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Wednesday, June 2, 2021

The Honourable GEORGE J. FUREY,
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Wednesday, June 2, 2021

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

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

CANADA-SERBIA DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

EIGHTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Hon. Michael L. MacDonald: Honourable senators, today I wish to draw your attention to the eightieth anniversary of diplomatic relations between Ottawa and Belgrade.

It was from exile in London on May 31, 1941, during the Second World War, that King Peter II provided the royal decree that would officially create the diplomatic channels between Canada and Serbia. Although diplomatic channels did not open until the Second World War, our ties began far before then.

Following the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914, Austria-Hungary declared war on and invaded Serbia. It would be the spark that ignited the First World War and the resulting conflict would be devastating for the Serbian people.

While Serbian forces were fighting to repel the Austrian offensives and with much of the civilian population being forced to flee their homes, the region was hit by epidemics of typhus and relapsing fever. Serbia would ultimately suffer among the highest casualty rates of the war. Although Canada was entrenching its soldiers on the Western Front, we also responded to Serbia's call for help by establishing a Canadian field hospital to assist in the massing casualties in Serbia. Canada's military-medical mission during the First World War is remembered and appreciated in Serbia to this day.

During the interwar years, the formation of Yugoslavia came during a time when fascism was rising in Europe. By March 1941, when Yugoslavian Prince Regent Paul Karadjordjevic reluctantly acquiesced and signed onto a treaty, it took only two days for a pro-British coup to successfully remove the Prince Regent from power and declare King Peter II of age. Assuming full duties, the young king found himself surrounded by hostile Axis powers. Serbia would be invaded within 10 days, and Peter and his ministers forced to exile in London. It was there, governing in exile, that King Peter II issued a royal decree to formally create diplomatic relations with Canada.

Although our connection with Serbia was forged during the most challenging of times, our relations with Belgrade have not always been without difficulty. Our role in the United Nations Peacekeeping missions during the Yugoslav wars presented a challenging time in our relations and a dark chapter in the region's history.

However, I am pleased to see that relations between Ottawa and Belgrade have improved significantly since then. Democratic and economic reforms have revitalized our partnership and common interests, and promoted a growing level of investment and trade, especially during the last decade, and no fewer than 150,000 Serbians now call Canada home.

After eight decades of diplomacy, may Canada and Serbia continue to foster our growing partnership and build upon our renewed common interests for peace, security and freedom for all. Thank you, honourable senators.

AGNES CAMPBELL MACPHAIL

FIRST WOMAN ELECTED TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS— ONE HUNDRETH ANNIVERSARY

Hon. Donna Dasko: Honourable senators, this year marks the one hundredth anniversary of the first woman elected to our House of Commons. Her name was Agnes Campbell Macphail, and she was elected as a member from Grey Southeast in my province of Ontario in the 1921 federal election.

Building on her training as a teacher and her work as an organizer for the United Farmers of Ontario, Ms. Macphail fought for family allowances, equal access to divorce and equal pay. She made significant contributions to the creation of Old Age Security and to prison reform, and she was Canada's first woman delegate to the League of Nations in 1929. In her remarkable career, she would be re-elected four times to Parliament and later was also one of the first two women elected to the Ontario legislature.

Ms. Macphail sat with the Progressives. It is interesting that 58 Progressives were elected in the 1921 election, but they refused to take on the role of official opposition, as they did not want to organize decision making along party lines; a kind of precursor to today's Senate.

Honourable senators, over the past century our country has come to embrace the goal of gender equality, which we now strive to achieve in all our institutions. Yet, today we see that women make up just 30% of our Parliament, which gives Canada the dismal ranking of fifty-second country in the world. We need to do better.

Unlike in 1921, today there is no shortage of qualified women wanting to run, and Canadians are very willing to vote for women. However, a key problem today is that political parties disproportionately nominate women in other parties' strongholds, not those of their own party. Many women are running for their party in ridings where their party cannot win.

As we contemplate another election later this year, Canada's political parties need to tell us what their goals and their processes are with respect to recruiting and nominating women and other under-represented groups. In fact, the reporting requirements under the Canada Elections Act should be changed

to allow the gender of candidates and riding results — including in stronghold ridings — to be tracked and compared. Canada's taxpayer-funded financing schemes should reward parties that increase women's representation or sanction those that do not.

The 100-year trial period that parties have had since Ms. Macphail was elected has now come to an end. If the parties themselves will not step up, we in the Senate must take the lead role to make Parliament more accountable and representative.

On that note, I wish a happy anniversary to all the women in Canada who have been elected to Parliament, and I wish you all well in the upcoming election. Thank you.

TIANANMEN SQUARE MASSACRE

Hon. Jim Munson: Honourable senators, this will be my last statement on the massacre in Tiananmen Square 32 years ago.

These are dates on your calendar that you never forget. I go through so much emotion this time every year. It has been this way for 32 years. Sometimes I cry and sometimes I'm angry, but when I think of a young man flattened by a tank near Tiananmen Square, I think of his family today. Did he have a brother or sister? Are his parents still alive? Does anyone care?

Well, I care, and I care about the thousands of families who were never allowed to mourn the deaths of their loved ones. I remember the students' smiling faces in the square on a warm spring day in May 1989. I remember the citizens of Beijing embracing the pro-democracy student movement. I remember a city that felt liberated after tens of thousands entered the square — 100,000 strong. While they were there to ostensibly mourn the death of a former Communist Party leader, what they didn't know was that a power struggle was taking place inside the walls of the Great Hall of the People. Communist party secretary Zhao Ziyang, who was sympathetic to the student cause, would lose that political struggle to the hardline premier, Li Peng. The rest is history, but it's a shameful history where the military killed its own people — young people in the prime of their lives.

• (1410)

June 3 and 4 are dates that I will never forget. How can you forget what you witnessed? This was a massacre in and around Tiananmen Square. I am haunted by those agonizing pictures of pain and death, not only of the thousands who died, but the death of the ideal that perhaps there was a better way to govern.

Today we see a China where suppression of anything resembling rights is crushed. Today the government doesn't need tanks to do it. It just does it: in the so-called autonomous territory of Xinjiang, where the government practises genocide against the Uighur minority; in Tibet, where voices are silenced; in Hong Kong, where the lights have dimmed on democracy. Now the menacing voice of a totalitarian government is getting louder in dealing with Taiwan.

We live in dangerous times, but in dangerous times we must all speak out for human rights.

In my reading of human rights, these are rights that belong to everyone in the world from birth until death, and we must speak out for those who don't have a voice. These are basic rights and shared values like dignity, fairness, equality, respect and independence — values defined and protected by law.

I recognize that Canada must engage and have economic relations with China. With recognition, we as a country have the right to speak out on human rights.

Honourable senators, on a dusty avenue of a Beijing street 32 years ago, a voice from the dark said, "Tell the world what's going on here." I've kept my promise. I've said it again and again and again, but I am one voice. Thank you.

PORTAGE ONTARIO

Hon. Robert Black: Honourable senators, I rise today to highlight the work of Portage Ontario. Portage Ontario is a non-profit organization that was established in 1985 and operates a residential drug addiction rehabilitation centre for youth in Elora, Ontario, just a short drive away from my home here north of Fergus.

The Portage Elora treatment centre serves Ontario youth referred by parents, schools, family physicians, hospitals and other addiction-treatment and youth-serving agencies.

Since its inception, Portage has helped tens of thousands of people take back control of their lives with their specialized drug rehabilitation programs for adolescents, adults, pregnant women and mothers with children, the Indigenous community, adults with mental health issues and individuals referred by the justice system.

I had the distinct pleasure of visiting Portage's facilities in Elora earlier this year for a socially distanced tour. I have also had the opportunity to previously support Portage through their annual Pedal for Portage campaign, wherein I, along with many others, rode my bike along a designated route to raise funds in support of this outstanding facility.

During my visit this past March, I was pleased to learn that in Portage's therapeutic community environment, residents work through the underlying issues that caused their substance abuse and develop a set of social competencies that will help them deal with the challenges of everyday life without resorting to drug abuse. They develop the self-esteem and confidence needed to go on to lead healthy, productive, drug-free lives.

At this time, I would like to thank the team at Portage's facilities for continuing to serve and support vulnerable members of our community, especially during these challenging times. I know it is appreciated by countless Ontarians.

Honourable colleagues, I believe this pandemic has highlighted some already existing problems facing our communities, including the mental health and substance abuse crises. Substance use has risks at all ages, but young people are at particular risk of harm to their physical and mental health and well-being; accidents, because of increased risk-taking and impaired judgment; strain on important relationships with family and friends; and long-term substance-use issues.

Organizations like Portage are dedicated to helping individuals heal emotionally and physically, and to support the development of behaviours, attitudes and values of healthy living, which Canada is known for. I am hopeful that we, as senators of this great nation, will continue to support such organizations that provide dedicated services to fellow Canadians who may be struggling.

Thank you, *meegwetch*.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Hon. Paula Simons: Today, I want to tell you the story of two remarkable Edmontonians: Bernie and Carol Kowalchuk. In December of 2001, they happened to read a column I had written in the *Edmonton Journal* about child poverty and about Sifton Elementary School in northeast Edmonton. Edmonton had a lunch program for the neediest elementary schools in the city, but Sifton was slightly too affluent to qualify. It had a mix of students: some comfortably middle class and others from struggling families. When the numbers were averaged out, Sifton didn't make the cut for support.

I suspect plenty of people read my column that day, felt bad and turned the page — not Bernie and Carol. Bernie was a successful insurance man from suburban Sherwood Park. And he was a can-do guy, a grown-up farm boy who liked to fix things. So he called up a bunch of his friends, leaned a bit on a local grocery store and, presto, in just a few weeks Bernie and Carol — his wise and serene partner — put together their own privately funded, do-it-yourself lunch program for the Sifton kids who needed it most.

That was the beginning of Food for Thought. Today, almost 20 years later, the program operates in 15 Edmonton schools and provides breakfast, lunch and snacks to approximately 550 children every day. The program is unique because it quietly targets pockets of poverty that exist in middle-income neighbourhoods, helping kids who truly require support even if their school itself isn't designated as high needs. And when schools were closed for COVID the program quickly adapted, delivering hampers to families who needed them.

Last month, Food for Thought hit a remarkable milestone: It served its one-millionth meal.

Bernie Kowalchuk, whose boyish, boundless enthusiasm created the program, died of cancer in 2010. But Carol and their daughters Kristine and Kelly are still the guiding spirits of Food for Thought, which they run in partnership with the Edmonton Public Schools Foundation. What a gift Food for Thought has

been for thousands of Edmonton kids. What an inspiration to see what one family can do when they put their minds and their hearts to it.

So many of us see the social problems around us, and become paralyzed by their complexity. We freeze — wanting to help, but not knowing how.

Bernie wasn't a big-picture guy. He didn't try to "fix" child poverty. He and Carol just set out to see that a few hungry kids got a sandwich and a bowl of soup. They literally broke the problem into bite-sized pieces, and it worked. That should be food for thought for us all.

Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

DIABETES

SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH

Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie: Honourable senators, I was shocked to learn of the discovery of children's remains. All of the tributes that have been rendered reflect the palpable sadness that is being felt across the country.

I hope that, now more than ever, every effort will be made to right the wrongs of the past. I extend my sincere condolences to all of the families affected.

Colleagues, this year, we are celebrating the one hundredth anniversary of the discovery of insulin in Canada. Insulin has changed the lives of millions of people around the world.

In 1921, Dr. Frederick Banting and his young colleague Charles Best began conducting tests in a lab in Toronto under the supervision of the esteemed John Macleod. Their goal was to discover the chemical that is missing from the pancreas of people who suffer from diabetes. At the time, diabetes was a virulent disease and most children who had it died within a few months.

This discovery earned Canadian researchers Sir Frederick Banting and John Macleod a Nobel prize in 1923. This is a real-life example of the quick application of a basic research discovery that benefited patients.

Basic research in Canada is what helped to free us from COVID thanks to the messenger RNA-based vaccines that have been developed. It took a lot of research before RNA was discovered by Montrealer Sidney Altman and before nanotechnology was discovered in Vancouver labs, discoveries that were key to the development of coronavirus vaccines.

As you've heard, COVID-19 was more virulent among people with comorbidities, such as diabetes. In Canada, diabetes directly affects 11 million people and costs our health care system close to \$30 billion.

• (1420)

I applaud our government's budget 2021, which supports the creation of a national framework for diabetes. If Canada is to maintain its status as a global leader in health, it must support research.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION BILL, 2021, NO. 1

SIXTH REPORT OF LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE ON SUBJECT MATTER TABLED

Hon. Mobina S. B. Jaffer: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, which deals with the subject matter of those elements contained in Divisions 26, 27 and 37 of Part 4 of Bill C-30, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 19, 2021 and other measures.

(Pursuant to the order adopted on May 4, 2021, the report was deemed referred to the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance and placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting.)

[English]

ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR SENATORS

THIRD REPORT OF COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Judith G. Seidman, Chair of the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators, presented the following report:

Wednesday, June 2, 2021

The Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators has the honour to present its

THIRD REPORT

Your committee, which is responsible on its own initiative for all matters relating to the *Ethics and Conflict of Interest Code for Senators*, pursuant to rule 12-7(16) of the *Rules of the Senate*, herewith presents an interim report on amendments to the Code.

Respectfully submitted,

JUDITH G. SEIDMAN
Chair

(For text of report, see today's Journals of the Senate, p. 594.)

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

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

[Translation]

ADJOURNMENT

NOTICE OF MOTION

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

That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, June 8, 2021, at 2 p.m.

[English]

QUESTION PERIOD

FINANCE

PANDEMIC SUPPORT FOR AIR CANADA

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Senator Gold, in April when Minister Freeland announced a deal to provide Air Canada with almost \$6 billion in repayable loans, the minister said dividends and share buybacks would be restricted and executive compensation would be capped. On Monday we learned that while Air Canada was negotiating with the Trudeau government to receive billions in taxpayers' dollars, they were, in fact, paying their top executives \$10 million in COVID-19 pandemic mitigation bonuses.

Leader, how could Minister Freeland ever negotiate an agreement like this? How could the Trudeau government say it capped compensation at \$1 million but allowed Air Canada executives to collect bonuses of \$2 million to \$3 million each, leader, for having laid off most of their employees? How does this make any sense?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. The negotiations and the agreement that was ultimately entered into between the government and Air Canada contained clear rules regarding limits on executive compensation. The agreement that was negotiated also included limitations on stock options. Those limitations are effective until 12 months after the loans have been repaid. In that agreement, as this chamber would recall, there was also a commitment by Air Canada to maintain April 1 employment levels.

The intent of this agreement and these negotiations was to provide Air Canada with the necessary liquidity to keep Canadians and Canadian marketplaces connected. The news that, before this agreement was actually signed and its terms were therefore legally in effect, Air Canada paid the bonuses is deeply disappointing to the Canadian government. It is the view of the Canadian government that Air Canada's actions abused the spirit of the government's support.

Senator Plett: Somewhere in that answer you talked about that it had been very clear what they were doing. Obviously it wasn't as clear to some people as to others.

Air Canada laid off well over 20,000 of its workers while giving its executives millions in bonuses, and you say the Trudeau government is troubled. The fact is that the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister didn't seem all that troubled at their news conference.

I think taxpayers will take a different view, leader, about whether this is fine. The package brought forward in April helped just one airline while thousands of other workers in the aviation sector remain out of their jobs. Why wasn't the Trudeau government capable of negotiating a comprehensive plan to help the workers — all the workers — in this industry?

Senator Gold: Senator, thank you for your question.

To the first part of your question, the government is deeply disappointed in the actions of Air Canada; it is not pleased, far from it.

To the second part of your question, each company or sector within an industry has different challenges. The Canadian government worked with a number of airlines to help them with their particular challenges. I'll mention just one airline from my home province and that is Air Transat. On April 29, 2021, Air Transat reached a bailout deal with the government which had, amongst other features, the requirement that Air Transat refund its eligible customers who found themselves with tickets but no place to go.

It remains the position of this government that the efforts it made in a time of crisis were made not only with the best of intentions to help Canadians and those industries struck by the pandemic but, in fact, despite the news of Air Canada's decision to compensate their CEOs, which is against the spirit of the agreement, that they ultimately did sign with the government. Nonetheless the support of this government was to the benefit of Canadians and their need to stay connected through air.

• (1430)

CANADA EMERGENCY BUSINESS ACCOUNT

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I just can't get past this first question from our leader in terms of what has happened and the fact that the government may be disappointed — but what are they doing? We see inaction.

[Senator Gold]

For instance, yesterday, leader, I did briefly get to talk about what happened with these new businesses that started in 2020. They have not been eligible for the Canada Emergency Business Account. They have been promised action; they have been waiting over a year. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business says that many of the small businesses which were created in 2020 have been unable to access any federal COVID-19 emergency support programs. Yet billion-dollar hedge funds received the wage subsidy — which is in line with what the leader was asking — as did companies that declared bankruptcy before the pandemic even began.

So these businesses are still waiting. Minister Freeland said in January that she took this issue very seriously and was looking at it closely. Then she brought forward a budget which did nothing to help these new, small businesses.

Leader, I guess I am asking: Are you going to help the new businesses? If you're not, then let's just say no. If you are going to, would you please find out, when will these businesses be able to have access? What will you do and when? We just want to understand what the action plan is. Could we have that answer before we rise for the summer recess?

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. There is no denying the fact that the measures that this government introduced over the last year-plus, in response, as the government has acknowledged on many occasions, were done with extraordinary dispatch in order to provide assistance as quickly and as effectively as it could. To a very large degree, I think the government has succeeded, with the help and support of all the parties in the other place and indeed in this place. Canada has weathered and is weathering the storm far better than it would, had the government taken a more cautious and conventional approach.

There are gaps. Not everyone, not every sector, will necessarily benefit to the extent they would like. That is also something that cannot be denied. The government continues to provide support to Canadians. The budget is replete with such examples. As soon as I know more and if the government has further programs to announce, in addition to the general support, this chamber will be the first to know.

Senator Martin: I heard the word "if" the government has programs for these small businesses. I do recall asking the former minister Morneau, when he was in our chamber, about a tweet he made the day before he was supposed to begin a new program.

These small businesses — senator, I'm sure you appreciate as many in the chamber appreciate — work 16- to 20-hour days. In family-owned businesses, one day makes a difference, one cent makes a difference, in whether or not they close their doors. They have been waiting over a year.

You said "if," so that concerns me. Will there be programs to help these new businesses that started in 2020 and have had zero access to any support? It's not even benefits. They haven't had any support.

Senator Gold: My response to your earlier question — let me be clear — is that I do not know what new programs, if any, are being contemplated. Honourable senators, the programs that have been announced, the programs that have been extended, the support that is in the budget, are there for all of us to see. I understand your question to be what new or additional programs or tweaks to programs are being contemplated. My answer to you remains: If there are going to be new programs or tweaks above and beyond what is there, I will report this to the chamber at the earliest moment that I have that information.

I'm very aware of the importance of small businesses. I was a member of a family business. In the context of that, I ran some very small businesses. I'm not insensitive, nor is this government, to this challenge. The fact remains, the government has provided enormous support, hundreds of billions of dollars in support, for the Canadian economy and will continue to do so, so as to transition Canadians out of this pandemic.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON OPEN BANKING

Hon. Colin Deacon: Honourable senators, my question is for the Government Representative in the Senate. More than three years ago, the government announced its review of the merits of open banking. Two years ago, our Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce published a report stating that open banking is urgently needed for the benefit of consumers, especially those who are marginalized, and to help keep our financial sector strong and globally competitive.

I was pleased that our new finance minister seemed to prioritize open banking when, early in her tenure last fall, she restarted consultations between financial institutions and financial innovators under the leadership of her Advisory Committee on Open Banking. I understand that she has received a report. Yet we have continued to stand on the same starting line for more than three years now.

This is worrisome because other nations have rapidly moved ahead with modernizing their financial systems to the benefit of consumers, implementing new legislation, updating regulations and iterating where needed. Yet we remain on the starting line.

My question is: When can we expect the finance minister to release the advisory committee's report and hopefully announce decisive action versus intention?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for the question. The government thanks the Senate committee for the report and for the recommendations that were contained therein.

As the financial sector is becoming increasingly digitalized and in order to ensure the privacy and security of Canadians, the government is reviewing consumer-driven finance or open banking in Canada. The Advisory Committee on Open Banking, as you know, was appointed in 2018 to conduct this review and to provide advice on potential solutions and standards to enhance data protection in the financial sector.

Your advance notice of this question allowed me to inquire with the government. I have been advised as follows. Following the first phase of the government's review of open banking, which was guided by the advisory committee, the Department of Finance did issue a report in early 2020 entitled *Consumer-directed finance — the future of financial services*. It's available online.

The second phase of the government's review of open banking also began in that year, 2020, and included a public consultation period in December of that year. Details of the second phase are not yet available, but I have been advised that the government will have more to say about this in due course. If the honourable senator would like, perhaps I could try to facilitate a conversation between him and any interested senators with the minister's office.

Senator C. Deacon: Thank you to the government representative. Given the fact that Bill C-11, which is foundational in terms of providing opportunity for new entrants to get into the digital economy and the speed at which technologies are evolving globally, increasing risk to financial consumers and lost opportunities, and the extent to which our banks in fact have been increasing fees recently while seeing dramatically increased profits and executive bonuses, I'm getting a sense of inaction or promised future action. Does the government appreciate, to your understanding, the extent to which Canadians are losing out due to the lack of a made-in-Canada competitive environment within our financial system?

Senator Gold: I thank the honourable senator for the question. To the best of my understanding, senator, the government understands very well the importance of it. That's why it has taken the initiatives that it has. The circumstances that we are in, which need not be underlined, are such that progress is clearly not as quick as many would like, but the government remains committed to moving forward.

CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION

NATIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY

Hon. Pat Duncan: Honourable senators, my question is for the Government Representative in the Senate. In the last three years, we have seen a remarkable increase in insurance premiums resulting in some types, such as condominium insurance, to double each year in the Yukon. Although the national average is lower than what we see in the Yukon, there has still been an increase nationally of about 30% annually for condo insurance.

This trend leads to several negative consequences. Seniors on fixed incomes find it difficult to deal with rapidly increasing living costs. It increases rent if these additional costs are passed on to tenants, putting increased financial pressure on low-income Canadians trying to find affordable housing. Real estate investments are affected by higher associated costs and lower return where those costs can't be passed onto tenants, potentially reducing the attractiveness of rental properties as investments or even reducing the availability of rental units.

• (1440)

We know that insurance falls under provincial and territorial jurisdiction; however, considering the government ran and won on a platform entitled Forward: A Real Plan for the Middle Class and has recommitted to the National Housing Strategy, yesterday the stress test changes were implemented.

Government Representative in the Senate, what is the federal government doing in collaboration with the provinces and territories to address the alarming trend of increased condominium insurance costs that are affecting so many Canadians? Thank you.

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

The government is very aware that the dream of purchasing a home is becoming increasingly elusive and unattainable for far too many Canadians. However, it remains fully committed to doing its part with the provinces and territories in tackling the critical issue of housing affordability.

Currently, this involves ensuring that Canada's residential housing stock, which is one aspect of this, is not used unproductively by non-resident, non-Canadian investors. Therefore, in Budget 2021 the government proposes an annual 1% tax on the value of non-resident, non-Canadian-owned residential real estate that is considered vacant or underused.

Honourable senators, it's also the case that Budget 2021 is the fifth consecutive budget to put forward more money for affordable housing.

Thank you for your advance notice of this question. I did make inquiries, but I have seen no indication of a specific focus on insurance costs.

Senator Duncan: Government representative, I appreciate the government's initiatives with respect to the National Housing Strategy and that condominium insurance is one specific component of that housing strategy. I understand the Prime Minister is in regular contact with the premiers of provinces and territories and that this may be lower down on the agenda. Could I have reassurance that the Government Representative in the Senate will look into this specific issue of condominium insurance being raised with premiers?

Senator Gold: Thank you. You have my assurance. I'll be happy to convey that from my office to the Prime Minister's Office.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

CANADA-CHINA RELATIONS

Hon. David Richards: Honourable senators, my question is for Senator Gold.

Senator, I know that other terrible events have taken precedence recently, but I must ask about the two Michaels and if we know anything about their mental health, access to diplomatic

channels or if they have been vaccinated. Being held as pawns in a Chinese gulag was not of their making, so what steps has Canada been taking recently for their release?

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

I don't have information as to whether they have been vaccinated.

The Canadian government remains committed to working with its allies, the United States in particular but also others, to secure the release of the two Michaels. It is intolerable to them and their families, and it's unacceptable to all Canadians. The Canadian government is dealing with a situation in China that is very difficult. We are working closely with our allies so that our voices are magnified and amplified.

This chamber should rest assured that the fate of the two Michaels, as well as other Canadians who are held illegally and arbitrarily in China, is top of mind for the government.

Senator Richards: What kind of support are the families getting here in Canada? Could you mention that?

Senator Gold: Thank you for the question. It's an important one. I will have to make inquiries, senator, and report back.

CANADIAN HERITAGE

SUPPORT FOR INDIGENOUS CULTURAL CENTRES

Hon. Patricia Bovey: Honourable senators, this question is for the Government Representative in the Senate.

Knowing, understanding and celebrating culture is essential to humanity and, with the horrific discovery of this past week, it's even more essential than ever. As I said yesterday, over a number of years I have worked with First Nations, developing feasibility studies and goals and strategic and financial plans to develop cultural centres to enable that understanding of Indigenous history, art and traditions. Lack of federal — and, I must say, provincial — funding as well as bureaucratic red tape curtailed the realization of those needs and dreams. I believe the need is even greater now than it was during those six years of the first decade of this century when I was intimately involved.

In addition to supporting the search for more Indigenous children's remains across the country and supporting the families and communities dealing with this unimaginable tragedy, what will the government do to support the Indigenous cultural centres, which can be ongoing places of healing, learning, culture, tradition and contemporary knowledge? Surely such support would be important steps toward reconciliation.

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

The government knows that Indigenous-led cultural centres play an important role in moving forward on Canada's path to reconciliation and healing with Indigenous peoples.

Thanks to your advance notice of the question, I was able to make some inquiries and inform myself on the matter. I was directed to and will direct your attention to the following: Budget 2021 proposes to provide \$13.4 million over five years, with \$2.4 million ongoing, to Canadian Heritage for events to commemorate the history and legacy of residential schools to honour survivors, their families and their communities, as well as to support celebrations and commemoration events during the proposed national day for truth and reconciliation. There is also Budget 2019's investment of \$60 million over five years, beginning in 2019-20, to support capital infrastructure investments in friendship centres that might play a role designing cultural centres and offering culturally appropriate programs and services.

Finally, colleagues, I want to underline the importance of listening to the wishes of Indigenous peoples and supporting Indigenous-led initiatives. The government has heard loud and clear, and agrees that a top-down, government-led approach is not the best path to take.

Senator Bovey: I thank you for that, Senator Gold.

I just want assurance that Indigenous organizations will not have to go through the same steps that non-Indigenous organizations have to, such as being in operation and presenting successful programming for three years before they qualify for Canada Council funding.

Can you assure me, in working with Indigenous leaders, that the government will develop more appropriate pathways to financial support for Indigenous cultural organizations?

Senator Gold: Senator, thank you for that. I can assure you that the government will work and is working with Indigenous communities and their organizations to develop appropriate pathways to provide support for those initiatives.

I cannot give you assurances about Canada Council per se. I'm simply not apprised of the details of that, but the government approach to these matters is to work with Indigenous communities, their representatives and organizations so that we avoid and reverse the history of top-down, government-led initiatives in this area.

CANADIAN RADIO-TELEVISION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

ACCESS TO HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND NETWORKS

Hon. Salma Atallahjan: Honourable senators, my question is for the government leader in the Senate.

Last Thursday, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission announced it would not significantly lower the rates that small companies must pay to access the high-speed broadband networks of the big three. This

follows a prior decision in 2019 to lower these rates and a statement in 2016 declaring the internet a basic service that should be accessible to every Canadian.

The pandemic has highlighted just how essential a high-speed internet connection is for online learning, working remotely and keeping in touch with loved ones. However, the lack of broadband service is a widespread issue in rural and remote parts of Canada as well as low-income households and highly racialized neighbourhoods.

• (1450)

Leader, during the 2019 election, the Liberal Party campaigned on internet service affordability. How will your government uphold this promise in light of the new CRTC decision?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for that question and for raising this important issue. As we all know, the pandemic that we are in has really highlighted the critical importance of having strong, reliable networks in place, and all of us who have children or grandchildren required to study remotely know this very well.

The government continues and is committed to promoting competition to lower prices, because this is an equally important part of the equation to improve the quality and increase the coverage of telecom services in Canada.

The government was and remains committed to ensuring that all Canadians pay fair prices for reliable telecom services. The government will continue to work with service providers and industry partners to drive investment and to make telecommunication services more available and more affordable to Canadians.

Senator Atallahjan: Senator Gold, the Liberal Party specifically committed to lower monthly cellphone bills by reducing the cost of these services by 25% over the next two years. Need I remind you that Canadians pay some of the highest cellphone bills in the world? I'm consistently asked about when these prices are going to be lowered for cellphones. That means that by October of this year, about four months from now, the Liberals should be keeping their promise of reducing the cost of these services by 25%. Can they still honour this commitment or will it end up like so many other broken promises from the Trudeau government?

Senator Gold: The government remains committed to working with the service providers and industry partners to ensure both widespread and expanded coverage for the benefit of Canadians, especially those in more remote areas, and affordable prices for Canadians.

HEALTH

COVID-19 VACCINE ROLLOUT

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Government leader, you will be thrilled that I'm going to go back again to asking about vaccines. Over the next few days, Canada will receive two deliveries from Moderna totalling

500,000 doses. Moderna has also said it will ship one and a half million doses to Canada during the week of June 14. Beyond that Moderna has not confirmed either the delivery schedule or any amounts Canada can expect to receive.

In April, Moderna informed the Trudeau government that it would likely ship up to 2 million doses less than what they had been expected to send in the second quarter. To meet even this reduced delivery, Moderna would have to ship Canada another 4.5 million doses by the end of this month. Does your government believe that is likely, leader? What penalties exist under our contract with Moderna if they don't meet their second-quarter delivery commitment? May I have a short answer, please? I have another question.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): I don't have information to share with regard to penalties, as we have discussed in this chamber before.

It is true that Moderna continues to have challenges with their supply chain and delivery. It is important to note, however, that we are also expecting 2.4 million doses from Pfizer this week. Moderna has indicated we will ramp up its deliveries in the second half of June. Canada remains firmly on track for all eligible Canadians to have their first dose by the end of June, and we will have enough doses to fully vaccinate every Canadian who wants one by the end of September.

Senator Plett: As of Monday, the Mayor of Windsor, Ontario, Drew Dilkens has a wait-list of over 4,000 Canadians willing to get their second dose of Pfizer from surplus vaccines in Michigan, but they have received no help from the Trudeau government to access them. In fact, when Minister Hajdu was asked about this in the other place last week she said, "There are enough vaccines in Canada for Canadians."

Unbelievable. Less than 6% of Canadians are fully vaccinated and the Minister of Health thinks we have enough vaccines already. We don't have long-term confirmed deliveries for Moderna, Johnson & Johnson or AstraZeneca, but the Minister of Health thinks we have enough. Yes or no, do you agree with the minister?

Senator Gold: I have confidence in the minister, and she is serving Canada well.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BILLS OF EXCHANGE ACT INTERPRETATION ACT CANADA LABOUR CODE

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING

Hon. Brian Francis moved second reading of Bill C-5, An Act to amend the Bills of Exchange Act, the Interpretation Act and the Canada Labour Code (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation).

He said: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak at second reading of Bill C-5, An Act to amend the Bills of Exchange Act, the Interpretation Act and the Canada Labour Code (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation).

I would like to begin by acknowledging I am delivering my remarks from Epekwitk, now known as Prince Edward Island, the ancestral and unceded territory of my people, the Mi'kmaq or, as we call ourselves, *L'nú'k*.

I join in the collective grief and sorrow over the discovery of 215 Indigenous children, some as young as three years old, who were buried in unmarked graves at the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School, which was one of the largest in Canada and operated from the late 19th century to the late 1970s.

I cannot help but be overcome by horror and anger thinking about their last days and hours on earth experiencing isolation, loneliness and fear. Their dead bodies were then discarded like trash, their lives viewed as disposable and treated as such.

But these were children who were loved and are still loved and missed. None of them deserved to be deprived of their dignity and humanity.

It may be difficult to accept that Canada, a country that has long prided itself as being a bastion of democracy, peace and kindness throughout the world, was involved in the planned and deliberate genocide of Indigenous peoples. Yet what other evidence do we need that this is exactly what happened here on behalf of Canada and of Canadians? We should call it what it is and not be complicit in its perpetuation. It is genocide; there is no other word for it.

Many of us are fathers and grandfathers, and we cannot even begin to fathom the depth of loss and suffering felt by the families and communities in British Columbia and across this country who are still waiting for answers and closure. All the wounds that never healed have been reopened and will remain so until each missing child is identified and returned home. I urge each of you to help answer the calls of Indigenous leaders and communities to assist in these efforts.

It's deeply upsetting that it takes a tragedy of this magnitude to remind everyone that Indigenous people are worthy and deserving of care and protection, and that we have a right, just like everyone else, to lead happy, healthy and fulfilling lives free from the consequences of discrimination, racism and violence. I mean, it should not have to be said but apparently, it does.

The time has come to move beyond words to actions. We, Indigenous People, have spent too long fighting for our dignity, well-being and survival. It is time for Canada to uphold its promises and act honourably.

This country will not begin to heal and reconcile until the truth is known and corrective action is taken. Only then will we build a renewed relationship between Canada and Indigenous people, one based on the recognition of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership. That is the future we should all work towards. The

establishment of the “National Day for Truth and Reconciliation” on September 30 of each year will be one small but significant step in that direction.

• (1500)

Honourable senators, I will focus my remarks today on the meaning and significance of the national day for truth and reconciliation, which I support unequivocally. It has been said before, but it bears repeating: The residential school system is not a dark chapter in our past; it is a lived reality for many. The residential school system operated in Canada for more than 160 years. The last one closed in 1996 — that was only 25 years ago. The primary purpose for these institutions was not education — it was to remove children from their families and communities in order to better assimilate them into the dominant culture. It was, as it was infamously said, to “kill the Indian in the child to save the man.” These actions were based on racist assumptions about the intellectual and cultural inferiority of Indigenous people and our ways of knowing and being.

All of us here have a unique responsibility to help undo these past wrongs and to challenge the settler narrative that continues to ignore Indigenous histories and realities. We have to have these tough and uncomfortable conversations so that we can use our roles as legislators to build a more inclusive and equitable future for all.

It is estimated that more than 150,000 children were taken from their homes and sent to these harsh and dangerous institutions. Our children were deprived of the love and care of their families and communities over many years, and sometimes permanently. Our children were made to feel worthless and ashamed of who they were, which resulted in the loss of language, culture and identity, as well as the destruction of familial and community bonds. Too often, our children were subjected to rampant neglect and abuse. What happened here, and in all other residential schools, would not be tolerated today, and it should not have been tolerated back then.

We know, for example, that at the infamous St. Anne’s residential school in Fort Albany, Ontario, there was a makeshift electric chair used to torture children as young as 6 years old. Let that sink in. Canada did that. What is worse, the survivors of St. Anne’s residential school have been fighting the federal government for years over documents detailing the horrors committed there. That is seriously shameful and ought to remind us all that truth, healing and justice continue to be a hard-fought battle for survivors and for Indigenous people in general.

All of us need to have open minds and difficult conversations. The residential schools contributed to the Canada we live in now. There is no debate on this point. The federal government and others must be held accountable for failing residential school survivors for years. We have to redress past and ongoing harm. Doing so will help us bring respect and trust into our relationships. It is clear that we are not there yet, but that is the future that we can and must build for our children and grandchildren.

The trauma caused by the residential schools continues to be felt today. I have seen too many lives lost and families torn apart. I myself attended an Indian day school — a version of the

residential schools where students lived with their parents and remained in their communities. Just like those who attended residential schools, many who attended an Indian day school have had to live with trauma inflicted at the hands of those entrusted with our care. Even at 63 years old, I am not ready to speak about it. My healing is still ongoing.

Honourable senators, we use the term “survivors” because we know that many did not survive the residential school system. We must forever honour the resilience and resistance of each of the survivors in the face of attempts to suppress every aspect of their being. You will have heard by now that around 6,000 children died while attending residential schools. However, the number could be much higher, because the names of the students who died were too often unrecorded. The figure could be as high as 25,000.

Further compounding the anguish, many residential schools did not return children’s bodies to their families, too often citing cost as a reason. Many, if not most, are buried in unmarked and untended graves across the country. Some have been found because of archival documents and oral testimony, and others through accidental disturbances. We may never find all of our children, but that does not mean we will stop trying.

Earlier this week, I heard renewed calls by survivors of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School in Nova Scotia to locate unmarked graves at the site. The news hit close to home, because a few family members and friends are survivors. Theirs are not my stories to tell, but I will say that most are still learning to deal with and heal from the experience. It is not something we often talk about, but I can see the scars it has left on their bodies and souls. I speak as a First Nations person, but it’s important to note that our Inuit and Métis brothers and sisters have also experienced much harm at these federally run institutions and because of other harmful policies and practices.

Honourable senators, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which was tasked with establishing a historical record, was one part of the largest class-action lawsuit in Canadian history. The final report, which was released in 2015, exposed a truth that many never knew existed. It also outlined 94 Calls to Action that all levels of government and society must take to repair the harm caused by residential schools and begin the process of reconciliation.

The final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission said:

Reconciliation must become a way of life. It will take many years to repair damaged trust and relationships Reconciliation not only requires apologies, reparations, the relearning of Canada’s national history, and public commemoration, but also needs real social, political, and economic change. Ongoing public education and dialogue are essential to reconciliation. Governments, churches, educational institutions, and Canadians from all walks of life are responsible for taking action on reconciliation in concrete ways, working collaboratively with Aboriginal peoples. Reconciliation begins with each and every one of us.

Five years have already passed since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission released its final report. It is disappointing that many Canadians are still unaware of the history and legacy of the residential school system. It is even more concerning that some continue to ignore or even deny the nature and scope of the harm caused. We have seen this happen in our chamber.

This narrative must be unequivocally countered because it contributes to the prevalence of ignorant and racist beliefs and attitudes about Indigenous people that continue to affect every aspect of our lives and only adds to the suffering and trauma generations of us have experienced. I am a firm believer in the notion that we do better once we know better. That is why I invite everyone inside and outside this chamber to take the time to read the six volumes of the final report. It is a must-read document and available online for free.

Honourable senators, the national day for truth and reconciliation is but one step. However, it is the sum of all our individual and collective actions, of all the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that, when fully implemented, will create our new normal. If we follow this path, we will continue to move forward as a country in a positive direction. We can start doing this now, this week, with the passage of Bill C-5.

This bill directly fulfills Call to Action 80 of the Truth and Reconciliation report, which calls on Canada to establish a statutory holiday, a national day for truth and reconciliation, to honour survivors, their families and communities, and to ensure that public commemoration of the history and legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process. The date chosen is September 30, which builds on the grassroots momentum of Orange Shirt Day.

The establishment of the national day for truth and reconciliation is, in itself, significant, because it is a formal and public acknowledgment of what was done to survivors, their families and communities. So much of the history of this country has been hidden. This has created a deep divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people that needs to be addressed. The new holiday will mark a new chapter — one in which we will all walk together, side by side, to heal and repair relationships damaged by the residential school system and other policies and practices.

• (1510)

In order for that to happen, there has to be an increased awareness and understanding of the history of the residential schools, including the immediate and intergenerational impacts on First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

The national day for truth and reconciliation is a day meant to both commemorate the past and to educate in the future. The journey that has gotten us to where we are today begins with the survivors who fought, and continue to fight, to ensure the history and legacy of the residential school system are known and never forgotten or repeated.

[Senator Francis]

Most of us cannot begin to understand the abuse and trauma all survivors endured, or the strength it has taken for some of them to come forward and relive it. Without the courageous and persistent efforts of survivors, the shameful treatment of Indigenous people would not have been brought to light.

The holiday is needed because survivors will not be here to gather and share their stories and experiences in the future. It is estimated that there are only 80,000 survivors alive today. That number continues to decrease each year.

Like Remembrance Day, the new statutory holiday will be a day to pause, reflect and honour all the lives lost and impacted by the residential schools. Last November, Dene National Chief Norman Yakeleya of the Northwest Territories, who is himself a survivor, said the following at the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage:

Just like we commemorate November 11, when we all put aside our differences and honour the people who fought for us, who gave us this freedom and sacrificed their lives, we are doing this with the residential schools. Our parents gave up their children to the schools and the churches, and they sacrificed, and the impact is very devastating, but we are a forgiving nation, and we want the Canadian people to understand that, as aboriginal people, this is what really happened to us.

Dr. Marie Wilson, one of the three commissioners of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, appeared at the same committee during the study of Bill C-369, introduced by former New Democratic Party MP Georgina Jolibois. The previous iteration of this legislation died in 2019 with the dissolution of the Forty-second Parliament. Dr. Wilson noted then that the national day for truth and reconciliation should receive the same dignity and solemnity as Remembrance Day. She explained:

As a country, we understand fully the heartache of a mother who has lost a son or daughter to war. We make great efforts to bring home with dignity and ceremony anyone lost, and to honour the parent left behind. Each year, as we did recently, we honour a Silver Cross Mother to represent all grieving parents. We mark Remembrance Day in a national ceremony in all our schools and at monuments throughout the country in honour of all veterans, living or dead. We acknowledge, collectively, those never found with the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

When have we ever demonstrated such reverence for residential school children, also lost in a state-sanctioned context of proven harm?

Colleagues, creating the national day for truth and reconciliation as a federal statutory holiday can be compared to Remembrance Day because it will hold the same spirit of reflection and remembrance. On September 30 we will stop to reflect on our history and our values as a nation.

Many of you may not know, but the odds of a student dying while attending a residential school was 1 in 25. In contrast, the odds of a soldier dying during the Second World War was 1 in 26. Take a minute to think about these statistics. These were

innocent children who were forcefully and lawfully taken away from their families and communities. These were not adults who volunteered to serve in combat zones.

We can understand, now, that this holiday is not meant to be a celebration. Instead, it will be an opportunity for ongoing public commemoration through education.

The chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, our former colleague the Honourable Murray Sinclair, has spoken many times and to many different people about the connection between education and reconciliation. You will recall him stating time and again, “education got us into this mess and education will get us out of it.”

Education takes place in many ways — one of which, of course, is the structured education in elementary and secondary schools. Results of a Research Co. online survey released last year illustrate the importance of education as a foundation for reconciliation. The survey found that close to half, roughly 45%, of respondents said they never learned about residential schools when they were in elementary or high school in Canada. Equally troubling was the fact that the survey found that about one third of respondents who did learn about residential schools remember their teachers casting the schools in a positive light.

The survey, of course, had other statistics in it. One in particular struck me because it highlighted that younger generations are leading the way when it comes to reconciliation. The younger the respondents were, the more likely they were to have discussed the topic of residential schools in the classroom. I am encouraged that the knowledge of residential schools is increasing in school settings.

The orange shirts that children, youth and even many adults now wear on September 30 to recognize the story of Phyllis Jack Webstad and her experience at residential school makes me hopeful that my granddaughters will one day live in a new reality.

That’s quite the statistic. Almost 50% of our current population never learned about residential schools while they were in school.

First Nations, Métis and Inuit people knew all too well about residential schools. We are heartbroken but not shocked by the latest discovery of mass graves. We know this is neither the first nor the last time this will happen. That is the point of the national day for truth and reconciliation: to educate all Canadians, young and old, newcomers, and those from all walks of life and all cultures.

We can celebrate the achievements and the great people who contributed to Canada, but this is a one-sided story if we do not understand the dark and horrific legacy of residential schools. By creating a new statutory holiday, we create a reason for people of all ages and backgrounds to pause, listen, learn and engage in dialogue. We further create a reason for future generations to not only ask, “Why?” but to commit to “Never again.”

The journey toward truth, healing, justice and reconciliation must be based on a willingness to open our minds and hearts. We have to be able to reckon with realities that may be

uncomfortable and challenging — such as that some benefited, whether directly or indirectly, from the genocide against First Nations, Métis and Inuit people. It is not about pointing fingers or assigning blame. It is about understanding how history contributed to the Canada that we live in today.

I believe it is important to have these difficult conversations and remain open to imagining how things could be better. We can then begin to find ways to address and redress the damage done together.

Colleagues, Bill C-5 is another step on the journey toward truth, healing, justice and reconciliation. It is, indeed, all about commemoration and education. This day will help all of us bear witness to our history and deepen our resolve to change the narrative.

I will remind you that it is our collective duty and responsibility to make sure that we remember the survivors, their families and communities, and the lasting history and legacy of residential schools. The national day for truth and reconciliation will serve as an annual reminder that truth, healing, justice and reconciliation are not things that you can just tick off a list.

Colleagues, the designation of a national statutory holiday relates to other Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Examples include Call to Action 57 and Call to Action 81.

Given the fact that this bill was at a standstill in the other place for six months, I spent a lot of time meeting with survivors and organizations and working with survivors. It was important for me to hear directly from them. I learned a lot in the process and shared some of the findings with ministerial and department officials, who are anticipating the first official “National Day for Truth and Reconciliation” next September.

• (1520)

One of the main topics we discussed was the need to promote professional development and training for public servants along the lines of Call to Action 57. This Call to Action calls on all orders of government, including the federal government, to prioritize professional development around the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law and Aboriginal-Crown relations.

I worked in the federal public service for over two decades, so I know that the more public servants know about these topics, the more sensitive and responsive they will be to our communities, and the more just and more equitable policies and practices will be. You do better when you know better.

The work to increase awareness and understanding of the history and contemporary issues of Indigenous peoples is already underway. The Canada School of Public Service launched the Indigenous Learning Series in 2017. This learning series looks at the themes of recognition, respect, relationships and reconciliation. Over 80,000 public servants have completed online and in-class courses and participated in special events that relate to the history of Indigenous peoples.

This statistic only accounts for events and sessions offered directly through the Canada School of Public Service. We know that many workers have taken training offered by their departments, because the federal government put a priority on addressing Call to Action 57. In fact, the number is likely much higher. Just as the curricula in elementary and high schools are becoming more inclusive, so too are the professional development opportunities offered to adults in many parts of the country. Education matters and education will indeed lead us out of this mess.

It is also worth mentioning that since the start of 2021, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, and Indigenous Services Canada, which provide many front-line services to Indigenous peoples, have implemented an Indigenous Cultural Competency Learning Policy. This is a small but welcome development, and I am hopeful that other governments, departments and agencies will soon follow suit.

That being said, we should not hold others to standards we do not hold for ourselves. I believe that when you are a leader, it is your duty to lead by example and others will follow.

When I was appointed, I found it shocking to learn that it is not mandatory for parliamentarians and their staff to have professional development and training to increase awareness and understanding of the history and the contemporary issues of Indigenous peoples. That is deeply concerning given our role as lawmakers and overseers of government action.

That is why, last March, I encouraged senators and staff of my caucus, the Progressive Senate Group, to participate in a six-hour guided training program. The knowledge and skills gained through this experience have enhanced the breadth and quality of our work. I am proud of that.

As a result, I remain convinced that all parliamentarians and staff would benefit from participation in similar programs both on an initial and ongoing basis.

It is not lost on me that the Senate as an institution and Parliament as a whole have been involved in the design and implementation of laws and policies that have harmed generations of Indigenous people, including the residential school system. We have a moral and legal obligation to address and repair the harm done. But to do that, we first have to educate ourselves on these issues. That will demonstrate a real commitment on our part to improving the conditions affecting Indigenous people and communities. That, colleagues, is my challenge to you. Please listen, learn and act on reconciliation.

We must remember that the Calls to Action came from a commission that studied these areas extensively. They arise from Indigenous voices and stories. Call to Action 80, creating this national day, is a way for the federal government to show leadership by making the past visible.

Call to Action 80 is one of the commemorative Calls to Action, along with Call to Action 81, for example, that calls for a residential schools national monument.

Monuments and national days are powerful symbolic actions that signal society's values so that we are in a good space to continue all our other important work, to keep learning and to take concrete action to right past wrongs. We must also continue to contribute to meaningful healing and to work hard every day to dismantle the systemic discrimination and racism that is ever-present in our communities, in our health care, in our education systems, in our government institutions and everywhere in our society.

I will conclude my remarks now by expressing how pleased I am that all groups have come together to make the establishment of the statutory holiday a priority. This is a non-partisan issue worthy of our support.

Since there was agreement in our chamber to proceed without committee consideration, I asked a few survivors and organizations working for survivors for short statements I could share on their behalf. This is what two of them had to say.

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation wrote:

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) is where truths of Residential School Survivors are honoured and kept safe for future generations. These experiences told by Survivors have a spirit and must be part of Canada's living memory.

The NCTR applauds the passing of Bill C-5 which will establish a day dedicated to honouring Survivors and their families. In a time where heartache and loss is felt across this country and new truths are coming to light, we are solemnly reminded that there is much work ahead in our Reconciliation journey.

Lila Bruyere of the NCTR Survivors Circle said:

As Survivors, to share our painful experiences took immense strength and courage. This day honours the voices of all Survivors and recognizes our truths. Years from now, future generations will not have the opportunity to hear from Survivors directly. We must act now to build better understanding and empathy among all Canadians. We must never let this happen to innocent children ever again.

Phyllis Webstad, whom I spoke of earlier, added:

The Orange Shirt Society proudly supports Orange Shirt Day, September 30th, in becoming a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

A National Day of Truth and Reconciliation is an important and positive step toward Canada's Reconciliation. We hope all Canadians continue to wear their orange shirts on this day.

For many years, our governments were integral and complicit in Canada's Indian Residential School System.

Today, we recognize the positive steps being taken by the Federal Government, but acknowledge that there is still more work to do.

With the passing of Bill C-5, we honour all Residential School survivors, their families, and remember those who did not make it. We will always be reminded of the horrors of Canada's Residential School System, as we have been this week when the remains of 215 children from Kamloops Indian Residential School were discovered. These children and their stories must not be forgotten. "Every Child Matters."

Colleagues, I said it before and I will say it again: This institution has been complicit in the historical and ongoing harm inflicted on Indigenous peoples. In passing Bill C-5 with unanimous support, all of us will go on record acknowledging the need to move forward together as a nation towards truth, healing, justice and reconciliation.

I urge you to support the passage of the bill without delay. Many of us are eager to participate in special events and ceremonies this September 30 to remember and honour the thousands of children who were stolen and placed in residential schools.

I know Canadians across the country will join together on this day to pay their respects and to reaffirm their individual and collective commitment to the long process of reconciliation ahead.

Wela'lin. Thank you.

Hon. Kim Pate: Honourable senators, I speak today in support of Bill C-5, establishing a "National Day for Truth and Reconciliation" and implementing Call to Action 80 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I speak, as well, to call for the full and immediate implementation of the Calls to Action of the TRC as well as the calls for justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

As Senator McCallum yesterday, and Senator Francis today reminded us, it is impossible to ignore, as we create a national day for truth and reconciliation, the impact of the recent news of a mass grave at the site of a residential school in Kamloops. The hundreds of messages and calls that many of us have received from people who live with the worst of what Canada has done to First Nations peoples is as predictable as it was preventable.

• (1530)

Theirs is the anger and frustration of realizing nearly six years after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada — the TRC — told us that too many ignored or did not believe what residential school survivors told us in gut-wrenching and heartbreaking detail. Theirs is an unimaginable grief, a righteous rage, and the only appropriate response from us is action. More empty words and performative statements will more likely inflame than comfort.

Canadian laws and policies created residential schools, the forced separation of families and communities, and contexts of assimilation and colonialism. Canadian laws and policies also perpetuate this cruelty, injustice and racism. This failure to reckon with the harms done by Canada has caused even greater

harm. We must close gaps in economic and social well-being, ensure access to resources, health care and housing and act immediately to end every boil water advisory in this country.

The mass grave site in Kamloops represents only the tip of the iceberg. The TRC documented the reality that thousands more children died away from their homes, loved ones and culture in residential schools across the country. Today, Indigenous children continue to be taken and disappeared. The institutions have different names. Like the term "school," their racist and colonial discriminatory practices are cloaked in state-sanctioned and socially legitimized nomenclature, such as the child welfare system, justice and correctional systems, but the effect on communities of stealing people continues the devastating legacy of loss. The residential school legacy is ongoing and is only made worse by rising anti-Indigenous sentiment in recent years.

A critical part of reconciliation, according to the Truth and Reconciliation commissioners:

. . . involves repairing damaged trust by making apologies, providing . . . reparations, and following through with concrete actions that demonstrate real societal change.

The action taken to prioritize reconciliation has been woefully inadequate so far.

Bill C-5 builds on the momentum of grassroots organizers who have led us in marking Orange Shirt Day. Each September 30, we honour the truth that every child matters and the lives of those who survived residential schools, as well as those who did not.

To be more than merely performative, a national day for truth and reconciliation must incorporate concrete plans and implementation of the Calls to Action of the TRC. Bill C-5 is a step to recommit Canada to action in the name of residential school survivors, their families and communities.

The Survivors Circle of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation emphasizes that Bill C-5 is a critical means of honouring, engaging, listening to and learning from survivors and enshrining this education and remembrance within the public consciousness of all Canadians.

In the words of Eddy Charlie, survivor of the Kuper Island Residential School:

If we stop talking about what happened, it will die with the last residential school survivor, and it will be as if residential schools did not happen. I don't want this history to die. I want it to be told over and over and over again until it is impossible that we forget.

Passing Bill C-5 should not, however, be a moment for self-congratulatory platitudes. In a country that still privileges that which is male, White and wealthy, this achievement is just one little step — a nod, really — toward reconciliation. We need to follow the course charted for us by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous

Women and Girls, and countless other Indigenous leaders, including our colleagues. This includes implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples through Bill C-15 and affirming the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples to self-determination and a framework for reconciliation and realizing the Calls to Action.

Current TRC progress is wholly inadequate. According to the Assembly of First Nations' TRC Report Card, five years after the publication of the TRC's final report, Canada had achieved significant progress on only 15% of the Calls to Action. These benchmarks show us the extent to which inequality and injustice persist. To quote Cindy Blackstock:

The federal government, which has an insatiable appetite to be thanked for inadequate measures, should expect no gratitude for discrimination.

Despite TRC Call to Action No. 1 — to reduce the number of Indigenous children in care — and Bill C-92, current child welfare policies continue the mass removal of Indigenous children from their families.

In 2017, Indigenous children represented over half of the children in foster care, while representing only 7% of all children in Canada. Canada must end the status quo of discrimination against and institutionalization of First Nations children.

Indigenous children and their families consistently receive less funding per capita from Canadian governments for education, health care, water and sanitation. Housing and food insecurity remain a crisis on many reserves, and 39 First Nations are still subject to drinking water advisories.

Too many children continue to be taken into the care of the state for reasons that have to do with a lack of access to resources rather than a lack of care from their families and communities. Very few children and youth who are criminalized have not first entered it via the child welfare system.

This pattern of criminalization and institutionalization means that prisons are increasingly recognized as the new residential schools. Both the TRC and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls have called for measures to decolonize, decriminalize and decarcerate Indigenous peoples. Instead, however, as we have witnessed with successive legislative initiatives, from Bill C-75, Bill C-83 and now Bill C-22, Canadian policies and practices are escalating the criminalization and incarceration of racialized people.

Bended knees, lowered flags and orange shirts amount to dramatic performances absent concrete actions to end boil water advisories, stop the theft of First Nations, Inuit and Métis

children from their families and stop racism and misogyny that results in the disappearances, institutionalization and murders of Indigenous women. And as scholars and advocates like Dr. Pam Palmater remind us, Indigenous people are still being removed from their lands, sometimes at the barrel of a gun. She reminds us that, "Residential schools were created as part of Canada's . . . policy to remove [Indigenous peoples] from [their] lands at any cost." It was a policy, as Canada's assimilationist-in-chief Duncan Campbell Scott once said, "geared towards the final solution of our Indian Problem."

This is a continuation of Dr. Pam Palmater's quote:

Genocide has taken a huge toll on our Nations, but we're still here, protecting our children, demanding justice for survivors, and defending our lands — not just for ourselves, but for the health of the planet.

If Canada is interested in real change, it will take more than symbolic gestures and flags at half-mast.

Over the past few years, Native youth have begun elevating a truth we've long understood: a just path forward is impossible without the return of stolen land.

That should be good news: more land in control of First Nations will mean a safer climate for all Canadians.

In the most recent budget, the federal government proposes to invest \$18 billion over the next five years to improve the quality of life of Indigenous peoples. As we pass Bill C-5, it is also long past time to ensure that, moving forward, Canada uses this funding and commits the additional resources necessary to make all 94 Calls to Action a reality.

In a country as wealthy as Canada, there is no excuse for the ongoing racist inequities from water advisories, inadequate access to housing, poverty, food insecurity to generations of stolen and institutionalized children. We must make sure that the Calls to Action are embedded within all aspects of Canada's future spending and programming.

• (1540)

Honourable colleagues, let us work together every day in this place, in our communities and in the country to redress the shameful legacy of colonialism. *Meegwetch*, thank you.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and bill read second time.)

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

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

**CANADIAN NET-ZERO EMISSIONS ACCOUNTABILITY
BILL**

ENERGY, THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY SUBJECT MATTER

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate), pursuant to notice of June 1, 2021, moved:

That, in accordance with rule 10-11(1), the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources be authorized to examine the subject matter of Bill C-12, An Act respecting transparency and accountability in Canada's efforts to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2050, introduced in the House of Commons on November 19, 2020, in advance of the said bill coming before the Senate; and

That, for the purposes of this study, the committee be authorized to meet even though the Senate may then be sitting, with the application of rule 12-18(1) being suspended in relation thereto.

He said: I move the motion standing in my name.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

(At 3:42 p.m., pursuant to the orders adopted by the Senate on October 27, 2020 and December 17, 2020, the Senate adjourned until 2 p.m., tomorrow.)

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