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The Honourable GEORGE J. FUREY,
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Thursday, June 2, 2022

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

Prayers.

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I received notice from the Facilitator of the Independent Senators Group who requests, pursuant to rule 4-3(1), that the time provided for the consideration of Senators' Statements be extended today for the purpose of paying tribute to the Honourable Howard Wetston, who will retire from the Senate on June 3, 2022.

I remind senators that, pursuant to our rules, each senator may speak only once and will be allowed only three minutes, not including Senator Wetston's response.

Is it agreed that we continue our tributes to our colleague Senator Wetston under Senators' Statements?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

TRIBUTES

THE HONOURABLE HOWARD WETSTON, C.M., Q.C.

Hon. Raymonde Saint-Germain: Honourable senators, the few minutes I have for this tribute won't allow me to adequately recount all the highlights of Senator Wetston's long and illustrious career. After devotedly serving on the executive side of government, Howard came to the Senate in 2016 to serve on the legislative side as a member of the first wave of independent senators — a historic change to the Senate — which he duly personified, having been appointed in his career to positions by Liberal and Conservative governments, both provincially and federally.

For more than 30 years before joining the Senate, Howard was in pursuit of the public interest, whether as a judge, an enforcement official or as the chair of several administrative tribunals. The prestigious honours he has received over the years are in themselves a testament to his immense contribution to Canadian public life, most notably the Order of Canada for the significant contributions he made as a public servant, jurist and regulator.

Senator Wetston has a breadth of experience and expertise in competition law and policy, securities regulation, energy regulation and administrative law. He has generously shared this expertise, most notably through his work on the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, as well as the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce.

His contributions to the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators should also be highlighted as they are a key sign of his credibility among his peers, particularly because of his sense of justice and profound ethical values.

I would also like to emphasize his remarkable work on the Competition Act. Here is a senator who has taken advantage of the pandemic to accomplish something greatly useful. His consultation paper, entitled *Examining the Canadian Competition Act in the Digital Era*, is remarkable in that it offers a happy balance between vision and pragmatism. This demonstrates the wisdom of our colleague who understands that politics, being "the art of the possible," requires one to sometimes deal with it step by step.

I will now conclude on a more personal note and say that being a senator, with all the demands and sacrifices, also brings the privilege of knowing exceptional colleagues. Howard is one of them, not only for his intelligence and wisdom but his great human values. Since childhood, when he was ostracized and experienced, among other things, refugee camps, life has provided him with its share of challenges — challenges that he overcame and which have made him an exceptional human being, open to the world and attentive to others.

Dear Howard, in the name of all members of the Independent Senators Group, thank you for all you have done, and all the best to you as you enjoy more time with your family and loved ones.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, on behalf of my colleagues in the Government Representative Office — feeling slightly bittersweet about this — I am pleased to pay tribute to Senator Howard Wetston.

Senator Wetston came to the Senate in the fall of 2016 as a respected public servant, a distinguished lawyer and jurist and an experienced regulator and executive. He had previously led the Ontario Securities Commission, the Ontario Energy Board and the Competition Bureau.

His passion to update best practices and rules governing publicly traded companies in Canada was clear during his sponsorship of Bill C-25 during the Forty-second Parliament. A main objective of the bill was to increase diversity and the participation of women on corporate boards and within senior management. It also improved corporate transparency, reduced the regulatory burden and increased shareholder democracy.

• (1410)

During committee study, Senator Wetston proposed three important amendments that were ultimately accepted by the government. One change allowed corporations to share information with their shareholders electronically in a broader range of circumstances. Two more amendments created a grace period of 90 days for current directors who were not re-elected

under new majority voting rules to continue their duties. This commitment to transparency and fairness is a perfect reflection of the values that Senator Wetston brought with him to this chamber.

Senator Wetston also sponsored Bill C-85, legislation to enable to ratification of a new Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement. The modernized and more robust trade agreement helped enhance the commercial relationship between the two countries.

More recently, as Senator Saint-Germain alluded to, Senator Wetston initiated a consultation process examining the appropriateness of the current Competition Act in the digital age. This initiative represents a really important and timely contribution to the public policy process in Canada and will stand as an important legacy that he has bequeathed us.

On a more personal note, I had the privilege of being sworn into the Senate just a few days after Senator Wetston, and we became friends immediately. He is a kind, sensitive and caring person. As we say in Boston, wicked smart, but not arrogant; gentle in demeanour, but principled and tough-minded; a no-nonsense person with a great sense of humour. Simply put, a wonderful colleague and a true mensch. Howard, I will miss you terribly. On behalf of all of us in this chamber, we wish you all the best as you embark on this next chapter in your life.

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I also rise today to pay tribute to our colleague and friend Senator Wetston.

Senator Howard Wetston was appointed to this chamber five and a half years ago. He has served on several committees, but the two committees where I am most familiar with the work he has done are the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce and the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources.

Today, I wish to recognize the work you have done, Senator Wetston, especially on the Banking Committee report entitled: *Cyber assault: It should keep you up at night*. This report dealt with important issues for Canadians and showcased the positive work that can be done at the committee level in the Senate of Canada.

Another of your great contributions was your involvement in the committee with the Senate's record-high number of amendments brought forward on Bill C-69, An Act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts. Your expertise and knowledge in regulatory law were beneficial to everyone in this chamber, especially to former Senator Mitchell, who was the sponsor of the bill.

Your competence and past experiences in competition law and policy, securities and energy regulations, and administrative law enriched this chamber with a very specific expertise.

Although we haven't served together much on committees, I wish to recognize and underline that I have a lot of respect for you and the work you have accomplished in this chamber. And I believe it is important to acknowledge your service to our country.

Howard, I know that we both share a passion for golf. With your imminent retirement, I wish you the very best in your future endeavours. I hope you get that handicap down a bit, and I hope you will be able to enjoy a lot more time on the greens in the weeks and months ahead.

And I am always open and looking forward to an invitation to playing a round of golf with you, Howard. Happy retirement.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Scott Tannas: Honourable senators, on behalf of the Canadian Senators Group, I rise today to pay tribute to our friend and colleague, the Honourable Senator Howard Wetston.

He has proudly spent much of his career in public service as a judge, a regulatory official and chair of administrative tribunals. He has relentlessly pursued opportunities to make a difference. He has been duly recognized for his contributions to public law and other key sectors of the economy that have touched the lives of countless Canadians.

But the outpouring of affection we are hearing for our departing colleague has as much to do with his personal qualities of kindness, compassion and intellectual curiosity as it does with his distinguished career. Senator Wetston is one of those rare people who have deep networks in a multitude of segments of Canadian life: government, academia, business, law and multiple communities.

Some people build superficial networks for their own purposes and collect contacts like baseball cards. Howard has earned his through a lifetime of diligent and thoughtful work anchored in trust, civility and respect. In fact, I cannot think of anyone who has the universal respect and affection of people from so many walks of life as our friend and colleague, Senator Wetston.

I have had many different meetings where I have come away surprised, a meeting in Canada with academics, or with business people or with ordinary people, and at the end of the meeting, somebody says, "Say hi to Senator Wetston for me," or more often, "Say hi to Howard for me." There is no greater sign of respect, no greater mark of real achievement that I can think of than the numbers of people who admire, respect and have the greatest affection for you, Howard, and that includes me and all the colleagues here in the Senate.

We are all proud to have served with you in the Senate of Canada, and you have indeed made a difference here as you have in so many other places over the course of your life and career. I wish you a very happy birthday tomorrow. Thank you, Howard.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Marty Klyne: Honourable senators, like many of you, I rise to pay tribute to our esteemed friend and colleague Senator Howard Wetston. He was appointed to the Senate in 2016 after a long and distinguished career as a public servant, lawyer and federal judge.

He served as the Commissioner of Competition, the head of the Ontario Energy Board and the head of the Ontario Securities Commission. Among his many accomplishments in that last role, he created a partnership with the RCMP financial crime program, spearheaded a paid whistle-blower program and implemented policies aimed to include more women on corporate boards and in senior management.

As a senator, he applied his broad experience and expertise to continue making a difference. During his six years in the Red Chamber, he worked tirelessly to enrich debate and improve legislation. For example, his knowledge informed many of this chamber's changes to Bill C-69 regarding environmental assessments for resource development, with the House of Commons accepting a record 99 Senate amendments.

Senator Wetston also successfully sponsored two government bills through to Royal Assent. One was Bill C-25 to modernize federal corporate laws, including to increase diversity and gender equality on corporate boards and in senior management, with the House of Commons accepting all Senate amendments. The other bill was Bill C-85 on the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement.

During his time in the chamber, Senator Wetston also did important policy work to develop Canada's competition law, encourage entrepreneurs and drive innovation. He released his detailed and consultative commentary in April, and that will be a resource for our country going forward.

I was fortunate to serve on the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce with Senator Wetston, including while he was chair. We also sit on the Agriculture and Forestry Committee together. I always appreciated hearing his well-reasoned perspective on the issue at hand.

Senator Wetston in a relatively short time has left a great mark on this institution and our legislative and policy record. It has been a pleasure working with him. Senator Wetston, I wish you the best in your well-deserved retirement. Here is to the many divots on the golf course. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

• (1420)

Hon. Colin Deacon: Honourable senators, clearly our life experience and that of our families inform our values, passions and priorities. This is profoundly true for Senator Howard Wetston.

He describes his parents and his grandmother as "strong, hardworking and resilient people." Those humble words don't capture the fact that they had to flee on foot from Poland to Uzbekistan to survive the Second World War.

After the war, they were transferred by train to a displaced persons camp in Germany. Howard's mother delivered his late brother Sam as they travelled on that train to the DP camp, where Howard was born in 1947. Resilient people, indeed.

Senator Wetston recounted that, after the war, "Jewish settlers . . . weren't that welcome." His parents settled in Cape Breton, thanks only to a distant uncle's sponsorship. Specifically, they settled in Whitney Pier, a community dominated by a steel mill that contaminated the surrounding air, soil and water, making it one of Canada's most polluted communities. Senator Wetston recalls it as "a very diverse community, but we accommodated our differences."

There is so much about Senator Wetston that we do not know.

What we do know is that when he speaks, he is a fountain of insight and sharp critiques against the status quo. There is a reason for that. It comes from a life and a career of fighting for those who could not fight for themselves.

At the Consumers' Association of Canada, you may not know that he played a leading role in initiating the efforts to remove UFFI, or Urea Formaldehyde Foam Insulation, from the market.

In the 1980s, he started what would be a pinnacle of careers, each one, when he was head of what is now the Competition Bureau. Another pinnacle, he was a Federal Court judge and then chair of the Ontario Securities Commission and helped our country recover from the economic turmoil resulting from the financial crisis.

Regardless of the role, Senator Wetston championed the rights of those whose voices were often ignored; he championed diversity in the workplace and the representation of women in senior leadership roles.

I'm personally very grateful that Senator Wetston encouraged the Senate to study open banking, subject of one of our most read reports, and that he has reminded the government of the crucial role that competition law and policy play in shaping an economy that fairly delivers both prosperity and affordability to Canadians.

Howard, I am far from alone in saying thank you for being a dear friend and mentor. Be warned, though, I am among many others who will continue to reach out for your guidance.

As you pack your suitcase and move on from the Senate, we can't wait to see what new challenge you will embrace, bringing even more honour to the strength and courage demonstrated by your grandmother, parents and brother.

Howard, on behalf of all of us, thank you so much.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond: I am pleased to join my colleagues in this tribute to the Honourable Howard Wetston, who is leaving us tomorrow after five and a half years in the Senate.

I recall his warm welcome four years ago when he invited me to dine with Senators Marwah and Eggleton at a nearby restaurant. That evening, full of humour and advice, accompanied by good wine, was the best way to start my Senate career.

Of course, I already knew Senator Wetston, not only by reputation, but also from having met him briefly when we were young judges.

[*English*]

Before arriving in this place, Senator Wetston had a successful and varied career as a Federal Court judge, chair and CEO of the Ontario Energy Board, chair and CEO of the Ontario Securities Commission.

A man of great intellect and common sense, Howard is always ready to face new challenges as a trusted decision maker. Throughout his career he has also demonstrated a passion for competition law, a passion not shared by many. Though not always well understood by non-specialists, this is an important area of federal jurisdiction for Canada's economic well-being.

This spring he published an insightful commentary on the Competition Act in the digital era, with the benefit of public and expert consultations conducted by him on his own.

[*Translation*]

Moreover, in the Senate, he has been a strong advocate for gender and ethnic diversity on corporate boards. I would like to add that I am very grateful to have worked with him on the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee. Senator Wetston has always shown himself to be wise, sensible and progressive in his interventions.

Now that I have listed his talents, I will close by underscoring one of his great qualities: his humanity. Family, friends and colleagues are what is most important to him, and he is always ready to listen, advise and help.

Senator Wetston, I wish you good health and happiness in this next phase of your life, surrounded by your loved ones. Best of luck in your future endeavours, as I am sure there will be many. Take care.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[*English*]

Hon. Yuen Pau Woo: Honourable senators, what does one do for an encore after a life of accomplishment which includes having served in top jobs on consumer protection, transportation, competition policy, energy, the courts and securities regulation?

Well, Howard Wetston, at the age of 70, applied to become a senator. Setting aside every other contribution he has made in the upper house, the fact that he considered a Senate appointment a worthy next chapter for an already illustrious career raises the bar for aspiring applicants and puts us in very fine company indeed. Here I'm referring not simply to the positions he has held in the highest echelons of the Canadian establishment but also to the leitmotif of his career, which is public service.

Senator Wetston came to the Senate to continue his lifelong commitment to serving the public. It is our loss that we only had him for just under six years, three of which were attenuated by COVID. But what an outsized contribution he made in that short period of time.

If your measure of senatorial impact is column inches in Hansard; number of sponsored bills, amendments, motions and inquiries; social media hits; or a paparazzi following, Senator Wetston would probably get a B-minus.

But if you were interested in the quality and timing of interventions, willingness to take on difficult and unglamorous assignments and, above all, the trust and respect of colleagues, he surely would graduate summa cum laude.

Have you noticed how, when Senator Wetston speaks, the room gets appreciably quiet, heads turn in his direction and ears perk up? How a seemingly innocent question or comment that he might pose in the middle of a dead-end meeting suddenly changes the trajectory of the discussion and provides fresh avenues for enlightenment? Such was the case on Bill C-69, the Impact Assessment Act, on which he served as the legislative lead for the Independent Senators Group, ISG, and on which I worked very closely with him.

Bill C-69 was divisive, to put it mildly, but Senator Wetston was one of the few people to whom all sides of the debate went for advice, from pipeline and mining advocates to eco-justice champions and First Nations representatives. He was less about providing answers than about clarifying: clarifying the principles underlying a policy objective; clarifying the institutional framework that all policies must function within; clarifying the aspirations for a better Canada that are necessary if changes in policy are to have any point; and clarifying the trade-offs that come with every difficult decision.

Five years and seven months of Senator Wetston is not enough. He has accomplished so much in that time, and yet I know he wishes that he could have done more. His unfinished work in the Senate is for us to take up. This leaves us with a burning question: After climbing yet another peak in his career, what does Senator Wetston do for an encore?

Howard, we look forward to your next chapter and wish you and Debbie all the very best.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Tony Dean: Honourable senators, I rise on behalf of Senator Sabi Marwah and myself to say a few words about our friend and colleague Howard Wetston.

Howard is a highly trusted policy-maker, a nationally renowned regulator, a Federal Court judge in his past, a senator, a collector and player of electric guitars, a tennis player, a snazzy dresser, a recipient of the Order of Canada and — I have just had to write in — golfer.

When we arrived in this place six years ago, Sabi and I were in awe of being appointed alongside Howard. That was because if you got anywhere near the complex world of energy policy, energy regulation or securities regulation, and the major debates about a national securities regulator in Canada, you know about the legendary role and massive contributions of Howard Wetston, including his tenure as a jurist.

• (1430)

I certainly knew about Howard; I had heard about him often, but our paths seldom crossed. Therefore, it has been such a privilege to work alongside you, Howard, and to see your vast experience, scholarship, judgment and, let's face it, dry sense of humour, which we've all seen in full flow.

Howard held senior influential and highly impactful roles as the chair of the Ontario Energy Board and the Ontario Securities Commission. Many things stand out. First, as chair of the Ontario Energy Board, we saw Howard's balanced emphasis on the thoughtful regulation of electricity and natural gas, directly rooted in legal principles and economic rationale. He enjoyed a distinguished and closely watched tenure as chair of the Ontario Securities Commission, and he was a strong advocate of the concept of a national securities regulator and worked hard to make it a reality, which he has noted as a missed opportunity to create "a best-in-class, state-of-the-art, modern 21st century regulator."

Howard, as we know, sound policy proposals and good ideas never go away completely, so don't give up.

Howard has also worked hard to improve diversity on corporate boards and has been publicly recognized for this. He has continued that work here in collaboration with Senator Omidvar and other colleagues.

In his inaugural speech, Howard talked humbly about his past achievements, saying that he had worked in two of the three major fields occupied by our work here in the Senate, the first two being public policy and the law — both of which Howard is well informed about — and the third one is politics. Howard, I hope you have enjoyed the third leg of the stool, my friend.

Howard has made huge contributions here as chair of the Senate's Banking Committee and as a member of several other committees. He brought with him his vast experience at senior

levels of institutions and boards. His legacy, as many colleagues have noted, will be his major study on competition law, which we can now build on.

Howard has always been highly respected as the quintessential public servant: lots of integrity, he cared tremendously about the public interest and he was always perceived as being wise. Howard has quietly shared that wisdom with many of us here, particularly colleagues who have had to tackle complex issues associated with policy and legislation.

Howard, we have been privileged to work with you, learn from you and benefit from your wisdom. You will now have more time to grow and play your collection of electric guitars, and to sharpen your competitive edge in your tennis games even more.

We will miss you here, Howard, but you haven't seen the last of us. We are going to stay in touch. All the very best, and thank you for your friendship.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Brent Cotter: Honourable senators, I would like to first share a few personal words about Senator Wetston and then talk about his remarkable career.

I've known Senator Wetston, or Howard Wetston as he then was, for over 50 years. Howard and I started law school in 1971 at Dalhousie in Halifax. Howard was the star of that star-studded law school class graduating class of 1974. Howard and I have remained friends over the years, occasionally overlapping in work or sports. As some of you well know, Howard was and still is a formidable athlete, as we've heard, when his health permits.

We have grown closer in the Senate. Here, he has been my mentor, friend and guide. On my first date day — in fact, in my first hour in the Senate — Howard came over to my seat, up there in the nosebleed section, where Senator Quinn is presently, and offered his advice and support. We had dinner together that first week and had regular coffees, all with gentle guidance to help me navigate the mysteries of the upper house. He made calls of encouragement pretty well every week.

All of us have benefited from Howard's wisdom — yes, wisdom — and his generosity of spirit, but I think none more than me. Thank you, Howard.

Second, he's had a career of excellence and distinction at every stage, as you've heard, as a Crown prosecutor in Nova Scotia, Director of the Competition Bureau Canada, judge of the Federal Court of Canada, chair of the Ontario Energy Board, member and chair of the Ontario Securities Commission, not to mention his amazing contributions as a senator.

The law school from which he graduated is known for its "Weldon Tradition," a commitment to public service. It is named after its founding dean, Richard Weldon, himself a member of Parliament over a century ago. As I listed off Howard's contributions, you might well think, as I have, that this tradition of commitment to public service could have aptly been named

the “Wetston Tradition.” All of this emerged from extremely humble beginnings about which Senator Wetston only occasionally speaks.

His contributions to this country have often been at the cost to him of opportunities foregone, sacrifices so that Canadians could benefit. In some ways, he is a superman, which brings to mind, for me, the closing lines from the Crash Test Dummies song, “Superman’s Song,” sung by Brad Roberts. Some of you will know it. It goes like this — and I won’t try to sing it:

Kept on changing clothes
In dirty old phonebooths ’til his work was through
And nothing to do but go on home
Superman never made any money
For saving the world from Solomon Grundy
And sometimes I despair
The world will never see another man like him

A man like Howard Wetston.

Thank you, Howard, for your kindness to me, and for your lifetime of work on behalf of Canadians.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Lucie Moncion: Howard, how can I possibly pay tribute to you in such a short time and tell you how much I value your brilliance? I am privileged to count you among the people who have enriched my life in so many ways.

You are a skilled, subtle and cunning speaker with great emotional intelligence. Very respectful of your colleagues, you accept and consider the ideas and suggestions of others.

I know you as a humble man with an avid curiosity to constantly acquire additional knowledge and understanding. You are an active listener, balanced, calm despite everything, open-minded and analytical. You enjoy silence and peace, but you also enjoy the company of others, and the exchange of ideas and knowledge.

Howard, you have an impressive track record. Before you were appointed to the Senate, you served as a counsel at Goodmans LLP. You are a prominent Canadian leader and a respected public servant, a distinguished lawyer, jurist, regulator and executive. You are an expert in competition law and policy, securities regulation, energy regulation and administrative law. You were a judge of the Federal Court of Canada for six years. At some point during your career, you were Director of Investigation and Research with the federal Competition Bureau, chair and CEO of the Ontario Securities Commission and chair and CEO of the Ontario Energy Board.

Howard, you were at the heart of many significant changes and played an important role in Ontario.

You were called “Suitcase Wetston,” and you provided the explanation for the nickname, saying to me:

I worked in the public service for most of my career. I looked at whatever job I was in as an opportunity to make a difference — I packed my suitcase and went wherever an opportunity arose. When I didn’t feel what I was doing was making a meaningful difference anymore, then I moved on. To me, the nickname was a metaphor for taking a risk — I was willing to take risks with my career. My career in public service was a lifelong experience of learning.

I know you are an active reader, an avid tennis player and that you count among your close circle an impressive number of friends. You are a busy person, but despite your active lifestyle, I have an assignment for you, Howard. You have a story to tell. Please write your biography. From the time of your family’s immigration to Canada to the brilliant career you forged for yourself and the amount of knowledge and experience you have acquired over the years — all of that needs to be shared.

I am an avid reader of biographies and would immensely benefit from reading about you, your life, your involvements, your knowledge, your expertise and your lessons learned.

• (1440)

You are an excellent writer, a good storyteller and a brilliant man. Howard, please let us know; let the world know. Keep well, my friend. You will be missed.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Donna Dasko: Honourable senators, I still remember the announcement in *The Globe and Mail* in 2016 saying that Prime Minister Trudeau had appointed Howard Wetston to represent Ontario in the Senate. How lucky for the Senate, for Ontario and for Canada.

Howard Wetston has been a marvellous colleague and the model of an excellent senator. He brought to this chamber a depth of expertise in an area that is extremely relevant and vital for government, and I always appreciated his wisdom, judgment and willingness to share his knowledge.

Senator Wetston came to this chamber as a leader in administrative law and regulation with expertise in securities, energy and other regulated industries. He led the Ontario Securities Commission, the Ontario Energy Board and the Competition Bureau. He is a former federal judge and much more. Our colleague was truly a regulator for the 21st century, and I can say that, because I had first-hand experience.

Howard Wetston was my client in our previous lives. As chair of the Ontario Energy Board two decades ago, he brought in processes that were actually considered revolutionary for a regulator. He consulted widely with stakeholders, not only the big electricity and natural gas distributors, but consumers, academics, industry groups and the media. He set goals for his

organization, he made them public and he measured his progress and made that public too. That is how I got to know him, as my firm was retained to conduct surveys with stakeholders and consumers.

I also learned at that time that Howard loved discussing and debating just about everything, which was a fine quality that has made him such a wonderful senator and colleague — none of this top-down style of leadership from him.

There's much, much more. Here is just one: While chair of the Ontario Securities Commission, he took on the challenge of implementing a comply-or-explain policy with respect to women on corporate boards to promote gender equality in the private sector. He expanded this approach when, as senator, he sponsored Bill C-25, An Act to amend the Canada Business Corporations Act, which required corporations to report whether they had implemented policies regarding diversity, what these policies involved, and, if not, why they had not implemented such policies.

As he said in his sponsor speech:

Talent is not gender-specific. Talented people must be given the opportunity to succeed regardless of gender or ethnicity.

Empowering our diverse and skilled talent to lead Canadian corporations will only benefit our investors, competition and the Canadian economy at large.

Howard, thank you for your service, for your help and advice, for your generosity of spirit, for your collegiality and good humour, and I offer my very, very best wishes to you in the years and months ahead. Like many of my colleagues, I hope to call on you for advice going forward.

Thank you, very, very much, Howard.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

Hon. Howard Wetston: Honourable senators, once again, I want to thank the Speaker.

I wish I could be there physically with you, but I took the decision not to appear in the chamber today because I've come down with a cold or a flu. I so much wanted to participate, so I decided to do it from my office. Please forgive me for not being in the chamber with you today.

I want to thank you for your kind words on the occasion of my retirement. Your comments are very, very thoughtful, and they mean so much to me. I wonder, though, if I might ask you for something. Might, perhaps, one or two or three of the senators who provided tributes to me wish to write a reference letter for me when I apply for my next job? I may call on you to do that, but I am very, very thankful.

I do have a lot of things to do before I clean out my office, but nothing is more important than what I want to do today, and that is to say thank you to each of you.

Speaking about retirement, as Senator Cotter once said in the Senate in a somewhat different context, "I expected this." Senator Cotter would remember that.

I have moved around a lot in my career and often had to consider whether to leave before my best-before date. On this occasion, I don't have to consider that. Nevertheless, not all aspects about my retirement are negative. I won't have to think about seeing the clock. I won't have to struggle to figure out how to change channels on Microsoft Teams, and I won't have to wait through another one-hour bell. Those must be positive things.

Let me begin by thanking our extremely skilled and highly professional administrative staff. I have very much appreciated the advice of the Clerk of the Senate, the law clerks, the staff in Chamber Operations, the clerks of all our Senate committees, as well as the committed staff who support these offices.

I would especially like to thank our Speaker and Speaker pro tempore for their incredibly patient, wise and objective management of Senate proceedings.

As a member of the Independent Senators Group, I wish to express my thanks to its leadership team. I have valued your tireless efforts and commitment, Senator Saint-Germain, Senator Dean, Senator Woo, Senator Duncan, Senator Omidvar and Senator Peticlerc. It's been a lot of heavy lifting over the last six years and will continue to be, but I'm optimistic about where the Senate is heading.

I would also thank my seatmate over the past five and a half years, my good friend Senator Marwah. You could not find a better person to have in your corner. I've always appreciated and enjoyed how he cuts through complex issues like a hot knife through butter. More importantly, I have considerable respect and admiration for him as a person.

Senators, I believe that my most satisfying professional achievement was being appointed to the Senate of Canada as it allowed me to serve in all three branches of our parliamentary democracy: executive, both federally and provincially; judicial, at the Federal Court of Canada, as you know; and legislative. I was able to complete the parliamentary trifecta when I was appointed to the Senate.

You might ask what I learned from these experiences — obviously, a great deal — but first, common sense and pragmatism work best in the reform of markets. Second, regulation has always been about addressing problems with human behaviour, not necessarily problems with innovation. Third, policy making involves complex trade-offs, as you all know, but the bigger challenge is always implementation. And, fourth, I may now know more, but I am sure of less. It is a complex world.

Colleagues, as you have heard from other senators, my parents were Jewish immigrants who fled Poland to Uzbekistan and were then relocated by the Allied forces to a displaced persons' camp in Ulm, Germany, where I was born. By the way, Albert Einstein was also born in Ulm, Germany. Don't take too much from that comment. Surprisingly, we share very little in common, other than we have similar hair.

We eventually settled in Whitney Pier in Sydney, Nova Scotia, and my Nova Scotian colleagues would understand where that is. My parents lived there for nearly 60 years.

I was raised in a multicultural and multi-ethnic community, which shaped my value system. We were the only Jewish family in the neighbourhood. We were a religious family. Growing up, we accommodated our differences culturally, socially and economically. There was no internet or Google to keep us occupied. Sports and education brought us together. There were many challenges, but our community was resilient and hard-working.

My upbringing provided me with a strong sense of social and economic justice, which carried through my entire career as a public servant, as a judge and as a senator.

When I consider my time in the Senate, it feels too short, and, to be honest, I feel somewhat cheated. Maybe it's because of my age but, more so, we lost meaningful time due to the pandemic, an election, a prorogation and, of course, our important committee work was curtailed significantly.

• (1450)

During this time, we also sadly lost three of our own devoted senators: Senator Forest-Niesing, Senator Keating and Senator McCoy. Their contributions will always be remembered. In the Jewish tradition, we say, "May their memories be for a blessing."

Senators, I enjoyed my work with Senator Colin Deacon in the Banking Committee under the leadership of Senator Doug Black in preparing a report on open banking, which was well received by the fintec community. Indeed, the government is now proceeding to develop an open banking framework, as you know. It will help transform how financial institutions operate. It puts consumers first.

Also, as has been stated, I worked on Bill C-25, which modernized certain elements of the Canada Business Corporations Act. I am especially pleased with the corporate governance reforms with respect to directors' duties and board director diversity. I recognize that Senator Omidvar was somewhat disappointed that we didn't go far enough, but I might just say that there's more to be done and I hope you pursue it.

I worked closely with Senator Woo, and others, on Bill C-69, the wide-ranging environmental impact legislation. That was a massive undertaking for the Energy Committee under the chairmanship of Senator Galvez. The bill was studied over 36 committee meetings; those were the good old days. We worked very closely with other senators in passing this complex piece of legislation, which included numerous amendments from all across the chamber.

I served as a member of the Ethics Committee, which was very meaningful for me. We consistently approached our work with objectivity and fair-mindedness. I enjoyed working with all my colleagues on this committee.

I also think I can recall a period when I was chair of the Banking Committee. I was probably the shortest-serving chair of this committee in the history of the Senate, but at least I can put it on my CV.

Finally, I am most satisfied to have initiated a Senate consultation to examine the Canadian Competition Act in the digital era.

Honourable senators, I want to emphasize that this was a Senate consultation, and I believe the Senate should be proud of the fact that we've seen some action on the part of the federal government. Feedback from stakeholders who participated in the consultation indicated that it nudged government to proceed with limited — but important — amendments to the Competition Act. You have seen that in the pre-study to the budget implementation act. I am pleased that the government also intends to proceed with a broad-based stakeholder consultation in the future.

Honourable senators, I joined the Senate at an important time in its history and in the wake of the Supreme Court of Canada's decision regarding Senate reform, which clarified the federal government's ability to change the terms of Senate appointments.

I believe we are moving toward a Senate that is more reflective of Canada's diverse population, which is giving more voice to these perspectives and conversations. This has resulted in a more diverse scrutiny of bills and the initiation of special studies and inquiries, which also gives senators the opportunity to join different groups, changing the structural composition of the new independent model. It provides more options for senators. I had a very long chat about this with Senator Dean and I was very satisfied with my being able to present this to the Senate today.

Honourable senators, I believe the Senate is now functioning as it was originally intended — that is, as an independent and complementary legislative body of sober second thought, and not in competition with the House of Commons.

It is my belief that the Senate's reputation has improved over these last six years. The independent model appears to be building more confidence and trust with the public.

I also agree with the article Senator Harder wrote several years ago — it found its way into a constitutional magazine, which was quite surprising, Senator Harder — in which he asserts that the renewed Senate has acted neither as a rubber stamp for the government nor as a rival to the people's elected representatives.

In addition, I'm optimistic because I see positive developments in the Senate. Senators are moving between groups. There is more communication and collaboration. Senators from all groups, including the opposition — and I do respect the important work of the opposition; the challenge function is critical — are working together on bills, inquiries and motions in advancing social and economic justice in Canada.

Honourable senators, we live in a more complex and unfriendly world. Indeed, it is distressing to observe the brutality of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Parliament must continue to stand up against this cruelty and I am confident that it will.

It was Mark Twain who said that history may not repeat itself, but it rhymes.

In conclusion, I am grateful to have been part of an institution that represents Canada's diverse regional, linguistic, cultural and socio-economic interests.

The Senate has been hard at work and I have observed the thoroughness, commitment and thoughtfulness of the Senate's legislative and committee work.

I wish to thank my staff, Jonathan Bishop and Lisa Fisher. They have served me exceptionally well. They have juggled all my files — and there was no shortage of files — with dedication, enthusiasm and hard work.

Colleagues, I will now look forward to being less scheduled. I will spend more time travelling with Debbie, whom I would like to thank for always being by my side. I'm also going to spend more time studying music; Debbie often asks me, "How many guitars do you need?" I always say, "Just one more."

That's a message to Senator Gold.

I'm going to get back on the tennis court and start playing golf again. Maybe we'll have that golf game, Senator Plett; I hope we do.

There's always more to do. I've been asked to take on some new work — it's been hard to say no, but I'm trying to get better at it.

Honourable senators, it has been a pleasure and a privilege working with you. It's been an honour to be a senator. Thank you for your commitment. You have my deepest respect. Thank you for your friendship.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

AUDIT AND OVERSIGHT

THIRD REPORT OF COMMITTEE TABLED

Hon. Marty Klyne: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight, which deals with its obligation to report annually.

FOURTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Marty Klyne: Honourable senators, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report (interim) of the Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight, which deals with the Senate Charter on Audit and Oversight.

(For text of report, see today's Journals of the Senate, p. 608.)

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

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

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION BILL, 2022, NO. 1

FOURTH REPORT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMITTEE ON SUBJECT MATTER TABLED

Hon. Peter M. Boehm: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, which deals with the subject matter of those elements contained in Divisions 9, 18 and 31 of Part 5 of Bill C-19, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022 and other measures.

CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION IMPLEMENTATION ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate) introduced Bill S-9, An Act to amend the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act.

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

• (1500)

CRIMINAL CODE

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Pamela Wallin introduced Bill S-248, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying).

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

[Translation]

**CRIMINAL CODE
JUDGES ACT**

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-233, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Judges Act (violence against an intimate partner).

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

[English]

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker: Pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate on December 7, 2021, Question Period will begin at 4 p.m.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

POINT OF ORDER

SPEAKER'S RULING RESERVED

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Your Honour, I rise today on a point of order regarding Question Period. Actually, it's probably more of a request, Your Honour, for clarification around the parameters around Question Period.

Lately, some senators have taken the habit of asking questions to chairs of committees. That is certainly within the rules and we have no problem with that, as it is a useful tool to learn more about the work of committees. But I think, Your Honour, that you need to remind us and this chamber of the rules regarding those questions.

Yesterday, as you know, Your Honour, we had two senators asking questions of committee chairs, and it's our belief that in both cases the *Rules of the Senate* were not followed with those particular questions.

After Senator Black asked his question to the chair of the Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, you did remind him and the rest of the senators that questions should not be asked of subcommittee chairs and, in fact, by the rules cannot be asked of subcommittee chairs. I do regret the fact that you allowed, however, the question to be answered after ruling that it was out

of order. This incident clearly showed us, Your Honour, that clarification around the rules of these types of questions are needed.

As well, during yesterday's sitting, Senator Bovey asked a question of Senator Boehm in his capacity as chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee. While this particular question was on the business of the committee, which, of course, is required by the rules that the question needs to be placed on the business of the committee, the supplementary question was asked of Senator Boehm, which was asking him for a personal opinion. While I have the highest regard for Senator Boehm and his opinions — and a personal opinion from him would always be valuable — Question Period is not the moment or the place for senators to share our opinions.

The next concern that I have about Question Period is centred, in our opinion on this side here, on the length and time of the questions and the answers. As you know, we have established a mechanism whereby the time granted for questions and answers are limited when ministers come to this chamber, and I think it has worked very well. I think we can all agree that this allows for better rhythm and for more senators to be able to get involved and ask their questions.

I am not, at this point, suggesting that we start using a stopwatch each time a senator stands to ask a question. However, some senators' questions are getting borderline close to making Senators' Statements. And with the highest regard and respect for our government leader — and, indeed, for chairs — the answers, or non-answers, are equally long. That is unfair to senators who would like to ask a question, are at the bottom of the order and can't get to their questions.

Your Honour, I do not want this to be a debate in this chamber. I simply thank you in advance, Your Honour, for any consideration you might give to this request for clarification and simply ask, Your Honour, that you clarify for all of us the rules and parameters around Question Period and these types of questions. Thank you, Your Honour.

The Hon. the Speaker: Thank you, Senator Plett, for raising this important issue. I will take the matter under advisement.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION ADOPTED

Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate), pursuant to notice of June 1, 2022, moved:

That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, June 7, 2022, at 2 p.m.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

[*Translation*]

LANGUAGE SKILLS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Carignan, P.C., seconded by the Honourable Senator Housakos, for the second reading of Bill S-220, An Act to amend the Languages Skills Act (Governor General).

Hon. Chantal Petitclerc: Today I am speaking to Bill S-220, which is Senator Carignan's way of inviting us to make fluency in French and English a requirement for the position of Governor General.

While it is our responsibility to study this bill, I see this as an excellent opportunity to reflect on official bilingualism in Canada today, the protection of Indigenous languages and, in this context, our commitment to reconciliation.

• (1510)

Before I get to the substance of my speech, I would like to thank Senator McCallum and Senator Francis, whose comments and the reservations they expressed about this bill really gave me a lot of food for thought.

To be honest, I've learned more from all our Indigenous senators over my six years in the Senate than in the entire rest of my life. Thanks to you, I have been exposed to more of the historic and contemporary realities of Indigenous peoples than ever before. You made me think, reach outside my comfort zone and question assumptions I've been making since childhood that no longer work. However, even when one chooses change, when it is necessary and positive, change is never simple or easy.

[*English*]

Our colleague Senator Christmas once told me, "Reconciliation is a journey that we must all travel together." Honourable senators, this country that we now call Canada has embarked on this journey, and so has the Senate and each of us. I want my journey to reconciliation to be humble and ongoing. I realize it will be challenging at times, but I am committed to doing my part.

[*Translation*]

It is with that in mind that I wanted to address the chamber today.

I want to be very clear that my intervention goes well beyond the person of the Right Honourable Mary Simon, an inspiring woman with an exceptional career path, a fighter, a residential school survivor who managed to preserve her mother tongue despite the assimilative policies in force at those schools. Her national and international experience is impressive.

Former prime minister Paul Martin summed up what many people were saying, and I quote:

If there is one person who can help the country heal its wounds and move the reconciliation process forward, it is Mary Simon . . .

When she was appointed, against the very difficult backdrop of the discovery of unmarked graves at former residential school sites, I was filled with pride. What a historic appointment, symbolizing an important step forward in reconciliation.

However, as a francophone, I couldn't help but feel uneasy at the same time. I say this almost as a confession, because I know that this is a very delicate point and a feeling that many have shared. However, in any reconciliation process, whether personal or historical and national, one must be bold enough to have uncomfortable reflections and conversations in order to move forward.

In this case, as much as I am proud that we finally have an Indigenous person as the Queen's representative, I am not indifferent to the debate over her lack of proficiency in French; these feelings still coexist among many Canadians.

Canada is this unique identity made up of 70 Indigenous languages and more than 200 immigrant mother tongues. It is also two official languages, English and French, that are recognized under the Official Languages Act and protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which is itself enshrined in the Constitution Act, 1982. In fact, in an article that was published in 2019, Senators Cormier and Poirier said the following, and I quote:

. . . linguistic duality . . . is at the heart of Canada's social contract, and strengthens relationships among all Canadians.

All of these languages are central to our lives, our daily lives, at the breakfast table, in our communities, at work.

On that, Minister Petitpas Taylor, in introducing Bill C-13, said she understands the following:

. . . the importance of being able to grow up, work and live in one's own language.

She also recognizes the following:

. . . the fragility of our official language minority communities.

Finally, she notes that:

French is in significant decline in the country and that we must make a concerted effort to reverse this trend.

The fragility of French is real, and this must be a concern for us. In fact, history teaches us that it would be irresponsible to take anything for granted when it comes to the French language. On the contrary, the current situation compels us to remain vigilant.

Just recently, as Senator Carignan pointed out, an investigation by Radio-Canada revealed that more than four out of five deputy ministers or assistant deputy ministers in the federal public service are anglophones.

I will not revisit the recent controversies involving the CEOs of Air Canada and CN, companies that have no francophones on their boards of directors. These examples are indicative of the worrisome situation of French, and there are many others. In Quebec, according to the language projections of the Office québécois de la langue française, French will steadily decline as the language used at home. Quebec workplaces and francophone communities elsewhere in Canada have also not been spared. For example, Campus Saint-Jean in Alberta, where I had the pleasure of doing my university studies, is now at risk of disappearing.

It has been well documented that French-language minority populations do not always obtain services in their language, and that the linguistic identity of certain communities is jeopardized by rather worrisome rates of assimilation.

According to Raymond Thériège, the Commissioner of Official Languages, there are:

. . . more than 8 million French-speaking Canadians in a sea of more than 300 million English-speaking North Americans

The digital world, which is primarily English, increases that vulnerability and makes the need to protect French all the more urgent.

We do not have to look very far. Even here, it would be naive to think that unilingual francophones do not face any challenges in fulfilling their parliamentary duties. The fight for the French language must be fought alongside the fight to save many of our Indigenous languages. That is a reality that I understand because I witnessed it first-hand.

When I was an athlete, I was sponsored by a company based in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean and, as a result, I had the privilege of visiting the beautiful community of Mashteuiatsh. I remember visiting a school in the village where I met a classroom of children who were reclaiming their language. What really stood out to me, other than how proud the children were to teach me a few words of Nehlueun, was the look on the faces of the elders, who were moved to tears at hearing young people speaking their childhood language. That language had practically disappeared and was being revived thanks to their efforts. I never forgot that visit to Mashteuiatsh.

Let's now come back to the bill before us today. With this bill, Senator Carignan is proposing to amend the Language Skills Act in order to ensure that future governors general are required to speak and understand both official languages.

As an athlete, a delegation head and Companion of the Order of Canada, I had the great privilege of meeting five of our governors general on a number of occasions. These experiences helped me realize how important protocol is to the role of representing the Queen. Governor generals attend receptions, present awards and engage in myriad causes. It is certainly a demanding role, but I was deeply touched every time I was

invited. In their own way, they each shared an extraordinary ability to connect with us, to speak to us and to make us even prouder of being Canadian. As I speak, the memories come flooding back; I remember the wonderful conversations with Ms. Clarkson about physical activity with our Paralympians from across the country, as well as a long evening of culture and music hosted by Ms. Jean, at which everyone happily jumped back and forth between French and English. I could go on. One of the moments that touched me the most when I was Canada's chef de mission, was the beautiful reception in the garden of the Honourable David Johnston, who had agreed to participate in the torch relay. We were surrounded by children from the local English- and French-language schools. With his typical generosity, he spent many hours talking to them, asking them questions — just spending time with them.

• (1520)

Let's face it, this responsibility to fully exercise a representative role, this spontaneous ability to communicate with Canadians of all ages, in all contexts, in both official languages, cannot exist without a good command of these two languages.

Am I being dramatic? Maybe, maybe not, but I am troubled, to say the least. As much as this appointment is a promise, a hope, an inspiration for Indigenous youth, it is also a message to young francophones that, in the end, it does not matter that much if the person who assumes the duties of Canada's Head of State cannot speak their mother tongue.

That same message is being sent to all Canadians, young and old, conveying that, in the end, French is not necessary because we can always "work something out." That is what troubles me.

I've already asked Senator Carignan this, and it's a question I still ask myself. Why is it that, in many fields, both public and private, many highly qualified candidates, including business people, judges and the Governor General are not, at the time of their appointment, fluent in both official languages? Of course, that also opens them to a flurry of criticism.

Just last Tuesday morning, in *La Presse*, Agnès Whitfield, a professor in York University's English department, posed the following question:

. . . why should we worry about unilingual anglophone judges' career plans? People are not appointed to the highest court fresh out of law school. According to the Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs, the average age of a lawyer when first appointed to the bench is around 52 or 53. That means they have at least 20 years, if not 30, to learn French. Judges also have access to free French classes. What are we to infer from the fact that they consistently fail to work on learning French?

This shows that there are definitely major problems with the practice of bilingualism in Canadian institutions and the tools available to these individuals over the course of their career. Sadly, it also shows the little importance placed on learning both official languages in some environments. Being pressured to learn French or doing so out of obligation is not the same as doing it by choice, because you know it may help you get the job you want in the future.

The fact that we are in a situation where French continues to remain fragile shows that there are obstacles to bilingualism in Canada. We therefore need to dig deeper and ask questions about that. In an ideal world, we should not need the Language Skills Act.

Senator Dalphond was wondering whether the Language Skills Act is the best tool for correcting the structural problem created by this appointment. That is an interesting question. Here are some others. Will this bill help us achieve the objective? Will this challenge Canada's bilingualism as we currently know it? Is there a risk that this appointment will set a precedent? Do we need to better understand the mechanisms and realities that stand in the way of learning both official languages?

These are all important and defining questions, and we need to have the courage to dig deep to get answers. That is why, honourable senators, I am proposing that we send this bill to committee for study.

Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Duncan, debate adjourned.)

[English]

CITIZENSHIP ACT IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROTECTION ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

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

She said: Honourable senators, first I want to thank Senator Pate for helping me draft this bill and for her support throughout its stages. Her assistance has been invaluable to me, and I thank her for it.

I want to read the summary of the bill, honourable senators:

This enactment amends the *Citizenship Act* to provide citizenship for certain persons when they transition out of the care of a child welfare agency or foster parent. It also amends the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* to provide that, in certain circumstances, a removal order cannot be enforced against a person who was not a citizen when they transitioned out of such care.

At its core, this bill aims to address the issue of minors coming to Canada, being taken into government care and never becoming citizens because the government, their parent, failed to secure citizenship for them. As these children are taken away from their parents by our government, the government becomes their parent. However, the government consistently fails to carry out the responsibility of a parent when it comes to applying for citizenship. In fact, as things are, the government never applies for its children to obtain Canadian citizenship when they are under its care.

[Senator Petitcherc]

Consequently, on attaining the age 18, as these children are released from the Canadian foster care system, they face the risk of getting deported if they get in trouble. Many are sent back to the country of their parents, a country with which they have no connection and of which they, often, don't speak the language.

Honourable senators, this is a complete failure on the part of the government in its role as a parent to these minors. The bill will ensure that after living in Canada for a minimum of one year, a minor under foster care will be granted citizenship. In addition, it would prevent and/or blunt the unwarranted and unnecessary use of removal orders on adults who came to Canada as minors but never became Canadian citizens because of the fault of our government, which acts as their parent.

This bill will enshrine in law that all young people who come to Canada would obtain their Canadian citizenship, and that their rights are respected if they are taken into care. Currently, the Canadian government is failing some of the most vulnerable people. The Canadian government is failing the children who have come to Canada with hope for the future.

In 2007, the Canadian Child Welfare Research Portal's own review of provincial annual reports concluded that on any given day, over 65,000 Canadian children were in care. As these numbers date from 15 years ago, we can only imagine how they have increased since. And with that increase, so do we see more non-Canadian citizens raised by the government being deported back to the country of their parents — one that is unknown to them.

• (1530)

Of the countless stories of the anonymous victims of our foster care system, many of which have ended in deportation, let me share with you three cases that highlight the darkness and pain endured by those whose lives illustrate this reality.

Back in 2017, during the Senate's debates on Bill C-6, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act and to make consequential amendments to another Act, Fliss Cramman's case was cited as an example of why there is an urgent need to protect children without citizenship who are in Canadian care. That was in 2017, honourable senators, and the need has only grown since.

As a side note, we owe a lot of gratitude to Senator Oh's work on Bill C-6. Thanks to the work of Senator Oh, the Senate successfully amended the bill to add the clarification that non-parental guardians can apply for a child's citizenship, and that older children can apply for their own citizenship.

These improvements were an important step forward, but unfortunately, they were not enough. Even with these improvements, as it stands, Bill C-6 is not enough to ensure the protection of these children. Fliss Cramman's is one of the cases that exemplifies why.

Fliss Cramman came to Canada at 8 years old and became a Crown ward at age 11. She had mental health issues, as well as a history of suffering from violence and sexual abuse throughout her childhood in Canada.

When she committed an offence at age 33, Ms. Cramman — a mother of four and a professional chef — found out that she had never become a Canadian citizen.

Following her release from the Nova Institution for Women in Truro, Nova Scotia, Ms. Cramman was taken into custody by the Canada Border Services Agency. While in their custody, Ms. Cramman became very ill and had to be hospitalized due to a perforated bowel. While at the hospital, Ms. Cramman was shackled to her bed. In full shackles, Ms. Cramman underwent a hearing where she was told she was subject to removal from Canada.

Imagine, senators: This young girl came to Canada from the United Kingdom, spent her childhood in care and then, as an adult with children and a steady job, got into some trouble and found herself shackled to a hospital bed, being told she would have to leave the country that, for her, was home. She did not know the home of her parents.

In this instance, due to the national attention to her case and the work of the Elizabeth Fry Society, then-federal immigration minister John McCallum stepped in to prevent Ms. Cramman's deportation on compassionate grounds. Had Minister McCallum not stepped in, Ms. Cramman would have had to go to the United Kingdom right away, leaving behind her four children and a good career.

Ms. Cramman's case illustrates why the amendments to Bill C-6 are not sufficient, because simply allowing a child in care to apply for citizenship on their own becomes moot if the child does not know they lack citizenship in the first place. For too many, like Fliss Cramman, they do not know they are not a Canadian citizen until it is too late.

Another case that mirrors Ms. Cramman's is that of Kiwayne Jones. Mr. Jones was born in Jamaica. At 10 years old, he arrived in Canada with his parents. Less than a year after his arrival, then age 11, Mr. Jones was taken into care by the Children's Aid Society of Toronto. Not long after, he was made a permanent ward of the Crown — that is, the government became his family.

This means that Mr. Jones was a non-citizen who was removed from his family and placed into the care of the Ontario government. The Ontario government, in effect, became his family.

During the entire time of being under the care of the Ontario government, Mr. Jones did not have access to any of his personal documentation. Only when he was 21 did the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services return some of his documentation. When he received these documents, he discovered that his Jamaican birth certificate was no longer considered valid in his birth country, and that his Canadian permanent resident card was near expiration. Until then, Mr. Jones believed he was a Canadian citizen. Mr. Jones was beyond shocked when he heard this.

In Mr. Jones's own words:

"I kind of felt disowned. I felt confused. I couldn't understand what happened," Jones said in an interview with the Star, talking about the confusion over his status in Canada after he was no longer a Crown ward.

Mr. Jones rightfully questioned this and stated:

... the Crown has decided they're going to be my parents, and all the circumstances around that would mean I'm adopted as a Canadian, but that's not the reality of it.

For far too many, this is their reality. They come to Canada as children with their families, are taken into foster care and feel they are abandoned upon reaching majority.

Non-Canadian citizens raised as Crown wards face the risk of deportation to a country they do not even know. They are denied any benefits that come with being a Canadian citizen. They are denied their democratic and Charter rights. They lose critical educational and employment opportunities. They suffer unimaginable losses of their identities, communities and sense of belonging.

Honourable senators, numerous more cases have exposed the blatant injustices in the immigration system that led to individuals being unfairly at risk of deportation. Consequently, in Ontario, a multi-million dollar class-action lawsuit is being launched against the province for failing to obtain citizenship for non-citizen Crown wards. The representative plaintiff in the case is Kiwayne Jones.

According to the statement of claim filed in the Superior Court, the lawsuit will argue that the government has failed in its duties:

... to take all reasonable steps to maintain permanent residency status and pursue and obtain Canadian citizenship for the non-citizen Crown wards in its care.

Additionally, it mentions that Canada's failure to secure their citizenship status violates their constitutional rights.

Honourable senators, no matter where they came from, when these children came to Canada, they were expecting to have a new home and to be protected by their new country, especially when taken into the care of the government. They thought of themselves as Canadian citizens. Instead, following their arrival, they were taken into the care of the government; they were not Canadian citizens, but they were Canada's responsibility. Canada became these children's parent when they took them into care.

As you all know, being a parent comes with many responsibilities. The government cannot pick and choose which right to uphold according to its liking. On the contrary; these obligations are fundamental — fundamental to our obligations under international and domestic law and, arguably, under Canadian values.

Some of you may have heard about the case of Abdoul and Fatouma Abdi. Along with their two aunts, Abdoul, then age 6, and Fatouma, then age 8, came to Nova Scotia as refugees in 2000, fleeing Somalia.

In 2001, the siblings were taken into care by children's services when their aunt removed them from school in response to racist bullying they were experiencing. During the course of their time with children's services, Abdoul was moved around to different foster homes 31 times.

• (1540)

Worse yet, both Abdoul and Fatouma recounted detailed accounts of horrific histories of sexual, physical and emotional abuse while they were under the care of foster parents, including being forbidden from engaging in their traditional language or customs while in care.

Eventually, as a youth, Abdoul began accumulating criminal charges. When Mr. Abdi's aunt attempted to obtain citizenship for him, the service intervened on the basis that Mr. Abdi was a ward of the government and only the government could apply to grant him citizenship. Although children's services should have attempted to obtain Canadian citizenship for Mr. Abdi, they never did.

As a young adult, Mr. Abdi accumulated more serious criminal charges and ended up in custody. This led to his facing deportation through a removal order to Somalia, a place he did not know and did not have any connections to. In both 2017 and 2018, Abdoul faced deportation to Somalia after completing a prison term, but both orders were overturned by the federal court. In the ruling, it was noted that the government had a responsibility to secure Mr. Abdi's citizenship, which it had failed to do.

I repeat, the court held that the government had a responsibility to secure his citizenship.

Ultimately, the federal government dropped the deportation proceedings.

On the one hand, this case led policy change in Nova Scotia. It granted powers to social workers to apply for Canadian citizenship on a child's behalf. However, honourable senators, this is not enough. In order to truly rectify this injustice, federal action is needed. Bill S-235 is needed now.

Indeed, in 2018, Fatouma Abdi asked Prime Minister Trudeau a question about her brother's case at a town hall meeting. The Prime Minister acknowledged that Canada's care system failed Abdoul and that his situation:

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

Honourable senators, these are the words of our Prime Minister. Even the Prime Minister acknowledged this injustice to our children and said that it needed to be addressed. However, nothing has been done.

Clearly, Canadian immigration laws are unfair and unable to address this crisis facing our children. Current Canadian law allows for individual government departments to decide if and when to apply for a young person in their care to be granted citizenship. Far too often, these children never become citizens if the government does not apply for their citizenship, and many do not even know they are not citizens until they get into trouble.

The government fails them, and then they are left to pick up the pieces. We are failing our children.

Honourable senators, Bill S-235 will address this issue of minors coming to Canada, being taken into government care and never becoming a citizen because the government failed to secure their citizenship. Bill S-235 is the only way to meaningfully and comprehensively address this injustice. It is the only way to ensure that young people who come to Canada as immigrants and refugees are fairly protected and represented in our country while simultaneously ensuring that their most basic rights are upheld.

In closing, let me remind you that the courts have spoken on this issue. The Prime Minister has spoken on this issue, calling on the minister to act. The federal government stated twice in Mr. Abdi's case that the government had a responsibility to secure Mr. Abdi's citizenship, which it failed to do.

On top of that, the judges determined that if public authorities failed to take reasonable steps to secure his citizenship over a period of years, a valid concern about the appropriateness of deportation does arise.

Bill S-235 answers those concerns. I encourage you to think of all the children who are falling through the cracks. Honourable senators, we have an opportunity to right this wrong to our children, so I respectfully ask that you support this bill. Thank you, senators.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Paula Simons: Would the honourable senator take a question?

Senator Jaffer: Yes.

Senator Simons: Senator Jaffer, one of the challenges you and I have discussed is that it is provincial governments who are responsible for acting as the guardians of these children. It is provincial governments who are often the ones failing to apply for citizenship. Understanding, of course, that we can't tell provinces what to do, what do you hope your bill will accomplish to encourage provincial governments to actually make these applications in the first place?

Senator Jaffer: Thank you very much, Senator Simons. This is something that I have struggled with a lot, because it is true. We all know that it is the provinces who take the children into care.

But in our wonderful federal system, immigration law is under the federal government. It is something I really believe is our responsibility. So the immigration law can only be changed by the federal government or by us in Parliament. It is the beauty of

our federal system that if the federal law changes and becomes the law of the country, the provincial social workers would have to apply to get citizenship.

I have struggled a lot with this, but that's the only way to do it. The courts have held that as well, because the provinces don't form immigration laws.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

JANE GOODALL BILL

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Klyne, seconded by the Honourable Senator Harder, P.C., for the second reading of Bill S-241, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act (great apes, elephants and certain other animals).

Hon. Patricia Bovey: Honourable senators, I speak from the unceded territory of the Algonquin people.

I rise today in full support of Senator Klyne's Bill S-241, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act.

Several aspects of the act, as stated in the preamble, are of particular interest to me:

Whereas animal care organizations that meet the highest standards of animal care may serve the interests of animals across many species with regard to animal welfare, conservation, non-harmful scientific research and public education . . .

[*Translation*]

Whereas animal care organizations may contribute to wildlife rescue and rehabilitation, the provision of 25 sanctuary for animals in need, the restoration of wild populations and field research;

[*English*]

These summarize the goals, purposes and work of the Assiniboine Park Conservancy in Winnipeg — its zoo, gardens and parks. All the bill's goals have proven to be attainable.

I recently met with Margaret Redmond, CEO, and Grant Furniss, Senior Director of Zoological Operations, at the Assiniboine Park Conservancy, located on Treaty 1 territory within the Province of Manitoba, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dene and Dakota peoples and the homeland of the Métis Nation. I can attest to the fact that the

conservancy supports this bill in its current form. They referred to it as, ". . . a fantastic bill, trailblazing and revolutionary, and people are talking about it."

First, I declare an age-old personal history with this zoo. In the 1950s, my father, a knowledgeable animal conservationist, was the chair of the zoo's board. He and I went often — he walking, I on my bike. We spent much time behind the scenes with the keepers. As I can say, the attitudes I experienced then do not differ from those expressed throughout this bill. I am pleased to see those principles and standards coming into wide use.

• (1550)

Mr. Furniss told me the public is increasingly aware of animal welfare standards, expecting our zoos to be transparent and meet high standards — standards that constantly improve.

The Winnipeg Zoo's Journey to Churchill exhibit is an excellent advance expression of this bill. It is a rescue centre for orphaned polar bear cubs; they are rehabilitated at the Leatherdale International Polar Bear Conservation Centre and are on view in an expanded habitat. There is a truly informative education centre with panels in various languages, Indigenous ones included. They are also conducting a northern denning project as polar bear dens in the wild are under threat given fires and climate change.

The conservancy aims to assist in protecting the area — another goal of this bill.

This bill encourages field work. In addition to the Journey to Churchill exhibition, the Assiniboine Park Conservancy, in keeping with the scientific and animal welfare principles, does significant field work. A team goes to Churchill annually for their Beluga Bits program in which they monitor the belugas, and invite anyone in the public to participate. In this work, they connect with traditional knowledge, profiled in their Journey to Churchill. They also work with the Churchill Northern Studies Centre, and their climate change research includes University of Manitoba academics and others.

Internationally, they have signed a memorandum of understanding with Japan's Maruyama Zoo dealing with bears and climate change. There, brown bears — like our polar bears — are encroaching on populated areas. Both zoos are learning from each other's experiences and the impacts of climate change on those species.

In keeping with the conservation aspect of this bill, the Assiniboine Park Conservancy has worked diligently to preserve the Poweshiek Skipperling butterfly, which is dependent on the tall grass prairie. Their research has saved the species from extinction. Only about 50 were extant at the outset of their work. This year, they are about to release 300 back into nature; their first release several years ago was only six. This important conservation project, mirroring what this bill calls for, was based on primary research, breeding and release.

Zoos are moving away from being roadside entertainment centres to ones focused on animal welfare and rights, animal care, rehabilitation, wildlife rescue, sanctuaries, conservation and science. The Winnipeg Zoo's current master plan discussions include creating larger habitats for the animals. This may mean fewer animals and the creation of mixed species habitats.

Will the public be concerned about fewer species? No. Consultations have shown the public supports the zoo in ensuring animals have space and proper habitats. I was told it was important for animal care professionals not only to know the group of animals, but know them individually — their habits and reactions. The public also wants good information and education opportunities for lifelong learning and engagement.

Some question that this bill might create a two-tier system. It will not. It is not just for big zoos. I have been assured that any zoo of any size or budget can apply for accreditation. As Ms. Redmond said, "The door is open to all to apply for the licence."

I was also candidly told that had the Assiniboine Park Conservancy applied for accreditation in 2012, they know they would not have been successful. In 2014, they applied and were accredited. The fact is that they now support a bill that would have closed them down.

The accreditation process is rigorous, and CAZA, Canada's Accredited Zoos and Aquariums, and AZA, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, are there to assist. The accreditation criteria are scientifically based on publicly available standards. The zoo's entire operation is examined, including animal welfare, veterinary care, conservation, education, guest services, physical facilities, safety, staffing, finance and its governing body.

As we heard from Senator Klyne, there are 250 accredited zoos in North America. None — and certainly not ours — want to ally themselves with the lowest common denominator.

These zoos work together to make a positive difference. In the last year, they contributed \$200 million to conservation science. That's a huge contribution.

These organizations are aiming to be ready to repopulate species if they become extinct or are nearing extinction in the wild. For those determinants, accredited zoos rely on the International Union for Conservation of Nature, or IUCN, the global authority on the status of the natural world and biological diversity, and the required safeguarding measures.

Using quantitative criteria to evaluate extinction risks of thousands of species, the IUCN researches and maintains the Red List of threatened species. The Red List is currently assessing 134,425 species; 35,000-plus are threatened. Zoos make their breeding decisions based on that list and on scientific, genetic findings.

[Senator Bovey]

[*Translation*]

Education is important for students and for adults, who continue learning throughout their lives. The Morris & Rosalind Goodman Family Foundation has funded a school program for students in grades four to six since 2018. The students participate in a two-week immersion program with the Assiniboine Park Conservancy, during which they learn about climate change in Manitoba, to better understand its impact on Arctic animals.

[*English*]

What is the current status regarding wider agreement for these changes in the field? There is actually now an alignment of organizations that was deemed impossible a few years ago — humane societies, zoos, and Zoocheck are working together in creative and exciting ways. Is the public concerned about such shifts in our zoos? I don't think so.

Remember the Shrine Circus that travelled across Canada many decades ago? We went as kids and loved it, but after animals were banned in circuses, did we miss the dancing elephants? No, we did not. Were we upset when new regulations were put in place in pet stores? No, we were not. I honestly believe that society feels money should not be made off animals, whether in zoos, pet stores or elsewhere. Society wants good animal care, animal welfare and action on animal rights. That is what this bill is about — animal rights under human care.

Colleagues, zoos are museums. I recently gave the Canadian Museums Association's Fellows Lecture, titled *Museums to Lead*. Highlighting museological roles of collecting, preserving, presenting and educating, I said the following:

[*Translation*]

Museums manage our material, natural, scientific and creative past and present, as they always have, but I think that they play an increasingly critical role in our rapidly changing modern world, with its many profound paradigm shifts, including climate change. As leaders, museums have the opportunity and the responsibility to bring about substantive social change in the areas of public education, understanding, and humanitarian and environmental realities.

[*English*]

North America's accredited zoos do just that. As Mr. Furniss and Ms. Redmond opined, standards for animal care will continue to improve, and more zoos will seek and achieve that accreditation. Colleagues, this Jane Goodall act ensures animal welfare will be the determinant for a licence to operate. It is not about the size or budget of the zoo. It is about sanctuary, rehabilitation and operational standards based on science and in

collaboration between zoos internationally. Experience has already shown that attendance has increased in places enshrining these values.

Before I conclude, I want to invite you to the Assiniboine Park Conservancy and our zoo. On entering, to your right are the bison, and their importance to the history and life of Canada's First Nations and Métis people is evident. There is an offering bowl presented by First Nations leaders and informative Indigenous interpretation panels. A white buffalo is in the herd. White buffalo are considered sacred or spiritually significant in a number of Indigenous beliefs and are often visited for prayer and other religious rituals. Winnipeg Indigenous artist Jackie Traverse's painting *White Buffalo Calf* reflects that rich spirituality. She has included white handprints linking the human dimension with animal welfare and spirituality.

Colleagues, as Senator Harder mentioned, the Jane Goodall bill has been publicly supported by Coastal First Nations. In their letter, they stated the reason for their support. Coastal First Nations CEO, Christine Smith-Martin, said:

For far too long, our relatives, bears, wolves, cougars, whales, seals, sea lions, birds, salmon, halibut, herring, and all living creatures have not been recognized by Crown governments and modern society for the individual beings and collective societies they are a part of.

We live together and need each other to be healthy in the biosphere that the Creator placed us in. . . . Therefore, it is not difficult for our peoples, working through our Nation authorities, to say we support a law that offers protection to the animals we live and interact with.

• (1600)

Colleagues, human care, animal welfare, conservation, rescue, relocation and education are paramount in this bill. I congratulate Senator Klyne for this iteration of the bill, Senator Sinclair for its initial introduction and, of course, Jane Goodall for her dedicated and impressive career, vision and support.

I hope you will join me in moving this important piece of legislation to committee as soon as possible. Let's make animal lives better — those in human care and those in the wild — while assisting and ensuring their habitat meets their needs. After all, it's really about us in the end, and we need to do what's right in becoming true stewards of this planet. Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

[Translation]

QUESTION PERIOD

(Pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate on December 7, 2021, to receive a Minister of the Crown, the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, appeared before honourable senators during Question Period.)

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Honourable senators, we welcome today the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, to ask questions relating to her ministerial responsibilities.

Pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate on December 7, 2021, senators do not need to stand. Questions are limited to one minute and responses to one and a half minutes. The reading clerk will stand 10 seconds before the expiry of these times. Question Period will last one hour.

[English]

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

FOOD LABELLING

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Minister, welcome to the Senate of Canada.

Minister, the Minister of Health is proposing front-of-package labelling regulations which would require ground beef sold at retail to carry a "high in saturated fat" warning label. This would make Canada the only jurisdiction in the world to place a health warning label on its ground beef. Other countries have implemented front-of-package regulations, and they have chosen to exempt all single-ingredient, whole foods based on their nutritional value, including ground beef.

Health Canada is doing the opposite. I met with cattle producers yesterday, and they are very concerned about this measure. They have asked that ground beef be exempted from the regulations, just as butter, milk and maple syrup are exempted.

Minister, do you agree with this proposal, and would you commit to speak with the Minister of Health and ask him to ensure that cattle producers receive the exemption from these regulations that they are seeking?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food: Thank you. Yes. As you well know, and as you said, this is under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Health, but, obviously, I am following this project very closely since it might have an impact on our producers.

I'm glad that our dairy and beef producers have had the opportunity to be heard. I know that significant progress is being made in terms of understanding the nutritional value of our products and that it is being recognized.

The final decision hasn't been taken yet, but you can count on me to always advocate for our producers with my colleague the Minister of Health so we can find the right balance to protect the health of Canadians and also take into account the interests of our farmers.

Senator Plett: Thank you, minister. I'm not sure whether that was a yes or a no. But with respect, as I said, I met with the Manitoba beef producers, and they are very concerned about this measure. Margins are already extremely tight. Your carbon tax has hammered their profitability, and this measure is just one more hurdle that they cannot afford.

We see this in a number of other areas in the agricultural sector, where the NDP-Liberal government is deliberately choosing policies that make life more unaffordable for farmers and producers.

Minister, why does your government seem to be doing everything in its power to undermine our beef industry?

Ms. Bibeau: Thank you, senator. Our government has been most generous to the agricultural sector, our farmers and ranchers. Only last year, we invested, through business risk management programs and other programming, \$4 billion. That is a historical record.

We do care for farmers, and we are there to support them in different ways. In the last Fall Economic Statement and in the last budget, we are investing \$1.5 billion to support our farmers in different ways, so I would say that our government has the backs of farmers. We recognize their extremely important contribution to our food security and our economy, and also their dedication to sustainable agriculture.

Our government is there, and I can explain during the coming hour the different ways and programming that we are putting in place to support them.

BUSINESS RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Minister Bibeau, business risk management programs are critical for farmers, and given the rising costs of production, farmers are bearing more risk this year than ever before. It seems as though your government has no intention to make these programs more timely, predictable or bankable. Instead you're threatening to reduce access to farmers if they don't comply with certain practices that your government thinks they should, without even consulting the industry. As we know, your government announced plans to cut GHG emissions from fertilizer use on farms by 30% without consulting the provinces, the agricultural sector or stakeholders.

Minister, why are you more focused on limiting access to the business risk management programs than actually improving them?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food: Thank you, senator. Actually, we have increased AgriStability in the last year and a half. To increase AgriStability and to make it more timely, affordable, bankable and understandable, we have to do it in collaboration with the provinces, because these programs are funded 60% by the federal government, 40% by the provinces. We need two thirds of the provinces to be able to make significant changes to this program.

We did remove the reference margin limit, which was one element in AgriStability that made the program more difficult to understand and, therefore, less bankable. We made this important change that represents \$95 million more per year for our farmers who need it the most.

The federal government has put in a contribution of \$46 million that we could have put in place to improve AgriStability more by increasing the compensation rate from 70% to 80%. Unfortunately, we did not get the support of enough provinces to make this happen.

I can tell you that the business risk management program is doing better than it was before we arrived. Our government has increased financing to the business risk management programs, and we are, right now, in negotiations with the provinces for the next partnership agreement.

GREENHOUSE GASES AND AGRICULTURE

Hon. Mary Coyle: Welcome back to the Senate, Minister Bibeau. I am asking the following three brief questions on behalf of Senator Galvez, and I will ask them all at once.

First, minister, as you are aware, between 2019 and 2020, greenhouse gas emissions from Canada's agriculture sector increased. When do you forecast that emissions from this important sector will start to decrease?

Second, it is understood that livestock production generates more emissions than the growing of plants of equivalent nutritional value. Does your government promote plant-based diets as being key to a sustainable agricultural system? If so, could you tell us what policies are in place to do so?

Finally, minister, how do government subsidies of crops for human consumption compare with those related to crops for livestock production?

• (1610)

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food: Thank you.

The agricultural sector is one that contributes its share of GHG. We do have a strategy to reduce emissions from the agricultural sector. That is why we are investing so much to support our farmers to allow them, invite them and incentivize them to adopt better practices, like cover-cropping, rotational grazing and better management of fertilizer, for example. I'm talking about the On-Farm Climate Action Fund and clean-technology programming as well.

We are doing a lot in consultation with the sector. I am spending a lot of time consulting via Zoom and other platforms, but I'm also glad to be back in the field, travelling across the country to meet farmers and ranchers and having conversations with them. They are committed to doing their part. They understand; they get it. They are the first ones to be impacted by climate change, and they always want to do better.

We have dairy farmers and grain farmers who are both committed to zero emissions by 2050. It is encouraging to see their commitment to go in this direction, and we will be there to support them.

To respond to your second question, we have also invested significantly in the Protein Industries Supercluster. This is a sector that we strongly believe in. Last week, I was in Saskatchewan, visiting —

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Madam Minister, we have to move to another senator.

CARBON SEQUESTRATION

Hon. Colin Deacon: Welcome, Minister Bibeau, to the Senate.

I was thrilled to see that your mandate letter asked you to devise a strategy that enables farmers to reduce emissions, store carbon in healthy soil and enhance the resiliency of that soil. That directive points to the importance of soil carbon sequestration as a viable approach to mitigating climate change and enhancing the resiliency of our agricultural capacity.

This has received widespread support from farmers, academia, federal researchers at federal research stations, as well as major businesses and even charities, including the Shopify Sustainability Fund and the Weston Family Foundation's Soil Health Initiative. However, it has yet to receive support from your officials here in Ottawa. Minister, for those of us who are champions of this important approach, what questions would you need to have answered in order to confidently implement this directive? Thank you.

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food: We do work significantly in that direction. Increasing carbon sequestration is very important to us. I have already given a few examples of the programming we have to support farmers and incentivize them to adopt good practices.

We are investing in research and innovation to find better ways to capture carbon and also to measure it. Actually, in B.C. last week I visited a company that is developing equipment to measure carbon in the soil; we know it will be very important for our farmers to better understand and know what they can capture. Eventually, they could also be recognized financially for their contribution to the environment and our objective to reduce emissions.

That is why we are investing in research and innovation, also looking at Environment and Climate Change Canada to provide the offset system to support them. It's an area of work in which we are investing significantly.

CANADA WATER AGENCY

Hon. Marty Klyne: Minister, my question is about the Canada Water Agency. As you know, establishing the CWA is part of the mandate letters for you and the Minister of the Environment. It's a goal that I and many others hope to see the government move expeditiously on.

Given recent extreme weather events and increased risk in the future, establishing the CWA and rewriting the Canada Water Act are important priorities. They can help mitigate flooding, preserve safe drinking water, manage drought and limit forest fires. Water management also impacts food security in Canada.

Where do things stand with the establishment of the CWA, and do you have a timeline you can share with this chamber?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food: As you know, the Canada Water Agency is under the leadership of my colleague the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. I am working closely on that issue as well, particularly because the agricultural sector has a significant interest in it. A large part of the mandate of the agency would be related to irrigation and water management for agriculture. As you said so well, it has an impact on our food security and on sustainable agriculture, particularly considering last year's drought in one part of the country and floods in another.

Canada is blessed in having 20% of the world's fresh water, so we recognize that we have to put that strategy in place. We also have to bring all the experts from different departments together — all those who are working one way or another around the water resource — under this agency. In the last budget, you've seen \$43.5 million over five years that we will be investing in this. The work is in progress. We are still in consultations, so it is a bit too soon for me to give clearer direction on this.

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON ECONOMIC GROWTH

Hon. Robert Black: Thank you, minister, for joining us here today.

I would like to request an update on the Barton report targets as they relate to the domestic agricultural industry. As you may know, I have asked our Government Representative in the Senate to confirm whether Canada is on track to meet the Barton report targets.

In his response, my honourable colleague highlighted that he was:

... advised that the recommendation to reach \$75 billion in agricultural exports by 2025 is a target that the government is striving towards and, indeed, has internalized.

That being said, he also highlighted that we are about \$1 billion short of reaching those export targets.

However, a recent post made by The Grower, which announced Canada Agriculture Day for 2023, highlighted that Canada earned \$82 billion in exports in 2021, which is \$7 billion more than the 2025 target.

Minister, could you clarify whether Canada has indeed met the Barton report targets regarding agricultural exports? Thank you.

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food: Yes, we did reach \$82 billion in exports last year. At the same time, it has been a hard year because of weather conditions, but the prices were good. I believe the trade agreements we have signed through the years and diversifying by opening up new markets are helping as well.

We have seen two new processing facilities for the canola industry, so it's a good example of the investments being made in Canada in processing facilities, and adding value to our commodities also contributes to the economy and the success of our food sector in general.

We are also investing through AgriMarketing, which is a program that will support different sectors of the industry in diversifying their markets and opening up new opportunities.

So, yes, we've actually reached \$82.2 billion, which is 10% more than the objective.

CARBON TAXES FOR FARMERS

Hon. Denise Batters: Minister, at a time of war, pandemic and global food crisis in which food security is paramount, this Trudeau government continues to throw roadblocks in the path of Canadian agricultural producers who are trying to help solve those problems. Supply shortages and dry conditions, combined with out-of-control Liberal spending and crushing inflation, mean increases in the cost of everything, including farm input costs. All this Trudeau government delivers are a huge tariff to spike already high fertilizer costs and a skyrocketing carbon tax with a so-called rebate that returns agricultural producers only pennies on the dollar. Farmers in my province of Saskatchewan are having serious concerns about whether to even put crops in the ground in what should be the bread basket of the world.

When will your government get out of the way, exempt agricultural producers from your punishing carbon tax and let our Canadian farmers feed the world?

• (1620)

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food: Thank you. Actually, farmers benefit from some exemptions from the price on pollution: the

on-farm diesel and cardlock; the greenhouse sector also has a significant exemption. So we do recognize that and we are reinvesting the revenue from the price on pollution in the agricultural sector. We are returning a larger amount to the community in general, but we are also saving some part of these revenues to return to the agricultural sector. Last year, we're talking about \$100 million that is going back into the pockets of our farmers through this rebate, and \$121 million for the coming year. So we are returning it to our farmers.

It's true this year that everyone in every sector is facing an increase in their input costs and also in the price of sales of their produce. Once again, our government is there to support our farmers. We're talking about \$4 billion last year. It is a record. We are the government who has increased the business risk management programs. So I think we are definitely there to support our farmers.

[*Translation*]

TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKER PROGRAM

Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu: Good afternoon, minister. Welcome back to the Senate of Canada.

The labour shortage is a very serious issue in Canada. As you know, this shortage is killing our farms and processing plants across the country. Quebec is particularly hard hit by this problem, and it seems to me that the federal government bears a significant share of the responsibility. Backlogs in the processing of assessment applications are having a significant impact on the labour market. It often takes several months for the Department of Employment and Social Development to process these applications. The same is true when it comes to processing visa applications at Immigration Canada.

All of these delays are penalizing and discouraging workers in the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. The agricultural sector is one of the sectors that has been hit the hardest by the labour shortage. Does your department have a serious long-term plan to address this problem? Where do you think the bottleneck is? Why is it easier to enter Canada illegally than legally?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food: Indeed, the labour shortage is a blow to the agriculture and agri-food sector and many other sectors, but especially agriculture. It is absolutely true. Roughly a month ago, the Minister of Employment, Carla Qualtrough, announced important changes that affect processing plants in particular.

We have increased the maximum limit, and the number of foreign workers at processing plants can go from 10% to 30%, which provides more flexibility to our businesses. We extended the duration of the labour market impact assessment to 18 months, which is something the sector asked for. We also extended the work permits from two years to three years in some sectors for skilled workers, among others. A certain number of measures have already been brought in this past month to primarily help the processing plants.

As for farmers, the reform of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program is making progress. We are implementing a program for what is referred to as “trusted employers,” who are the vast majority of employers. Unfortunately, some are not, but for the trusted employers who treat their employees well, who provide them with housing in good condition, who respect the salary rules and meet health care and other requirements, we will ensure that they do not have to go through the entire process every year. I very much look forward to making the announcement.

[English]

GLOBAL WHEAT SUPPLY

Hon. Tony Loffreda: Minister Bibeau, welcome to the Senate. Ukraine is known as Europe’s breadbasket, and the war in Ukraine has many concerned. To what extent can Canada compensate for the lack of global wheat supply caused by this war? Are you having or undertaking discussions on this matter with your European and global counterparts and our wheat producers? As we know, after Russia, Canada is the largest wheat exporter in the world.

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food: Thank you. Absolutely. I was at the G7 about two weeks ago in Germany with my counterparts, and the Minister of Agriculture of Ukraine was with us, so we had the opportunity to listen to him and understand all the challenges that they are going through in the agricultural sector, such as seeing their agricultural infrastructure, transportation and storage, for example, being attacked, some fields having mines and not having access to the ports.

What can we do? We are obviously working with the industry, and what we expect right now is to see our Canadian wheat producers produce about 7% more. You know that these decisions are often made in the fall. Our producers prepare their coming season during the fall, they buy the inputs and have some rotational patterns that they have to follow. But still, if Mother Nature is with us, we expect to have about 7% more than in a regular year to contribute and avoid a wheat shortage, particularly for those countries who need it most.

[Translation]

PERMANENT IMMIGRATION IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

Hon. Julie Miville-Dechêne: Welcome to the Senate of Canada, Minister Bibeau. In addition to the need for temporary labour, there is also the issue of land use and occupancy. Not only do agricultural areas need seasonal workers, but they also need new residents to take over farms, ensure a younger demographic and justify keeping schools open. There is a need for permanent and not just temporary immigration. What could the minister do, together with the provinces, to increase the number of permanent immigrants in Canada’s agricultural sector and to make it easier for them to come to Canada?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food: I completely agree. The labour shortage is very difficult, especially for the regions. We have been able to implement specific programs to make it easier and faster for temporary agricultural workers to get permanent resident status, particularly in the Atlantic region. This pilot program has become a popular and permanent program in Atlantic Canada.

There is also a program in Ontario specifically designed for workers in the processing, greenhouse and mushroom industries, and it works well. There is still room for more participation. I would have hoped that such a program could have been created in Quebec, but the situation is different, since the provincial government makes the decisions about economic immigration. It was, however, something we were asked to do.

In my mandate letter, the Prime Minister asked me to develop an agricultural labour strategy. This all obviously requires improvements to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. Investments also need to be made in employment or internship programs for young people to get them interested in the agricultural sector. This sector is not limited to farm work; it also relies on new technologies and science, for example.

The Minister of Finance’s mandate letter also includes tax incentives to keep seniors working longer. By investing in child care services, we are trying to bring workers back to the workplace and to the regions. I come from a region, the Eastern Townships, and housing, which is a problem everywhere, is known to be associated with the labour shortage. As you know, the government is investing billions of dollars through the National Housing Strategy. Our strategy is quite broad, when it comes to labour.

[English]

FOOD SECURITY

Hon. Peter Harder: Welcome, minister. I’ll follow up on a question asked by my colleague Senator Loffreda with respect to global food shortages as a result of events in Ukraine.

It’s not just wheat, but also canola, barley, sunflower oil and a vast array of grains that are in turbulence in the global market. As you well know, food prices have shot up. The UN’s Food and Agricultural Organization suggests that we’re at the highest levels of food costs since the index was created, and it is rising by over 10% a month. That’s very disturbing not only for Canadian consumers, obviously, but I am particularly worried about the impact in the less developed world. You will know the dependency on foodstuffs and grains from Ukraine is very significant, particularly in some portions of Africa.

• (1630)

Could you report to us what work you are doing with other departments, and in particular your former department of International Development, to balance increased exports and to fill the gaps that are necessary for the well-being of the least fortunate?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food: Thank you. Yes, this is particularly disturbing, and even more so for a former minister of International Development.

We are working closely with Minister Sajjan, the current Minister of International Development, supporting the World Food Programme, among other important partners.

We have recently provided \$245 million for humanitarian assistance in Ukraine, and even more to face the situation in the other countries who normally are being supplied by Ukraine. This is something that we pay attention to. We made sure that our Canadian producers were in contact with the World Food Programme, for example. I know that we are a big supplier to the World Food Programme as well.

Another thing that the Ukrainian agriculture minister has asked us in order to help them take some of their production out of the country to supply their normal consumers is to provide equipment to help them issue the export certificates for their production.

With the European Union and the United States, we are also looking at different ways, paths and alternative routes to get their grain and oil out of the country. We are working on that. In Canada, we are having a look at the equipment related to food export certificates.

CANADIAN GRAIN

Hon. Robert Black: Minister, I recently met with agricultural industry stakeholders to discuss the Canada Grain Act review process. They highlighted that this review is an important step forward, and I shared that in a letter to you earlier in May.

The *What We Heard Report* document produced from the government's consultations also highlights that this process was a half-century in the making, since the last comprehensive amendment took place in 1971. In fact, it is especially important given how dramatically the nature of grain delivery by farmers has changed.

Stakeholders shared their perspective that the review process should move away from an industry-versus-government regulatory scenario, and instead focus on how to support the value chain and ensure Canada's place as a superpower in the global grain sector, especially in light of the war in Ukraine, which is impacting food security around the world.

Minister, will the government commit to supporting Canadian grain through policy and practice to ensure that Canadian grain remains a trusted brand and solidifies our position as an efficient supplier for the global community?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food: Thank you.

We definitely do commit to support our grain producers and make sure that we keep this brand trusted, as Canadian food is known for being sustainable. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency allows us to have such a good reputation because our inspection system is very robust.

The Canadian Grain Commission is involved in the consultation, and I have been following this closely. There are some recommendations that will find consensus quite easily. Some of the proposals that have been brought forward do not necessarily make this consensus yet and could bring two very different business models for the commission.

It is definitely worth an in-depth analysis of the different paths that we might move forward with. This is something that I definitely care about and the department is working together with my team, obviously, because we want to find the right direction. Well, there are some paths in front of us that are quite different, so it has to be done in a very diligent manner.

FERTILIZER TARIFF

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan: Thank you. Welcome to the Senate, minister.

Minister, over a month ago, the grain growers of your province of Quebec joined the grain farmers of my province of Ontario to ask you to take immediate action to eliminate the burden on farmers caused by tariffs your government imposed on fertilizer from Russia. In many cases, this fertilizer was purchased last fall, well before the illegal invasion of Ukraine. Vladimir Putin is not hurt by this tariff — Canadian farmers are, at a time of growing food insecurity worldwide.

Minister, you have known about this issue for two months and yet your government has done absolutely nothing to fix it. Why is that, minister? You told the media you're "following the situation" and "exploring options." Are you going to take action to actually help the farmers?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food: I understand very well what you are talking about — the customs tariff of 35% being imposed on Russian fertilizer as it is included in our financial sanctions against Russia.

First, we acknowledge it was very important to make sure that this fertilizer was coming to Canada. That was the first issue. It is a matter of food security. We did what was necessary to let the boats get to the Canadian ports, and the fertilizers reach the farmers.

What we've also done quickly — and I'm still looking at other options with my colleagues — is a modification to the advance payment program. This program is meant to support grain producers and horticultural — fruit and vegetable — producers to have access to an interest-free loan of up to \$100,000; it could go up to a loan of \$1 million.

Normally, they can get this loan in two payments, one in April, more or less, and one in July when they confirm what they have really planted, based on the revenue they expect for the coming fall. So we have allowed them to get 100% of this loan as soon as they submitted their request. So that was a quick change that has been made to a program. I'm still looking at different options with my colleagues.

[Translation]

TRANSFER OF SMALL BUSINESS

Hon. Éric Forest: Thank you for being with us today, minister.

With respect to land occupancy, one of the important steps is to ensure the continuity of family farms. This is an important issue as our farmers are facing many economic pressures. The average age of farmers continues to rise, and less than two thirds of them have a designated successor.

For many years, our tax rules have penalized those who want to transfer their business to a family member. It is more profitable for them to sell the business to a stranger or to simply close down, which undermines land occupancy.

We have known about this problem for a long time. The Prime Minister had asked you to resolve this issue in your previous mandate letter.

Last June, the Senate and the House of Commons passed Bill C-208 to correct this inequity. However, nothing has happened since then. Bill C-208 still has not been implemented. Budget 2022 only proposes a consultation process, even though this issue has been studied for several years.

How do you explain that, 12 months after Bill C-208 was passed, this legislation still has not been applied or come into force?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food: Our family farms are at the heart of the agricultural sector and land occupancy. I could not agree with you more.

Bill C-208 has been passed and is in force. People can now transfer or sell their business to a stranger or a family member under similar conditions.

I assume that the honourable senator is referring to our announcement that we want to clarify the definition of intergenerational transfer and we therefore plan to introduce a second bill.

I want to reassure people that if they are in a situation where they are making a true intergenerational transfer and are transferring their farm to family members, there is nothing to worry about. However, officials at the finance department have found that there were some abuses in the past with older legislation. We need to clarify what an intergenerational transfer is, so that this business transfer is not used as a simple tax evasion tool.

• (1640)

[English]

CROP INSURANCE PROGRAM

Hon. Patricia Bovey: Thank you for being here, minister. You mentioned Mother Nature. The flooding in Manitoba is devastating. Fields are sodden and wet, and many are under water.

According to the latest crop report in Manitoba for the period ending May 31, seeding progress sits at 40% completion behind a five-year average of 91% for week 21. We are all worried about food prices and shortages due to the weather here at home combined with the situation in Ukraine.

How is your department working to mitigate these concerns and those farmer concerns for crop insurance, as some insurance end dates for planting are nearing us, like corn, which ended May 30? If farmers risk planting after the end date, what help will your government give if weather continues to be detrimental?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food: We have a range of business risk management programs, mainly four. We have crop insurance, and I am in discussion with the provinces because, once again, these programs are cost-shared and often managed by the provinces. A discussion is happening with the provinces in terms of the delay.

There is AgriStability, for example, another business risk management program besides crop insurance. It will kick in if a producer sees a significant decrease in their margins. There is also AgriRecovery that a province would start if a situation — often a weather event — creates exceptional costs for a sector or for a region, for example. This applied last year because of the drought in the Prairies and in Ontario and because of the floods in B.C. The AgriRecovery program worked quite well. The collaboration with the provinces was good, and we were able to make these programs work quickly when we were faced with those situations.

These are two of the programs that could be used if the situation doesn't get better.

[Translation]

TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

Hon. Jean-Guy Dagenais: Minister, Mr. Harper's Conservative government signed an economic partnership agreement with the United States, Mexico, Australia and Asian countries. That was the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Unfortunately, President Trump tossed aside the agreement, which would have benefited Canadian businesses and our farmers.

Just a few weeks ago, President Joe Biden opened talks for a new economic agreement with a dozen Asian countries, but he didn't ask Canada to participate, which is an insult, especially given that the Prime Minister considers President Biden to be Canada's friend and ally. Some friend, right?

The fact is, President Biden is playing for the United States, and only the United States, with his Buy American procurement policies. This will most definitely affect agricultural production in Canada.

Can you explain why the Americans took this unilateral action? How are you going to address the worrisome fact that the Canadian Prime Minister is being left out of these discussions?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food: I would say that we've been very successful with free trade agreements in recent years. For instance, we concluded an agreement for the trans-Pacific region with countries in Asia. We also reached agreements with the European Union, the United States and Mexico. It seems to me that Canada is already well covered in terms of relationships and trade agreements with the countries targeted by the United States.

As you know, this file is managed by my colleague Mary Ng, the Minister of International Trade. Obviously, everything related to international trade is a pillar of agriculture, along with research and innovation. This is extremely important to us. We already have some windows of opportunity to develop markets in many countries. There are also business opportunities that we are trying to develop, in partnership with the industry and various associations in the agricultural sectors that have an interest in countries or other jurisdictions. Ultimately, it is our farmers and their associations that set their priorities with respect to the countries where they want to develop their markets. Canada is already very well positioned with these three very important free trade agreements.

[English]

COMPENSATION FOR DAIRY FARMERS

Hon. Judith G. Seidman: Welcome to the Senate, minister.

Minister, my question concerns full and fair compensation for dairy farmers for what they've lost under the CUSMA trade agreement. In the April budget, your government said compensation for CUSMA won't be announced until the fall 2022 Economic and Fiscal Update.

In response, the Dairy Farmers of Canada said, "In tabling Budget 2022 without details, the government missed an opportunity to provide predictability to the industry."

Minister, the new NAFTA came into force almost two years ago, on July 1, 2020. Why is it taking so long to fulfill this promise to dairy farmers?

[Senator Dagenais]

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food: Thank you. I think you know how much I care for our dairy farmers. I have almost 500 dairy farmers in my region. This is a file that I follow closely.

We first signed the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, or CPTPP, and the equivalent with the European Union. We announced the full and fair compensation for our dairy farmers. We already had an investment program of \$250 million, and then we added \$1.75 billion. It was supposed to be spread over eight years. However, at year two, and with COVID-19 happening, I felt that it might be challenging to complete the discussion on CUSMA.

As a government, we decided to bring back this commitment to pay for the two first agreements over eight years and to pay over four years. The idea was to pay over four years and deal with COVID and with everything else so it gives predictability to the dairy farmers. Then we will have time to sit with them again and to complete CUSMA for years five to eight.

Our dairy farmers still have predictability in that they already know what they will receive in 2023. Our commitment is that in this Fall Economic Statement they will know what they will receive for the following years for the agreement with the United States and Mexico.

[Translation]

TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKER PROGRAM

Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie: Good afternoon, minister.

For some agriculture and agri-food businesses, temporary foreign workers have become essential. An article in *Le Devoir* indicated that 74% of those welcomed through this program do not know French when they arrive in the country, which limits their ability to integrate and understand their rights. All of this creates a double linguistic and economic gap for Quebec and francophone communities in Canada.

Given that Haiti has an abundance of skilled labour, how could you bridge the gap between Haiti and Canada to mutually help our francophone farming populations?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food: Thank you. That is an interesting idea. Our foreign worker programs start with a bilateral agreement between Canada and the source countries, primarily Mexico and Guatemala in the case of temporary foreign worker programs.

That would be the first step, if the country showed an interest. This could be discussed with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. Then, that community could potentially be integrated into the program.

I would like to take this opportunity to say that, as the Minister of Agriculture, my objective is to address the labour shortage through foreign worker programs, but we also have concerns about the safety of these workers. Minister Qualtrough and I want to make sure that we implement the measures needed to ensure that our workers are better integrated despite the language barrier.

I have met a large number of farmers who now speak Spanish very well. Rather than the workers learning French and English, the farmers have learned to speak Spanish so they can communicate properly. We want to ensure that these workers are better integrated. Last year, funding was provided to non-profit organizations such as Actions interculturelles in my region. These organizations have supported workers in their communities.

• (1650)

[English]

LAKE DIEFENBAKER IRRIGATION PROJECT

Hon. Marty Klyne: Minister, my question is on the Lake Diefenbaker Irrigation Projects. As you will know, in 2020, the Province of Saskatchewan announced a \$4 billion irrigation investment project at Lake Diefenbaker. Once completed, this project will irrigate up to 500,000 acres of land, which will double the amount of irrigable land in the province. Construction of the Gardiner Dam began in the late 1950s when John Diefenbaker was the Prime Minister. Sixty years later, we still do not have the required water security for the Prairie provinces, and Canada is denied the significant benefits of this project, including positive climate change impact, opportunities to manage flooding and droughts on the Prairies and a just transition to bolster labour and prosperity.

For the sake of bolstering Canada's food security and economic stability, is the Government of Canada considering partnering with the Province of Saskatchewan to help make this a reality?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food: Thank you for the question. This is definitely a significant infrastructure project in a critical sector — water. As you know, the Department of Agriculture, at the federal level, is involved in international trade, science and innovation and supporting our farmers. And through the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, we have other responsibilities, of course.

When it comes to infrastructure, it falls either under the jurisdiction of my colleague the Minister of Infrastructure or potentially also the Minister of Industry, who is responsible for the Canada Infrastructure Bank. As far as I know, the Infrastructure Bank is following this project and looking at it very carefully because it is one of the five strategic areas of the bank, with \$1.5 billion available to invest in irrigation projects.

This is definitely a project of interest that we want to follow. Through which channel, I cannot be more specific, unfortunately. It is not under the agriculture department, but there are potentially other opportunities. However, there is definitely the Infrastructure Bank.

[Translation]

CHINA—CANOLA EXPORTS

Hon. Jean-Guy Dagenais: Minister, China just lifted the ban on canola imports from two of Canada's largest producers. That is excellent news for our producers, who, for the past three years, have been paying the price for the diplomatic quarrel that followed the arrest of a Huawei executive in Canada. In 2019, Canada supplied 40% of the canola used in China, which means that our industry lost billions of dollars. To justify the ban, the Chinese alleged that something dangerous had been found in canola from the two Canadian suppliers.

Can you tell us if the quality of the canola has changed since 2019 or if this was just a diplomatic excuse? I would also like to know how much this dispute with the Chinese cost the thousands of workers in the industry and Canadian taxpayers as a whole in terms of sales lost, jobs lost and government subsidies.

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food: Our industry has once again proved to be very resilient because the canola sector had a record year in 2019-20, partly because of prices, but also because producers were able to diversify their exports. Since then, two major plants have been built and major investments have been made in processing plants; this is value added here, at home.

It's true that the two main exporters lost access to the Chinese market, but these business people were able to reposition themselves quite well. We were able to support them in different ways. We had to take the matter before the World Trade Organisation, because we had tried every possible way to have a technical discussion with the Chinese authorities but were unsuccessful. We therefore took the matter all the way to the WTO, which has since authorized those two companies to start doing business again.

Yes, it can be challenging to have discussions based on science, but Canada will always be a country that defends and promotes trade based on rules and science. To answer your question, the canola sector has actually had some very good years.

[English]

FARM AND FOOD DEVELOPMENT CANADA

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Minister, during the 2019 federal election campaign, your government promised food producers that they would replace Farm Credit Canada with a new entity called Farm and Food Development Canada. Yesterday, we received from you an answer to a written question on the Senate Order Paper on this subject which confirms your government, at this point, has no intention of following through on this commitment.

Minister, is this a case of your government making an election promise to farmers without having any idea on how to implement it? Or did you ever really intend to follow through on this promise?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food: Fall 2019 and the beginning of COVID were very close. It was our intention in the fall of 2019. This commitment was also coming with a commitment to invest \$500 million more in Farm Credit Canada. COVID happened and we needed to shift our priorities and to adapt to the situation. This \$500 million has been given to Farm Credit Canada so they were in a position to better support our farmers during COVID. They were able to have more flexibility in their terms with their farming clients. So it was important.

You have noted that in my mandate letter of 2021 the idea of changing the name and maybe reanalyzing the structure is no longer there. I would say that because of COVID and perhaps because of the new situation, we have identified other priorities. But Farm Credit Canada definitely is still an important tool and an important organization in our agricultural environment.

CHINA—CANOLA EXPORTS

Hon. Peter Harder: My question, Minister Bibeau, is a bit of a follow-up to Senator Boisvenu's question. I seem to be following up everyone else's questions. It is with respect to canola and the export market in China. First of all, congratulations to you and the officials who have worked for so many years now on this issue. My concern is that as the market in China now opens, we take advantage of the enhanced value that production facilities that have been added since the market closed, and that we export an upgraded product and not low-grade, unprocessed canola to China.

Are you working with the Canola Council of Canada to ensure that while the market opens, we not revert to a low end of the market but persist at the high end?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food: Thank you. Sometimes it is when we face adversity that we become more innovative. I am so proud that the industry has risen to the challenge and invested in important processing facilities. I would say at the end of the day, it is the industry and the business people who will make the decision. I am quite confident that they see their interest in value-added.

Actually, last week, once again in Saskatchewan, I was visiting oil seed processing facilities, let's say, and it gives a lot of hope in the development of this sector — one senator was talking about the vegetable proteins. I think there is a lot of potential out of this, investing through the Innovation Superclusters Initiative. This initiative is allowing innovation to take place, and we are at a stage of commercializing some of these innovations.

It is a sector in which we see a lot of potential. I would say that Canada is a leader in the protein industry right now.

[Senator Plett]

BEEF PROCESSING

Hon. Paula Simons: Thank you very much, minister. With regard to beef slaughter in Canada, 84% is done by just two companies — JBS Foods Canada and Cargill, two large multinationals. Cattle producers and consumers, thus, are captive to a market without competition. According to Alberta government data, prices for slaughtered cattle and calves in Alberta stayed almost unchanged between January 2021 and January 2022, but over the same period retail beef inflation in Canada rose by 15.4%, while beef consumption went into sharp decline.

• (1700)

Minister, while I understand there are no easy answers to increasing slaughterhouse capacity, what steps are your government taking to protect Canadian consumers and beef producers from this degree of corporate concentration?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food: You're right. There is no easy answer to this one. It's not the government who will conduct this business, of course. It comes back to the industry.

When I travel across the country, what I hear in many regions is the need for regional slaughterhouses, and it comes down to the question about federal and the provincial jurisdiction regarding inspection. At my last meeting with my provincial and territorial colleagues in Guelph, we identified this as a priority. We have asked the CFIA to work on facilitating interprovincial trade and access to this certification.

It's a challenge because at the federal level we have to remain at the international level. What goes through a federally inspected slaughterhouse can be exported, and the challenge is that we cannot go lower for interprovincial trade because we have to comply with our international trade commitment. There is a challenge there, but it has been identified as a priority.

FOOD SECURITY

Hon. Pat Duncan: Thank you, Minister Bibeau, for your attendance today.

Several colleagues have spoken about food security. Not all Canadians and North Americans are aware of how the North has become increasingly food secure. The Yukon has several initiatives that are important to note: egg production, locally produced and packaged flour, many locally grown vegetables and, this year, dairy milk that did not come up the Alaska Highway by truck. The increased costs to farmers have been mentioned; these increased costs are much higher in the North. Many Yukoners are prepared to pay higher prices for a local product. However, the significantly higher cost of production is challenging for the farmers when it comes to expanding their markets to the west in Alaska, to the east in the Northwest Territories and even into southern Canada.

Is there any specific assistance that you or your department can elaborate on for me, today, that offers farmers not in the traditional farming areas an opportunity to enhance North America's food security in the North?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food: Thank you. There are probably opportunities through my colleague Minister Vandal, the minister responsible for the North, as well as through the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency. What I see under Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is an initiative that we launched recently that directly targets our northern and remote communities. It's the last call for proposals under the Local Food Infrastructure Fund.

It's not for farmers, but it is meant to strengthen the local food system in a region. The idea is to bring partners together, which could include farmers, grocers, food banks and whoever the players in a region's food system are. The funding could go up to \$250,000. This call for proposals is currently open and it targets remote, northern and Indigenous communities.

[*Translation*]

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

[*English*]

I'm certain you will want to join me in thanking Minister Bibeau for joining us today.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

NATIONAL FINANCE

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY A ROAD MAP FOR POST-PANDEMIC ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICY TO ADDRESS HUMAN, SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL COSTS OF ECONOMIC MARGINALIZATION AND INEQUALITY—
DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Pate, seconded by the Honourable Senator Duncan:

That the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance be authorized to examine and report on a road map for post-pandemic economic and social policy to address the human, social and financial costs of economic marginalization and inequality, when and if the committee is formed;

That, given recent calls for action from Indigenous, provincial, territorial and municipal jurisdictions, the committee examine in particular potential national approaches to interjurisdictional collaboration to implement a guaranteed livable basic income; and

That the committee submit its final report no later than December 31, 2022.

(On motion of Senator Martin, for Senator Plett, debate adjourned.)

HUMAN RIGHTS

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO DEPOSIT REPORT ON THE STUDY OF ISSUES RELATING TO HUMAN RIGHTS GENERALLY WITH CLERK DURING ADJOURNMENT OF THE SENATE

Hon. Salma Atallahjan, pursuant to notice of May 19, 2022, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights be permitted, notwithstanding usual practices, to deposit with the Clerk of the Senate, no later than September 16, 2022, a report on issues relating to human rights generally, if the Senate is not then sitting, and that the report be deemed to have been tabled in the Senate.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

ROLE OF LEADERS' DEBATES IN ENHANCING DEMOCRACY BY ENGAGING AND INFORMING VOTERS

INQUIRY—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Donna Dasko rose pursuant to notice of November 24, 2021:

That she will call the attention of the Senate to the role of leaders' debates in enhancing democracy by engaging and informing voters.

She said: Honourable senators, I note that this item is at day 15, and I am not prepared to speak at this time. Therefore, I move the adjournment of the debate in my name for the balance of my time.

(On motion of Senator Dasko, debate adjourned.)

(*At 5:09 p.m., the Senate was continued until Tuesday, June 7, 2022, at 2 p.m.*)

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