Moncion and Ms. Korn clearly violated my Charter rights and freedoms that I enjoy as a Canadian. You may also find that such actions were done outside of Senator Moncion's and Ms. Korn's power as the Chair of the Internal Economy Committee and a member of Senate administration, respectively.

Finally, I think you will find that Senator Moncion acted improperly toward a fellow senator by not respecting the usual courtesy that is necessary for the Senate to function properly. Some people, including senators, may ask themselves why I did not raise a question of privilege instead, considering my rights have been clearly flouted. Your Honour, parliamentary privilege is very narrowly defined, and the free speech of a senator is privileged only in debate inside the Senate.

A few months ago, when a question of privilege was raised, I supported the argument that privilege should be narrowly defined. However, Your Honour, you decided last December to go beyond the jurisprudence to give an increased reach to parliamentary privilege. Your argument was that the Senate is evolving and is not the same institution it was a few years ago.

The composition and culture of the Senate have changed, as you rightfully said, so you may want to use the same argument in the present case and decide what Senator Moncion and Ms. Korn did was, indeed, a breach of privilege. I would be happy to raise the matter on a substantive motion following notice as contemplated by section 13-2 of our Rules.

You may also find, Your Honour, that Senator Moncion's and Ms. Korn's actions were so egregious that they constitute an act of contempt of the Senate. We would then be able to debate the following steps.

Finally, I invite all senators to reflect on how they would feel if, in the future, the same thing happened to them. As I said, the Chair of the Internal Economy Committee will be a Conservative someday. The Speaker of the Senate will be a Conservative within the next year or so. Do you want a Speaker's ruling that says the Speaker or the Chair of the Internal Economy Committee has the power to change your op-ed because he or she does not like how you present the facts? Should the Senate of Canada engage in this dangerous and irreversible course of action? Is this the new Senate you want?

I thank you for your attention.

The Hon. the Speaker: I have two senators rising. I see Senator Batters was standing first. Then I will go to Senator Moncion.

Hon. Denise Batters: Thank you, Your Honour.

Your Honour, I was the Deputy Chair of the Senate Internal Economy Committee for about two and a half years — from the fall of 2017 until the spring of 2020 — so I was quite alarmed as Senator Plett laid out this point of order today and to hear him say that the chair, Senator Moncion, instructed Ms. Korn to call *The Hill Times* to make this media correction.

That is not the proper role of the chair. It is the proper role of the steering committee of the Internal Economy Committee — the chair, the deputy chairs and steering members, generally consisting of four members — and not merely the chair to give those instructions. The Chair of the Internal Economy Committee is not the king or queen to dictate those types of instructions.

When I was the Deputy Chair of the Internal Economy Committee, Ms. Alison Korn was in the same role in the Internal Economy Committee and routinely sent emails about media requests and comments to those senators on the Internal Economy Committee steering committee. As a deputy chair, I took that role seriously, diligently reviewing the emails and asking for changes to comments if needed or approving them if changes were not needed. As such, Ms. Korn certainly operated under that system for years when I was a deputy chair.

I have no idea why the current chair, Senator Moncion, instructed Ms. Korn to bypass the Internal Economy Committee steering committee and instead demand a media correction based only on the dictate of one member of steering, not all four, and to not ask for the consent of — or even inform — the Conservative Deputy Chair of the Internal Economy Committee. As such, and given this background, I support Senator Plett's point of order in this matter. Thank you.

[Translation]

Hon. Lucie Moncion: Honourable senators, with all due respect, this point of order is unfounded. For the purpose of deliberation, my comments will focus on the role and the mandate of the steering committee of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration with regard to media relations, and I will ignore all of the comments that were made about my political choices and preferences. I will stick to the facts.

The mandate of the steering committee of Internal Economy involves providing factual information to the media and, ultimately, to Canadians. In a democracy, it is essential to ensure that the information that is disseminated about our institutions is true in order to avoid contributing, even passively, to the spread of the misinformation and disinformation that characterize our media landscape. The Internal Economy Committee has adopted a decision-making process to empower the steering committee to provide factual information to the media by creating the position of Issues Management and Media Relations Advisor. Through this process, we can let media outlets know when an article or editorial contains misinformation by providing them with the correct information when applicable.

During the summer, we had to remain vigilant about providing certain media with factual information about the Senate's finances. Once a newspaper has the facts, it is free to change an

article, remove it or leave it as is. I repeat: The newspaper is free to make corrections. Obviously, the steering committee of the Internal Economy Committee or the advisor don't have the authority to compel the newspaper to do anything. Freedom of the press allows the newspaper to make changes or not. Our current media relations process goes back to 2015, when the staff of the chair and deputy chair of the Subcommittee on Communications took care of media relations and spokesperson duties on behalf of the Internal Economy Committee. At the time, Senator Housakos, chair, and Senator Cordy, deputy chair, were at the head of the steering committee and the Subcommittee on Communications.

[English]

The issues management and media relations advisor role was created following the thirteenth report of the Internal Economy Committee and the 2015 Blueprint report. The recommendations/principles in the Blueprint report that pertain to this position are that a modern issues management media relations function be implemented, that a spokesperson be identified/implemented and that parliamentarians answer on behalf of parliamentarians. This role fulfills the aforementioned Blueprint principles, perhaps most importantly that parliamentarians answer on behalf of parliamentarians.

• (1620)

In 2017, the Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration Committee, or CIBA, approved the creation of the Issues Management and Media Relations Advisor and the position was filled. The job description was reviewed and updated in 2021 and approved by the steering committee. The Issues Management and Media Relations Advisor is responsible for ensuring the media receive timely, accurate responses to all inquiries regarding matters that fall under the purview of the Internal Economy Committee. Where necessary, this also includes corrections. With respect to media coverage of matters under the purview of CIBA, the role is accountable to CIBA steering committee and fulfills the important principle that parliamentarians answer on behalf of parliamentarians.

Now, throughout the summer, senator, we've had more than one article that was published and more than one correction. You mentioned over the past few years maybe 75 corrections have been sent to journalists. We've sent corrections — in any case, I did not interrupt you and you should not interrupt me either.

The information and any correction were provided to the steering committee, to your comment, Senator Batters. So every time there was a correction issued, the steering committee had to agree to the corrections.

[Translation]

I'd now like to take the opportunity to provide some fact-based information about the budget. In an era of disinformation and misinformation, we have to be especially careful and discerning about the information we receive. As chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration, I consider it imperative and my duty to give you a reliable and trustworthy reference point regarding this

institution's budgetary matters. The information I'm giving you today is therefore fact-based, and was diligently recorded and checked by the Senate Finance and Procurement Directorate.

[*English*]

Let me start by saying it is important to compare actual expenditures with actual expenditures or a budget with a budget. A budget is different from actual expenditures that are only known after the fiscal year ends. Therefore, to analyze the increase over the years, one cannot draw conclusions by comparing, for example, the expenditures for one year and the budget from another year. Undoubtedly, the percentages increase would be significant given that we consistently allocate a financial cushion to ensure prudent financial management.

In the fiscal year of 2014-15, the expenditures of the Senate were \$85.4 million, and for the fiscal year 2022-23, they were \$104.9 million. Therefore, the Senate's actual spending between 2014-15 and 2022-23 increased by 22.8% over eight years. That increase is well in line with inflation of 21% during the same period.

As for fiscal year 2023-24, actual expenditures will be published in the Public Accounts of Canada this fall. I will make sure to provide this chamber with the information at the earliest opportunity.

As for the budgets, the increase in the last 10 years has been an average of 4.2% per year. The Senate regularly comes in under budget with 10% unspent each year and returned to the central funds. The Senate has never gone over its budget.

In 2014-15, the Senate budget was \$91.5 million, and for 2024-25, it was \$134.9 million, which is an overall increase of 47% over 10 years. Again, I would like to remind everyone that one cannot compare an increase in expenditures with an increase in budgets. It would be like comparing apples and oranges.

In conclusion, I reiterate that the point of order is unfounded, and I hope that my remarks will be useful to you, Your Honour, to form an opinion on this matter. Thank you.

Hon. Marilou McPhedran: Thank you very much, Your Honour. Thank you, Senator Plett, for bringing to our attention actions that are often kept secret in the Senate. Having been here now for eight years, I continue to be astounded by how much this chamber loves secrecy. I really appreciate the opportunity to respond to this point, as I also appreciate the information shared with us by Senator Moncion.

In any consideration of the points that have been raised with you today, I would ask you to make sure that you go back to the conduct of CIBA as documented in several court cases related to retired senator Michael Duffy, and if you would also please pay attention to commentary by Justice Vaillancourt in the decision, which exonerated the retired Senator Duffy on all 31 charges.

When one reads that decision, one sees very clearly that the concerns the judge noted about conduct were concerns about the Senate and concerns about the Prime Minister's Office in completely exonerating Senator Duffy.

[Senator Moncion]

I would ask that attention be paid to the fact that there are very clear court decisions, including the decision by the Supreme Court of Canada not to hear further appeal by Senator Duffy, where the core of Senator Duffy's argument was about his seeming Charter rights. The truth of the matter as I read those court decisions — and I ask you to please have that reviewed as well as responding to these points — the very sad and shocking truth is that senators actually cannot rely on their Charter rights as senators because it is self-governance. It is a closed circuit endorsed by recent court decisions governed by a certain interpretation of parliamentary privilege, which means that the power of CIBA as the top of the ruling class of this chamber is almost unlimited, and it is certainly not constrained by individual senators' Charter rights.

I would ask that this be given consideration along with the matters raised under the current conditions that we face. Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Claude Carignan: Your Honour, I'd like to say a few words to give you some context. Senator Moncion spoke about the media relations process in place since 2015 that we also used for managing certain issues. Now and then, the steering committee issues corrections, but always with respect to external reports about the Senate, never a senator's personal remarks. I think this is the first time I have seen a senator's remarks corrected since the process was introduced. I suggested that we create another procedure. There may be some process that could be put in place. That's what I suggested to the communications people. Before a senator is corrected, he or she should be asked the following questions: "Were you mistaken? Were your numbers right?" "Is that what you meant, because that's not really what was expressed." If the person says, "Yes, that's what I meant, that's my opinion," then the Senate or communications can't come back and correct an opinion piece or an op-ed released by a senator. The way to go would be for the committee to then say, "We'll be releasing our own piece challenging this."

• (1630)

There may be competing interests, as we saw when there were suspensions and in Senator Beyak's case, but this needs to happen through separate communications, not by interfering in a senator's letter or opinion and correcting it. I think that's the distinction to make. As soon as I saw this, yes, I thought it breached the senator's privilege. That's a serious issue. There are ways of doing things differently to respect everyone's rights. That is my suggestion.

[*English*]

Hon. Leo Housakos: Honourable senators, this is a critical point of order. This touches on our rights, the way the Senate functions and basic democracy. With all due respect, Senator Moncion, during your rebuttal of this point of order, you articulated substantive issues of debate, but those had to do with core issues of budget and whether this institution has been fiscally responsible over the past ten years — more so or less so — and it had nothing to do with the point of order. It had to do with Senator Plett's op-ed. You were free to rise on debate and discuss that op-ed and write a rebuttal on behalf of the Standing

Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration, conveying your opinion that, over the past ten years, this place has been a picture of fiscal responsibility and transparency, and that it's better today than it was ten years ago. You have that right.

But as Chair of the Internal Economy Committee, you don't have the right — nor does anybody in this place, whether it is the Speaker, the government leader or the Leader of the Opposition — to speak on behalf of senators and correct what you think is disinformation or misinformation. It's not incumbent on you to make that decision. What is incumbent on you is to rebut, to refute as part of debate — nothing more, nothing less.

On this point of order, it's important for me to point out that during the Blueprint review of the Senate's communications department, there were few of us who were actually there. I happened to be the chair of the committee that led that review, along with Senator Dawson and, I believe, Senator Wells and a small number of us who are still here.

Let me clarify the facts: Our objective at the time was to make sure that the administration, HR and communications stopped speaking on your behalf — each and every one of you. We're an independently functioning parliamentary body. Internal Economy is not the administrative boss of this body; each of us is. Ultimately, we're responsible for our own behaviour and for the administration of this institution. We appoint the chair, the steering and the committee at Internal Economy to do the day-to-day and month-to-month functioning, but they're ultimately accountable to us.

At the time, we thought it was incumbent on Internal Economy to have a spokesperson who could speak on behalf of the chair and the committee. I hired Alison Korn with our committee, and the instructions at the time — unless Internal Economy changed those instructions — were that she would speak according to the will of the steering committee and respond to corrections that needed to be made in public opinion and the media about misinformation in articles, news stories, et cetera, of which we are victims on a constant basis. But she never had the right — even I didn't have that right as chair — to correct the opinion of a senator.

Senator Plett engaged in an op-ed piece. It was not an interview where he stated something about the current administration of the Internal Economy Committee, and then a journalist approached the committee, asking if they agreed with the statement of Senator Plett. In such a case, the committee would be free to rebut, refute and engage in debate. But to go to a news outlet on behalf of a senator — and the way that Ms. Korn, according to my understanding, presented this to *The Hill Times* was that she was making a correction to Senator Plett's op-ed. She was editing it.

The truth of the matter — according to the information I have from *The Hill Times* — is that the only reason they acquiesced was because they thought she was speaking on behalf of Senator Plett, representing him. That's the only reason they accepted such a ludicrous act on behalf of a colleague. This goes beyond a simple point of order. This should concern each and every one of us: Another colleague thinks that her position, which we have bestowed upon her, gives her the right to manage a senator's

opinion. We can disagree about whether you're doing a good job or not with the Senate Administration on the Senate floor. We can even disagree in terms of public opinion, public interviews, exchanges and op-eds, but I don't have the right to instruct my staff to call any news outlet in the country to edit anything you say, senator, and nobody should have the right to do that to Senator Plett or anybody else.

Your Honour, I think this is a critical point of order. I think this is a line that the Internal Economy Committee has crossed. It's unacceptable. Further, I would like to highlight the fact that when we put into place the changes and hired the spokesperson, Alison Korn and her predecessor, we made a decision at Internal Economy to the effect that when we received media inquiries — without even considering this case as an example — about something that concerned a senator in this chamber, the committee would never comment without first offering an opportunity to the senator to respond to that question. That is how far we went to create respect and maintain the authority of all 105 senators. So for the Internal Economy Committee to go and proactively do what has been done to Senator Plett without even advising him should be unacceptable to all of us. Thank you, Your Honour.

Hon. David M. Wells: Honourable senators, we've heard a lot of things around the point of order. We've heard about the budgets and whether the budgets were fair or whether we went over budget in our expenditures. The fact that a senator believes that something was presented in a way that they themselves wouldn't have presented is beside the point. The fact that Senator Plett may have had incorrect information — and he didn't — also is beside the point. The fact that another senator didn't agree with the way it was presented also is beside the point. Senator Moncion clearly used her position as Chair of the Internal Economy Committee to direct staff to interfere in a process entirely outside her remit. I could not have called Ms. Korn and made that directive. Senator Quinn could not have made that directive to Ms. Korn. Senator Plett couldn't have made that directive to Ms. Korn. The only person who could make that directive to Ms. Korn was the Chair of the Internal Economy Committee. If it happened to me, I would be absolutely furious.

The Chair of the Internal Economy Committee was clearly outside her remit to do this. I think we can all agree that if you don't agree with something someone writes, you don't go and change it. You can offer a response; you can write your own op-ed. You can make a reply. That's the correct path, and it's not okay to use the Senate resources that are solely at her disposal to do that.

Hon. Pamela Wallin: Honourable senators, I would like to say a few words. Much of what needs to be said has already been said. Too easily in this political environment do we toss around the terms "misinformation" and "disinformation." They've become politicized. Misinformation and disinformation are in the eye of the beholder or the user. If you disagree with me, and I don't like your point of view, then I declare that that is misinformation. Or if there's an argument about facts, whether it's a budget or a fiscal allocation, then I will say that is misinformation or disinformation.

The basic concept here is free speech — the right to say what you believe. That is fundamentally expressed in an op-ed, in an opinion piece. That is where people can say what they believe, what they feel. It may be right or wrong. It may contain factual errors. It may be completely different from what you or others believe or even what you yourself used to believe. Changes happen. But an opinion piece is just that.

• (1640)

I know the lines have become very blurred in our public media, in our newspapers and certainly on our television screens. The difference between opinion and fact-based reporting — it's increasingly hard to tell. But I think this is why it's so fundamentally important that we put the brakes on this at a very early stage in this discussion in this place.

I hesitate to use the American example, but we have an opportunity to look at what is happening and try to prevent ourselves as a country — and certainly in this body — from going down the same road. I've expressed my views often in this place and in committee about censorship and some of the legislation that I have seen that I find very troubling.

This is at that line. We cannot correct another's point of view except in the ways that other senators have suggested, which is to offer a rebuttal, write your own op-ed or take to the airwaves. There are many things you can do to rebut an opinion that you disagree with, but you can't change the other person's mind, you most certainly cannot change their words and you fundamentally cannot do that without engaging with that person directly. This is a very important question. Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Senator Moncion: Your Honour, I'd like to give you the information so you can verify it. An email was sent to me on August 21 about the proposed correction. When I asked Alison to forward the information to the steering committee, she asked the following question in her email:

Please let me know if you want me to ask the steering committee to correct this.

She identified the sentence in question. I replied to Alison that same day. I wrote, "Hi Alison. Yes, please." The steering committee was duly informed.

Inaccurate information was presented. Alison did her job. She asked my permission to go to the steering committee. The Internal Economy steering committee approved the request. Everything was done by the book.

The other comment I want to make is this: If the procedure is no longer working, the question must be put to the Internal Economy Committee and the matter must be studied. This matter is on the list of matters that the Internal Economy steering committee will study.

Thank you, Your Honour.

[Senator Wallin]

Senator Carignan: I just want to clarify something. Senator Moncion said the steering committee approved the request. I'm a member of the steering committee, but I was out of the country in a different time zone in a little corner of paradise. I didn't get the email in time, and I didn't agree to the correction. I wanted that to be very clear. Thank you.

Senator Moncion: I will correct you, honourable senator, because we spoke with your assistant and we exchanged emails about this issue. I don't necessarily agree with you that this information can be released.

Senator Carignan: My assistant was affected by the flooding. He didn't give his approval.

[*English*]

Senator Plett: Your Honour, do I have the right to —

The Hon. the Speaker: Could it be short?

Senator Plett: It will be short. I just have a few points to make. I apologize, Your Honour, but it is my point of order.

Quite frankly, Your Honour, I thought that we would hear at least something somewhere along the line that we made a mistake, we overstepped our bounds and this would have been ended very easily. Senator Moncion obviously was aware that I was going to bring this forward. She had well-prepared remarks, so she was aware I was bringing this forward. She never called. She is now doubling down, which is what frightens me the most, Your Honour. There's no question that what she did was wrong. Whether or not you're going to rule in favour of the point of order remains to be seen.

But there is no question, to change somebody's opinion, to write to somebody and say, "Don Plett changed his opinion; he doesn't believe that anymore," because that's what was done here. They said to *The Hill Times*, "Don Plett has changed his opinion on this." Then she doubles down and says steering did. Then we have a member of steering here saying he was out of the country. Then she changes it to, "Well, we talked to your staff."

That's the problem. She had staff doing what she did in the first place. She should have called me and said, "Don, your \$85 million is incorrect; it's \$91 million." We could have debated it.

Senator Housakos: She should never have done it, period.

Senator Plett: But the fact of the matter is it's an opinion. It was my opinion, which was a correct one.

What I'm afraid of here, Your Honour, is that the chair believes that she has the right to change people's opinions; that's what she believes. This entire Senate — she says she went to steering. She could have contacted 99 senators and got 98 of you to agree with her. All 98 of you would have had no right to change that opinion. Only one person's opinion mattered and that was mine because it was my opinion piece. Senator Moncion believes that if she asks enough people, then she can make this change.

Your Honour, this is about one thing: somebody changed something that I thought. That is wrong. It doesn't matter how many people she asked. If this had been a news article that — if this had been an interview, she could have gone and done a number of things. She could have sent me an email. She could have copied the whole Senate and said, "Senator Plett is giving false information." The one thing she could not do is call *The Hill Times* and say, "Don Plett changed his mind."

Your Honour, I stand on that. I know you will do the right thing, and I will await your response. Thank you.

[Translation]

The Hon. the Speaker: I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all those who participated in the debate. This point of order raised an important issue, which I will take under advisement. Thank you very much.

• (1650)

CUSTOMS TARIFF

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Housakos, seconded by the Honourable Senator Ataullahjan, for the second reading of Bill S-204, An Act to amend the Customs Tariff (goods from Xinjiang).

Hon. Bernadette Clement: Honourable senators, I note that this item is at day 15, and I am not ready to speak at this time. Therefore, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 4-15(3), I move the adjournment of the debate for the balance of my time.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Debate adjourned.)

PUBLIC SECTOR INTEGRITY BILL

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

Hon. Pierre J. Dalfond moved second reading of Bill C-290, An Act to amend the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Conflict of Interest Act.

He said: Honourable senators, it is my honour today to begin debate at second reading of Bill C-290, An Act to amend the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Conflict of Interest Act. With such a long title, I assure you that I will not take 45 minutes.

In short, the bill proposes to amend the whistle-blower legislation.

Unanimously adopted at the other place on January 31, 2024, including with votes by the Prime Minister and the President of the Treasury Board, this bill seeks to improve, even modernize the current legislation, which hasn't been changed in 18 years, in order to provide more protection to public service whistle-blowers, thereby encouraging more public servants to act when necessary. I want to thank the member Jean-Denis Garon — who is here in the gallery — the sponsor of this bill who ushered it through the House of Commons with great success. I also thank him for thinking of me for sponsoring it in the Senate.

In a democracy, functions of a governmental nature are carried out by various independent organizations, including the government, the courts and the public service. Our public service is professional, competent and dedicated. According to a 2017 British report, Canada has the most effective public service of the 31 countries studied. I'll let you draw your own conclusions. If Canada's public service is more effective than that of those 31 countries, imagine the others. Still, we are proud of our public service.

Every public servant must be committed to public service and sound management of the public service. That includes a duty to blow the whistle on reprehensible acts, not to turn a blind eye and keep quiet.

People may have reservations about fulfilling that duty. Whistle-blowers may be subjected to threats, blackmail, demotion, sidelining, accusations of disloyalty or financial or psychological consequences.

Cognizant of those risks, in 2005, Parliament passed legislation to protect whistle-blowers in the public service, thereby encouraging people to disclose acts that are contrary to the mission of the public service, which is to serve Canadians well.

In my remarks, I will review the history of the current act and discuss the Office of the Public Service Integrity Commissioner, which was created by that act. I will then address criticisms and flaws in the existing system and conclude with the proposed changes in Bill C-290, which was passed unanimously in the House of Commons.

Let's start with the history.

The Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act is a product of the sponsorship scandal.

Shortly after Quebec's last referendum on sovereignty in 1996, voted down by a tiny margin of barely 2%, the federal government launched a program to promote federalism in Quebec by sponsoring cultural and sports events. With an annual budget of \$40 million, the program essentially involved issuing contracts to advertising agencies.

Between 1999 and 2002, reporters Daniel Leblanc and Campbell Clark, working for *The Globe and Mail* at the time, and I give them due credit, published dozens of articles exposing serious anomalies, such as payments for services not rendered, double billing or unacceptable practices, like buying expensive box seat tickets to the Montreal Grand Prix. Certainly, ticket purchases like this could be considered a worthwhile economic

benefit, but it's certainly not the government's job to fund purchases of box seat tickets. All this was sometimes topped off with commissions paid to influential intermediaries within the public service or the Liberal Party, which was in power at the time.

The inquiry, chaired by my former colleague the late Justice John Gomery, shed light on certain unacceptable practices within the public service, which a lot of people knew about, but no one spoke up about.

Then there was Bill C-11, An Act to establish a procedure for the disclosure of wrongdoings in the public sector, including the protection of persons who disclose the wrongdoings, which was introduced on October 8, 2004.

That bill was enacted in November 2005, but its provisions didn't come into force until April 2007, or after the election of the government led by Prime Minister Harper.

That new government quickly adopted the Federal Accountability Act in December 2006, legislation that introduced various transparency and whistle-blower protection measures.

That is the background for the current legislation.

[*English*]

I will now move to my second point. The Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act establishes the Office of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner as an independent federal agency reporting directly to Parliament. This office has jurisdiction over most federal public or publicly owned organizations, including the RCMP and Crown corporations.

• (1700)

Its mandate is to investigate wrongdoings in the federal public sector and to protect whistle-blowers and those involved in investigations from reprisals. Investigated cases are reported to Parliament through an annual report and special reports that include recommendations for corrective measures.

Complaints of reprisals, if deemed admissible, are referred to the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Tribunal, composed essentially of a few Federal Court judges.

The Office of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner is currently a small entity with some 30 full-time equivalent employees, including 7 analysts, 8 investigators and 5 lawyers. This small but mobile team faces a constant increase in submissions. That's a good sign because the culture is probably changing. Over the last two years, we've seen an exponential increase in complaints; the number has multiplied by three times. Unfortunately, the budget has remained steady, and the office is becoming unable to process the new complaints or, at least, to meet the requirements to deal with them within certain time frames.

Just last month, in August 2024, the Office of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner received 23 disclosures of wrongdoing. As a result, at the end of August, the office was analyzing 140 files for disclosure eligibility, because the office receives the complaints, and then they check if the complaints meet the

requirements of the law in terms of admissibility or eligibility. If they do, then investigators are appointed to conduct inquiries or investigations.

Please compare this number with the previous years. For example, in August 2023, the office was analyzing 61 files, and, in August 2022, it was 38 files. In other words, the number of disclosures has been constantly increasing, and now it has been multiplied by three over two years.

The budget of the office remains unchanged, as we found out this morning at the National Finance Committee. If a disclosure is found admissible, then an investigation is launched. There have been 48 investigations in progress since January of this year. Over the same period last year, there were 25.

In addition to analyzing and investigating disclosures of wrongdoing, the Office of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner must respond to general inquiries, such as providing the best possible guidance to persons considering making a disclosure. This work receives priority.

The increased workload has not prompted an increased processing capacity in the office. In fact, for several years now, the budget approved by Parliament has been stagnant. Bill C-69, which was adopted in June, provides a budget of \$6 million for the fiscal year 2024-25 compared with \$5.8 million for the previous fiscal year. That barely covers inflation.

I, therefore, take this opportunity, as I did this morning at the National Finance Committee, to invite the Treasury Board to review the financial framework of the Office of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner and make proper adjustments through the supplementary estimates that will be coming up soon.

If files are not processed diligently, confidence in the system will decline, and that will translate into fewer complaints. Once a file is closed, the complainant and the relevant department are informed.

In terms of statistics, the other point is the number of cases of wrongdoing tabled in Parliament. Since taking up its duties, the Office of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner has only identified 21 cases of wrongdoing or cases requiring corrective action.

Another important role of the office is to assist whistle-blowers who are subsequently exposed to reprisal measures.

Only nine cases were referred to the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Tribunal, whose role is to decide whether reprisals occurred. Of these nine cases, none had a finding of reprisal by the tribunal.

To sum up, a growing number of civil servants are calling upon the services of the commissioner for guidance, and filing complaints that need to be processed and reviewed for eligibility and then, if found eligible, have an investigator assigned. So far, the resources seem quite inadequate.

[*Translation*]

The criticisms made in the past few years by various people or studies, including a parliamentary committee, bring me to my third point.

Whistle-blowers who used the current process have reported an absence of protection or, at least, inadequate protection from internal smear campaigns, threats at their workplace or at their home, internal administrative procedures in order to mentally, physically and financially punish them, pushing some to contemplate suicide. I have met not only people from the commissioner's office, but also whistle-blowers who went through some highly unfortunate experiences.

All of this leads to the perception that the protections are inadequate and result in a loss of confidence among potential whistle-blowers. These criticisms by whistle-blowers have been corroborated by various studies.

[*English*]

In 2017, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates reviewed the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act and heard from numerous witnesses. The report traced the successes and challenges of the act, comparing them with other international legislation, as well as identifying six major challenges and providing 15 recommendations to improve our legal framework.

[*Translation*]

Among the recommendations made by the parliamentary committee, I noted that some suggest amending the act, including in the following ways, and the bill currently before us implements those recommendations in part or in full. These suggestions include clarifying and broadening the current definition of the term “wrongdoing,” broadening the definition of the term “supervisor,” repealing the requirement regarding a whistle-blower's good faith in order to determine whether his or her complaint is admissible, expanding the Auditor General's mandate to deal with complaints against the Office of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner in cases of misconduct by the institution responsible for investigating misconduct, ensuring that the protection provided by the act extends to any person who has helped a whistle-blower as well as to any witness, extending the deadline for filing a reprisal complaint to 12 months, enabling victims of reprisals to directly address the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Tribunal, reversing the burden of proof by presuming the existence of reprisal in certain circumstances, which would require the employer to demonstrate that it has not taken reprisals, and finally, reviewing the act every five years.

[*English*]

The consensus report recommended, among other things, all the issues that I just mentioned, such as broadening definitions, strengthening whistle-blower protection, reversing the burden of proof, providing legal advice to whistle-blowers, imposing mandatory reporting and giving the Office of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner responsibility for the training, education and supervision of the internal disclosure mechanism. Unfortunately, the government did not take action.

In 2021, a joint study of the Government Accountability Project and the International Bar Association examined some 50 whistle-blower protection laws and identified 20 best practices worldwide. Canada ranked last. In fact, of the 20 best practices in transparency and scrutiny, Canadian legislation features only one. Compare that to the European Union directive that meets 16 of these criteria, the Irish law that meets 15, the French law that meets 7, the U.K.'s, Belgium's and Italy's laws that meet 4. Canada is really meeting only one.

• (1710)

I will now move to the content of the bill, my fourth and last part.

[*Translation*]

The bill before us responds to several recommendations in the 2017 House of Commons committee report and proposes to update the law in light of new realities.

I commend MP Jean-Denis Garon, who did the work that the government was reluctant to undertake, despite the unanimous report of a House of Commons committee. It took an opposition MP in a minority Parliament to see these changes through. Furthermore, it will require our review and our vote at third reading for this bill to go to Rideau Hall and become law. I invite you to do just that at the end of my speech.

[*English*]

As I mentioned, Bill C-290 proposes to address the inadequacies of the current law by broadening definitions. The bill also aims to remove barriers that currently discourage whistle-blowers from coming forward, such as fears of retaliation and the dismissal of complaints based on the personal motives of the complainant because of this theoretical good-faith complaint, which is a subjective concept.

The bill would create a mechanism to allow public servants to report wrongdoing while remaining anonymous. The whistle-blower would then be better protected from reprisals, such as being fired or demoted. Even private companies that receive government contracts could be covered and protected from the non-renewal of their contract because they have disclosed wrongdoing.

Let me describe these proposals in greater detail.

The definition of “wrongdoing” would be expanded in two ways. The first would be by removing the word “gross” in the expression “gross mismanagement.” That will lower the threshold and remove a study they must do at the eligibility step of the process where they determine there is mismanagement — but is it bad enough to be qualified as gross mismanagement?

Second, the bill will include new forms of wrongdoing, such as abuse of authority and political and foreign interference.

Bill C-290 will also expand the definition of a supervisor to whom the whistle-blower should report so that public servants can make protected disclosure to any superior within their organization. This would allow public servants to go to any trusted superior to make their disclosure, up to the deputy

minister. Public servants will gain confidence in raising concerns if they know they can go to someone they trust outside of their immediate superior.

The bill would also define what an act of reprisal is, and here I give you a list of acts of reprisal: a disciplinary measure; a demotion; the termination of employment; any measure that adversely affects the employment or the working conditions including, but not limited to, mandatory assignment or deployment of the public servant, any form of reprimand, any form of discrimination, the infliction of emotional distress, any act or omission that causes any psychological injury to the public servant; and any threat to take any of these measures.

Bill C-290 will also extend the period during which a reprisal complaint may be filed from 60 days, which is in the current law, to one year. This extension of the time frame to file a complaint in response to reprisal measures will allow the victims to fully assess their situation, to consult and to file a complaint.

This bill would significantly increase financial penalties for reprisal measures. Some of these penalties will increase from \$2,000 to \$10,000, from \$5,000 to \$100,000. The bill would have potentially serious consequences in the event of a breach. These amendments will serve as important deterrents to potential bad actors who are tempted to silence whistle-blowers or punish them for disclosure.

The bill will allow for a new remedy for a whistle-blower if a reprisal action was taken so they could be compensated for the reprisal action or ensuing consequences. Additionally, by giving superiors a duty to protect and provide support to public servants making a disclosure, whistle-blowers could be more confident when coming forward than they are now.

Furthermore, if a person files a complaint about reprisal measures and if, after an inquiry, the commissioner is of the opinion that the application to the tribunal is not warranted, the law will provide that this complainant will have the right to apply directly to the tribunal. The floodgate controlled by the commissioners would be removed in such a case. The tribunal will then have to decide if the complaint is valid, and if it is found to be valid it will have to decide the appropriate remedy.

The bill would also expand the mandate of the Auditor General of Canada to include receiving disclosures of wrongdoing and reprisals involving the Office of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner. It's another one of the proposals that I referred to earlier.

Finally, the bill would introduce a parliamentary review every five years to provide an opportunity to suggest ways to improve and adjust to an ever-evolving context.

[*Translation*]

In conclusion, this bill proposes numerous improvements, but it's important to keep in mind what we've heard from numerous experts, which is that even with the best intentions in the world and the finest bill possible, which this bill is not, it all comes down to culture. If we want people to follow the rules, the rules have to be comprehensible and appropriate.

[Senator Dalphond]

However, it is just as critical to develop organizational cultures that promote disclosure of wrongdoing. Organizations must adopt best practices designed to change the existing culture around disclosure: fear of reprisal.

Judging from the exponentially higher number of complaints, I think we're making progress. Nobody should jeopardize their career, much less their health, by disclosing illegal acts or behaviours.

Some members of this chamber are former senior public servants, and they speak to the excellence of the Canadian public service.

Whether in Parliament or in our society, we must never take our first-class public service for granted. It is the envy of the world. That means treating legitimate whistle-blowers with dignity and justice.

This bill would not only revolutionize existing legislation, but also improve it and enable us to meet several of the 20 internationally recognized criteria.

I think it's a step in the right direction, and so I would invite anyone who has an interest in the subject to rise to speak in the coming weeks. I hope that senators will support the bill and that it will be quickly sent to committee for review and study and that it will then come back to the Senate so that we can finally send it to Rideau Hall. That way we can finally do what hasn't been done since 2017, and that is follow up on important recommendations.

Thank you for listening. *Meegwetch.*

• (1720)

Hon. Julie Miville-Dechêne: Would you take a question, Senator Dalphond?

Senator Dalphond: Of course.

Hon. Julie Miville-Dechêne: I tend to agree with this bill in that whistle-blowers are very important for our democracy. I'm wondering how this bill strikes the necessary balance. You said that the burden of proof has been reduced and that the term "gross negligence" has been replaced with "negligence" or something to that effect. Those may not be the exact words. You said that there has already been an increase in complaints. By reducing the burden of proof, isn't there a risk of being inundated with complaints, some of which may be frivolous? We know that sometimes complaints are filed for revenge and all sorts of other reasons. How can we separate all of that?

I don't imagine there is a simple answer, but I'm sure that you have thought about the balance that we need to strike.

Senator Dalphond: That's an excellent question. I asked the same thing this morning of the commissioner when she appeared before the National Finance Committee. I also asked whether she was concerned that passing this bill would provoke a flood of complaints. She replied that she already needs more funding, and that if the bill passes, even more money would be needed, because she does anticipate more complaints.

Does she anticipate a flood of complaints? No. She has expressed her support for the bill and hopes it will pass. However, she will have to be given the resources needed to do her job. Of course, the concept of a public servant who discloses in good faith implies that if the whistle-blowing is done out of revenge, the complaint won't be accepted. Nevertheless, even if it's out of revenge, the whistle-blower could still disclose a wrongdoing that goes against the public interest and deserves to be denounced. Casting doubt on his or her motives may not be the right approach. The agreement should be reviewed and investigated, and if it turns out that the facts reported are reprehensible under the law, they should be investigated, regardless of the motivation that led this public servant to turn a blind eye at first, only to eventually do the right thing. So much the better if he or she discloses practices that must be stopped.

The legislation contains provisions that allow the commissioner not to address the complaints, but refer them to other organizations that may be better equipped to deal with them. For example, a unionized public servant might report that a supervisor is psychologically harassing him because he was a whistle-blower, no one took action and now he has to deal with the situation. Perhaps in some cases he might be asked to file a grievance; his union could deal with it and everything could be handled more quickly because the apparatus is equipped to address this type of thing. Maybe other cases will be presented by the Human Rights Commission. The commission has the capacity to refer the files, even to the police in the most serious cases. After filtering the information, the commission would transfer the case to the police, as in the case of this communications director who had a beautiful ranch, a lot of horses and a lot of beautiful properties and who seemed to be getting rewarded by the people getting contracts from him.

Hon. Raymonde Saint-Germain: Senator Dalphond, this bill deals with an issue that I'm deeply interested in, and I'd like to underscore that the Quebec ombud now has vital experience and expertise as the official National Assembly institution responsible for managing Quebec's whistle-blower legislation. The balance mentioned by our colleague Senator Miville-Dechêne is extremely important. For reasons that are sometimes extremely skewed and biased, complaints are sometimes made without any actual basis.

My question primarily concerns the Quebec experience. Have the consultations held so far taken the Quebec legislation into account and the expertise gained over the past two years? Is the Quebec ombud going to be included among the committee's witnesses?

Senator Dalphond: The basis for this bill is essentially the 2017 House of Commons committee report. Nearly seven years have passed since 2017. I think your suggestion is a very good idea. If the bill goes to committee, that will no doubt be one of the witnesses I'll suggest that the steering committee invite. We often forget that Quebec has done a lot of interesting things, but because they operate in another language, they're not on the radar. It's a good suggestion, and I'd like to suggest that we invite the person currently in that position. If he's not available, we'll ask you to appear.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

CRIMINAL CODE

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Julie Miville-Dechêne moved second reading of Bill C-332, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (coercive control of intimate partner).

She said: Honourable senators, it is my privilege to begin second reading debate on Bill C-332, which deals with coercive control of an intimate partner.

I told the sponsor of the bill in the House of Commons, MP Laurel Collins, that I would sponsor her initiative in the Senate because this insidious form of violence has concerned me for years.

[*English*]

Much progress has already been made since Bill C-332 was unanimously adopted by the House of Commons on June 12, after having been amended and improved in several respects by a series of substantial amendments. I will come back to this, but first, a few words about context.

Intimate partner violence against women is a tragedy. A woman is killed every six days in Canada by an act of domestic violence, and, as University of New Brunswick expert Professor Carmen Gill explains, our Criminal Code is outdated because it considers this violence as isolated and one-time events.

I quote her:

. . . the Canadian criminal justice system primarily places emphasis on evidence of physical violence, first responders are to find evidence of such violence. Consequently, there is a neglect to question the context of the abuse and the harm caused within these situations, which results in coercive control being unaddressed or dismissed. It is almost impossible for a police officer to recognize the deprivation of rights to freedom, the obstruction of liberty and the dynamic of power and control when they are intervening.

So what is coercive control, the notion at the heart of Bill C-332? It is the abuser's use of repetitive tactics, such as exploitation, humiliation, manipulation, isolation, and the micro-regulation of the daily life of his intimate partner. It is, therefore, not a single behaviour but a wide range of behaviours that when taken separately are not necessarily criminal in nature but through their repetition are transformed into coercive control.

This is the heart of Bill C-332, which creates a new offence of coercive control of an intimate partner, punishable by up to 10 years in prison.

[*Translation*]

Women's advocacy groups have long realized that there is a host of controlling behaviour that is separate from beatings or even, in the worst cases, separate from femicide.

• (1730)

Ninety-five per cent of victims of physical violence also report the presence of coercive control. What's more, that violence is gendered. Women and girls represent 79% of the victims of intimate partner violence reported to the police. The public inquiry into the mass shooting in Nova Scotia established that the shooter had a history of coercive behaviour and that he had shot the tires of his partner's car to prevent her from leaving. The night of the shooting, he attacked and confined her.

In Quebec, the Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale has done a lot of work in the past three years on coercive control by training more than 6,200 stakeholders in police, judicial and health care settings. Even in the absence of legislation, awareness of coercive control can help stakeholders identify a woman in distress. This training is based on the 13-year hell experienced by a mother who I will call Marie, who agreed to share her ordeal with me in detail.

At first, he was a caring partner, but he gradually began to isolate her. He was always keeping track of her and was obsessively jealous. After the birth of their first child, he "screamed and yelled at her" — those are her words — until she curled up in a ball on the floor to protect her baby who was wailing. Marie said that her partner drank and that he began yelling more and more. He was extremely aggressive, but he didn't hit her because, as he said, he didn't want to leave marks.

Marie, who was financially dependent on her partner, lived in fear of the next crisis and she ended up fleeing her home after her mother told her that she was going to end up dead. The situation was so stressful that a series of medical problems left her with brain damage. Since coercive control is not yet an offence, the former partner of another survivor, Brigitte, was convicted for only one aspect of all the violence she suffered: stalking. He was not convicted for all of his ongoing controlling behaviour or for the psychological abuse he inflicted on her for nine years; rather, he was convicted because, after they separated, she recorded their telephone conversations about the custody of their child for six months. The judge read some of these violent and denigrating remarks to the court. I will quote a few of them: "When I look at you, you're dead, lifeless. I don't understand why you aren't sick. You're good for nothing." "You're going to shut your damn mouth. You're no good. You're retarded."

He called her a stupid, worthless bitch.

Once, he said, "I don't give a shit what you say. I can do whatever I want with her. Stop asking her how she feels about having supper at my place." He was talking about his daughter.

The accused was sentenced to 30 days served at home, one day a week.

Brigitte explained that there wasn't much physical violence. It took her a while to realize what was going on. In between blackmailing her, preventing her from interacting with her friends, threatening, manipulating and insulting her, he gave her gifts.

That's why, in order to help women, to help mothers like Marie and Brigitte, it's time we made coercive control a criminal offence. It's not an easy concept to pin down, though.

See, the original bill was radically altered in the other place's committee. Justice Canada added 14 amendments informed by input from the provinces and territories, stakeholders, and especially the Scottish law on coercive control, which has been in force since 2019.

The proposed offence includes two distinct elements that are psychological in nature.

264.01 (1) Everyone commits an offence who engages in a pattern of conduct referred to in subsection (2)

(a) with intent to cause their intimate partner to believe that the intimate partner's safety is threatened; or

(b) being reckless as to whether that pattern could cause their intimate partner to believe that the intimate partner's safety is threatened.

One major strength of this legislation is that it includes a non-exhaustive list of about ten identified and repeated patterns of conduct. Specifically, these include using or attempting to use, or threatening to use violence against the intimate partner, a child or an animal; coercing or attempting to coerce the intimate partner to engage in sexual activity; controlling, attempting to control or monitoring the intimate partner's actions, movements or social interactions or the manner in which the intimate partner cares for a child; controlling or attempting to control any matter related to the intimate partner's employment or education, property, finances, expression of gender, physical appearance, manner of dress, and so on.

A number of expert witnesses called for this kind of list during the committee study to help the legal system understand the kinds of conduct that might constitute an offence.

Another amendment that was passed states that the analysis has to be objective, in other words, it has to pass the "reasonable person" test.

I would ask lawyers to listen to the following. This approach reduces the risk of revictimization by ensuring that the evidence before the court isn't based solely on the victim's testimony or perceptions. The idea is to focus the court's analysis on the behaviour of the accused.

The key question is this: Is it reasonable, given the context, to expect the intimate partner to believe that her safety or that of someone she knows is in on the line? This objective test allows for the protection of a victim who can't name the threat, when the conduct of the accused is objectively likely to cause fear. It also allows for the protection of an accused whose conduct would not objectively likely cause fear, even in the victim's own circumstances.

Other significant improvements to the bill are also worth mentioning.

A clarification was added, saying, and I quote, “For the purposes of this section, and for greater certainty, a person’s safety includes their psychological safety.”

The idea here is obviously to emphasize the fact that violence, and therefore a person’s safety, is not just physical.

In another important addition, the bill states that we must take into account, and I quote, “the nature of the relationship between the accused and the intimate partner, in particular whether the intimate partner is in a position of vulnerability in relation to the accused.”

We’re talking here about the word “vulnerability.”

Why was this added? It was added so that the justice system will take into account the power imbalance when the aggressor tries to turn the complaint of coercive control against his or her intimate partner. In such cases, the vulnerability analysis will enable the court to identify who the real victim is, rather than using false equivalencies.

This bill drew criticism as soon as it was introduced.

Some groups are worried that making coercive control into a new criminal offence will negatively impact Indigenous people and racialized and marginalized communities that are already over-represented in prisons.

Others are concerned that this new offence could be turned against women who are trying to protect their children from their spouse’s violence. Still others think that the concept of coercive control is too broad and that it could be challenged or misinterpreted.

These criticisms are legitimate, but they were made before the bill was significantly amended. The Senate committee will have to determine whether the government’s amendments resolved these issues in a reasonable manner.

We will also need to have conversations with the communities that are most concerned about this before Bill C-332 comes into force. We have the flexibility to hold such consultations because there’s no maximum deadline for the coming into force of this bill.

I would add that there are ways of limiting the risks of errors.

First, everyone agrees that the secret to success is raising awareness and training stakeholders who are in contact with the victims to properly detect coercive control.

• (1740)

For example, police officers need more time and there needs to be new, longer and more detailed questionnaires for those who file complaints. According to Karine Barrette, lawyer and project manager at Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale, the Nova Scotia experience shows that when the dynamic and patterns of coercive control are mastered, prosecutors and police officers find it easier to prove coercive control than the isolated incidents of physical violence. When people understand what coercive control is, they are better able to identify who the main attacker is, including when there are

intersecting complaints by both partners. It seems that, in Great Britain at least, the offence of coercive control hasn’t backfired against the victims so far.

A delegation made up of two jurists and one police officer from Quebec went to Scotland and England last May to see what they could learn from their experience. Members of the delegation reported that, although there were some difficulties, British and Scottish police officers, prosecutors and victim assistance groups would never go back. They don’t have conclusive evidence yet — the whole COVID thing delayed implementation of the act — but Scotland believes it’s on the right track, partly because everyone was trained before the law came into effect.

In conclusion, contrary to what some people claim, Bill C-332 will not transform everything into coercive control. This is really about behavioural tendencies over long periods of time. No single act constitutes coercive control.

According to Professor Carmen Gill, an expert on this issue, passing Bill C-332 is crucial. She said:

It is important to reinforce women’s safety. . . . An offence of coercive control would clearly recognize the fact that IPV is a pattern of control and power over the victim and would legitimize victims’ experiences. Such an offence may also prevent intimate partner homicide.

What we don’t want anymore is for victims of coercive control to avoid seeking help because they believe that what they’re going through isn’t that serious or doesn’t break the law. That’s what happened to Marie for 13 years. We also want to make sure that these women are taken seriously when they bring a complaint even though they have no bruises. It’s also important to keep in mind that the harassment often continues after a separation, like it did in Brigitte’s case, who went through three years of violence after her separation.

I want to acknowledge the courage of these two survivors, who told me about the trap that slowly swallowed them up. Marie and Brigitte, I wish you a better life.

Having said that, esteemed colleagues, I look forward to hearing your respective opinions on Bill C-332. I sincerely hope that this bill, awaited by many women, will receive serious consideration in committee as soon as possible. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Senator Miville-Dechéne, would you take some questions?

Senator Miville-Dechéne: Certainly.

[English]

Hon. Mary Coyle: I want to thank my colleague for bringing this very important bill forward. I very much look forward to the debate and the study of this bill, which proposes a very significant new criminal charge. When we are looking at criminal

charges, we have to be very careful, because we already have a fair degree of what some of us would believe is an over-incarceration in our country.

You know that I am very sympathetic. I spoke in this chamber about Shanna Borden Desmond, Anna Maria Tremonti and Lisa Banfield. All three were victims of coercive control in my province of Nova Scotia. We also know that coercive control can lead to intimate partner homicide. As we've seen in the Nova Scotia case, it can also lead to homicide more generally, so this is serious.

I want to ask about other remedies, more than just incarceration. What are the other considerations that have been looked at by those who are studying coercive control to prevent it and to address it? Are there other things that have been brought forward as remedies for this, other than incarceration?

[Translation]

Senator Miville-Dechêne: I will answer you in French. I understand, and I mentioned that this bill raises important issues because people who are marginalized, racialized and discriminated against are generally overrepresented in prisons. It's clear that we will have to have some serious conversations with these communities before the bill comes into force.

There's no opposition in all of these circles, because, obviously, such violence exists. What I can tell you is that everyone that I've spoken to who works in this field says that, even without legislation, we have to make sure that we train anyone who is working with these victims so that they can detect coercive control, because that's the most important thing. If those who are experiencing coercive control — usually it's women — don't realize what is happening, then it's much harder for them to get out of the situation, because they think that it is normal, that it is a personality thing, that it is their fault and that they didn't do the right thing. All of this can be spotted by people working in hospitals and help centres, but that requires training.

What I think is incredible about the shelters in Quebec is that they weren't expecting the legislation. They have been providing training for three years and they say that there is already a better understanding. Soon there will be a website available and some documents are being translated so that everyone can have access to a simple explanation of this phenomenon.

I would say that this idea of training and raising public awareness is without a doubt the important part that precedes the legislation. However, none of the people I spoke to at length believe that the situation could be resolved without legislation. It is very good to raise awareness, it is very good to train police officers, but without legislation, if we don't amend the Criminal Code, we won't see the result of this hard work.

I know that incarceration is not the only solution; I am well aware of that, but at the end of the day, to prevent impunity, I personally feel that coercive control needs to be a criminal offence.

[Senator Coyle]

[English]

Hon. Paula Simons: Would my friend accept another question?

Senator Miville-Dechêne: Yes.

Senator Simons: In your presentation, you spoke primarily about intimate partner violence, but if I'm reading the bill correctly, it would also apply to any relatives who were living together. Is that correct? That would be a relationship of parents perhaps living with young adult children, or siblings, or somebody living with an older parent. Would that also apply?

[Translation]

Senator Miville-Dechêne: That's not how I understand the definition of "intimate partner" that already exists in the Criminal Code. Clearly, to use violence against any person who is 18 years old and is the child of the intimate partner . . . In fact, a child can be involved in coercive control to the extent that he or she can become the victim of one of the intimate partners, but there has to be an intimate partner relationship, either past or present, in other words a relationship that was once intimate for the concept of coercive control to be used.

[English]

Senator Simons: I guess we'll find out when it comes to the Legal Committee, but I guess I am concerned. Obviously, I share the disgust that everyone in this chamber feels about intimate partner violence. We've all spoken to this issue many times. Many other senators have brought forward initiatives to try and cope with this, but I am concerned about Criminal Code offences where the standard is so vague. In this case, it says that an interpretation of the significant impact is something that causes alarm or distress. I don't know what that means — to cause alarm or distress. What is the test to know if bullying and the kinds of problems that sometimes happen in relationships rise to the level of what is criminal?

• (1750)

[Translation]

Senator Miville-Dechêne: You've hit the nail on the head. This is a new offence that's hard to define. No one is denying that a certain degree of judgment will have to be used. I think the important word is repetition. A one-time thing, a tantrum or screaming fit, is different than repeated behaviour that becomes a way of being. There's obviously a difference. Not all sexual violence offences are easy to prove. This offence won't necessarily be any different from sexual assault, which, as you know, aren't easy to prove. Many cases never make it to court because prosecutors feel they don't have enough independent evidence. It's never going to be easy. These things often happen in private, but there may be witnesses, including children, relatives or close friends.

Yes, this is a leap of faith, but Scotland and England have done it, and they're satisfied insofar as this is one more tool they can use to detect violence against women in general. Of course, the opposite can happen too, but this is gendered violence. The idea is to create one more tool to help these women. Yes, we need

social services and so on, but this idea, this new offence, reflects reality. For decades now, women's groups have been saying that, alongside physical violence, there's something much more insidious: coercive control. In my opinion, opting to do nothing because it's complicated is not the right approach.

Yes, this is a relatively complex offence. That's why putting examples right in the bill helps the justice system. It helps everyone. The first version of the bill was two and a half pages long and contained no examples. This version is better. It's now six pages long. I've talked to several stakeholders about the amendments, and they make sense. They're the kind of thing a number of witnesses asked for in committee.

I think this bill is relatively solid in the sense that, as you said, this offence will undoubtedly be tricky to pin down, but that will get easier as awareness grows and people understand the phenomenon better.

[English]

Hon. Gwen Boniface: Thank you for sponsoring this bill, it's an important issue. As you know from my inquiry, I have an interest in this issue and have for a long time.

I wanted to just point out that Ontario and Quebec are doing very similar things from the policing perspective in terms of the amount of oversight and training around these sorts of issues on risk assessment.

I would ask when the committee looks at this — and I'm asking if you think this is important — to also look at the other services available, somewhat in line with Senator Coyle. At least in the province I'm in — and the inquiry from Renfrew would tell you this — totally unfunded and poorly funded services that should be in place to support this.

The second issue is when you have high-risk offenders who are repeat offenders with different victims, the penalties they have already received, the sentences they've already received, probation and the direction to take anger management they've received is never followed up on. I would ask, as you lead this with the committee, to take a look at the range of issues that fall around this so that we don't find ourselves with basically a new legislation that has no effect because the resources around it are not effective.

[Translation]

Senator Miville-Dechêne: Thank you for these comments. It is true that, in many cases, there aren't enough resources to implement new laws. In this case, I wouldn't support an approach that would only criminalize behaviour. The whole system has to change. The same goes for all other forms of violence.

I would say that it's a truly systemic problem. Laws have to be passed, of course, but implementing them and changing things is just as necessary. I must tell you that many of the laws that I've carefully studied — including legislation on prostitution — failed to get the necessary framework that would allow women to withdraw from this activity if they want to, provide them with guidance and organize awareness campaigns so that the people

who procure sexual services know that prostitution is sexual exploitation. Attitudes need to be changed. Social services are needed to address this, and the same goes for coercive control.

[English]

Hon. Paulette Senior: As someone who has worked for about 35 years with women's organizations from gender-based violence and all that that entails, I am happy to see the attention that this will bring. I have some surrounding concerns around the application of it, and how folks particularly from Black, Indigenous, and racialized communities will be protected.

You mentioned that the changes since then have been put in place. I'd love to learn more about that. Forgive me, it's my first day back, so I'm not as up to speed as I should be, but I'd like to learn how that is working because in current legislation, it's happening. I would not like to see new legislation introduced that then compounds the issue that is already in place.

I'd like to just learn more about that and maybe ask the committee to be very specific about how that is being mitigated. Thank you.

Senator Miville-Dechêne: Thank you for the question. If I understand you well, are you saying that in the justice system we're already taking into consideration coercive control? Or did I miss something? I'm sorry?

Senator Senior: Thank you. No. I'm saying that in current criminalization legislation, the laws that are currently being used already are discriminating in terms of their application, so how will that be mitigated with this new piece of legislation?

Senator Miville-Dechêne: Yes, it's my mistake, I didn't understand well.

[Translation]

It's a vast and highly complex question. Criminalization doesn't have the same effect on every segment of the population. I mention it because it came up in committee. I would never presume to speak on behalf of racialized communities, with a disproportionate number of their members imprisoned, but in this particular case, it seems to me that allowing some time for conversations before the legislation takes effect would at least provide an opportunity to hear from these communities and see things through their eyes.

Is a consultation enough? I'm not a clairvoyant, and I don't want to make any promises. This is a problem in a society where there are blatant inequalities and where the laws are supposed to apply equally to everyone. That is not the case. I understand all of these issues of systemic discrimination.

• (1800)

Does that mean that, because of that, we can't create new offences that address a reality? I wouldn't go that far. However, we have to take serious precautions. What I find somewhat reassuring is that the amendments strengthen the bill. The Senate committee will be able to look at the context surrounding this

new offence. I believe that enough of my colleagues on the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee have sufficient awareness of this issue that they will be able to raise it and have witnesses come and talk about it.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

[*English*]

THE SENATE

MOTION TO RECOGNIZE THAT CLIMATE CHANGE IS AN URGENT CRISIS—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Galvez, seconded by the Honourable Senator Forest:

That the Senate of Canada recognize that:

- (a) climate change is an urgent crisis that requires an immediate and ambitious response;
- (b) human activity is unequivocally warming the atmosphere, ocean and land at an unprecedented pace, and is provoking weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe, including in the Arctic, which is warming at more than twice the global rate;
- (c) failure to address climate change is resulting in catastrophic consequences especially for Canadian youth, Indigenous Peoples and future generations; and
- (d) climate change is negatively impacting the health and safety of Canadians, and the financial stability of Canada;

That the Senate declare that Canada is in a national climate emergency which requires that Canada uphold its international commitments with respect to climate change and increase its climate action in line with the Paris Agreement's objective of holding global warming well below two degrees Celsius and pursuing efforts to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius; and

That the Senate commit to action on mitigation and adaptation in response to the climate emergency and that it consider this urgency for action while undertaking its parliamentary business.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, on behalf of Senator Housakos, I note that this item is at day 15 and he is not ready to speak at this time. Therefore, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 4-14(3), I move the adjournment of the debate in the name of Senator Housakos for the balance of his time.

[Senator Miville-Dechéne]

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Debate adjourned.)

MOTION TO RESOLVE THAT AN AMENDMENT TO THE REAL PROPERTY QUALIFICATIONS OF SENATORS IN THE CONSTITUTION ACT, 1867 BE AUTHORIZED TO BE MADE BY PROCLAMATION ISSUED BY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Patterson (*Nunavut*), seconded by the Honourable Senator Greene:

Whereas the Senate provides representation for groups that are often underrepresented in Parliament, such as Aboriginal peoples, visible minorities and women;

Whereas paragraph (3) of section 23 of the *Constitution Act, 1867* requires that, in order to be qualified for appointment to and to maintain a place in the Senate, a person must own land with a net worth of at least four thousand dollars in the province for which he or she is appointed;

Whereas a person's personal circumstances or the availability of real property in a particular location may prevent him or her from owning the required property;

Whereas appointment to the Senate should not be restricted to those who own real property of a minimum net worth;

Whereas the existing real property qualification is inconsistent with the democratic values of modern Canadian society and is no longer an appropriate or relevant measure of the fitness of a person to serve in the Senate;

Whereas, in the case of Quebec, each of the twenty-four Senators representing the province must be appointed for and must have either their real property qualification in or be resident of a specified Electoral Division;

Whereas an amendment to the Constitution of Canada in relation to any provision that applies to one or more, but not all, provinces may be made by proclamation issued by the Governor General under the Great Seal of Canada only where so authorized by resolutions of the Senate and House of Commons and of the legislative assembly of each province to which the amendment applies;

Whereas the Supreme Court of Canada has determined that a full repeal of paragraph (3) of section 23 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, respecting the real property qualification of Senators, would require a resolution of the Quebec National Assembly pursuant to section 43 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*;

Now, therefore, the Senate resolves that an amendment to the Constitution of Canada be authorized to be made by proclamation issued by Her Excellency the Governor General under the Great Seal of Canada in accordance with the Schedule hereto.

SCHEDULE

AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF CANADA

1. **(1) Paragraph (3) of section 23 of the *Constitution Act, 1867* is repealed.**

(2) Section 23 of the Act is amended by replacing the semi-colon at the end of paragraph (5) with a period and by repealing paragraph (6).

2. **The Declaration of Qualification set out in The Fifth Schedule to the Act is replaced by the following:**

I, *A.B.*, do declare and testify that I am by law duly qualified to be appointed a member of the Senate of Canada.

3. **This Amendment may be cited as the *Constitution Amendment, [year of proclamation] (Real property qualification of Senators)*.**

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, again, I note that this item is at day 15 and Senator Housakos is not ready to speak at this time. Therefore, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 4-14(3), I move the adjournment of the debate in the name of Senator Housakos for the balance of his time.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Debate adjourned.)

MOTION PERTAINING TO MINIMUMS FOR GOVERNMENT BILLS— DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Tannas, seconded by the Honourable Senator Black:

That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules, previous order or usual practice:

1. except as provided in this order, the question not be put on the motion for third reading of a government bill unless the orders for resuming debate at second and third reading have, together, been called at least three times, in addition to the sittings at which the motions for second and third readings were moved;

2. when a government bill has been read a first time, and before a motion is moved to set the date for second reading, the Leader of the Government in the

Senate or the Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate may, without notice, move that the bill be deemed an urgent matter, and that the provisions of paragraph 1 of this order not apply to proceedings on the bill; and

3. when a motion has been moved pursuant to paragraph 2 of this order, the following provisions apply:

(a) the debate shall only deal with whether the bill should be deemed an urgent matter or not;

(b) the debate shall not be adjourned;

(c) the debate shall last a maximum of 20 minutes;

(d) no senator shall speak for more than 5 minutes;

(e) no senators shall speak more than once;

(f) the debate shall not be interrupted for any purpose, except for the reading of a message from the Crown or an event announced in such a message;

(g) the debate may continue beyond the ordinary time of adjournment, if necessary, until the conclusion of the debate and consequential business;

(h) the time taken in debate and for any vote shall not count as part of Routine Proceedings;

(i) no amendment or other motion shall be received, except a motion that a certain senator be now heard or do now speak;

(j) when debate concludes or the time for debate expires, the Speaker shall put the question; and

(k) any standing vote requested shall not be deferred, and the bells shall ring for only 15 minutes.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): With leave, I would like to adjourn in the name of Senator Housakos for the balance of his time.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Debate adjourned.)

[Translation]

ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR SENATORS

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY AMENDMENTS TO THE *ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST CODE FOR SENATORS* WITH RESPECT TO SPONSORED TRAVEL—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Raymonde Saint-Germain, pursuant to notice of June 20, 2024, moved:

That the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest be authorized to examine and report on amendments to the *Ethics and Conflict of Interest Code for Senators* with respect to sponsored travel, and to consider whether senators accepting sponsored travel continues to be appropriate in the current environment relating to foreign interference, whether that sponsorship is by foreign states or other third parties, including, but not limited to, corporations, lobbyists or non-governmental organizations;

That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules or the code, when the committee is dealing with this matter, it be authorized to meet in public if it so decides and a senator who is not a member of the committee not attend unless doing so as a witness and at the invitation of the committee; and

That the committee present its final report to the Senate no later than March 31, 2025.

She said: Honourable senators, the Senate cannot remain indifferent to the risks that foreign interference now poses to political institutions and democracy in this country.

The Five Eyes, the allied intelligence services of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States, say that this worrisome reality is affecting Western democracies in particular. Canadian intelligence and security authorities, as well as the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, or NSICOP, all confirm that Canada has not been spared.

In its June 2024 special report, NSICOP clearly states that parliamentarians and their staff are major targets for foreign interference. I will read an excerpt from the special report:

. . . foreign interference activities in Canada in the period under review —

— meaning, since 2018 —

— were conducted predominantly through person-to-person interaction . . . Foreign actors seek to cultivate long-term relationships with Canadians who they believe may be useful in advancing their interests, with a view to having the Canadian act in favour of the foreign actor and against Canada's interests.

The committee members mention the use of certain inducements, including “all-expenses-paid trips to the foreign country.”

[English]

If foreign interference is what ignited my desire to table this motion, let's not be mistaken, and let's be clear: Despite this situation, it is important for the Senate to free itself from the numerous other consequences of sponsored travels, and it's important that it does so now.

However, this situation of active interference adds an urgency to the need to talk today about the appropriateness of the sponsored travels we are offered, which, over time, have multiplied.

Let me now present to you what these trips have amounted to since 2013. Unfortunately, this will only be a partial account, since public information on these trips is deleted when a senator retires or resigns. We, therefore, only have information on senators still in office.

According to what was publicly disclosed by the Senate Ethics Officer, apart from the 45 sponsored trips within the borders of Canada, which are not targeted by this motion, 119 senator trips took place abroad, and most of them were sponsored by a foreign entity or a proxy.

Sixteen of these trips took place in what is considered to be an “authoritarian regime” by the definition of the Economist Intelligence Unit. Even if the ethical issues at stake with sponsored trips are not only in visiting such countries, we must admit that a parliamentarian being hosted by authoritarian-led countries could end up in delicate and tedious situations.

Furthermore, only one senator who decides to engage in these types of situations could embarrass the whole of the institution. Even over a 10-year period, the number of trips sponsored by foreign agents that were offered to and accepted by senators is quite significant.

I will now expose what I believe to be the main ethical issues related to sponsored travels.

• (1810)

The first one is being placed in an “I owe you” situation. When a senator accepts such sponsorships, their flights, accommodations and meals, notably, are paid for by a foreign country or a dummy corporation. In exchange, the senator gives their time, attention and influence to specific questions that are of great interest to the trip's sponsor. Like it or not, every parliamentarian who receives such treatment becomes indebted to the sponsoring state or corporation. This indebtedness can affect their work and their objectivity. This is what is commonly called a “quid pro quo,” a favour for a favour.

The indebtedness is even more embarrassing and inappropriate when we consider that the Senate — and, more generally, the Canadian Parliament — does not have an equivalent to these sponsored trips. Neither chamber has a program or funds allocated for this. Besides, such a practice would be inappropriate, given the role of the Senate and considering how it would impact taxpayers.

I am not here trying to place blame on anyone, but on a few occasions I have noticed some of our colleagues take stands — for example, through a statement and even through a Senate public bill — that clearly revealed this indebtedness.

The second ethical issue I see is finding oneself in a position of conflict of interest or loyalty. Intimately related to the first issue, there is a potential for conflict of interest or loyalty, whether real or perceived. This could have serious negative effects on the public's opinion of our country's parliamentarians and democratic institutions.

Can a senator who has travelled at a sponsor's expense and followed a program designed and overseen by said sponsor separate fact from fiction and distinguish information from misinformation? Do they know the objective points of view of all parties involved? Can the senator really form an enlightened opinion based on a meeting program created to show the host's perspective in a favourable light? Our code of ethics states that senators are expected:

... to fulfil their public duties while upholding the highest standards so as to avoid conflicts of interest and maintain and enhance public confidence and trust in the integrity of each Senator and in the Senate; and

(c) to arrange their private affairs so that foreseeable real or apparent conflicts of interest may be prevented from arising...

This is from the *Ethics and Conflict of Interest Code for Senators*, paragraphs 2(2)(b) and (c).

There is an insidious nature to these trips that seek to promote the interests of the host countries — interests that don't always align with Canada's.

A third and not insignificant issue I see — which stems from the first two — involves breaching Canada's foreign policy, which is the prerogative of the executive power, not the legislative power. Parliamentary diplomacy must complement and be consistent with the country's foreign policy, not hinder it. In international affairs, it is essential that Canada speak with one voice when it comes to committing and fulfilling its international obligations.

It is also possible that in specific situations, a position taken following a trip sponsored by a sovereign state could infringe upon the principle of international law regarding non-interference in domestic affairs. This principle is included in the United Nations Charter, to which Canada adheres as a member of the UN.

The risk of infringing on Canada's foreign policy is further increased when sponsored travel is not submitted to the usual audits and briefings from Global Affairs Canada. What are Canada's positions on and interests in the matter? As part of sponsored travel, parliamentarians follow a program established by the host country or the corporation acting as a proxy. Parliamentarians are also potentially vulnerable to a foreign state's propaganda.

Allow me to now take a few minutes to focus on our role in parliamentary diplomacy through the Parliament of Canada official channels. Parliamentary diplomacy, as former Senate and House Speakers Noël A. Kinsella and Peter Milliken have described it, is mainly a builder of relationships and partnerships. It is efficient in the development of networks between policy-makers and can help with benchmarking and opening dialogues.

While all of this is beneficial and a strong complement to our international presence, it does not replace the targeted and thought-out actions of professional diplomats. At its core, foreign policy is the responsibility of the government — the executive.

[Translation]

Parliamentary diplomacy is only relevant if it is carried out in accordance with the government's foreign policy, which aligns with our national defence interests.

MP and Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons Chris d'Entremont and I co-chair the Joint Interparliamentary Council, commonly referred to as the JIC. The JIC oversees 12 parliamentary associations and four interparliamentary groups that coordinate delegations that represent Parliament at various meetings of MPs and senators around the world. The objective is to meet with parliamentarians from other countries and discuss issues of strategic interest to us as Canadian parliamentarians. Above all, the goal is interparliamentary cooperation.

In fiscal year 2022-23, 63 delegations represented Parliament at meetings held in 31 countries. In all, 79 senators and 183 MPs took part in these delegations.

Furthermore, unlike sponsored travel, all parliamentarians belonging to these associations who participate in official delegations receive exhaustive analyses and reports, along with security support that includes cybersecurity, to make sure they are properly briefed and well prepared to represent Canada and its Parliament effectively.

Senators have other opportunities to travel on official business for standing Senate committees, for example, and they also get travel points for trips to the United States, specifically New York City and Washington, or for international events held in Canada.

For colleagues who are interested in parliamentary diplomacy, the best way to take part is through these official channels, not sponsored travel. These diplomatic opportunities do not raise any ethical issues and will not sow any doubts about a parliamentarian's loyalty to our country. In fact, they offer us a special channel for promoting democracy and good governance and cooperating with other parliamentarians to strengthen those values both here and abroad.

[English]

Another concerning factor is the serious lack of accountability and transparency in our current reporting system. Under the *Ethics and Conflict of Interest Code for Senators*, senators must declare to the Senate Ethics Officer, or SEO, their participation in a sponsored trip. However, under subsection 18(2), only the name of the person or organization paying for the trip, the destinations, the purpose and duration of the trip, whether or not

a guest was also sponsored and the general nature of the benefits received must be declared. Furthermore, this feedback is given for information purposes only, and the SEO has no role or ability to identify possible conflicts of interest or discourage a senator from going on a particular trip.

Even worse, under section 19, sponsored trips are deemed to have received the consent of the Senate thereto for all purposes. This means that under the current code of ethics, all senators are deemed to have consented to all sponsored trips. This is deeply problematic and essentially means that if only one senator is not rigorous in his choice of destinations, the whole Senate can be deemed complicit.

Another dimension that is inappropriate — even inconsistent — is that the code clearly states that a senator cannot accept a gift with a value over \$500. However, there is no problem in accepting trips with accommodations worth thousands of dollars.

It is also worth noting that the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, or NSICOP, *Special Report on Foreign Interference in Canada's Democratic Processes and Institutions* states that “. . . consistent with the *Conflict of Interest Act*, public office holders must always place the public interest before private interests. . . .”

- (1820)

We need to seriously rethink these practices and bring them up to par with best practices and the highest contemporary ethical standards.

As you can attest, there are a lot of flaws with the current state of sponsored travel for senators. Does it mean that all forms of international sponsored travel should be outright banned? This is a question that I would defer to the members of the Senate Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators to address and make recommendations on.

There is room for interpretation and, potentially, to maintaining strict exceptions. The issue lies with those situations where senators put themselves in a position of liability which, in turn, influences their work as parliamentarians. Some trips have no influence on our work.

If this motion is adopted, I will count on the expertise of the Ethics and Conflict of Interest Committee to do this interpretation, establish the exceptions that do not place senators in positions of liability and recommend them to the Senate. Notably, this can be the case when we are invited to contribute to an academic activity or recognized professional association that only covers our expenses without any other remuneration.

[Translation]

For the sake of transparency, I will admit that since I was first appointed to the Senate in 2016, I've been invited to take part in four sponsored trips. I declined all but one of those invitations. I accepted an invitation from the Association des ombudsmans et médiateurs de la Francophonie, or AOMF, which invited me to Brussels for two days to give a speech at its biennial congress, which coincided with the 20th anniversary of its creation. I saw

no risk of a conflict of interest. This is a multilateral association that is recognized and subsidized by the Canadian government and that is made up of over 60 member states, including three provinces, specifically New Brunswick, Ontario and Quebec, which also fund it, as the Government of Canada does. I was invited on this trip to take part in the official discussions and to receive an award recognizing my decade of contributions to the AOMF.

My participation in the AOMF's biennial conference was in no way related to my role as a senator and had no impact or influence on any future legislation. No quid pro quo was expected of me, other than my professional contribution to the deliberations.

[English]

Outside strict valuable exceptions, I believe that sponsored travel as it happens now does not benefit the contemporary Senate. Modernization is not a process limited to speaking times, bells or recognized parliamentary groups. It also applies to our ethics and standards. I would even argue that this is more important to Canadians than the way we organize our work.

In recent years, the Senate has been ushered toward a new era of modernity. The ethical and appropriate management of sponsored trips is a further step in this modernization. What this motion proposes is a concrete action that is easily achievable by the will of this chamber.

With the many perks, accolades and distractions offered to senators, it can be easy to forget what we are truly nominated to this institution for. Our first and main role is to study and vote on bills. To that end, we must be present in this chamber and participate in its debates in addition to scrutinizing legislation and public policies in committee. This must always take priority over international parliamentary travel despite how relevant the official parliamentary diplomacy we are invited to contribute to via our membership in either one of our twelve recognized parliamentary associations or four interparliamentary groups may be.

If we adopt this motion, the Senate of Canada would not be the only parliamentary institution to reflect on this issue. In fact, in December of 2023, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics passed a motion calling for the end of sponsored travel. This motion is set to be debated at the Board of Internal Economy in the fall. This proposal was applauded by the federal lobbying commissioner as well as parliamentary watchdogs.

Also of interest to us is the 2018 Transparency International report entitled *In Whose Interest? Analysing how corrupt and repressive regimes seek influence and legitimacy through engagement with UK Parliamentarians*.

Here is an excerpt of this report:

It is imperative that when parliamentarians undertake engagements overseas their independence is beyond question. At present, there is a clear risk that overseas trips sponsored either directly or indirectly by corrupt and repressive regimes may present the perception or reality that

parliamentarians' judgements and actions are influenced by the malign intent of their hosts, which could also constitute a bribery offence.

This point was reiterated in another Transparency International brief published in March 2024:

There is a gap in the law which allows both foreign governments — including those with hostile or other malign intent — to curry favour with UK politicians through funding overseas visits. . . .

The U.K. Parliament has yet to act on this issue.

As such, the Senate of Canada has an opportunity to become a model to follow and a pioneer. I believe we should take advantage of this opportunity.

On a slightly different but related topic, the issue of sponsored travel also raises questions of our relationship to lobbying and the permissiveness of our legislation governing lobbying. I also believe this is something the Senate must investigate especially considering that, ever since 2016, the lobbying of senators has significantly increased due to our new-found independence. That said, this is a debate for another day.

Colleagues, in conclusion, if this motion is adopted, the Standing Senate Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators will be given the mandate to suggest amendments to the code in order to regulate all aspects related to sponsored travel and to present these suggestions no later than March 31, 2025. I will remind you that this committee is not dissolved when a parliament is dissolved.

I will rely on the committee members' expertise for the answers to these questions and on how to proceed in the future. In my view, it is clear that the risks of accepting sponsored trips from foreign states — directly or through a proxy — damage our reputation and should be banned from Senate practices.

[*Translation*]

Regarding foreign interference, there are many things that are beyond our control. However, restricting sponsored travel is tangible action that is within our purview. Considering the current environment, it is action that we must take without delay by adopting this motion.

I also suggest that between now and the review by our Standing Senate Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators and the adoption of its report, we convene a moratorium on accepting such sponsored travel. I'm appealing to every senator's forbearance.

It would be to our credit.

I've no doubt that Canadians would appreciate our restraint.

Thank you, *meegwetch*.

[*English*]

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Senator Downe, you have a question?

Hon. Percy E. Downe: Yes, would Senator Saint-Germain take a question?

Senator Saint-Germain: With pleasure, senator.

Senator Downe: Thank you, Senator Saint-Germain, for raising this important issue. You made the argument as I understood it that notwithstanding what the other countries are doing — and you referenced the Five Eyes and foreign interference at the beginning of your speech. All the other Five Eyes currently allow sponsored travel.

Setting that aside, your argument is, "Let's get ahead of the curve." You mentioned some trips you were on that were all allowed under sponsored travel, but times change, and the question is: Is this something we should be doing sooner rather than later?

• (1830)

My concern is not so much foreign interference in changing views, because the people here are very experienced. My concern would be public perception of sponsored travel.

To that end, I'm wondering if we should revert to the system we used to have in the Senate. The Five Eyes currently allow sponsored travel. They also allow international travel by parliamentarians which is paid for by their parliament. We used to have that in the Senate; we no longer do. Should we restore that so that people can have the experience and broaden their perspectives on international affairs? With the exception of Senator Peter Boehm and a few others, most of us have worked provincially and nationally, but very few of us have done so internationally. I think this would make for better senators.

Do you agree the Senate should also have funded international travel? Again, the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration used to have to approve it; you couldn't just go anywhere — you had to make a case for it, but it was funded by the Senate out of your own budget.

Senator Saint-Germain: Thank you, Senator Downe, for your question and your comments, and for highlighting the fact that I recognize that, currently, sponsored travel is allowed and that I didn't blame anyone. This is not my perspective; it is allowed. Times have changed, as you've said.

To one of your points, with regard to the Five Eyes countries and other countries, many are currently reconsidering allowing parliamentarians to travel on sponsored trips. Many others are even stricter than Canada with regard to obtaining permission and making sure there's no potential conflict of loyalty or other specific aspects. I have France in mind, which has a very strict code of ethics. It would be more difficult for a French parliamentarian to travel in these specific conditions, although it is allowed.

I will also defer to our Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators to further suggest to us, perhaps, some criteria, restrictions or even exceptions to prohibitions, if we go there.

Regarding your point related to parliamentary diplomacy — and I referred to it — both chambers of Parliament currently have access to parliamentary trips. As you've seen, 83 senators have travelled over the last year on parliamentary trips. I believe those are more focused and relevant to our work as parliamentarians. We're not diplomats, we're not members of the government and we're not responsible, first and foremost, for the foreign policy of the government, although we are contributing to it.

You didn't use the word that I will use on your behalf: I would share the frustration of some colleagues in some smaller groups who have fewer opportunities. I would say that, even with proportionality, we all have fewer opportunities than we would wish to have. The right question or way to act is to see how we can find a fair and balanced way to have more parliamentarians savvy with benchmarking, with good governance and with good practices in other countries in order to really cooperate in bringing our own expertise while learning from them on matters that are related to governance, democracy and human rights, or matters related to us.

On that, I concur with you that we should have a further look in the Senate regarding where we could do more and what we could do best in matters of parliamentary diplomacy.

My last point is that I do not agree — though it is not what you've said — that although we don't have all the opportunities that we would like to have within the realm of parliamentary diplomacy, we should agree to go on sponsored trips.

Thanks again for your question.

Senator Downe: Thank you, Senator Saint-Germain, for your response.

I have a small point: If the recommendation, at the end of the day, is to ban sponsored travel, I think it should also be banned within Canada. The very same principles apply. Who is funding it and why? Some might be very good reasons, and some might be front organizations for somebody else. If we're banning it, we're banning it.

I want to return to my key argument: Banning it would leave a vacuum. Every other parliament in the Five Eyes countries has funding for parliamentarians to attend international sessions. Again, they have to appear before a committee — in our case, it would be the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration — and make the case: Have you spoken about this topic? Have you been involved? You have to justify the trip. The expenses are public. They are paid out of your budget, if you have that budget.

That's what we used to have, and we should restore that if we're ending sponsored travel.

I'll give you a personal example. A few years ago, I surprised myself when I was elected as Vice-Chair of the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank and IMF. I was the only North

American vice-chair. Their headquarters are in Paris. All my colleagues from around the world — including Morocco and all the other countries from which there have been vice-chairs — would go to the meetings in Paris. For me to attend, I had to pay for it personally since there was no avenue to attend in my capacity as a senator. That is a gap that I think we should address. Again, it's not any additional funding; it has to be in your existing office budget, or you can't go.

Do you share my view that this should be studied parallel to the motion you put before us today?

Senator Saint-Germain: Thank you for the question and comments.

I concur with you on your first point in relation to banning these types of trips in Canada when they are sponsored by a foreign country. I have checked: Of the 45 trips that we have in Canada, none of them has been sponsored by a foreign country or proxy. I would make an exception for all the embassies and consulates in Canada. They're doing the work they have to do, and our diplomats do the same internationally. That is an exception.

I also concur with you that we need to revisit whether it is the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators on this side; I don't believe so. We need to revisit internally what we could do in order to allow us to further contribute to parliamentary diplomacy. I know the House of Commons is also looking at additional ways to further fulfill this responsibility that we have, which is not our first one, but it is one of our responsibilities.

Essentially, this is what we will have to decide: How do we work in a way that will allow us to better contribute and obtain more opportunities while still fulfilling our main duties in the Senate? There is another exception I will consider: In no way is this motion calling for any restriction on standing Senate committee members travelling abroad. This is clearly another question.

Senator Downe: Just for clarity, I don't care who sponsored the trips in Canada. If we're banning sponsored travel, anything sponsored in front of us should be banned, including anything within Canada. That's my view.

Senator Saint-Germain: I agree with you, but you will also have noticed that I said that we have an issue with some lobbyists. I will go as far as stating today that sometimes an invitation from a foreign country would have the promotion of tourism as a goal, which is, from my standpoint, not very close to foreign interference. However, I see some sponsored trips where, one day, we will have people who are pro-environment sponsoring a senator, and, another day, it's people who are pro-fossil fuels.

I believe this is also another issue that, at the very least, raises the perception issue of our impartiality and objectivity. This is another key question that we should address, but the motion for today is not targeting these types of sponsored trips.

• (1840)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Julie Miville-Dechêne: Thank you very much for this motion, senator. I totally agree with this motion. When I was first appointed to the Senate six years ago, I was surprised by these sponsored trips. I saw images on social media of happy senators in Israel and suddenly realized it was a sponsored trip. Obviously, as a former journalist, I was shocked. It wasn't so much an actual conflict of interest that shocked me, but rather the appearance of a conflict of interest, since that tends to stay in people's minds. You can't make it go away.

There probably won't be any foreign policy decisions made in this chamber. That said, when I made these observations, I appeared before the Committee on Ethics, and it's not as easy as one might think to identify what is travel sponsored indirectly by a foreign power and what is not. What you call a proxy, the individuals who organize all this, may be well hidden. Ultimately, there may be universities contributing and working for the government, but no one knows for sure. So the question is how to determine what is really state-sponsored and what isn't, and we would practically have to carry out full-on investigations to determine that.

Senator Saint-Germain: I would like to point out that you named a country, senator, while I didn't name any, and that it is perfectly legitimate for countries to try to sponsor travel. Also, regardless of the country involved, that is not the issue. You also said that the main problem with accepting these trips is not that it is a conflict of interest, but rather a perceived conflict of interest. Personally, I believe that these trips are often an actual conflict of interest. When we see a senator make a statement in favour of a certain country or situation, that is a problem. We have even seen a bill introduced after a sponsored trip, so I think that we are indeed talking about more than just a perceived conflict of interest. Your question concerns the best way of ascertaining the identity of the real sponsor.

There are several official sources of information, including the Economist Intelligence Unit, and when you look at the agenda, you can see the nature of the contacts and the people being met. When we do a bit of research, it is often easy to identify the proxies, because we know their sources of funding and what positions they have taken. I'm not saying that it is easy in every case, but it often is.

[*English*]

Hon. Denise Batters: My primary concern about this motion deals with what I see as the flawed rules that are set in the motion for the Ethics Committee's study.

Senator Saint-Germain, your December 2023 motion on the question of privilege ended with nearly identical wording. You sought in that case to refer that matter to the Ethics Committee, too, and that motion stated:

That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules, when the committee is dealing with the case of privilege:

1. it be authorized to meet in public if it so decides; and

2. a senator who is not a member of the committee not attend unless doing so as a witness and at the invitation of the committee.

Meanwhile, the motion you're promoting today ends with the same two, I'd say, highly problematic provisions regarding the Ethics Committee. It states:

That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules or the code, when the committee is dealing with this matter, it be authorized to meet in public if it so decides and a senator who is not a member of the committee not attend unless doing so as a witness and at the invitation of the committee

It's a complete cut-and-paste job from your previous motion. In my December 7, 2023, Senate speech, where I expressed my grave and serious concerns about those two clauses of that motion, I stated:

It is shocking that this is even being proposed by the Independent Senators Group leader. This is not an open, transparent process in the least. Committee hearings of this nature should not be held in secret. . . .

Instead, Senator Saint-Germain's motion would send this to the Ethics Committee, which rarely, if ever, meets in public. This lack of openness and transparency is especially problematic in light of the clause that follows, which prohibits any other senator who is not a member of the Ethics Committee from attending unless they are a witness and are invited to attend by the committee.

Senator Saint-Germain, why is your motion on this important matter once again demanding secrecy rather than openness and transparency? Why would you not want senators who are not members of the Ethics Committee to be able to participate in, attend and even watch these Ethics Committee hearings? Then they could perhaps contribute to and maybe even strengthen this key study. I remind you that other senators who are not members of that committee could not watch or even read transcripts of in camera Senate committee meetings.

Senator Saint-Germain: Thank you, Senator Batters, for your question. I'm glad you agree that allowing the Ethics Committee to meet in public is really a good opportunity and a good decision to make in this situation. As you know, the committee members can decide to invite as a witness any senator, and they can do so in public with any senator or any group.

As for your specific question related to senators who could not attend committee meetings, I can tell you that I have worked with the clerk, as we always do for these motions, and this is what has been recommended. I do believe there are good reasons for it.

But in a nutshell, having the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators, exceptionally in this case, be allowed to have public sittings, I think, is very positive. Nothing will prevent them, if they so wish, from inviting any senator. Any senator can be a witness if he or she so wishes. That senator can reach out to the committee and ask to be a witness in public.

There are also sometimes privacy reasons for the committee to ask some senators to appear as witnesses in camera.

I would defer to the good judgment of the committee, the members of which I really do respect. Each group and caucus is represented, as you know, within the committee. Thank you.

Senator Batters: First of all, with respect to that question of privilege, all of those Ethics Committee meetings — and there have been several — have been held in camera. No senators have been invited to appear; I certainly have not. It's solely at the discretion of the committee. The committee can decide to hold a meeting in public. It's at the committee's invitation and not by someone expressing that they want to attend, as I certainly did in that matter.

My second question is this: In your speech, you said the motion would not deal with sponsored travel within Canada. Where does your motion actually say that such an exclusion exists? There isn't anything mentioned in the motion about international travel. The motion states:

. . . with respect to sponsored travel, and to consider whether senators accepting sponsored travel continues to be appropriate in the current environment relating to foreign interference, whether that sponsorship is by foreign states or other third parties, including, but not limited to, corporations, lobbyists or non-governmental organizations

Where does your motion state that the sponsored travel within Canada would not be included?

Senator Saint-Germain: Thank you. On your first point, I do believe that the Ethics Committee deserves the same autonomy to manage its work as any other standing Senate committee. I would defer to the very savvy and professional members of that committee to organize their work and to decide if and when they need to hold public hearings in this case.

The motion — you are right — is about international trips sponsored by foreign entities. Foreign entities could sometimes, perhaps, sponsor trips within Canada, but I had looked at the list of all sponsored trips over the last 10 years, all those that were not deleted on the Senate Ethics Officer's website, and none have been sponsored within Canada by any foreign state. If we find such a situation eventually, it would certainly be covered by the motion. This is theoretical because, in reality, there are no internationally sponsored trips by foreign states in Canada.

• (1850)

Senator Batters: I wanted to point out that I think you would need to actually look at amending that because it says “. . . by foreign states or by other third parties, including” I don't think your wording is precise on that point.

Senator Saint-Germain: I referred many times in my speech to proxies or their partners or associates, so that is what I mean. Directly or indirectly foreign states and then their proxies, who are obviously associated with foreign states.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

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

That the Senate do now adjourn.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(At 6:51 p.m., the Senate was continued until tomorrow at 2 p.m.)

THE SPEAKER

The Honourable Raymonde Gagné

THE GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE IN THE SENATE

The Honourable Marc Gold

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

The Honourable Donald Neil Plett

FACILITATOR OF THE INDEPENDENT SENATORS GROUP

The Honourable Raymonde Saint-Germain

THE LEADER OF THE CANADIAN SENATORS GROUP

The Honourable Scott Tannas

THE LEADER OF THE PROGRESSIVE SENATE GROUP

The Honourable Pierre J. Dalphond

OFFICERS OF THE SENATE

CLERK OF THE SENATE AND CLERK OF THE PARLIAMENTS

Shaila Anwar

LAW CLERK AND PARLIAMENTARY COUNSEL

Philippe Hallée

USHER OF THE BLACK ROD

J. Greg Peters

THE MINISTRY

(In order of precedence)

(September 1, 2024)

The Right Hon. Justin Trudeau	Prime Minister
The Hon. Chrystia Freeland	Minister of Finance
	Deputy Prime Minister
The Hon. Lawrence MacAulay	Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
The Hon. Dominic LeBlanc	Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs
	Minister of Public Services and Procurement
The Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos	Minister of National Revenue
The Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau	Minister of Foreign Affairs
The Hon. Mélanie Joly	Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard
The Hon. Diane Lebouthillier	President of the King's Privy Council for Canada
The Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan	Minister of Emergency Preparedness
	Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada
	Minister of Sport and Physical Activity
The Hon. Carla Qualtrough	Minister of Indigenous Services
The Hon. Patty Hajdu	Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario
	Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry
The Hon. François-Philippe Champagne	Leader of the Government in the House of Commons
The Hon. Karina Gould	Minister of International Development
The Hon. Ahmed Hussen	Minister of Veterans Affairs
The Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor	Associate Minister of National Defence
	Minister of Transport
The Hon. Pablo Rodriguez	Minister of National Defence
The Hon. Bill Blair	Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development
The Hon. Mary Ng	Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario
	Minister of Energy and National Resources
The Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson	President of the Treasury Board
The Hon. Anita Anand	Minister of Environment and Climate Change
The Hon. Steven Guilbeault	Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
The Hon. Marc Miller	Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada
The Hon. Dan Vandal	Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency
	Minister of Northern Affairs
	Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages
The Hon. Randy Boissonnault	Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities
The Hon. Sean Fraser	Minister of Health
The Hon. Mark Holland	Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
The Hon. Gudie Hutchings	Minister of Rural Economic Development
	Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth
The Hon. Marci Ien	Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities
The Hon. Kamal Khara	Minister of Canadian Heritage
The Hon. Pascale St-Onge	Minister of Labour and Seniors
The Hon. Steven MacKinnon	Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations
The Hon. Gary Anandasangaree	Minister of Citizens' Services
The Hon. Terry Beech	Minister of Tourism
The Hon. Soraya Martinez Ferrada	Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Region of Quebec
	Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
The Hon. Ya'ara Saks	Associate Minister of Health
	Minister of Families, Children and Social Development
The Hon. Jenna Sudds	Minister of Small Business
The Hon. Rechie Valdez	Minister of Justice
The Hon. Arif Virani	Attorney General of Canada

SENATORS OF CANADA

ACCORDING TO SENIORITY

(September 1, 2024)

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
Jane Cordy.....	Nova Scotia.....	Dartmouth, N.S.
Pierrette Ringuette.....	New Brunswick.....	Edmundston, N.B.
Percy E. Downe.....	Charlottetown.....	Charlottetown, P.E.I.
Paul J. Massicotte.....	De Lanaudière.....	Mont-Saint-Hilaire, Que.
Stephen Greene.....	Halifax - The Citadel.....	Halifax, N.S.
Michael L. MacDonald.....	Cape Breton.....	Dartmouth, N.S.
Pamela Wallin.....	Saskatchewan.....	Wadena, Sask.
Yonah Martin.....	British Columbia.....	Vancouver, B.C.
Patrick Brazeau.....	Repentigny.....	Maniwaki, Que.
Leo Housakos.....	Wellington.....	Laval, Que.
Donald Neil Plett.....	Landmark.....	Landmark, Man.
Claude Carignan, P.C.....	Mille Isles.....	Saint-Eustache, Que.
Elizabeth Marshall.....	Newfoundland and Labrador.....	Paradise, Nfld. & Lab.
Judith G. Seidman.....	De la Durantaye.....	Saint-Raphaël, Que.
Rose-May Poirier.....	New Brunswick—Saint-Louis-de-Kent.....	Saint-Louis-de-Kent, N.B.
Salma Ataullahjan.....	Ontario (Toronto).....	Toronto, Ont.
Fabian Manning.....	Newfoundland and Labrador.....	St. Bride's, Nfld. & Lab.
Larry W. Smith.....	Saurel.....	Hudson, Que.
Josée Verner, P.C.....	Montarville.....	Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures, Que.
Jean-Guy Dagenais.....	Victoria.....	Blainville, Que.
Diane Bellemare.....	Alma.....	Outremont, Que.
David M. Wells.....	Newfoundland and Labrador.....	St. John's, Nfld. & Lab.
Denise Batters.....	Saskatchewan.....	Regina, Sask.
Scott Tannas.....	Alberta.....	High River, Alta.
Peter Harder, P.C.....	Ottawa.....	Manotick, Ont.
Raymonde Gagné, <i>Speaker</i>	Manitoba.....	Winnipeg, Man.
Frances Lankin, P.C.....	Ontario.....	Restoule, Ont.
Ratna Omidvar.....	Ontario.....	Toronto, Ont.
Chantal Petitclerc.....	Grandville.....	Montreal, Que.
Yuen Pau Woo.....	British Columbia.....	North Vancouver, B.C.
René Cormier.....	New Brunswick.....	Caraquet, N.B.
Nancy J. Hartling.....	New Brunswick.....	Riverview, N.B.
Kim Pate.....	Ontario.....	Ottawa, Ont.
Tony Dean.....	Ontario.....	Toronto, Ont.
Wanda Thomas Bernard.....	Nova Scotia (East Preston).....	East Preston, N.S.
Lucie Moncion.....	Ontario.....	North Bay, Ont.
Marilou McPhedran.....	Manitoba.....	Winnipeg, Man.
Gwen Boniface.....	Ontario.....	Orillia, Ont.
Éric Forest.....	Gulf.....	Rimouski, Que.
Marc Gold.....	Stadacona.....	Westmount, Que.
Marie-Françoise Mégie.....	Rougemont.....	Montreal, Que.
Raymonde Saint-Germain.....	De la Vallière.....	Quebec City, Que.
Rosa Galvez.....	Bedford.....	Lévis, Que.
David Richards.....	New Brunswick.....	Fredericton, N.B.
Mary Coyle.....	Nova Scotia.....	Antigonish, N.S.
Mary Jane McCallum.....	Manitoba.....	Winnipeg, Man.
Robert Black.....	Ontario.....	Centre Wellington, Ont.
Marty Deacon.....	Waterloo Region.....	Waterloo, Ont.

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
Yvonne Boyer	Ontario	Merrickville-Wolford, Ont.
Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia.....	Newfoundland and Labrador.....	Twillingate, Nfld. & Lab.
Pierre J. Dalphond.....	De Lorimier.....	Montreal, Que.
Donna Dasko.....	Ontario.....	Toronto, Ont.
Colin Deacon.....	Nova Scotia.....	Halifax, N.S.
Julie Miville-Dechêne	Inkerman	Mont-Royal, Que.
Bev Busson	British Columbia	North Okanagan Region, B.C.
Marty Klyne	Saskatchewan	White City, Sask.
Patti LaBoucane-Benson.....	Alberta.....	Spruce Grove, Alta.
Paula Simons.....	Alberta.....	Edmonton, Alta.
Peter M. Boehm	Ontario	Ottawa, Ont.
Brian Francis	Prince Edward Island	Rocky Point, P.E.I.
Dawn Anderson.....	Northwest Territories	Yellowknife, N.W.T.
Pat Duncan	Yukon.....	Whitehorse, Yukon
Rosemary Moodie.....	Ontario.....	Toronto, Ont.
Stan Kutcher.....	Nova Scotia.....	Halifax, N.S.
Tony Loffreda	Shawinigan	Montreal, Que.
Brent Cotter.....	Saskatchewan	Saskatoon, Sask.
Hassan Yussuff.....	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.
Bernadette Clement.....	Ontario.....	Cornwall, Ont.
Jim Quinn.....	New Brunswick.....	Saint John, N.B.
Karen Sorensen	Alberta.....	Banff, Alta.
Amina Gerba	Rigaud.....	Blainville, Que.
Clément Gignac.....	Kennebec.....	Lac Saint-Joseph, Que.
Michèle Audette.....	De Salaberry.....	Quebec City, Que.
David M. Arnot.....	Saskatchewan.....	Saskatoon, Sask.
Flordeliz (Gigi) Osler.....	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.
Margo Greenwood.....	British Columbia.....	Vernon, B.C.
Sharon Burey.....	Ontario	Windsor, Ont.
Andrew Cardozo	Ontario	Ottawa, Ont.
Rebecca Patterson	Ontario	Ottawa, Ont.
Iris G. Petten.....	Newfoundland and Labrador.....	St. John's, Nfld. & Lab.
Jane MacAdam.....	Prince Edward Island	West St. Peters, P.E.I.
Judy A. White.....	Newfoundland and Labrador.....	St. George's, Nfld. & Lab.
Paul J. Prosper.....	Nova Scotia.....	Hants County, N.S.
Joan Kingston.....	New Brunswick.....	New Maryland, N.B.
John M. McNair.....	New Brunswick.....	Grand-Bouctouche, N.B.
Réjean Aucoin.....	Nova Scotia.....	Cape Breton, N.S.
Krista Ross.....	New Brunswick.....	Fredericton, N.B.
Rodger Cuzner	Nova Scotia.....	Cape Breton, N.S.
Marnie McBean.....	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.
Toni Varone	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.
Paulette Senior	Ontario	Pickering, Ont.
Mary Robinson.....	Prince Edward Island	Charlottetown, P.E.I.
Mohammad Al Zaibak	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.
Manuelle Oudar.....	La Salle	Quebec City, Que.
Victor Boudreau.....	New Brunswick.....	Shediac, N.B.
Charles S. Adler.....	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.
Tracy Muggli.....	Saskatchewan.....	Saskatoon, Sask.
Fridhandler, Daryl S.....	Alberta.....	Calgary, Alta.
Wells, Kristopher	Alberta.....	St. Albert, Alta.

SENATORS OF CANADA

ALPHABETICAL LIST

(September 1, 2024)

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address	Political Affiliation
The Honourable			
Adler, Charles S.	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.	Non-affiliated
Al Zaibak, Mohammad	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Canadian Senators Group
Anderson, Dawn	Northwest Territories	Yellowknife, N.W.T.	Progressive Senate Group
Arnot, David M.	Saskatchewan	Saskatoon, Sask.	Independent Senators Group
Ataullahjan, Salma	Ontario (Toronto)	Toronto, Ont.	Conservative Party of Canada
Aucoin, Réjean	Nova Scotia	Cape Breton, N.S.	Canadian Senators Group
Audette, Michèle	De Salaberry	Quebec City, Que.	Progressive Senate Group
Batters, Denise	Saskatchewan	Regina, Sask.	Conservative Party of Canada
Bellemare, Diane	Alma	Outremont, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Bernard, Wanda Thomas	Nova Scotia (East Preston)	East Preston, N.S.	Progressive Senate Group
Black, Robert	Ontario	Centre Wellington, Ont.	Canadian Senators Group
Boehm, Peter M.	Ontario	Ottawa, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Boniface, Gwen	Ontario	Orillia, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Boudreau, Victor	New Brunswick	Shediac, N.B.	Non-affiliated
Boyer, Yvonne	Ontario	Merrickville-Wolford, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Brazeau, Patrick	Repentigny	Maniwaki, Que.	Non-affiliated
Burey, Sharon	Ontario	Windsor, Ont.	Canadian Senators Group
Busson, Bev	British Columbia	North Okanagan Region, B.C.	Independent Senators Group
Cardozo, Andrew	Ontario	Ottawa, Ont.	Progressive Senate Group
Carignan, Claude, P.C.	Mille Isles	Saint-Eustache, Que.	Conservative Party of Canada
Clement, Bernadette	Ontario	Cornwall, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Cordy, Jane	Nova Scotia	Dartmouth, N.S.	Progressive Senate Group
Cormier, René	New Brunswick	Caraquet, N.B.	Independent Senators Group
Cotter, Brent	Saskatchewan	Saskatoon, Sask.	Independent Senators Group
Coyle, Mary	Nova Scotia	Antigonish, N.S.	Independent Senators Group
Cuzner, Rodger	Nova Scotia	Cape Breton, N.S.	Progressive Senate Group
Dagenais, Jean-Guy	Victoria	Blainville, Que.	Canadian Senators Group
Dalphond, Pierre J.	De Lorimier	Montreal, Que.	Progressive Senate Group
Dasko, Donna	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Deacon, Colin	Nova Scotia	Halifax, N.S.	Canadian Senators Group
Deacon, Marty	Waterloo Region	Waterloo, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Dean, Tony	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Downe, Percy E.	Charlottetown	Charlottetown, P.E.I.	Canadian Senators Group
Duncan, Pat	Yukon	Whitehorse, Yukon	Independent Senators Group
Forest, Éric	Gulf	Rimouski, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Francis, Brian	Prince Edward Island	Rocky Point, P.E.I.	Progressive Senate Group
Fridhandler, Daryl S.	Alberta	Calgary, Alta.	Non-affiliated
Gagné, Raymonde, <i>Speaker</i>	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.	Non-affiliated
Galvez, Rosa	Bedford	Lévis, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Gerba, Amina	Rigaud	Blainville, Que.	Progressive Senate Group
Gignac, Clément	Kennebec	Lac Saint-Joseph, Que.	Progressive Senate Group
Gold, Marc	Stadacona	Westmount, Que.	Non-affiliated
Greene, Stephen	Halifax - The Citadel	Halifax, N.S.	Canadian Senators Group
Greenwood, Margo	British Columbia	Vernon, B.C.	Independent Senators Group
Harder, Peter, P.C.	Ottawa	Manotick, Ont.	Progressive Senate Group
Hartling, Nancy J.	New Brunswick	Riverview, N.B.	Independent Senators Group
Housakos, Leo	Wellington	Laval, Que.	Conservative Party of Canada
Kingston, Joan	New Brunswick	New Maryland, N.B.	Independent Senators Group
Klyne, Marty	Saskatchewan	White City, Sask.	Progressive Senate Group
Kutcher, Stan	Nova Scotia	Halifax, N.S.	Independent Senators Group
LaBoucane-Benson, Patti	Alberta	Spruce Grove, Alta.	Non-affiliated
Lankin, Frances, P.C.	Ontario	Restoule, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Loffreda, Tony	Shawinegan	Montreal, Que.	Independent Senators Group

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address	Political Affiliation
MacAdam, Jane	Prince Edward Island	West St. Peters, P.E.I.	Independent Senators Group
MacDonald, Michael L.	Cape Breton	Dartmouth, N.S.	Conservative Party of Canada
Manning, Fabian	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. Bride's, Nfld. & Lab.	Conservative Party of Canada
Marshall, Elizabeth	Newfoundland and Labrador	Paradise, Nfld. & Lab.	Conservative Party of Canada
Martin, Yonah	British Columbia	Vancouver, B.C.	Conservative Party of Canada
Massicotte, Paul J.	De Lanaudière	Mont-Saint-Hilaire, Que.	Independent Senators Group
McBean, Marnie	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
McCallum, Mary Jane	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.	Non-affiliated
McNair, John M.	New Brunswick	Grand-Bouctouche, N.B.	Independent Senators Group
McPhedran, Marilou	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.	Non-affiliated
Mégie, Marie-Françoise	Rougemont	Montreal, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Miville-Dechéne, Julie	Inkerman	Mont-Royal, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Moncion, Lucie	Ontario	North Bay, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Moodie, Rosemary	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Muggli, Tracy	Saskatchewan	Saskatoon, Sask.	Non-affiliated
Omidvar, Ratna	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Osler, Flordeliz (Gigi)	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.	Canadian Senators Group
Oudar, Manuelle	La Salle	Quebec City, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Pate, Kim	Ontario	Ottawa, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Patterson, Rebecca	Ontario	Ottawa, Ont.	Canadian Senators Group
Petitclerc, Chantal	Grandville	Montreal, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Petten, Iris G.	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John's, Nfld. & Lab.	Non-affiliated
Plett, Donald Neil	Landmark	Landmark, Man.	Conservative Party of Canada
Poirier, Rose-May	New Brunswick—Saint-Louis-de-Kent	Saint-Louis-de-Kent, N.B.	Conservative Party of Canada
Prosper, Paul J.	Nova Scotia	Hants County, N.S.	Canadian Senators Group
Quinn, Jim	New Brunswick	Saint John, N.B.	Canadian Senators Group
Ravalia, Mohamed-Iqbal	Newfoundland and Labrador	Twillingate, Nfld. & Lab.	Independent Senators Group
Richards, David	New Brunswick	Fredericton, N.B.	Non-affiliated
Ringuette, Pierrette	New Brunswick	Edmundston, N.B.	Independent Senators Group
Robinson, Mary	Prince Edward Island	Charlottetown, P.E.I.	Canadian Senators Group
Ross, Krista	New Brunswick	Fredericton, N.B.	Canadian Senators Group
Saint-Germain, Raymonde	De la Vallière	Quebec City, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Seidman, Judith G.	De la Durantaye	Saint-Raphaël, Que.	Conservative Party of Canada
Senior, Paulette	Ontario	Pickering, Ont.	Non-affiliated
Simons, Paula	Alberta	Edmonton, Alta.	Independent Senators Group
Smith, Larry W.	Saurel	Hudson, Que.	Canadian Senators Group
Sorensen, Karen	Alberta	Banff, Alta.	Independent Senators Group
Tannas, Scott	Alberta	High River, Alta.	Canadian Senators Group
Varone, Toni	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Verner, Josée, P.C.	Montarville	Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures, Que.	Canadian Senators Group
Wallin, Pamela	Saskatchewan	Wadena, Sask.	Canadian Senators Group
Wells, David M.	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John's, Nfld. & Lab.	Conservative Party of Canada
Wells, Kristopher	Alberta	St. Albert, Alta.	Non-affiliated
White, Judy A.	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. George's, Nfld. & Lab.	Progressive Senate Group
Woo, Yuen Pau	British Columbia	North Vancouver, B.C.	Independent Senators Group
Yussuff, Hassan	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Independent Senators Group

SENATORS OF CANADA
BY PROVINCE AND TERRITORY

(September 1, 2024)

ONTARIO—24

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1	Salma Ataullahjan.....Ontario (Toronto).....	Toronto
2	Peter Harder, P.C.Ottawa.....	Manotick
3	Frances Lankin, P.C.....Ontario.....	Restoule
4	Ratna Omidvar.....Ontario.....	Toronto
5	Kim Pate.....Ontario.....	Ottawa
6	Tony Dean.....Ontario.....	Toronto
7	Lucie Moncion.....Ontario.....	North Bay
8	Gwen Boniface.....Ontario.....	Orillia
9	Robert Black.....Ontario.....	Centre Wellington
10	Marty Deacon.....Waterloo Region.....	Waterloo
11	Yvonne Boyer.....Ontario.....	Merrickville-Wolford
12	Donna Dasko.....Ontario.....	Toronto
13	Peter M. Boehm.....Ontario.....	Ottawa
14	Rosemary Moodie.....Ontario.....	Toronto
15	Hassan Yussuff.....Ontario.....	Toronto
16	Bernadette Clement.....Ontario.....	Cornwall
17	Sharon Burey.....Ontario.....	Windsor
18	Andrew Cardozo.....Ontario.....	Ottawa
19	Rebecca Patterson.....Ontario.....	Ottawa
20	Marnie McBean.....Ontario.....	Toronto
21	Toni Varone.....Ontario.....	Toronto
22	Paulette Senior.....Ontario.....	Pickering
23	Mohammad Al Zaibak.....Ontario.....	Toronto
24	

SENATORS BY PROVINCE AND TERRITORY

QUEBEC—24

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Paul J. Massicotte	De Lanaudière	Mont-Saint-Hilaire
2 Patrick Brazeau	Repentigny	Maniwaki
3 Leo Housakos	Wellington	Laval
4 Claude Carignan, P.C.	Mille Isles	Saint-Eustache
5 Judith G. Seidman	De la Durantaye	Saint-Raphaël
6 Larry W. Smith	Saurel	Hudson
7 Josée Verner, P.C.	Montarville	Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures
8 Jean-Guy Dagenais	Victoria	Blainville
9 Diane Bellemare	Alma	Outremont
10 Chantal Petitclerc	Grandville	Montreal
11 Éric Forest	Gulf	Rimouski
12 Marc Gold	Stadacona	Westmount
13 Marie-Françoise Mégie	Rougemont	Montreal
14 Raymonde Saint-Germain	De la Vallière	Quebec City
15 Rosa Galvez	Bedford	Lévis
16 Pierre J. Dalphond	De Lorimier	Montreal
17 Julie Miville-Dechéne	Inkerman	Mont-Royal
18 Tony Loffreda	Shawinigan	Montreal
19 Amina Gerba	Rigaud	Blainville
20 Clément Gignac	Kennebec	Lac Saint-Joseph
21 Michèle Audette	De Salaberry	Quebec City
22 Manuelle Oudar	La Salle	Quebec City
23
24

SENATORS BY PROVINCE—MARITIME DIVISION

NOVA SCOTIA—10

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Jane Cordy	Nova Scotia	Dartmouth
2 Stephen Greene	Halifax - The Citadel	Halifax
3 Michael L. MacDonald	Cape Breton	Dartmouth
4 Wanda Thomas Bernard	Nova Scotia (East Preston)	East Preston
5 Mary Coyle	Nova Scotia	Antigonish
6 Colin Deacon	Nova Scotia	Halifax
7 Stan Kutcher	Nova Scotia	Halifax
8 Paul J. Prosper	Nova Scotia	Hants County
9 Réjean Aucoin	Nova Scotia	Cape Breton
10 Rodger Cuzner	Nova Scotia	Cape Breton

NEW BRUNSWICK—10

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Pierrette Ringuette	New Brunswick	Edmundston
2 Rose-May Poirier	New Brunswick—Saint-Louis-de-Kent	Saint-Louis-de-Kent
3 René Cormier	New Brunswick	Caraquet
4 Nancy J. Hartling	New Brunswick	Riverview
5 David Richards	New Brunswick	Fredericton
6 Jim Quinn	New Brunswick	Saint John
7 Joan Kingston	New Brunswick	New Maryland
8 John M. McNair	New Brunswick	Grand-Bouctouche
9 Krista Ross	New Brunswick	Fredericton
10 Victor Boudreau	New Brunswick	Shediac

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND—4

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Percy E. Downe	Charlottetown	Charlottetown
2 Brian Francis	Prince Edward Island	Rocky Point
3 Jane MacAdam	Prince Edward Island	West St. Peters
4 Mary Robinson	Prince Edward Island	Charlottetown

SENATORS BY PROVINCE—WESTERN DIVISION

MANITOBA—6

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Donald Neil Plett	Landmark	Landmark
2 Raymonde Gagné, <i>Speaker</i>	Manitoba	Winnipeg
3 Marilou McPhedran	Manitoba	Winnipeg
4 Mary Jane McCallum.....	Manitoba	Winnipeg
5 Flordeliz (Gigi) Osler.....	Manitoba	Winnipeg
6 Charles S. Adler.....	Manitoba	Winnipeg

BRITISH COLUMBIA—6

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Yonah Martin.....	British Columbia	Vancouver
2 Yuen Pau Woo.....	British Columbia	North Vancouver
3 Bev Busson	British Columbia	North Okanagan Region
4 Margo Greenwood	British Columbia	Vernon
5
6

SASKATCHEWAN—6

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Pamela Wallin.....	Saskatchewan	Wadena
2 Denise Batters	Saskatchewan	Regina
3 Marty Klyne.....	Saskatchewan	White City
4 Brent Cotter	Saskatchewan	Saskatoon
5 David M. Arnot.....	Saskatchewan	Saskatoon
6 Tracy Muggli	Saskatchewan	Saskatoon

ALBERTA—6

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Scott Tannas.....	Alberta.....	High River
2 Patti LaBoucane-Benson.....	Alberta.....	Spruce Grove
3 Paula Simons	Alberta.....	Edmonton
4 Karen Sorensen	Alberta.....	Banff
5 Daryl S. Fridhandler	Alberta.....	Calgary
6 Kristopher Wells.....	Alberta.....	St. Albert

SENATORS BY PROVINCE AND TERRITORY

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR—6

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Elizabeth Marshall	Newfoundland and Labrador	Paradise
2 Fabian Manning	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. Bride's
3 David M. Wells	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John's
4 Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia.....	Newfoundland and Labrador	Twillingate
5 Iris G. Petten	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John's
6 Judy A. White	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. George's

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES—1

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Dawn Anderson	Northwest Territories	Yellowknife

NUNAVUT—1

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1		

YUKON—1

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Pat Duncan.....	Yukon.....	Whitehorse

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ORDERS OF THE DAY		Motion to Authorize Committee to Study Amendments to the <i>Ethics and Conflict of Interest Code for Senators</i> with Respect to Sponsored Travel—Debate Adjourned	
Business of the Senate		Hon. Raymonde Saint-Germain	6914
Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson	6894	Hon. Percy E. Downe	6917
Point of Order		Hon. Julie Miville-Dechéne	6919
Hon. Marilou McPhedran	6894	Hon. Denise Batters	6919
Hon. Percy E. Downe	6895	Business of the Senate	
Hon. Donald Neil Plett	6895	Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson	6920
Point of Order			
Speaker's Ruling Reserved			
Hon. Donald Neil Plett	6896		
Hon. Denise Batters	6899		
Hon. Lucie Moncion	6899		