



# DEBATES OF THE SENATE

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1st SESSION



44th PARLIAMENT



VOLUME 153



NUMBER 124

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, May 16, 2023

The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,  
Speaker

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Published by the Senate  
Available on the Internet: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>



## THE SENATE

Tuesday, May 16, 2023

The Senate met at 2 p.m.

[*Translation*]

[*Translation*]

### SPEAKER OF THE SENATE

READING OF COMMISSION APPOINTING HONOURABLE  
RAYMONDE GAGNÉ

**Hon. Raymonde Gagné**, having taken the chair at the foot of the throne, rose and informed the Senate that a Commission had been issued under the Great Seal of Canada, appointing her Speaker of the Senate.

*(The said Commission was then read by the Clerk.)*

Prayers.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Colleagues, thank you for the warm welcome.

Before I take my seat in this chair, let me take a few minutes to say a few words to you, in the tradition of my predecessors.

I am very humbled by this appointment made by the Governor General, Her Excellency Mary Simon. I thank the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, for his confidence in me. I will do my best to prove myself worthy of his trust and to earn yours in this Senate, which we hope to be ever more open and inclusive.

The Senate has a long and inspiring history. I think it is worth taking a closer look at the list of distinguished Speakers of this august chamber.

[*English*]

I note, for example, our last female Speaker, the Honourable Renaude Lapointe; our last Speaker from Manitoba, the Honourable Gildas Molgat; and, more recently, the Honourable Noël A. Kinsella, the Honourable Pierre Claude Nolin, our current colleague the Honourable Leo Housakos and, of course, the Honourable George J. Furey, who has left me such large shoes to fill. I am deeply honoured to have been given the chance to join such a distinguished group of individuals and I will do everything I can to measure up to the high standards they have set.

Colleagues, in this new role, I will rely upon your cooperation, your understanding and your support. This is the house of all senators to pursue excellence in our work and to always keep a focus on the needs of the regions and the individuals whom we serve and represent and who together make Canada such a great country.

*Meegwetch.* Thank you.

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

### THE HONOURABLE RAYMONDE GAGNÉ, C.M.

CONGRATULATIONS ON APPOINTMENT AS SPEAKER

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** I rise today to congratulate you on your appointment as the Forty-sixth Speaker of the Senate of Canada. I am confident that you will preside over this chamber with the same fairness, integrity and respect for the institution and for your colleagues that have characterized your work since you were appointed to the Senate and in your capacity as Legislative Deputy.

• (1410)

[*English*]

Speaker Gagné, you began your career teaching in a small school in rural Manitoba. You then became its principal, and before your appointment to the Senate, you capped a long and illustrious career in education as President of the Université de Saint-Boniface between 2003 and 2014.

You have also been an outstanding advocate for minority language rights, and an important representative for Franco-Manitobans and minority-language communities across the country. Your legacy is etched in your many contributions to the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages and to the important studies it undertook. Indeed, the first message from the other place that you will be reading today will be on Bill C-13, an act for the substantive equality of Canada's official languages. Madam Speaker, I cannot think of a more fitting message.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, it has been a great privilege for me to work closely with you. Over the past three and a half years, I have benefited from your wise counsel and your knowledge and respect for the Senate as an institution, including as it relates to the importance of continuing our modernization efforts.

You are a trusted colleague and friend who will be missed by Senator LaBoucane-Benson and the entire team in the Government Representative Office. At the same time, I'm filled with pride and gratitude that you've accepted this appointment. I know the Senate is in good hands.

As the Government Representative in the Senate, I look forward to renewing our working relationship as well as working with the opposition, the various groups and all unaffiliated senators in the service of Canadians. Once again, Madam Speaker, let me offer my sincere congratulations.

[English]

**Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, on behalf of the opposition and the Conservative caucus, I wish to congratulate you on your new appointment as Speaker of the Senate of Canada.

Indeed, I am pleased to see a Manitoban colleague take on this historical responsibility as Canada's Forty-sixth Speaker of Senate. As has already been mentioned, you are the second Manitoban to become Speaker. The first was Senator Molgat of Ste. Rose du Lac from 1994 to 2001.

On a personal note, Madam Speaker, because of your new role, I will miss some of the times we had in airport lounges visiting and having a cup of coffee before we would fly to Ottawa and Friday mornings before returning to Manitoba. I remember fondly not the days of COVID but the days when you and I travelled together, just the two of us, back and forth from Winnipeg to Ottawa. It was a great opportunity to get to know you on a personal level.

Madam Speaker, short of being a good Conservative, I believe that you are, indeed, the best choice the Prime Minister could have made as Speaker of the Senate. I find myself in uncharted territory in agreeing with the Prime Minister of Canada.

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

**Senator Plett:** Colleagues, our new Speaker has demonstrated her steady hand in her previous roles as a senator and as Deputy Leader of the Government. In those roles, she has shown a level-headed yet deliberate and concise manner, and I know she will do the same as Speaker.

Madam Speaker, your calmness and sensible character make you a natural fit to be a great Speaker. I am a bit of a traditionalist — as you know and as other colleagues know — and I am always saddened when we break with tradition, which we did to some extent today. However, Madam Speaker, as I said in my congratulatory note to you on Friday, we promise to play nice and to be good for a short period of time before we will test your strength.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the opposition, the Conservative caucus and all my colleagues, we truly wish you well in your new responsibility. We look forward to working with you and with other members of this august chamber as a collaborative and congenial opposition. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

[Translation]

**Hon. Raymonde Saint-Germain:** Madam Speaker, I respectfully refer to you as such as you are the first female Speaker in 44 years and only the third in the history of the Senate, which was established in November 1867. That is something to be very proud of. I note that you will be part of an all-female team together with our Speaker pro tempore, the Honourable Pierrette Ringuette, who, I'm sure, will ably support you in carrying out your new and important duties.

Thanks to your career in this chamber, your integrity, your humility and sense of democracy, you deserve our confidence in presiding over our proceedings. You and your predecessor have solid experience in education, which is an asset for the office of Speaker of the Senate.

Your career was marked by commitment to public service, a commitment that you've shown in the Senate since 2016. With this experience, you will now serve the entire institution, and I know that you will do so with your characteristic integrity.

[English]

I would now like to speak to some of the lessons that Speaker Furey left with us in his farewell address:

Honourable senators, let us always remember that our calling to this chamber is an honourable one. Let us always remember in our debates that disagreements must be debated, even vigorously at times, but never — never — personally. Disparaging individuals adds nothing to debate, but indeed denigrates the Senate as a whole.

Speaker Gagné, you embody the spirit of this message with your dignity, humbleness and integrity. I know that these teachings will find their echo with you, and that you will pursue the legacy of our former Speaker while creating your own.

Speaker Gagné, Forty-sixth Speaker of the Senate, please know that you can count on the collaboration, understanding and support of the Independent Senators Group in the fulfillment of your duties. We will stand by your side in contributing to the respect of democratic values, the modernization of our institution, the promotion of collegiality among ourselves and the respect of order and decorum in our deliberations.

Congratulations.

**Hon. Scott Tannas:** Madam Speaker, on behalf of my colleagues in the Canadian Senators Group, I congratulate you on your appointment as our new Speaker.

According to the Senate's website, the Speaker “. . . ensures proceedings run smoothly.” At times, that can be a tall order here. Your past experience as chair of numerous organizations — such as the Council of Presidents of Universities in Manitoba and the Association of Canadian Francophone Colleges and Universities — will serve you well as our new presiding officer. However, I think it is your experience in a classroom and as a principal that will give you the best transferable skills for your new job here in the chamber.

As our Speaker, you will be asked to be the public face of the Senate and to act as our chief diplomat abroad. I am certain that you are up to the job and that you will carry out your duties with the same dedication and commitment you have shown throughout your career in this place and before being called to the Senate.

I do have a special wish for you, Madam Speaker. I hope that your transition goes a little smoother than that of your predecessor. I distinctly remember that, by his third day on the job, two questions of privilege and a point of order were raised. It is our hope that we will permit you to ease well into the job.

On a final note, I, for one — and I know others as well — will miss your musical ending of each Senate sitting day with the motion, “that the Senate do now adjourn.”

Congratulations, Madam Speaker. We look forward to working with you.

**Hon. Jane Cordy:** Honourable senators, on behalf of the Progressive Senate Group, I am delighted to join the other leaders in congratulating the Honourable Raymonde Gagné, who will serve as the Forty-sixth Speaker of the Senate.

• (1420)

As others have mentioned, Senator Gagné is only the third woman to fulfill this role, the second Manitoban and the first woman from Manitoba. This will also mark the first time that both the Speaker of the Senate and the Speaker pro tempore are women.

Senator Gagné, when I came to the Senate, Manitoban Gil Molgat was the Speaker, and since I’m due to retire in 2025, it will be another Manitoban when I retire, so I guess I have Manitoba bookends.

Senator Gagné, I know that your background as a teacher will have prepared you well for the task that lies ahead when presiding over our proceedings. With the news of your appointment, the Prime Minister noted your “reputation for productive, objective, and balanced insights,” and from listening to the other leaders, I think it’s fair to say that he is not alone in those views. The Prime Minister has made an excellent choice in appointing you as our new Speaker.

The Senate has been experiencing a period of adjustment, as we navigate various changes and try to find a new path forward. We may not all share the same vision of how to improve, but I do know that we all want to serve our communities as best we can. Senator Gagné, you admirably serve the people of Manitoba, and particularly Franco-Manitobans. In your maiden speech here, you said that Franco-Manitobans have a legacy of defending:

. . . the idea of a Canada that unites and brings its citizens together, while fully respecting their differences and their rights.

I can’t think of a much better sentiment to describe you, our new Speaker. Whether within this chamber or through your various new diplomatic duties, I am confident that you will represent our institution with distinction.

On behalf of the Progressive Senate Group:

[*Translation*]

Congratulations, Madam Speaker.

### VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Daniel Beaudette, Lynne Sylvestre, Renaud and Léah Lafond, and Marie-Josée Houle.

[ Senator Tannas ]

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

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

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## SENATORS’ STATEMENTS

### THE HONOURABLE RAYMONDE GAGNÉ, C.M.

#### CONGRATULATIONS ON APPOINTMENT AS SPEAKER

**Hon. Pierrette Ringuette:** Honourable senators, I wish to join all of you in extending my sincere congratulations to our new Speaker, the Forty-sixth Speaker, Senator Gagné, and wishing her all the best in this new chapter of her parliamentary life. I am even more thrilled that, after 44 years, a woman is finally serving as the Speaker of the Senate, and what’s more, she’s a francophone from a minority community.

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

**Senator Ringuette:** In the interest of efficiency and to give other senators a chance to make their statements, I will be brief and will not repeat all of the good things that were said about you today.

Madam Speaker, as the Speaker pro tempore, I want to reiterate my support for you in this chamber so that we can fulfill our mandate of sober second thought for the well-being of all Canadians.

In short, Madam Speaker, as usual, we need to roll up our sleeves, particularly on Bill C-13, An Act to amend the Official Languages Act, to enact the Use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act and to make related amendments to other Acts, which I believe is necessary for our communities.

I’d like to take this opportunity to congratulate Senator LaBoucane-Benson for her promotion to the position of Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I want to reiterate my support in ensuring the proper functioning of the Senate and respect for our individual and collective responsibilities in this chamber.

Thank you very much.

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

[English]

### THE HONOURABLE LEO HOUSAKOS

#### CONGRATULATIONS ON AWARD OF ARMENIAN ORDER OF FRIENDSHIP

**Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, I rise to pay tribute to one of our esteemed colleagues in this chamber, Senator Leo Housakos. Senator Housakos has served the Senate and the people of Canada for many years and in various capacities, including as Speaker of the Senate in 2015. His particular passion, however, has been his commitment to international human rights, freedom and the rule of law. In that capacity, we know him to have spoken out courageously on matters of human rights all around the world.

Among the peoples he has spoken for are the people of Armenia. Armenia is a country that has suffered significantly in recent years, surrounded as it is by hostile and often aggressive neighbours. In 2020, Armenia was attacked by its neighbour Azerbaijan in the so-called 44-day war. That attack was supported by Turkey.

There were few voices in Canada speaking out for Armenia back then. Turkey is, after all, a NATO ally. The issue was considered too delicate for many. However, Senator Housakos had the courage to speak out. He exposed the silence of the international community on both the war and on the forced uprooting of many Armenian people from their homes. He condemned the lopsided settlement imposed on Armenia by its powerful neighbours.

Senator Housakos did not receive many accolades from the Government of Canada for his actions, but the people of Armenia did take notice. Indeed, he was recently awarded the Order of Friendship through a decree by the President of Armenia. This honour is in recognition of:

... his contribution to the strengthening & the development of friendly ties [between] [Armenia] & [Canada], & for his dedication to preserving universal human values.

Colleagues, I can say from a personal perspective that I am particularly proud of Senator Housakos' work as he defends human rights and the rule of law around the world. I hope all senators will join me in extending our warmest congratulations to our friend Senator Leo Housakos. Congratulations on this well-deserved honour.

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

#### NATIONAL FIDDLING DAY

**Hon. Jane Cordy:** Honourable senators, you have likely heard the expression “march to the beat of one’s own drum.” For those of us from Nova Scotia, the instrument is not a drum, and the expression rather has us tapping our feet to one’s own fiddle tune.

Fiddling and fiddle music is a tradition throughout much of the East Coast that travelled across the ocean with our Celtic ancestors. Like each stitch woven into our Nova Scotia tartan, you could say that fiddle music, along with the bagpipes, make up the double helix of our musical DNA.

This Saturday, May 20, we celebrate National Fiddling Day. The bill to establish a National Fiddling Day was a project of our former colleague P.E.I. Senator Libbe Hubley, herself a fiddler. To celebrate the bill, renowned Ontario fiddler Kelli Trotter even wrote a song called “Fiddle Bill.”

On the third Saturday in May, fiddlers all over Canada get together to celebrate their musical tradition and their own unique styles of fiddling. We Cape Bretoners have our very own style rooted in the Scottish tradition, but in the West, you can find the Métis style or the Anglo-Canadian style, which draws from a mix of many stylistic origins. The French-Canadian style found in Quebec and New Brunswick is different still.

Just how big is fiddle music in Cape Breton? For thousands who arrive to Sydney by cruise ships, the first thing to greet them on the waterfront is the world’s largest fiddle and bow, standing at 60 feet tall. It is a guarantee that their visit will include several good fiddle tunes and the inevitable accompanying step dance.

• (1430)

Honourable senators, if you find yourself in Nova Scotia this summer or fall, a highlight of the Nova Scotia tourist season is the annual Celtic Colours International Festival, which will take place this year from October 6 to 14. This festival features 49 concerts in 35 communities across Cape Breton Island celebrating its culture through music, song and dance.

While you are in Nova Scotia, a visit to the Red Shoe Pub in Mabou is a must, where you will experience lively music and a true East Coast kitchen party. You may even run into a member of the Rankin family, who are the owners of the pub. I challenge you to keep your toes from tapping. I offer my very best wishes to fiddlers across the country and to all those that enjoy fiddle music for a very happy National Fiddling Day.

#### VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Lucy and Larry Duke. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Black.

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

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

#### MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR FARMERS

**Hon. Robert Black:** Honourable senators, today I rise to speak about an increasingly concerning issue: the mental health of Canada’s farmers.

This has been a challenging few years for Canadians, but especially farmers and producers. Food insecurity is rising and inflation is pressuring families, flooding and drought have afflicted vital agricultural regions across the country and our economy has been battered in the post-COVID reality. But Canada's farmers remain resilient. New funding programs and promising bills like Bill C-234 offer some relief to the sector.

Farmers have sustained Canadians both in the economy and by maintaining supply chains even in volatile times. I applaud the many farmers and producers who have remained adaptable and determined in the past years while managing and overcoming regulatory burdens, labour shortages and increasing financial and emotional costs. Farmers have been there for Canadians and the world, putting food on our tables three times a day.

There are, however, concerns that are presenting themselves. Despite continuing to overcome these challenges, farmers are facing greater strains that inevitably affect their mental health. A recent study in 2020 of over 1,100 Canadian producers found that 57% of farmers faced anxiety, 45% faced unhealthy levels of stress and 35% lived with depression.

There is hope, however, colleagues. Among other support organizations, new investments into the Canadian Centre for Agricultural Wellbeing will help that organization spread awareness of resources and multiply their availability within the agricultural community.

As we work to reduce the stigma, I applaud groups like this that work to support Canada's producers, processors and farmers through some of the most turbulent and challenging times in their lives.

Farmers remain resilient and determined. They continue to feed Canada and the world and face ever-changing norms, and it's important that we continue to support them as they do so. Whether that be by promoting and encouraging new programs, buying locally grown foods when and where possible, celebrating the twentieth annual Food Day Canada in August or advocating for their mental health, I hope that we as senators can continue to speak of their dedication to this country and the world here in the Red Chamber. Thank you, *meegwetch*.

[Translation]

### VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Odette Lord and Jean-Pierre Carlos. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Boisvenu.

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

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

[ Senator Black ]

### VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF CRIME WEEK

**Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu:** Madam Speaker, like my colleagues, I want to congratulate you and say that there's no better choice than you for Speaker of the Senate. Congratulations.

Honourable senators, this week, we are marking the seventeenth annual Victims and Survivors of Crime Week. In June, it will be eight years since the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights was adopted.

To mark these two accomplishments by the previous Conservative government, last Saturday I went to Winnipeg to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights with my colleague, the member from the region, Raquel Dancho, to give the director of the museum a copy of the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights to have it displayed there with all the other charters adopted by Canada and elsewhere in the world.

We took the opportunity to meet with victims and the families of victims of violent crime. Listening to them made me realize, sadly, just how much their rights have eroded in our justice system since the change in government. All these families had lost confidence in our justice system, and to them, adopting the bill of rights meant that they might, at long last, have rights equal to those of criminals — rights they had been hoping for for decades.

We talked to a family whose loved one's murderer was never brought to justice. We talked to a victim of intimate partner violence whose abuser threatened them repeatedly without ever facing legal consequences. We talked to a mother who was never told that her son's murderer had been released not far from her home.

How can there be so many stories, so many injustices here in Canada?

For Ms. Dancho, the museum CEO and me, it was a deeply emotional and very enlightening encounter. When victims' families see the degree to which our justice system prioritizes respect for offenders' rights, it is obvious to them that their own rights get very short shrift in comparison. They still feel they're not being treated fairly, they still lack confidence in the system and they're still being revictimized by a system that should protect and respect them above all else.

Is this why the government has been downplaying this awareness week for so many years?

Honourable colleagues, during this Victims and Survivors of Crime Week, words alone will no longer be enough to restore victims' and their families' confidence in our justice system.

We must take action and stand by them by taking concrete measures the likes of which have been rare indeed in Canada over the past eight years.



This week, in solidarity with all victims of crime and their families, and in memory of all victims whose lives were tragically taken, I'm going to introduce an important bill that will strengthen the enforcement and broaden the scope of the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights.

Honourable senators, I know this matters to you, and I sincerely hope that, together, we can seize the opportunity to do something meaningful for victims by supporting this important bill for them. Thank you.

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

[English]

#### CANADIAN WOMEN'S FOUNDATION—SIGNAL FOR HELP

**Hon. Donna Dasko:** Your Honour, I'm so pleased and proud that you are our new Speaker.

Honourable senators, in a national survey I commissioned in 2021, violence against women was seen by Canadians as the most important issue facing women in this country.

As we continue to search for ways to deal with this significant problem, I rise today to highlight one of the most simple, yet innovative, approaches in recent years. It was created right here in Canada three years ago, and just this year, it received a Governor General's Innovation Award.

What is it? It's a simple hand signal, a gesture, that can be used by women and others in distress situations to signal that they are in grave danger. I will explain the signal in a moment, but first let me describe the origins of this simple invention.

It was created by the Canadian Women's Foundation, or CWF, a national foundation headquartered in Toronto, which funds vital community programs across the country that advance gender equality, address root causes and assist women in need. I often think of the foundation as a kind of United Way for women, since it raises funds from donors and distributes them to those in need. But, in fact, CWF is one of the largest women's foundations in the world. Since 1991 it has raised more than \$100 million and funded almost 2,000 programs right across Canada.

In 2020, prompted by reports of increased domestic violence during the pandemic, the foundation began working with an ad agency to develop a way for women who might be in distress at home to send messages about their situation to outsiders, especially via online video. Together they researched movements, gestures and international sign languages to find something unique that would not cause confusion across languages and cultures. They came up with a simple hand gesture that involves using one's thumb under one's fingers as a metaphor for being trapped.

• (1440)

Launched in April 2020, the Signal for Help has been taken up in over 45 countries, won numerous international awards and gone viral on social media. It has proven its worth well beyond the pandemic, and it is helping to save lives.

Here is an example. On November 4, 2021, a motorist in Kentucky contacted police with a licence plate number after observing a girl in a car who was using the hand gesture, which the motorist had seen on TikTok and recognized as a distress situation. Police caught up with the vehicle and arrested the driver, who was charged with unlawful imprisonment and possession of sexual matter concerning a minor. The 16-year-old girl in the car had been reported missing from North Carolina. That girl's life might have been saved by the motorist who knew what the signal meant and took appropriate action.

Colleagues, I could provide other examples, but let me conclude by saying that an important goal is to increase awareness of the signal: palm up, thumb in, fingers over. Now we can all be part of the solution. Thank you.

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

#### VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Michael Cholod, Executive Director of the Peace Coalition. He is the guest of the Honourable Senator Omidvar.

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

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

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### GOVERNOR GENERAL

COMMISSION APPOINTING MAIA WELBOURNE AS DEPUTY—  
DOCUMENT TABLED

**Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, a copy of the commission appointing Maia Welbourne Deputy of the Governor General.

### JUSTICE

CHARTER STATEMENT IN RELATION TO BILL S-12—  
DOCUMENT TABLED

**Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, a Charter Statement prepared by the Minister of Justice in relation to Bill S-12, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Sex Offender Information Registration Act and the International Transfer of Offenders Act, pursuant to the *Department of Justice Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. J-2, sbs. 4.2(1).

[Translation]

## INTERNAL ECONOMY, BUDGETS AND ADMINISTRATION

EIGHTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE PRESENTED

**Hon. Lucie Moncion**, Chair of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration, presented the following report:

Tuesday, May 16, 2023

The Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration has the honour to present its

### EIGHTH REPORT

Your committee, which is authorized by the *Rules of the Senate* to consider financial and administrative matters, now reports that it has reviewed the *Senate Administrative Rules* to streamline the Senate's intellectual property permissions process and recommends as follows:

1. That the *Senate Administration Rules* be amended, in Chapter 3:03 by adding the following after subsection 11(a):

(a) by way of fair dealing or any other statutory exception to the scope of intellectual property protection;

(b) if the commercial use is insignificant in nature; or

(c) with the consent of the Steering Committee.

2. That the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel be authorized to make any necessary technical, editorial, grammatical, or other required, non-substantive changes to the *Senate Administrative Rules* as a result of this amendment, including the updating of cross-references and the renumbering of provisions.

Respectfully submitted,

LUCIE MONCION

*Chair*

She said: Madam Speaker, my warmest congratulations.

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

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

[English]

## STUDY ON THE PROVISIONS AND OPERATION OF THE SERGEI MAGNITSKY LAW AND THE SPECIAL ECONOMIC MEASURES ACT

TENTH REPORT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMITTEE TABLED

**Hon. Peter M. Boehm:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the tenth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade entitled *Strengthening Canada's Autonomous Sanctions Architecture: Five-Year Legislative Review of the Sergei Magnitsky Law and the Special Economic Measures Act* and I move that the report be placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting of the Senate.

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

[Translation]

## SUBSTANTIVE EQUALITY OF CANADA'S OFFICIAL LANGUAGES BILL

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-13, An Act to amend the Official Languages Act, to enact the Use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act and to make related amendments to other Acts.

(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.)

[English]

## BILL TO AMEND THE FIRST NATIONS FISCAL MANAGEMENT ACT, TO MAKE CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS TO OTHER ACTS, AND TO MAKE A CLARIFICATION RELATING TO ANOTHER ACT

FIRST READING

**The Hon. the Speaker** informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-45, An Act to amend the First Nations Fiscal Management Act, to make consequential amendments to other Acts, and to make a clarification relating to another 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.)

[Translation]

## INTERNATIONAL TAX JUSTICE AND COOPERATION DAY BILL

### FIRST READING

**Hon. Pierre J. Dalfond** introduced Bill S-264, An Act to establish International Tax Justice and Cooperation Day.

(Bill read first time.)

**Senator Dalfond:** Once again, I would add my congratulations to all of those that have already been extended.

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

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

[English]

## QUESTION PERIOD

### INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

#### ELECTRIC VEHICLE BATTERY PLANT

**Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):** My question today is, once again, for the Liberal Leader of the Government in the Senate.

Leader, at this time last week, Prime Minister Trudeau was pointing to and bragging about the \$5 billion Stellantis battery plant project as an example of his government's economic management.

• (1450)

What the Prime Minister knew but did not tell Canadians was that Stellantis and LG were threatening to scrap the project — as he was speaking — if they didn't receive the subsidies similar to what his government gave Volkswagen, which would cost taxpayers up to \$14 billion.

In the last few days, Stellantis and LG said they would begin implementing their contingency plan. Work on the site in Windsor has been shut down — a factory that is supposed to be operating in a year.

Leader, this whole affair is, indeed, a prime example of the Trudeau government's incompetence. Why should Canadians trust anything that this government or this Prime Minister says when it comes to our economy and jobs?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question. The auto industry is crucial to the Canadian economy and to the hundreds of thousands of Canadian workers who work in this sector. That's why this government — and especially Minister Champagne — has worked tirelessly to secure the future of Canada's auto industry.

With regard to the Stellantis plant issue, the government is in negotiations, and continues to negotiate, in good faith with our partners. Its top priority is to obtain the best deal for all Canadians.

**Senator Plett:** Someday I'll try to figure out what your answer will be, and then I'll ask a question accordingly; that way, at least, we'll get the question answered.

Leader, why can't the Trudeau government ever be straight with Canadians about anything — even when it comes to how billions of their tax dollars could be spent in subsidies? They cannot be upfront with Canadians.

Yesterday, when Minister Freeland was asked about the Stellantis project in the other place, her responses did not even come close to answering the questions. I guess you attend the same Question Period prep.

This is what we have all seen publicly over the course of the Trudeau government: higher taxes, more red tape, moving regulatory goalposts midstream, private-sector investment and energy projects evaporating. The list goes on and on, leader.

Leader, when all is said and done, what will be the total cost to taxpayers? Will your government commit to telling Canadians, or will the Trudeau government try to conceal that as well?

**Senator Gold:** This government has been open and transparent with Canadians with regard to the efforts that they are making to secure our future, particularly the future of the auto sector — an important sector in Canada — in the face of the dramatically changing business environment, and capital environment, for the production of new generations of electric vehicles.

The investments that this government has made, notably in the Volkswagen battery plant and in the negotiations that are ongoing with Stellantis, are designed to ensure — for generations to come — that Canadians can have well-paying jobs and, more importantly, to secure Canada's place in the North American supply chain for the future.

### PUBLIC SAFETY

#### FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

**Hon. Leo Housakos:** My question is for the government leader in the Senate.

Government leader, this weekend we had Justin Trudeau's Minister of Public Safety Marco Mendicino admit in a televised interview that there are new, illegal Chinese Communist Party, or CCP, police stations operating in Canada and intimidating Canadian citizens. Of course, honourable senators, to no one's surprise, he vowed that the RCMP will shut them down immediately. The problem, of course, government leader, is that only a few weeks ago he rose in the House of Commons and said publicly that they have already been shut down. Now we know through media information that there are two illegal CCP police stations that have been operating for years in our own city.

The question is as follows: When the minister rose in the House of Commons, was he just displaying his and the government's complete and utter incompetence regarding foreign interference, or was it a question of misleading the Canadian public?

Here is my question more specifically so that there is no ambiguity: When will the Trudeau government and Minister Mendicino shut down, once and for all, these illegal CCP police stations — and, if not, why not?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** As the government has stated, and as I have stated on behalf of the government, the RCMP has been and continues to actively investigate the allegations made with regard to the alleged illegal police stations in our country. The government does not direct the RCMP in its investigations.

The minister and I have been clear in our statements that the RCMP is continuing to investigate, and will take all necessary action to protect Canadians from foreign interference on our soil.

**Senator Housakos:** Yes, you have been clear; the government has been clear. We are going to continue to investigate. We are going to continue to have special or regular rapporteurs, or hire people from the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation to write reports.

At the end of the day, we have had no action. It has been months that we have had these illegal CCP police stations operating on Canadian soil.

We have also seen the government take two years to address the issue of a member of Parliament — him and his family — being threatened by CCP foreign interference. Your government took no action whatsoever. It took two years before we actually expelled somebody who was involved directly in that particular threat.

The questions I have are very simple: How much longer before our government shuts these down? How much longer will it take before the government holds the people responsible for these operations to account, and has them meet the full force of Canadian law? At the end of the day, that's the only time when we can say the government is serious — when we shut them down, and when those responsible for this illegal operation on Canadian soil face the full force of Canadian law.

[ Senator Housakos ]

**Senator Gold:** It is the responsibility of a government — any responsible government — to take steps appropriately, prudently and according to proper standards.

It is a prerogative, of course, of an opposition party to say whatever they want to say without having the responsibility to back those up with actual actions.

This government was made aware of the allegations against member of Parliament Michael Chong from *The Globe and Mail*. One week later, the diplomat was expelled. That was an appropriate, timely and responsible response.

The government will continue to act responsibly and prudently when it receives information upon which it must take action.

[Translation]

## EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKER PROGRAM

**Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie:** Madam Speaker, congratulations once again on your appointment.

My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate. Canada needs immigrant labour, and Quebec is asking for francophone immigrants. Haiti, a member country of the Francophonie, is very close to Canada and its diaspora has had deep roots here for many decades.

What is Canada waiting for to add Haiti to the list of countries that are eligible for the Temporary Foreign Worker Program?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question and for emphasizing how important this issue is to our economy and society.

The government knows that Canada is looking for quick and effective solutions to meet the demand for qualified and talented foreign workers. In Budget 2022, the government allocated \$385.7 million to speed up the entry of temporary foreign workers into Canada so that they can fill critical labour market vacancies.

Under Bill C-19, the government made changes to the Express Entry program in order to select the highest-ranking candidates from the pool. It also temporarily lifted the 20-hour-per-week cap on the number of hours that eligible post-secondary students are allowed to work on campus while in school.

As for the matter of Haiti, I will undertake to inform the minister responsible of your suggestion and concerns.

## IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

### GRANTING OF TEMPORARY VISAS

**Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie:** Thank you for your response, Senator Gold. If I may make a suggestion: In response to the humanitarian emergency in Haiti, the United States has taken a unilateral approach with its H-1B1 visa in order to welcome Haitian nationals.

In light of this humanitarian emergency, what is stopping Canada from taking such an approach?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question. I will bring your suggestion to the attention of the minister.

• (1500)

[English]

## FINANCE

### BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION

**Hon. Pamela Wallin:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. All the very best in your new job. You're off to a good start here.

I have a question for Senator Gold. The constitutional role of the Senate is to study and, if need be, amend legislation and to be judicious in that work, yet we are constantly hit with arbitrary government timelines, such as time allocation on Bill C-11 or the BIA — budget implementation act — programming motion. It undermines our obligations as senators. The BIA is an omnibus bill that includes potentially dozens of stand-alone legislative initiatives, such as the Canada innovation corporation act; major amendments to the Canada Transportation Act, with a massive overhaul to the complaints resolution process, which witnesses have already said is not viable; changes to the Patent Act; the Canada Elections Act; the Department of Employment and Social Development Act and unilateral action on the extension of equalization.

Senator Gold, do you truly believe that the time frame given us to study a bill injected with such issues that have absolutely nothing to do with the budget is appropriate? Do you believe our rights and privileges are being respected as senators in this chamber of sober second thought?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question. I do believe that the Senate has time to study this bill, as it has done successfully not only since I have been here through every budget cycle but for many decades, and, indeed, prior to any of our arrivals here.

Budget bills typically do come late, but thanks to the excellent work of our committees — the National Finance Committee first and foremost, but other committees as well — and through our practice of pre-studies, senators have had the ability to identify the issues and study them.

In that regard, I do believe, although the time is tight, that we will no doubt be able to do our job. And no, I do not believe that our privileges as senators are compromised.

**Senator Wallin:** On that point, I guess we'll disagree because it is our job in committee to give full study. When you put into a budget bill things that should be stand-alone legislation — we're hearing this from witnesses and from members of the committee — there is no time or a way to actually look at the issues in a substantive way. Therefore, we find ourselves in a situation where we cannot legitimately claim to be providing sober second thought, and I do believe that breaches our rights and privileges as senators. Do you not see the problem?

**Senator Gold:** Well, if that was an invitation to agree to disagree, then I accept.

I understand the frustration when we have complicated matters that have to be addressed in circumscribed periods of time because of the budget cycles. I understand that well. But I stand by my answer, senator, and with respect, will disagree.

## ENERGY, THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

### BUSINESS OF THE COMMITTEE

**Hon. Marty Klyne:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. My sincere congratulations.

My question today is for Senator Galvez, Chair of the Environment Committee.

Senator Galvez, Bill S-241, the Jane Goodall act, has been at second reading for nearly 14 months. With the central objective of this bill being to protect wild animals in captivity, we need to get this bill to committee. No more delay tactics — delay prevents us from hearing from expert witnesses, including Dr. Jane Goodall, the Honourable Murray Sinclair, scientists, zoos and animal welfare groups. Each passing day risks animal welfare, not to mention public safety. For example, without this bill, licences are not required in Ontario to own tigers, crocodiles or venomous snakes.

Bill S-241 would be administered by Environment and Climate Change Canada. At least five Senate committees have studied this bill in recent years, which involves criminality, including your committee last year with Bill S-5 and Bill S-6.

As Chair of the Environment Committee, can you confirm your support towards receiving the Jane Goodall act for study and that the committee is available?

[Translation]

**Hon. Rosa Galvez:** Allow me to congratulate you too, Madam Speaker, on your appointment.

[English]

Thank you very much for your question, Senator Klyne. I can see two aspects to your question. One is a technical issue and the other is procedural.

On the technical part, I do believe that the Energy Committee, or ENEV, is the right committee to study Bill S-241 because questions on the bill encompass the protection of biodiversity, flora and fauna. You're right that during consideration of Bill S-5 we talked about animal protection while discussing the use of toxic substances in animal testing. Therefore, yes, the ENEV mandate could encompass this bill.

The other part of your question is about why we're not receiving the bill. Let me share with you that I believe that we and many other senators who have tabled private members' bills are wondering what's happening with these bills. These are discussions that take place at the scroll or the leaders' meetings, and we don't have access because these meetings are not public. We need to know what's happening with that.

[Translation]

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Do you have an answer to the question, Senator Galvez?

[English]

**Senator Galvez:** Yes. I think our work at any committee, including ENEV, with respect to this bill is impacted because we don't have the planning on when your bill will arrive. Thank you.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I just wanted to remind you that, according to Rule 4-8(1):

During Question Period, a Senator may, without notice, ask a question of:

(c) a committee chair, on a matter relating to the activities of the committee.

I'd like to remind senators that you have to ask a question on a matter relating to the activities of the committee.

Do you have a supplementary question?

**Senator Klyne:** I did, but I'm glad to hear that the activities of the committee have been confirmed and that there is a clear path forward. Thank you.

[Translation]

## ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

### ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER

**Hon. Claude Carignan:** Once again, Madam Speaker, congratulations on your appointment.

My question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Leader, yesterday and today, *La Presse* published a series of hard-hitting articles by journalist Tristan Péloquin about the sorry

[ Senator Galvez ]

saga of waste management on Kanesatake territory near Oka. Apparently all kinds of toxic substances are being dumped into the environment every day, contaminating waterways and Lake of Two Mountains.

I would remind you, senator, that Lake of Two Mountains and its outflows, Rivière des Mille Îles and Rivière des Prairies, supply drinking water to downstream communities, including Pointe-Calumet, Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-Lac, Deux-Montagnes, Saint-Eustache, Boisbriand, Blainville, Rosemère, Terrebonne, Laval, part of Montreal and many others on the north shore.

Leader, I asked you specific questions about this serious environmental issue twice, on June 17, 2020, and on October 1, 2020. I also asked Minister Miller questions last September 22. Your government's answers were evasive, and as far as I can tell, nothing has been done.

Leader, it seems nothing is being done as it should be in this never-ending saga.

As the Leader of the Government in the Senate, can you explain to us why your government has been so painfully slow to take action on an issue that is of such vital importance to the health of people in the area and to environmental protection?

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

With all due respect, the government is not dragging its feet. The government recognizes that this is a very serious situation. I'll continue to make representations to the government to ensure that the right steps are taken for the well-being of the citizens in the area and for the environment.

• (1510)

**Senator Carignan:** Will your government, once and for all, address this tragedy? What is the timetable for restoring the environmental heritage of this site, which is currently an open, infected wound and considered by many to be an environmental bomb?

**Senator Gold:** Thank you for your question. I will ensure that your concerns, which are entirely valid and legitimate, are brought to the attention of the ministers responsible.

[English]

## PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

### GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

**Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Your Honour, I'd like to add my voice to all the congratulatory remarks today. I am really happy to see you in the chair.

My question is to the government leader and is a follow-up to Senator Boisvenu's recent questions on the Trudeau government's ongoing failure to make judicial appointments.

When Minister Lametti was sworn in as Minister of Justice in January 2019, there were 58 federal judicial vacancies across Canada. According to the government's own statistics, as of May 1, the number of vacancies has grown to 88.

A year ago, an answer was provided to a written question on our Order Paper regarding the new judicial positions created under the 2017, 2018 and 2019 federal budgets. The answer at that time showed that 26 positions had not been created.

Leader, I have two questions: How many of the judicial positions announced in those budgets still remain unfilled, and why does Minister Lametti find it so hard to do this basic component of his job to fill judicial vacancies?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for the question. As I've mentioned before in this chamber, the government has appointed more than 600 judges since November 2015. Judges, like senators, have mandatory retirement at 75, according to the Constitution, so there will be a certain number of vacancies created just by the passage of time.

The government has put into place a system to ensure that those who apply for judicial appointments are vetted by an independent judicial advisory committee to ensure that the best candidates are brought forward for consideration by the minister, candidates who reflect the needs of the judiciary and also the makeup of the country. Minister Lametti continues to work seriously and diligently to ensure that the remaining vacant posts are filled.

**Senator Martin:** This isn't a new problem, leader. The Supreme Court rendered its *Jordan* decision in July 2016, and, as Senator Boisvenu stated, serious criminal charges, including first-degree murder, have been stayed in the wake of this decision. Yet, the Trudeau government has done such a poor job filling federal judicial vacancies that Chief Justice Wagner says justices across Canada are being forced to pick and choose "the criminal matters that 'deserve' to be heard."

Leader, can you make inquiries and let us know how many cases have been stayed across Canada under the 18-month and 30-month time limit set out in *Jordan*? As well, how many cases are currently in danger of being stayed?

**Senator Gold:** The decision whether or not to stay a particular case is in the hands of the judges who have to weigh a myriad of factors. Each case is distinct. Each case has a blend of factors which include and implicate — if that's the neutral word — the roles of the Crown, the roles of the defence and other matters dealing with the administration of justice. It is simply important to underline that this government has confidence in the judiciary to manage these matters, consistent with their constitutional obligations for a speedy and fair trial. Again, I repeat, as for the vacant positions, the government is working diligently to fill them.

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS

### NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION

**Hon. Marilou McPhedran:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I add both my congratulations and my great pleasure to see you in that chair.

My question is to Senator Gold. Senator Gold, I'm compelled to raise serious concerns about the escalating role of nuclear weapons in international affairs, as evidenced by the veiled threats and aggressive military posturing of both Russia and North Korea. Just weeks ago, the Washington Declaration issued by U.S. President Biden and South Korean President Yoon established the Nuclear Consultative Group and the Extended Deterrence Strategy and Consultation Group, both designed, we're told, to operationalize nuclear and strategic planning. Notably, both are signatories of the UN nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

This tilts our world toward normalization of nuclear warfare. This is horrifying.

As senators know, the G7 summit will soon convene in Hiroshima, a city bearing the indelible scars of nuclear devastation where only a few *hibakusha* — remaining survivors of the World War II nuclear strikes — still live. Instead of progressing to realizing the vision of a nuclear-free world, the U.S., South Korea and other states, including Canada and NATO members, are stepping away from the promises of safety and peace, instead threatening deployment of nuclear devastation.

Senator Gold, what is the government doing to lead diplomatic efforts to denuclearize the Korean peninsula? Will Canada work within the G7 to condemn nuclear threats and promote disarmament in line with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the disarmament treaty?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question and for underlining the risks that proliferation and the talk of the deployment of nuclear weapons pose for our real security and psychological security.

The Prime Minister, as we know, is in South Korea and is meeting with his counterparts. I have every expectation that this and many other subjects will be the matter of serious discussion amongst the participants.

**Senator McPhedran:** Senator Gold, thank you for the answer, which I experience as being partial. Could you provide a commitment to seek more information about what Canada is actually going to do at the upcoming G7 summit to address this escalation of nuclear threats?

**Senator Gold:** Thank you for your question. I'm sure that there will be a report of those meetings made public by the government. I'll certainly bring your concerns to the attention of the minister and the Prime Minister.

## IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

### PASSPORT SERVICES

**Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):** My next question, government leader, is a follow-up to my questions on Thursday regarding changes to our passports. Minister Fraser was at the announcement last week. He is currently presiding over a backlog of more than 2 million applications at the immigration department. As you know, leader, Senator Ataullahjan has recently questioned you about the extremely long wait for visas to visit Canada.

Minister Gould is responsible for Service Canada, which has trouble providing basic services to Canadians, including processing passports. This time last year, they were calling in the police to disperse people camped out overnight in the hopes of getting their passport. In retrospect, we see that the Trudeau government was working at that time to change the passport's design instead of putting in effort where it was truly needed.

Leader, don't these ministers have better things to do?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for the question. The ministers are working hard to fulfill their responsibilities and to fulfill the mandates that the Prime Minister gave to them. That includes providing an enhanced and more secure passport for Canadians to reduce the risks of fraud. It also includes putting into place measures — which are in place, are bearing fruit and will continue to bear fruit — to expedite the process for both visas and passport applications.

**Senator Plett:** Leader, I hoped the Trudeau government would have come to —

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Senator Plett, I'm sorry, but the time for Question Period has expired.

• (1520)

### DELAYED ANSWERS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Response to the oral question asked in the Senate on February 15, 2023, by the Honourable Senator Martin, concerning the Canada Infrastructure Bank.

Response to the oral question asked in the Senate on March 22, 2023, by the Honourable Senator Carignan, P.C., concerning social media.

Response to the oral question asked in the Senate on March 28, 2023, by the Honourable Senator McPhedran, concerning the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

### CANADA INFRASTRUCTURE BANK

*(Response to question raised by the Honourable Yonah Martin on February 15, 2023)*

#### Infrastructure Canada

The public consultation period formally closed on March 31, 2023; however, as a result of stakeholder interest, Infrastructure Canada officials continued to meet with interested parties and to receive written submissions into April. External stakeholder engagement for the legislative review of the operations and provisions of the *Canada Infrastructure Bank Act* began November 8, 2022, when it was communicated broadly at a Federal, Provincial and Territorial meeting attended by Ministers, Deputy Ministers and other officials. As part of their work, Infrastructure Canada officials sent numerous meeting invitations to a broad range of stakeholders including lenders, developers, government partners (municipal and provincial), Indigenous groups, and various organizations including the Canadian Union of Public Employees, and have held meetings and roundtables with those that accepted.

Information on the legislative review, including how the broader public and other interested parties can share their views, was made available on the Infrastructure Canada and Consulting with Canadians websites with a deadline of March 31, 2023. The review was also promoted on the Department's social media and through third parties as available.

### PUBLIC SAFETY

#### SOCIAL MEDIA

*(Response to question raised by the Honourable Claude Carignan on March 22, 2023)*

#### Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS):

The *Policy on Communications and Federal Identity* (<https://www.tbs-sct.canada.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=30683>) and its supporting *Directive on the Management of Communications* (<https://www.tbs-sct.canada.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=30682&section=procedure&p=D>) do not prescribe the type of media used in GC advertising. Departments are responsible for managing their advertising campaign budgets including the choice of media which is determined based on campaign objectives, target audience, timing, and budget.

Departments are still permitted to advertise on TikTok should they determine that this is a necessary platform on which to reach Canadians. Departments are not required to have an account on TikTok to advertise on the platform.



While the Government has decided to prevent the use of TikTok on government mobile devices, Canadians and Canadian organizations must make an informed decision on using the application based on their own needs and risk-assessments.

To help with these decisions, Communications Security Establishment's Canadian Centre for Cyber Security (Cyber Centre) recently published updated advice and guidance regarding the use of personal social media. This publication is in addition to the Cyber Centre's still relevant advice and guidance on security considerations that should be considered when using social media in an organization (<https://www.cyber.gc.ca/en/guidance/security-considerations-when-using-social-media-your-organization-itsm10066>).

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS

### UNITED NATIONS' SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

*(Response to question raised by the Honourable Marilou McPheeran on March 28, 2023)*

#### **Global Affairs Canada (GAC)**

Canada has a proven track record in supporting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. In implementing the Feminist International Assistance Policy, Canada has substantially increased its investments in advancing gender equality and helped contribute to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development continues to recognize Canada as its top bilateral donor in terms of share of aid supporting gender equality.

Canada's international assistance under this policy has achieved life-saving results and helped to improve the lives of women and girls. However, Global Affairs Canada agrees with the Office of the Auditor General that the Department must do better at reporting on and communicating these results. Global Affairs Canada's management action plan will clearly outline the actions we are taking to address the gaps identified in the report.

This includes putting in place a system for information on results enabling the Department to better track and report, conducting a review of performance indicators to ensure that Canada is reflecting the results achieved, reporting more thoroughly on the cumulative impacts of international assistance projects and further considering intersecting identity factors when conducting project-level gender-equality assessments.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### CANADA DISABILITY BENEFIT BILL

BILL TO AMEND—TWELFTH REPORT OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the twelfth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology (*Bill C-22, An Act to reduce poverty and to support the financial security of persons with disabilities by establishing the Canada disability benefit and making a consequential amendment to the Income Tax Act, with amendments and observations*), presented in the Senate on May 11, 2023.

**Hon. Ratna Omidvar** moved the adoption of the report.

She said: Let me add my voice of congratulations to you on your appointment, Your Honour. We look forward to your steady and calm leadership.

Here is a really important government bill, Bill C-22. The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology studied Bill C-22 over the course of 10 meetings, with 7 meetings of testimony from 44 witnesses. In addition to witness testimony heard during the meetings, the committee also received 48 briefs, seven follow-ups and two letters.

The committee wishes to acknowledge and thank the many Canadians who took the time to communicate with us and educate us about their lived experiences with disabilities, as well as share their perspectives on Bill C-22. Their thoughts have greatly helped inform the committee's work during this study.

At the outset of the study, the committee was informed by the Honourable Carla Qualtrough, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, of the amount of work and consultation that had gone into the bill that we were studying. The minister shared an enduring commitment to "Nothing Without Us" which has involved — and will continue to involve — the disability community in the development and implementation of the proposed Canada disability benefit.

The committee was also informed of the importance of carefully considering any and all amendments, as amending the bill would require it to go back, necessarily, to the House of Commons.

It was with this great consideration that the committee is reporting the bill with amendments.

The committee heard concerns from many witnesses about the possibility of the benefit being clawed back when interacting with other benefits and income supports, including private insurance providers.

Hart Schwartz, adjunct professor at Osgoode Hall Law School, stated:

It's no benefit if private insurers throughout the country in different provinces can set-off the amount so that effectively you get no disability benefit at all.

The committee, therefore, adopted an amendment to clause 9 using wording similar to that suggested by several witnesses and endorsed by trial lawyers' associations across Canada. The amendment specifies that the benefit cannot be recovered or retained in whole or in part under the terms of any contract, insurance plan or similar instrument.

Throughout the study, the witnesses expressed the importance of an explicit appeals process contained within the statute. We heard from Adrian Merdzan of the Income Security Advocacy Centre that the risk of not providing an appeals process in the statute is that it could "permit the creation of an inaccessible appeal mechanism" in the future. The committee, therefore, adopted an amendment creating a new clause 10.1 which would allow a person, or someone applying on their behalf, to appeal the minister's decisions regarding their eligibility or the amount of the benefit.

Bill C-22 was amended by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities to require the Governor-in-Council to take into consideration the official poverty line as defined by the Market Basket Measure.

The committee heard, however, that persons with disabilities often experience higher costs of living than the average. Krista Carr, Executive Vice-President of Inclusion Canada, stated, "We need to recognize that people with disabilities have additional costs that even go beyond." Sometimes it's up to 30% or 40% more.

The committee also heard that despite the "Nothing Without Us" approach and widespread consultations across Canada, there remain marginalized people with disabilities and organizations that face additional barriers to consultation and inclusion. Jheanelle Anderson, Vice-Chair of the ASE Community Foundation for Black Canadians with Disability, shared that "intersecting identities really impact your experience with disability."

For these reasons, the committee adopted an amendment to clause 11, adding that the Governor-in-Council must consider the additional costs associated with living with a disability; the challenges faced by those living with a disability in earning an income from work; the intersectional needs of disadvantaged individuals and groups; and Canada's international human rights obligations.

As a consequence of this amendment, the committee also adopted an amendment to the preamble, recognizing that persons with disabilities may face additional barriers because of their gender, racialized or Indigenous status or other intersecting statuses.

[ Senator Omidvar ]

All witnesses before the committee agreed that the Canada disability benefit should be paid out to eligible individuals as soon as possible. Glen Hoos, Director of Communications for the Down Syndrome Resource Foundation, put it this way when he said that "the money should start flowing as soon as possible — or sooner."

For this reason, the committee adopted an amendment to clause 11 requiring that, within 12 months of the coming into force of the bill, the Governor-in-Council must make the necessary regulations to begin paying the benefit.

The House committee had amended the coming-into-force date of this act as "no later than the first anniversary of the day on which it receives royal assent." However, it did not grant authority to anyone. An official from Employment and Social Development Canada informed us that the "no later than" doesn't have any way to be implemented as no authority has been given to the Governor-in-Council to actually bring the law into force earlier than the first anniversary.

The committee, therefore, adopted an amendment enabling the Governor-in-Council to fix a date no later than one year after Royal Assent.

In addition to these amendments, the committee has also made seven observations, including recommending that in addition to the "Nothing Without Us" consultative process around designing and implementing the Canada disability benefit, the disability community should be represented in all its diversity, with space made for the most marginalized voices to be equally involved in all stages of the decision-making process.

We note the concern that the benefit is limited to working-age persons with disabilities, which may perpetuate poverty amongst persons with disabilities over the age of 65, particularly women, and that with Old Age Security becoming available at 65, seniors with disabilities may experience a reduction in income.

We are recommending that persons with mental illnesses be explicitly involved in the drafting of regulations to ensure that the spectrum of disability, including episodic disability due to mental illness, is considered.

We are stressing the importance of respecting the necessary autonomy of persons with disabilities to live their life with dignity, as well as acknowledging that financial security is one way to help prevent certain types of violence against a person with a disability, and we are recommending that the benefit's eligibility be determined by an individual's income rather than that of their family or household unit.

• (1530)

Colleagues, I wish to thank all members of the Senate Social Affairs, Science and Technology Committee who gave their undivided attention to this important bill and also our excellent committee clerk, Emily Barrette, and the Library of Parliament analyst, Laura Blackmore, for supporting our work to this point. Thank you, Your Honour.

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

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

**Hon. Senators:** Question.

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

**Some Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**An Hon. Senator:** On division.

(Motion agreed to, on division, and report adopted.)

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

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

### SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

#### MOTION FOR ADDRESS IN REPLY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Gold, P.C., seconded by the Honourable Senator LaBoucane-Benson:

That the following Address be presented to Her Excellency the Governor General of Canada:

To Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary May Simon, Chancellor and Principal Companion of the Order of Canada, Chancellor and Commander of the Order of Military Merit, Chancellor and Commander of the Order of Merit of the Police Forces, Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY:

We, Her Majesty's most loyal and dutiful subjects, the Senate of Canada in Parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Excellency for the gracious Speech which Your Excellency has addressed to both Houses of Parliament.

**Hon. Mary Jane McCallum:** Thank you, Your Honour, and I also offer you my congratulations.

Before I start, I want to thank James Campbell from my office for all the help he has given me over these past few years.

Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Government Motion No. 1, which conveys the Senate of Canada's thanks to Her Excellency, the Governor General of Canada, for delivering the Speech from the Throne.

One of the main themes of this Throne Speech delivered in November of 2021 was a renewed pledge and commitment to the importance of reconciliation. This, of course, is not a surprise given Prime Minister Trudeau has boldly stated that there is no more important relationship to him and to Canada than the one with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in Canada.

This Throne Speech was perhaps more meaningful on the topic of reconciliation as it was delivered by Her Excellency Mary Simon, an Inuk woman who, as we all know, is the first Indigenous Governor General in Canada's history. I agreed with our Governor General's words when Her Excellency stated:

. . . I have seen how Canadians are committed to reconciliation. Indigenous Peoples are reclaiming our history, stories, culture and language through action. Non-Indigenous Peoples are coming to understand and accept the true impact of the past and the pain suffered by generations of Indigenous Peoples. Together they are walking the path towards reconciliation.

Honourable senators, although Her Excellency was speaking to the acts of reconciliation that are, indeed, occurring across Canada, I see glimmers of this same hope and shared vision for a better and more equitable future within our very own chamber. There is perhaps no greater example of this than the unprecedented action of this chamber in passing a motion of acknowledgement and apology for the role that the Senate of Canada played in the creation of the residential school system.

As you know, colleagues, I have delivered speeches in this chamber that were, for me, very emotional. They examined profoundly difficult aspects of my life, yet they allowed me to grow and to strengthen through the very sharing of these stories. As you may recall, these speeches dealt with issues including residential school, unmarked graves and corporal punishment. They confronted loss of language, loss of culture and loss of self.

Despite these moments of vulnerability and pain, I have always been met with support and compassion from all corners of this chamber. Indigenous and non-Indigenous senators alike have demonstrated a sincere willingness to listen, understand and challenge their own preconceived notions of both the history of this country as well as their understanding of the First Peoples who called this land home.

Colleagues, I acknowledge that many of these conversations are difficult to have. Much of this difficulty rests with the fact that many of these conversations are new. They are unfamiliar, and with that unfamiliarity comes an uncomfortableness that must be embraced. I have seen, by and large, a willingness for this chamber to embrace new ways of knowing, thinking and seeing the world.

As Canadians across this great country and within this great chamber continue to come to grips with the history of the First Peoples and the intergenerational trauma they carry with them to this day, there has been a prevailing sense of guilt. Guilt in the belief that this country should have known better than to create and sustain such horrifically discriminatory policies. Guilt that they, as Canadians, should have known better the history of the land they call home.

Honourable senators, to that, I would like to restate the following words of Her Excellency Mary Simon within the Speech from the Throne:

We must turn the guilt we carry into action.

Action on reconciliation.

Action on our collective health and well-being.

Action on climate change.

It is absolutely critical, colleagues, that we subscribe to the importance of promoting reconciliation and a more just, fair and equitable future for all who call this land home. Unless and until we seize every opportunity to champion this cause, we will continue to see indicators of overall population health, known as the social determinants, lag further and further behind for First Nations in Canada. Governor General Mary Simon affirmed these very sentiments when she read:

Reconciliation requires a whole-of-government approach, breaking down barriers, and rethinking how to accelerate our work.

. . . the Government is committed to closing the gaps that far too many First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities still face today.

To this end, Her Excellency also stated that Canadians:

. . . want bold, concrete solutions to meet the other challenges we face.

Growing an economy that works for everyone.

Fighting climate change.

Moving forward on the path of reconciliation.

Making sure our communities are safe, healthy, and inclusive.

Honourable senators, within the Throne Speech, Her Excellency expounded upon some of these issues we are facing as a nation — in some cases existential issues — and the path forward that we must take to come out the other side. When speaking to issues of the environment, the Governor General stated:

Protecting our land and oceans will address biodiversity loss. In this work, the Government will continue to strengthen its partnership with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, to protect nature and respect their traditional knowledge.

When speaking to racism and discrimination — massive and insidious issues in our society — the Governor General said:

When someone in our country is targeted because of their gender, or who they love, or where they come from, the way they pray, the language they speak, or the colour of their skin, we are all diminished.

Everyone should be — and feel — safe.

The Government will continue combatting hate and racism, including with a renewed Anti-Racism Strategy.

She continued:

Canadians understand that equity, justice, and diversity are the means and the ends to living together.

Fighting systemic racism, sexism, discrimination, misconduct, and abuse, including in our core institutions, will remain a key priority.

Honourable senators, these are profound words and they are lofty goals. Despite that fact, we must resolve to work towards them, as they are critical outcomes that simply must be achieved, not only for a better today but for a better future for those to come seven generations from now.

• (1540)

To this end, there are many items that exist before us today for consideration and debate in this chamber that would be critical tools in achieving these goals. There are items that affirm gender equity, items that seek to mitigate harms to our environment, items that look at addressing racism in the health care systems and items that aim to address environmental racism across this country. Colleagues, these are items that are not only critical to reconciliation; they are critical in the fundamental sense of the word in that, in many cases, they are matters of life and death.

Issues of reconciliation, issues of discrimination, issues of climate action and issues of environmental stewardship are not bartering chips. They are not frivolous matters that we can afford to have caught up in partisan gamesmanship or political bickering. No. They are issues that are critical to the survival and well-being of the most vulnerable in our society. They are issues that are critical to the very survival and well-being of the land, the animals and the environment in which we all live.

When items of this nature are left to toil without resolution, we must look in the mirror and ask ourselves why that is so. There is so much potential in this chamber to do infinite good, yet far too often we stand in our own way, to the detriment of all who call this land home.

I would like to close, honourable senators, by once again quoting Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary Simon in the Speech from the Throne:

There is hope in the every day. Reconciliation is not a single act, nor does it have an end date. It is a lifelong journey of healing, respect and understanding.

As such, colleagues, I urge that we collectively embrace our role as agents of change and commit to upholding the principle of reconciliation as a core and guiding value as we each go about fulfilling the vital role bestowed upon us as members of Canada's upper house.

*Kinanâskomitin.* Thank you.

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

(On motion of Senator LaBoucane-Benson, debate adjourned.)

**FOREIGN INFLUENCE REGISTRY AND  
ACCOUNTABILITY BILL**

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Housakos, seconded by the Honourable Senator Wells, for the second reading of Bill S-237, An Act to establish the Foreign Influence Registry and to amend the Criminal Code.

**Hon. David Richards:** Your Honour, congratulations to you.

Honourable senators, this item is adjourned in the name of Senator Clement, and I ask for leave of the Senate that following my intervention, the balance of her time to speak to this item be reserved.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Is leave granted?

So ordered.

**Senator Richards:** Thank you.

Although I am the critic on this particular Senate bill, I will be very brief. I tend to support it. It's Senator Housakos' bill.

Honourable senators, I suppose a nation must have some kind of moral force in order to remain a nation. That is a force independent enough to stand for its own principles, no matter the consequences, from those who would in some way wish to do us injury or harm. What we must also realize is that there are countries quite willing to take advantage and do us harm, and we must be vigilant in knowing this.

For a nation is beset at times both inside its borders, with discontent, and beyond its borders, with enmity. To ignore this is to open one's nation to internal displeasure and external attacks. I believe what is being asked with this bill is simply to decide whether we have a country which needs protection from outside forces — nothing more and nothing less. But in Canada today, it seems a very difficult question for some reason.

Would we let a neighbour come into our house and compromise or threaten our family? In the most basic sense, this is the question being asked, and in the most basic sense, this is what has happened to our country in the last few years.

I think a foreign registry is not a harsh thing to request and not an unreasonable position to take. To protect one's citizens, one must be conscious that those citizens have every right to be protected from predatory influence. Nor is it unreasonable to say that neglecting this obligation on even a small level is to neglect the duty to our citizens that our country has pledged by the very fact that it is a country, with its own constitution, borders and laws.

I suppose it depends on what country we want and what standards we demand of ourselves. So we might ask: If we are floundering in an abyss of modified standards, if our ships are behind schedule today, if our planes are years out of date, if our men and women in uniform — as brave and competent as they are and always were — do not amount to one division, and if our obligation to NATO is at its lowest ebb, do we answer that this is true? And if we do, then what does that say about us as a nation or a people?

Perhaps it says that we have little notion of what obligates a citizenry to their nation or to the greater world, to the allies who continually rely upon us. And are those at the gates willing to do us ill? We might ask this.

A foreign registry for those who work on behalf of a foreign government is both sane and practical and is practised in countries where those who do work on behalf of other nations are held accountable for what they do. I don't think this is a terrible thing, nor is it a racist policy. It is a sane practice to keep one's nation and its people safe from foreign bellicosity.

If national protection of our own citizenry is horrid against China or other nations, then why do China and other nations have it against so many others?

Canadian officialdom is filled with the impractical idea that the best way to fix any given crisis is by never responding to it in a timely fashion. I believe over the last number of years, more than a few nations have relied upon this aberration. It is evident in the North, within sight of our own borders, and, at times, off the Atlantic coast with other fishing fleets.

But I will come back to the first point: We have to decide if we are a country and not a post-nation nation. It is as simple and as profound and as existential as that. If we are a nation, then we must be vigilant in honouring our commitment to it and to our people, no matter who they are or where they are from — from First Nations to French to English to Chinese to Japanese.

Please let me offer a hockey analogy. "We become a nation when we drop the puck," I told Ron MacLean once about our hockey. That is because no one ever had to tell Canadians why they are on the ice. I wish we observed the same traits of tenacity, boldness and honour in assuming our democratic state and democratic values.

A foreign registry would simply keep in check those who work on behalf of a foreign entity. I am not saying that we treat any of them dishonourably. I'm saying if it became unjust, it would be called, and a penalty would ensue.

I will end here with a note about a battle that took place long ago. I will use it as a reminder of whom we once were. At Ypres in 1915, the first time the Germans used gas, the Canadians held their position when all around them fled. They were the only forces who would not give up the trench. They held the line. They did so because they felt they had to, and they refused to break and run. They were Canadians of all different races: Chinese, First Nations, English and French. They held their ground, as they did on Juno Beach and in Korea.

• (1550)

In honour of them, we should have vigilance and never give up our position or our love of country. In that regard, and in light of what has happened because of foreign meddling in the last five years, I am asking that this bill go to committee as soon as possible.

Thank you.

(Debate adjourned.)

[*Translation*]

## FOOD AND DRUGS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Brazeau, seconded by the Honourable Senator Housakos, for the second reading of Bill S-254, An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (warning label on alcoholic beverages).

**Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie:** Honourable senators, I rise today in support of Bill S-254, introduced by the Honourable Senator Brazeau.

The bill amends Canada's Food and Drugs Act to ensure that the labelling of alcoholic beverages reflects the most current scientific information. Senators Brazeau, Cordy, Miville-Dechéne and Richards spoke at second reading of this bill. I add my voice to theirs in the hope that we will promptly send this bill to committee for study. Let's not delay any longer in doing the right thing to improve the lives and the health of Canadians.

Three questions spring to mind upon reading the preamble. What is the link between alcohol and various cancers? Is labelling an effective way to inform the public? How could this bill be improved for the benefit of public health and consumers?

Before establishing the scientifically-proven link between alcohol and cancer, I'd like to share some data on the leading causes of mortality, in order to better understand the relevance of the bill and why urgent action is needed.

You'll hear the names of many diseases and many types of cancer. I don't mean to be alarmist, but I'll be sharing the information that's being reported in the current medical literature.

In Canada, roughly 300,000 people die each year of all causes. In 2020, malignant tumours were the cause of more than 80,000 of those 300,000 deaths. The numbers compiled by Statistics Canada indicate that cancer is still among the primary

causes of death and that alcohol is indirectly responsible for more than one in four deaths — hence the urgency to take action in Canada.

What's more, we saw notable increases in the rate of deaths associated with alcohol consumption in 2020. Specifically in people under 45, the number of deaths directly caused by alcohol increased by 50%. Many illnesses are caused by the chronic use of alcohol, including alcoholic gastritis, cirrhosis of the liver, pancreatitis, etc.

Note that the illnesses I just cited are responsible for death in the long term. There are other immediate deaths, such as highway accidents, in which alcohol is a determining factor.

What's more, there's a proven link between alcohol consumption and acts of aggression and violence.

What concrete action has been taken? The Canadian government tasked the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, the CCSA, with conducting studies and submitting reports with science-based recommendations. The CCSA produced a report entitled *What We Heard: Refreshing the National Framework for Action to Reduce the Harms Associated with Alcohol and Other Drugs and Substances in Canada*. It's a long title, but that's what it's called. It's a synthesis of consultations involving over 170 stakeholders in the context of a process to refresh the national framework.

Our National Framework for Action to Reduce the Harms Associated with Alcohol and Other Drugs and Substances in Canada is almost 20 years old. Its vision is for all people in Canada to live in a society free of the harms associated with these substances.

One of the principles articulated in the framework is that action should be knowledge-based, evidence-informed and evaluated for results. The January 2023 final report on Canada's guidance on alcohol and health came as a shock to many. It upends conventional thinking. Whereas the approach used to be prescriptive, now it is becoming restrictive.

Rather than suggest a number of drinks per day or per week, the experts are now telling us that the less alcohol one consumes, the better. Contrary to messaging from Educ'alcool, moderation is no longer in good taste.

No amount of alcohol is considered good for a person's health. This report is worth taking a closer look at. The guidance is based on the principle of autonomy in harm reduction and the fundamental idea behind it is that people living in Canada have a right to know. In addition to the chronic diseases that I mentioned earlier, alcohol itself is a carcinogen that can cause at least seven types of cancer. People often do not know that. The most recent data show that the use of alcohol causes nearly 7,000 cancer deaths each year in Canada, with most cases being breast cancer, colorectal cancer, liver cancer and oropharyngeal cancer.

According to the Canadian Cancer Society, drinking less alcohol is one of the top behaviours to reduce cancer risk.

[ Senator Richards ]

The message of Bill S-254 is reiterated in the CCSA report, which states, and I quote:

As a priority, people living in Canada need consistent, easy-to-use information at the point of pour to track their alcohol use in terms of standard drinks. They also have a right to clear and accessible information about the health and safety of the products they buy.

One of the direct benefits of this bill and a particularly effective policy change could be the mandatory labelling of all alcoholic beverages. We would expect the label to indicate the number of standard drinks per bottle, Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health and the health warnings.

Another study conducted by the CCSA, in collaboration with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, reported an association between alcohol use and aggression and violence.

I'm well aware that moving away from our collective addiction to alcohol requires a real paradigm shift. Drinking is deeply rooted in our culture. We call up a friend or colleague to go for a drink. Some even claim it's their right or duty to drink, as was the case a few years ago with smoking. However, we no longer carry our former convictions about alcohol's alleged benefits. We must strive to reduce our use of alcohol in all its forms, just as we did with tobacco.

The CCSA produced a separate report entitled *Lifetime Risk of Alcohol Attributable Death and Disability*. It notes that the lifetime risk of death and disability increases as alcohol consumption increases. This project, titled Canadian Substance Use Costs and Harms, analyzed Canadian data from 2007 to 2020 and lays out the dramatic changes in direct and indirect costs to our society. The CCSA report from March 29, 2023, states that the cost of substance use was estimated to be \$49.1 billion in 2020. The cost associated with alcohol is allegedly close to \$20 billion, or 40% of that total. The costs associated with the use of alcohol and tobacco have fluctuated over time. The per-person cost for alcohol has increased by 21%, while the cost for tobacco has decreased by 20%.

• (1600)

These estimates highlight the consequences of substance use, not only on the health care and criminal justice systems, but also on Canadians' ability to work and contribute to the economy.

To improve health and productivity in Canada, initiatives related to prevention, harm reduction and alcohol treatment must be put in place. Bill S-254 on alcohol labelling is just one of many measures the government should implement to ensure a healthier and safer life experience for all Canadians.

I couldn't help but wonder whether labelling actually works. A study on the effect of alcohol labelling on consumption, published in 2020 in *Journal of Studies of Alcohol and Drugs* in an article entitled "The Effects of Alcohol Warning Labels on Population Alcohol Consumption," compared alcohol consumption in Yukon with its neighbour, Northwest Territories. Approximately 300,000 labels were placed on 98% of alcoholic

beverages in Whitehorse. Sales dropped significantly in the capital city for products that carried these warnings, so the labelling made a difference.

My last question is the following: How could we improve this bill to benefit public health and consumers? I believe the only way is to study it in committee. It would give us the opportunity to hear from experts, the industries and other stakeholders on the future implementation of labelling and information to be disclosed. I think it is essential that consumers be able to obtain the information they need to freely make informed decisions.

Given that some consider alcohol a food item, should other information, such as the ingredients and nutritional information, be included?

Those are some of the ideas that I wanted to share with you, esteemed colleagues. Thank you for your attention.

**Hon. Julie Miville-Dechêne:** Would Senator Mégie take a question?

**Senator Mégie:** Yes.

**Senator Miville-Dechêne:** Ever since we began debating this bill, I've been wondering about that fact that there are still some doctors in Quebec, including at the Institut de cardiologie, who say that having two glasses of wine a day is excellent for the heart. As a doctor, what do you think of this debate that seems to pit some doctors against others?

**Senator Mégie:** What we realized after the study by the CCSA — and that's why I said that this surprised more than one person — is that even though the message for some time was that red wine is good for the heart, this new paradigm flies in the face of that. We still don't know how all this will end. Debates for and against are under way. Maybe there will be other studies or some will believe the studies that were done by the CCSA. I don't know where this will land, but they worked very hard on the new data to come up with some real standards. I think we need to give more weight to the CCSA data. This shouldn't stop you from having your glass of wine.

**Senator Miville-Dechêne:** There are some very reputable doctors in Quebec who say that these studies were poorly done and that doctors can continue to advise their patients to drink two glasses of wine. The interesting thing is that between leading experts on these issues, there seems to be a great deal of opposition.

**Senator Mégie:** Like all scientific studies, in medicine in particular — we're talking here about alcohol, but it's the same thing for other very important topics, such as cancer and other diseases: There are studies that often contradict each other. There would need to be a meta-analysis that takes the articles that are in favour and those that are against. Maybe that will land somewhere in the middle or prove someone or other right, but let's wait before coming to any conclusions. For now, it's a broader discussion.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

## BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

**The Hon. the Speaker:** I'd like to remind you that although I know it is awkward not to face the person to whom you're putting the question, it's very difficult to hear you when you turn your back on the microphone. It is just a little reminder. Thank you.

[*English*]

## CANADA REVENUE AGENCY ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Downe, seconded by the Honourable Senator Tannas, for the second reading of Bill S-258, An Act to amend the Canada Revenue Agency Act (reporting on unpaid income tax).

**Hon. Elizabeth Marshall:** Congratulations on your appointment, Your Honour. It's wonderful to see you in the chair.

Honourable senators, I rise today to speak as a critic of Senator Downe's Bill S-258, An Act to amend the Canada Revenue Agency Act (reporting on unpaid income tax), but I must confess that there is not much to be critical of with this bill.

As most of you will know, Senator Downe has been working on this issue for several years. He tabled his first bill in April 2015; it was Bill S-226. That bill died on the Order Paper when the 2015 election was called, but Senator Downe reintroduced the legislation as Bill S-243 in 2018. That bill was passed by this chamber with some minor amendments at committee, and then made it all the way to second reading in the House of Commons. I am hoping this bill makes it all the way through both houses.

Like its earlier iterations, Bill S-258 amends the Canada Revenue Agency Act to do three things: First, it will require the Canada Revenue Agency to list all convictions for tax evasion in the annual report it submits to the Minister of National Revenue. This would include convictions with respect to international tax evasion.

Second, Bill S-258 requires the agency to provide statistics on the tax gap once every three years.

Third, the bill will require the minister to provide data on the tax gap to the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

The value of these amendments is quite evident, but allow me to briefly explain the importance of what this bill will do — starting with the tax gap.

Quite simply, the tax gap is the difference between what the government should be collecting in taxes and what is actually collected. This is not an exact science because the tax gap exists, in part, due to income, assets and economic activities which are intentionally hidden, or as a result of errors which can be difficult to detect. But it is possible to establish an approximate tax gap range using one of two methodologies.

Since the tax gap is an estimate, it is presented as a range; for example, in 2022, the Canada Revenue Agency estimated a total gross tax gap of between \$35 billion to \$40 billion, or about 9% of federal revenues. The Canada Revenue Agency projected that, through collection efforts, they would be able to recoup \$17 billion of that, leaving a net tax gap of \$23 billion.

Colleagues, measuring this number is critical because it gives us a much-needed benchmark. Without it, we have no clear picture of how well our tax system is working, and we have no way to measure the effectiveness of our compliance and enforcement efforts. We are essentially flying blind.

While simply measuring the tax gap solves nothing on its own, it is very much like taking a reading of someone's vital signs. It reveals if something is wrong, and whether it is getting better or worse. If your tax gap is high, you know you have a problem. If your tax gap is rising, your problem is becoming worse. But if your tax gap is dropping, then you're doing something right.

• (1610)

This information is a vital tool. It assists the government in improving revenue collection, evaluating tax policies, ensuring fairness in the tax system, allocating resources effectively and developing strategies to promote compliance. Yet until recently, we were not measuring the tax gap.

This began to change in 2016, when the Canada Revenue Agency began publishing reports on various components of the federal tax gaps, including estimates and their underlying methodologies. In 2022, the Canada Revenue Agency published the *Overall federal tax gap report: Estimates and key findings for non-compliance, tax years 2014-2018* — its first-ever overall tax gap report — which looked at all sources of federal government taxation. This work is valuable and appreciated, but it remains deficient for a number of reasons.

First, there is no statutory requirement for the Canada Revenue Agency to continue this work. Because of the importance of the information to parliamentarians, it needs to be required by law. It needs to be regular in its occurrence so we can see over time if we are making progress. Bill S-258 addresses these shortcomings by mandating that the tax gap report is provided to parliamentarians every three years.

Second, there is currently no obligation for the Canada Revenue Agency to provide tax gap data to the Parliamentary Budget Officer. Without this information, there is a serious gap in accountability because the Parliamentary Budget Officer is



unable to do his own assessment and verification of the Canada Revenue Agency's tax gap estimate. Bill S-258 addresses this deficiency as well.

Third, although the Canada Revenue Agency publicly releases a list of some convictions for tax evasion, this list is not exhaustive and includes little information on international tax evasion cases. Without this information, the Canada Revenue Agency faces diminished public accountability regarding their efforts to crack down on offshore tax evasion. Bill S-258 would address this by requiring the Government of Canada to disclose all convictions for overseas tax evasion.

At its heart, this bill is one step in the fight against tax evasion, but it is an important step because tax evasion can have a significant impact on the public's confidence in the fairness of the tax system. When individuals or corporations evade taxes, they are avoiding their obligation to contribute their fair share to the funding of public services and programs that benefit our society as a whole. This creates a sense of unfairness and resentment among those who do pay their taxes and can create the perception that the system is rigged in favour of those who are wealthy and powerful. It erodes public confidence in the government's ability to enforce the tax laws fairly and to ensure that everyone is treated equally under the law.

Furthermore, tax evasion has practical consequences such as the loss of revenue for the government, which can lead to cuts in public services and programs or an increase in the tax burden on those who do pay their taxes. This can further exacerbate feelings of unfairness and injustice and lead to a breakdown in the social contract between citizens and the government.

Bill S-258 does not solve all of these problems, but it is a necessary step in the right direction. It will close a gap in important information that parliamentarians need to do their jobs properly. It will help to increase public accountability for the Canada Revenue Agency. It will help incentivize better enforcement and better public policy. It will help bolster voluntary compliance through greater public awareness, and it will strengthen public confidence in the fairness of our tax system.

Honourable senators, there is no perfect tax system, but we can make ours better and stronger by passing Bill S-258. I encourage you to support this bill so it can go to committee for further study. Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

## NATIONAL STRATEGY RESPECTING ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE BILL

### SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator McCallum, seconded by the Honourable Senator Boisvenu, for the second reading of Bill C-226, An Act

respecting the development of a national strategy to assess, prevent and address environmental racism and to advance environmental justice.

**Hon. Wanda Thomas Bernard:** Thank you, Your Honour. I also want to congratulate and welcome you as our Speaker.

Honourable senators, I stand today in support of Bill C-226, the national strategy respecting environmental racism and environmental justice act. I want to acknowledge that we are on the unceded, unsundered territory of the Algonquin Nation, and I live in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people. These acknowledgements are particularly important to me today given this topic of environmental racism. Thank you to Elizabeth May and Lenore Zann for their work in the other place. Thank you to Senator McCallum for sponsoring this very important bill here in the Senate and for sharing your ways of knowing and being. It truly is a gift.

Honourable senators, when I talk about marginalized communities, I am talking about groups of people who are, at times, physically on the margins of communities. Think about the outskirts of major city centres. You'll see landfills, industry and undesirable sites. You will also see racialized communities. When I say the name of a community to our south, Flint, Michigan, most Canadians understand the expanse of the devastating drinking water crisis impacting African Americans. Let me tell you that we have many communities like Flint, Michigan right here in Canada, many of which are still living under conditions that are killing them.

One of the most widely known examples of environmental racism of a marginalized community in Canada is the story of Africville. Senator Klyne talked about Africville in his speech on this bill. Let me add a bit more. Africville was a vibrant community of African Nova Scotians. An open-pit dump was placed 350 metres from this seaside community. They did not have clean drinking water. Throughout the 170 years that Africville existed, a railway extension was installed through the community and the Halifax Explosion damaged the community. An infectious disease hospital was built nearby, along with a human waste disposal pit, a prison and slaughterhouses. It was also the location chosen for a fertilizer production plant.

Imagine a location surrounded by hazardous sites, the last place on earth that you would allow your children and grandchildren to grow up nearby. Those were the conditions forced upon Africville. Located in the city of Halifax, they were denied basic services, such as city water and sewer. Instead of providing services, the city chose to relocate the residents of Africville. During the forceful relocation of Africville in 1967, some community members were transported to public housing in the North End by the City of Halifax using garbage trucks. If that doesn't show you how African Nova Scotians were seen by the government, I don't know what would. To this day, I hear of anecdotal stories about the staggering number of former Africville residents who have died of various forms of cancer. The community has connected the dots, and perhaps the government should too.

My gratitude goes to the fierce community activists and advocates who have been mobilizing for decades to protect the health and safety of their communities. African-Canadian

Professor Dr. Ingrid Waldron published a book called *There's Something in the Water*, which reveals one of Nova Scotia's hardest and most shameful truths: the pervasive nature of environmental racism against Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotians.

• (1620)

This book was used to create a documentary highlighting the devastation of racialized Nova Scotians. The film brings the viewer through the African-Nova Scotian community of Shelburne with local advocate Louise Delisle, who lists the people who have died or are ill with lung cancer and multiple myelomas. These families have no option to move, and even if they did, they would be leaving their homes and be separated from their communities.

Although the dump has been removed, the buried waste contaminates their water. Louise describes her childhood memories of the black smoke that regularly engulfed the skies of her neighbourhood as piles of hazardous waste from the hospitals, factories and residences were burned. She remembers arriving at school smelling like burnt garbage.

Nearby, in Pictou Landing, Nova Scotia, is a Mi'kmaq community absolutely devastated by the toxic waste from the Northern Pulp mill contaminating the water.

The Grassroots Grandmothers are a group of women water protectors who fight for the human right for their community's access to clean drinking water. Colleagues, please take one hour to watch the documentary *There's Something in the Water* and learn more about Canada's own environmental racism crisis.

We could name many communities: Whitney Pier, the Sydney tar ponds, Membertou, Lincolnville, Indian Brook — colleagues, there are so many examples. In my own community of East Preston, residents have been advocating against plans to designate a dump nearby for decades. In a 2016 letter of protest, Spencer Colley documented three examples of locating dumps in or near the Preston communities, which are the largest Black communities in Nova Scotia: in 1992 near East Lake in North Preston, in 1997 in North Preston and then, in 2016, the proposal to relocate a facility from Porters Lake to East Preston opposite Highway 107, Exit 17, where I live.

Colleagues, policy-making on environmental issues must not exclude race as the two are intrinsically tied. We can map out Nova Scotia by sites of dumps and hazardous industry alongside Indigenous and African-Nova Scotian communities. The environment, race and land have always been tied and always will be.

Eddie Carvery's protest against the forceful relocation of the residents of Africville will always remind us of that.

In her book, Ingrid Waldron states that:

State-sanctioned racial and gendered violence is subtle, invisible, and often has no specific person who can (or will) be . . . responsible, in contrast to interpersonal violence where a main perpetrator can be identified.

Since there is no one specific person, it is necessary to obligate all policy-makers to make decisions based on what is good for the communities nearby.

This bill proposes a national strategy to examine the link between race and environmental hazards and the locations of hazardous sites. It seeks to address federal laws, policies and programs pertaining to environmental justice; examine compensation for communities impacted and collect information on health outcomes to give us the data to prove what community residents have known for decades: that environmental racism is detrimental to our health.

Honourable colleagues, these communities are no strangers to advocating for themselves, and it's time the Senate advocated for them. Environmental racism is a great example of colonization doing its job: wiping out Indigenous and Black people in Canada.

Reconciliation cannot happen without putting a stop to environmental racism. Let's send this bill to committee quickly. This is not a topic to debate; it's a topic to act upon quickly. We are ready to make policy solutions that will save the lives of some of the most marginalized people in Canada.

Thank you. *Asante*.

**Hon. Kim Pate:** Your Honour, allow me to join our colleagues in congratulating you on your role as Speaker and taking on such a vital and important position, not just for yourself but for all of us. It reflects so well on this place. Thank you so much.

Honourable senators, I rise today to speak in support of Bill C-226. Many examples of environmental racism have already been spoken about at length, most recently by Senators Bernard, McCallum, Klyne and Audette. Their excellent interventions underscore the depth and breadth of this issue across Canada. And as Senator McCallum so clearly articulated last week and as Senator Bernard just did, environmental racism is one facet of the much broader intersectional issue of systemic racism.

Systemic racism both exacerbates and facilitates intersecting forms of racism to flourish and effectively normalizes and too often desensitizes the general population to its very existence and effects. In other words, environmental racism is not experienced in isolation, nor is it unintended. It can go unnoticed, however, as its consequences are rarely felt by those in the most privileged positions or locations.

Too often, we witness deliberate decisions, sometimes characterized as necessary or political compromises, whereby environmental devastation is permitted in what are often referred to as "sacrifice zones," communities that are largely out of sight and out of mind from the general public. Such decisions are rooted in and fuel geographic racism. On a global scale, environmental racism is the logic by which particular communities, nations and places — often racialized — experience the harshest consequences of the climate crisis.

We see it in terms of the historical and ongoing seizure of land and resources that privileges the convenience and access of the most privileged, from the razing of poor and racialized communities such as Africville and green spaces for the

construction of highways, airports and industry. Polluting infrastructure has been purposefully built in, over or adjacent to the backyards of poor, Indigenous and Black communities, with seemingly little regard for the impact of toxic pollutants on the respiratory or heart health of inhabitants, not to mention the racist and class-biased disregard for the corresponding proliferation of cancers and other diseases.

Last week, as I flew over Saskatchewan and into Alberta, the devastating forest fires raging in the West were top of mind. The consequences of those forest fires are immediate and devastating for Indigenous peoples and those in rural communities. The havoc wreaked will affect many people for decades to come. Many have lost their homes with nowhere to go. Many will never financially recover from these losses and will require financial supports. For many, the trauma they have experienced will require a lifetime of mental aid and support.

These forest fires are part of our climate crisis and are predictable, direct byproducts of our colonial privileging of individualistic profiteering and the pursuit of wealth through industries and the use of technology. The climate crisis is directly increasing both the severity and frequency of forest fires, and the resulting environmental, financial and personal devastation is disproportionately negatively impacting the most marginalized, racialized and disadvantaged.

Neither the trauma and hardship experienced nor the remedial resources or relief are equitably distributed. Indigenous communities are clearly signalling this.

• (1630)

The day I arrived in Edmonton, Carol Johnston, a resident of East Prairie Metis Settlement, was in the media describing her concerns that the communities closer to Edmonton and central Alberta were getting more attention than the northern Indigenous communities destroyed by fire. She described how the burning of 4 houses near Drayton Valley was “all over the media,” whereas the loss of 14 homes in the East Prairie settlement did not even initially warrant a mention despite the reality that the community was in dire straits.

Similarly, dozens of homes destroyed in Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation and Fox Lake in Little Red River Cree Nation received virtually no attention. The province has called on the federal government to act, but neither jurisdiction seems to have taken seriously the notice that a dozen Indigenous communities are currently affected or under threat from these wildfires. Neither the province nor the federal government seemingly wants to take responsibility for the crisis they have both played a part in creating.

To her credit, the federal Minister of Indigenous Services recognized that there were at least 150 homes lost, along with community infrastructure, and over 4,000 evacuees. Yet, we are hearing virtually nothing about support efforts. For the few we do know of, we are hearing that Indigenous peoples are having issues accessing the limited funding because they do not have sufficient identification, including identification that states they are Alberta residents.

For those who are displaced, it is often far from their communities, to places they have never been. Mayor of High Level Crystal McAtter recently explained:

Many of our evacuees come from the reserves, that like Fox Lake, for example, are remote . . . so a lot of the people have never left Fox Lake. A lot of the Elders, they speak Cree. Same with the Dene [communities] — they speak Dene. They don't speak any other language.

With no central evacuation centres or adequate culturally safe and specific resources, families and communities are also often separated. These communities, already devastated by immeasurable loss, effectively lose their support systems, further exacerbating their traumatic experiences.

If this were anomalous, we might be less concerned. But do you remember the wildfires in British Columbia in 2021? Lytton First Nation was all but destroyed, and there was no help provided and no plan to help those most in need. As Chief Matt Pasco so chillingly reminded us then, “They had processes in places for our cattle but none for Nlaka’pamux people.”

Two years later, their community is still grappling with rebuilding while having to take on the burden of again preparing for wildfire season. They are still in severe drought conditions and at risk of another wildfire. It took 19 months for the Lytton First Nation community store to open, a temporary grocery store for the residents of the community. Before that, community members were driving upwards of three hours, travelling as far as Kamloops to buy essential food items. They are still waiting for permanent reconstruction to begin. The Mayor of Lytton, Denise O'Connor, has said:

It's been extremely frustrating. We've been asking specifically for timelines and dates but it's just not there, we're just not getting it.

These communities are already struggling with overcrowding, lack of funding, inadequate health care and an overall deficit in social, housing, economic and health supports. Environmental crises create additional hardships and responsibilities for already struggling communities, further disadvantaging them and perpetuating the cycle of systemic inadequacies, distrust and the racism they face.

Last year, the Auditor General of Canada reported on this issue. These are the stark findings.

First:

. . . Indigenous Services Canada did not provide the support First Nations communities needed to manage emergencies such as floods and wildfires, which are happening more often and with greater intensity.

Second, they found that “. . . the department’s actions were more reactive than preventative . . .,” despite the proactive identification by First Nations communities of many infrastructure projects to mitigate the impact of emergencies. In fact, there was a backlog of 112 eligible infrastructure projects waiting to be funded.

Third — and worse yet — the Auditor General found that many issues had not been addressed or improved since they had first identified them in their 2013 audit of emergency management on reserves.

Finally:

The department also did not know whether First Nations received services that were culturally appropriate and comparable to emergency services provided in municipalities of similar size and circumstance because it did not identify or consistently monitor the services or level of services to be provided to First Nations.

Minister Hajdu said it’s clear that First Nations sit on the front lines of this environmental crisis, which has astronomical cost tied to evacuation, emergency accommodation and rebuilding of communities and livelihoods. Yet, we continue to do little or nothing to meaningfully support these communities and fail to take proactive steps to deal with the issue.

In short, the lack of a national strategy and the focus on reactive rather than preventative measures continue the privileging of the communities of the most privileged, which is just one of the many examples and forms of environmental racism that persists in Canada and that we must address. Let’s please get this to committee and continue the work.

*Meegwetch.* Thank you.

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

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, I rise today to speak in support of Bill C-226, a national strategy respecting environmental racism and environmental justice act. I want to thank Senator McCallum for sponsoring this important bill. I’m happy to indicate that the government fully supports Bill C-226.

When presenting this bill in the other place, member of Parliament Elizabeth May recounted the parliamentary history of the bill as “. . . a non-partisan effort from its very inception . . .” Here she was referring to Bill C-226’s predecessor, Bill C-230, first introduced by the former Liberal MP Lenore Zann.

The government views Bill C-226 and its objectives to prevent and address environmental racism and to advance environmental justice as important work for all Canadians. It also aligns with the government’s commitment to introduce legislation to develop an environmental justice strategy and examine the link between race, socio-economic status and exposure to environmental risk.

If adopted, Bill C-226 would create a new act, requiring the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to develop a national strategy to promote efforts across Canada to advance

environmental justice and to assess, prevent and address environmental racism. The development of a national strategy would add two important elements to the ongoing efforts to combat systemic racism and inequalities relating to the inclusion of Indigenous peoples, Black and racialized communities in environmental decision making and initiatives.

First, the process to develop the strategy would be an opportunity to pursue environmental justice by giving voice to marginalized communities to help define the problem and contribute to potential solutions. The benefits of the process are recognized in the bill, which provides that:

. . . it is important to meaningfully involve all Canadians — and, in particular, marginalized communities — in the development of environmental policy . . . .

Second, a national strategy would help frame what will need to be a diverse set of actions by a wide range of government and non-government actors, given the complex interrelationships and priorities across stakeholders, partners and policy areas. To that end, the resulting strategy will also complement other efforts and opportunities that contribute to advancing environmental justice in Canada, even where the cause of environmental injustice or the acknowledgement of environmental racism may not have been directly identified.

While many of these other initiatives may not be as explicit in their consideration of environmental justice, one example where the concept is directly incorporated is in Bill S-5, the strengthening environmental protection for a healthier Canada act. As honourable senators will recall, after our extensive consideration and study, Bill S-5 was adopted at third reading in the chamber on June 22, 2022.

This bill is now before the other place, after a thorough study by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. If passed, in addition to strengthening Canada’s chemicals management regime, it would recognize a right to a healthy environment as provided under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, more commonly known as CEPA. These amendments to CEPA would require the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the Minister of Health to develop an implementation framework that describes how a right to a healthy environment will be considered in the administration of that act.

• (1640)

The framework will also elaborate on how principles, such as the principle of environmental justice, will be considered in the administration of CEPA. Through consultations, Canadians will have an opportunity to participate in the development of the implementation framework. Strengthened awareness of, and reflection on, the potential for environmental injustices in environmental protection approaches can help to avoid environmental injustices before they begin or allow better understanding of those that may already exist.

Another example of concurrent efforts that contribute to the pursuit of environmental justice in Canada is the government’s work to identify and prioritize the cleanup of contaminated sites in areas where Indigenous peoples, racialized and low-income

Canadians live. Here, the emphasis on addressing contaminated sites in proximity to potentially marginalized populations aligns directly with the concern outlined in Bill C-226 that a “. . . disproportionate number of people who live in environmentally hazardous areas are members . . .” of those same communities.

Certainly, we expect that other programs that address environmental hazards such as landfills or polluting industries would similarly provide opportunities to make positive contributions to addressing environmental injustices.

We can also look to the recently released Federal Sustainable Development Strategy and how it seeks to reflect the issues of environmental equity and justice, which generally refer to equitable treatment and meaningful inclusion of all people in laws, regulations and programs to protect them from environmental hazards; avoiding the disproportionate burden of pollution and other environmental harms across identity groups and facilitating access to environmental benefits and opportunities regardless of identity factors including gender identity and expression, race, ethnicity, indigeneity, language, income or sexual orientation.

Taking into account the range of efforts outlined above, and others that may equally impact environmental justice outcomes, an important role of the national strategy will be to explain how these efforts and others work together to contribute to the strategy's objectives. Together, there is an opportunity to move the country forward towards more fair and equitable enjoyment of a healthy environment.

A critical interest in the context of Bill C-226 is the collection and use of data to improve understanding of linkages between race, socioeconomic status and environmental risk. The passing of Bill C-226 is expected to result in further collection and compilation of data as part of the required study, which may also provide insights, including from Indigenous peoples, on data collection, disaggregation and analysis to support environmental justice.

However, it also bears mentioning that there are a wide number of datasets already available across the federal government that include information related to environmental hazards, community composition and health outcomes. Given the two-year timeline set out in the bill for developing and publishing a national strategy once the act comes into force, it is expected that the work to support the strategy would also leverage existing data from broader and ongoing government initiatives. Many of these initiatives already, directly or indirectly, assist with providing information necessary to apply an environmental justice lens to decision making.

For example, since the launch of the Canadian Health Measures Survey in 2007, Health Canada, in collaboration with the Public Health Agency of Canada and Statistics Canada, has

collected information on the general health and health-related behaviours of Canadians that will help improve the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of illnesses and promote the health and wellness of Canadians. Other noteworthy examples include Statistics Canada's Census of Environment and their work to merge existing environmental data to create comprehensive information on Canada's ecosystem assets, which is integrated with socioeconomic data to help monitor environmental trends and better inform decision making.

Furthermore, Environment and Climate Change Canada maintains the air quality monitoring networks and is also collaborating with provinces and territories to implement the Air Quality Management System, which includes the development and establishment of industrial emissions requirements and ambient air quality standards to drive local air quality improvements.

Good information is crucial for enabling informed public decisions and holding the government accountable. The National Pollutant Release Inventory, or NPRI, plays an important role in supporting that goal. The NPRI is Canada's legislated, publicly accessible inventory of pollutant releases, disposal and transfers. It tracks over 320 pollutants from over 7,000 facilities across Canada. Reporting facilities include factories that manufacture a variety of goods, as well as mines, oil and gas operations, power plants and sewage treatment plants. It comprises information reported by facilities to Environment and Climate Change Canada under CEPA.

The NPRI is at the centre of the government's efforts to track toxic substances and other substances of concern. It is a key tool for identifying and monitoring sources of pollution in Canada, including information on pollution from facilities such as releases from facilities to air, water or land; disposals at facilities or other locations; transfers to other locations for treatment and recycling; facilities' activities; location and contacts and pollution prevention plans and activities.

It is also a tool for developing indicators for the quality of our air, water and land. Information collected through the NPRI is used for chemicals management initiatives and is made publicly available to help Canadians understand pollutant releases in their communities, encourage actions to reduce pollution and help track progress to Canadians each year. Public access to the NPRI also motivates industry to prevent and reduce pollutant releases. NPRI data helps the government track progress in pollution prevention, evaluate releases and transfers of substances of concern, identify and act on environmental priorities, conduct air-quality modelling and implement policy initiatives and risk management measures.

The NPRI is increasingly adopting the knowledge-on-demand paradigm by providing tools to translate released data into more understandable interpretations of risk, impact and priorities. With

this added context, priorities and challenging areas are more clearly visible along with environmental impacts on the general population, including members of Indigenous and racialized communities. Information collected through the National Pollutant Release Inventory could support the work that would be required under Bill C-226.

In addition to all the work that is already occurring, allow me to return to the amendments to CEPA in Bill S-5. These will require research, studies or monitoring activities to be conducted to support the government in protecting the right to a healthy environment. These should provide valuable information as the government moves forward on environmental justice issues. For example, they could include the collection and analysis of data to identify and monitor populations in communities that are particularly vulnerable to environmental and health risks because of greater susceptibility or greater exposure.

Finally, I want to highlight the Canadian Environmental Sustainability Indicators program, also known as CESI, which is administered by Environment and Climate Change Canada. The CESI program currently provides indicators to measure progress on key environmental issues, including targets in the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy, and provides contextual information for the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy goals. The CESI program's experience with developing indicators that integrate data and information from several federal departments, as well as from provincial and territorial governments, would likely serve as a base to build upon to develop indicators, track progress and report on the effectiveness of a national strategy every five years, as required by Bill C-226.

All this is to say the government is committed to making a national environmental justice strategy a reality. With that in mind, I understand that they are already considering how our existing datasets, legislation and policies can work together to continue advancing environmental justice and implement Bill C-226 if passed into law.

[*Translation*]

In conclusion, honourable senators, together with the Member of Parliament for Saanich—Gulf Islands and many of our colleagues here and in the other place, I encourage all senators to vote in favour of this bill. If it passes, a national strategy may give us the opportunity to discuss the best way to address the environmental risks affecting historically marginalized groups.

For anyone with lingering concerns, some of which were raised during the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development's study of the bill, I would point out that the bill will ensure the strategy remains relevant by providing for a report on its effectiveness every five years. Knowing that this bill and its proposed strategy are the beginning of the journey, not the end, it's important for us to do our part to help move things forward.

This bill won't solve all the problems related to systemic racism or environmental inequality, but that certainly shouldn't interfere with our social progress. Together, we can ensure this bill is examined and passed as soon as possible. From that point

on, governments and communities can work together to build both confidence and knowledge and achieve more equitable outcomes with respect to the environment and justice.

Honourable senators, I'd like to thank Senator McCallum once again for her work and her advocacy, and I hope we can send this bill to committee as soon as possible.

Thank you for your attention.

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

[*English*]

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Senator Batters, do you have a question?

**Hon. Denise Batters:** Yes, I do.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Will you take a question, Senator Gold?

**Senator Gold:** Yes, of course.

**Senator Batters:** Senator Gold, I am curious as to what your decision process is as to when you give a government speech on a bill, because you are making a speech on this private member's bill from the House of Commons today. Last week, however, you were the government sponsor of Bill C-46, a government bill, and you didn't give a third reading speech, so I wasn't able to ask you a question after you concluded your remarks that day. You didn't really have any remarks, so I couldn't ask you what the income threshold was, as I had asked you after the second reading speech and you didn't have an answer.

• (1650)

I'm just wondering what the decision process is as to when you make a government speech and when you don't. Also, I note that the fact that you would be making this speech wasn't on the scroll notes for today, so I'm wondering when you decided to make this particular speech. No one would have expected you to make this speech and have some questions prepared for you.

**Senator Gold:** Thank you for your question and for the care you'll take to prepare questions for me. I made the decision to give the speech today — it was after scroll — when it became clear that there was an opportunity to make a speech in a timely fashion.

The position of the government with regard to non-government bills is to look carefully at each and every bill. When we can support a bill, we will vote in favour, and when we can't, we will vote against them.

With regard to whether speeches are made or not, this is a bill that the government believes is important, and I thought it would be of interest to members of the chamber to know that the government fully supports this bill. To that end, I was pleased to speak today, and I appreciate the attention that was granted to me.

[ Senator Gold ]

With regard to your question about last week, Senator Batters, the government bill, which I was pleased to sponsor, was an important bill that had to be passed by a certain time so that Canadians could get their benefits in a timely fashion — benefits that were important to them. I made the decision in the interest of time and in collaboration and discussion with others to forego my speech so that we could make sure the bill passed and Canadians got their benefits on time.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

### FISHERIES AND OCEANS

#### BUDGET AND AUTHORIZATION TO TRAVEL—STUDY ON ISSUES RELATING TO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S CURRENT AND EVOLVING POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGING FISHERIES AND OCEANS—FIFTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the fifth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans (*Budget—study of issues relating to the management of Canada's fisheries and oceans—power to travel*), presented in the Senate on May 11, 2023.

**Hon. Fabian Manning** moved the adoption of the report.

He said: May I also join others in congratulating you, Madam Speaker, on your appointment to the chair. I wish you all the best.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

#### BUDGET AND AUTHORIZATION TO ENGAGE SERVICES AND TRAVEL—STUDY ON SEAL POPULATIONS—SIXTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the sixth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans (*Budget—examine and report on Canada's seal populations and their effect on Canada's fisheries—power to hire staff and to travel*), presented in the Senate on May 11, 2023.

**Hon. Fabian Manning** moved the adoption of the report.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

### AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

#### BUDGET—STUDY ON THE STATUS OF SOIL HEALTH—NINTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the ninth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry (*Budget—examine and report on the status of soil health in Canada—power to travel*), presented in the Senate on May 11, 2023.

**Hon. Paula Simons** moved the adoption of the report.

She said: To you, Madam Speaker, mazel tov.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

### BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY INDIGENOUS BUSINESSES TO CANADA'S ECONOMY

#### INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Klyne, calling the attention of the Senate to the ongoing business and economic contributions made by Indigenous businesses to Canada's economy.

**Hon. Scott Tannas:** I rise today to speak on my colleague Senator Klyne's inquiry that deals with the economic contributions of Indigenous businesses in Canada. I want to thank him for bringing this important inquiry forward.

As mentioned in his speech, there are more than 50,000 Indigenous-owned businesses in our country, annually contributing a total of \$31 billion into Canada's GDP. Senator Klyne very graciously spoke about the success of the Whitecap Dakota First Nation in Saskatchewan. Senator Busson equally spoke enthusiastically about many Indigenous success stories in her home province of British Columbia, including the Nisga'a and the Osoyoos Indian Band, to name a couple.

Today, I will speak about two of the many success stories in my home province of Alberta. I will not only speak to their successes, but also to the barriers they continue to face despite their monumental achievements. I think as representatives of our provinces, it is not only important to celebrate the achievements in our regions, but also to acknowledge and try to remedy the hurdles that are still in place.

Let me start with the first success story, the Fort McKay story. Fort McKay is located on the banks of the Athabasca River just north of Fort McMurray. In the community, there live about 800 people, members of Dene, Cree and Métis descent. It's a

signatory to Treaty 8 and boasts a long-standing history dating back to 1820, when the Hudson's Bay Company first built a trading post near the current site of the village.

Fast forward to 1986. The Fort McKay Group of Companies, or FMGOC, is established. In fact, it should be mentioned that the first female chief in Alberta, Chief Dorothy McDonald-Hyde, was instrumental in establishing the Fort McKay Group of Companies.

It began modestly with two employees and a single janitorial contract. Today, the Fort McKay Group of Companies has over 1,000 employees from over 75 First Nations across Canada and 5 subsidiaries. In addition to that, Fort McKay has a holding company called Fort McKay Landing Limited Partnership, and its investment portfolio includes 13 private companies that have been built using the nation's generated business income. That income is then reinvested into current subsidiaries and into new ventures as part of the nation's private equity fund.

Simply, the goal for Fort McKay is to become fully self-sustaining such that the revenue generated from their growing investment portfolio of companies is used to pay for community infrastructure, services and programs. We have heard that their portfolio of companies operating over four provinces generates approximately \$500 million in revenue. Fort McKay First Nation has, in fact, contributed over \$1 billion in accumulated business activity to the Alberta economy, and now employs over 1,500 Albertans, contributing to the Canada Pension Plan and Employment Insurance base.

All of Fort McKay's businesses embrace specific core values. First, they are all either majority or minority Indigenous owned or operated businesses. Second, each company tries to maintain a minimum of 10% Indigenous employment in their organization. This is a commendable goal and not an easy feat. While some of their portfolio companies have achieved this goal, Fort McKay supports others in their recruitment of Indigenous talent. It is the nation's goal to be the largest Indigenous employer — a workforce they believe is severely underutilized.

• (1700)

Further, many community leaders have been working hard to learn and implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. Every year they have seen more and more of their portfolio companies participate in the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls on May 5; May 11, Moose Hide Campaign Day; June 21, National Indigenous Peoples Day; and September 30, Orange Shirt Day.

Third is a core value set. In our conversations with Fort McKay, we were notified of an acronym: PACE — People, Accountability, Culture and Equity. Monika Wilson, Vice President of Fort McKay Landing LP, summed it up beautifully:

It's how we value people, value accountability, value culture, and value equity. Seeing and celebrating the achievements of our members and employees, being transparent in our governance and business activities, having culturally relevant policies, programs, and services, and

engaging elders as cultural advisors, and ensuring that our policies and procedures are fair and without bias is how we strive to do our jobs.

Before moving on to the barriers still faced by Fort McKay, let me briefly introduce the second success story, which is Tsuut'ina First Nation, signatory to Treaty 7, bordering the city of Calgary. Tsuut'ina's history dates back to the early 1700s.

In 2007, Tsuut'ina opened Grey Eagle Resort & Casino just outside Calgary. The resort includes a casino with over 84,000 square feet of gaming action, over 1,000 slot machines, 40 gaming tables, six poker tables, a bingo hall, a four-star hotel and conference centre and a 2,500-seat event centre. It is widely regarded as the number one casino in Calgary and the number two casino in Alberta, just behind the River Cree Resort and Casino in Enoch.

Today, the casino employs roughly 450 employees, while the hotel and event centre employ an additional 250 employees. Of the employees at the casino, there are 39 Tsuut'ina employees and 82 First Nations employees. Of the employees at the hotel and event centre, there are 16 Tsuut'ina employees and 52 Indigenous employees.

All revenue the casino makes, Tsuut'ina puts back into the community. This is a pattern I am sure you have noticed, colleagues. Every penny made through Indigenous establishments exists for the betterment of the community. The money Tsuut'ina makes is used to support health care, emergency services and housing on-reserve. In fact, over the years Tsuut'ina has spent approximately \$30 million on policing services on their reserve. Furthermore, there are currently plans for the construction of 60 houses in the community, and that is not including the 185 houses already built in the community using casino revenue.

I should also mention that, pursuant to the First Nations Development Fund Grant Program that has been entered into between Alberta and all First Nations, revenue generated from the Grey Eagle Casino is shared. Of slot revenue, 10% goes to non-Host First Nations which is then used by those First Nations to support their own economic, social and community development. Of slot revenue, 30% goes to the Province of Alberta. This is Tsuut'ina's way of giving back and sharing the success. It should also be mentioned that since the casino's opening, Tsuut'ina Nation has given Alberta \$442 million.

Now that I have spoken on both success stories, let me relay some of Fort McKay and Tsuut'ina's concerns. Both nations believe that the Government of Canada does not do enough. Both have either faced barriers in acquiring funding or in licensing projects. Both feel there are a lack of resources for Indigenous business owners.

For Fort McKay, an issue they have noticed that is unique to First Nations businesses is that they do not have access to capital for on-reserve assets to be financed. Banks and lenders cannot seize assets on-reserve, so it makes getting loans against assets on-reserve difficult if not impossible.



Another avenue of disadvantage is in the lack of mentorship programs that give interested persons the ability to acquire skills relevant to running a business, especially where it comes to understanding the complex legal framework surrounding business management on and off reserves, bookkeeping, accounting and general financial management. These skills are crucial in cultivating future talent in Indigenous communities. This is a shared responsibility — it does not just fall on Fort McKay or Tsuut'ina or any Indigenous community. Everyone benefits from talent in this country. It's a part of economic reconciliation, which is part of larger reconciliation.

For Tsuut'ina, many of the challenges existed prior to Grey Eagle Casino being operational. For Grey Eagle Casino to be built, Tsuut'ina first had to enter into negotiations with the federal government to lease their own lands for development. The establishment then had to be licensed by the Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Commission. All this can be a lengthy process, and, because Tsuut'ina cannot license their own gaming establishments, they only keep a portion of the revenue the establishment generates. The rest goes to the province — and while a portion of it is used for noble pursuits, such as the First Nations Development Fund Grant Agreement, the vast majority is simply pocketed into general revenues by the province. It is an unfair bargain, to say the least. What would make it a lot easier is if First Nations were not restrained by licensing rules outlined in the Criminal Code and, instead, could exercise their sovereignty on these matters where their own land was concerned. I will not delve into this topic deeper than this, but, colleagues, stay tuned. In the coming weeks, I will be speaking on this matter in greater detail.

To conclude, colleagues, I hope I have left you with some food for thought — and for my fellow Alberta senators, pride in these incredible Indigenous entrepreneurs. I am not sure if we will hear about all 50,000 Indigenous-owned businesses across this country, but we will hear about many, and I look forward to those stories that my colleagues will present on this inquiry. Thank you again, Senator Klyne.

**Hon. Peter Harder:** Thank you, Your Honour, and let me add my congratulations to you on your post. You mentioned earlier that you had big shoes to fill, but your predecessor never wore high heels.

Before I begin, I'd like to acknowledge that we are holding our deliberations on the unceded territory of the Anishinaabeg Algonquin First Nation. This acknowledgement is particularly appropriate, as I rise today to speak on the inquiry recently launched by our colleague the honourable Senator Klyne from Saskatchewan, or, as he's known by his Twitter handle, @Mister\_Regina.

The objective of this inquiry is to provide a focus on the great success stories being experienced but not adequately spoken of regarding Indigenous-led businesses across Canada. I am delighted to have so many colleagues, including Senator Tannas who just finished, speak on this issue from the perspective of your region.

As senators who occupy what I believe to be the most privileged think tank in the country, we can do a lot to inspire Indigenous Canadians looking to start their own business or

wanting to take part as employees, researchers, staffers or in other roles. In my home province of Ontario alone, the Indigenous Business Directory of Canada counts 526 businesses of all shapes and sizes.

As many of us know, entrepreneurs operating an Indigenous-led business often come up against challenges that businesses led by others don't encounter. Given that reality, one can be sure that a large number of those 526 businesses have overcome long odds to get to where they are. It would be easy to cherry-pick one or two upon which to shine a bit of light. But, rather than simply convey examples of such successes to you, I thought I would spend a bit of time discussing the challenges Indigenous-led companies face in ensuring that the number of 526 continues to grow here in this province.

By the way, overall there are, as Senator Tannas already referenced, about 50,000 Indigenous businesses in Canada.

I'd like to talk a bit about the potential Indigenous labour pool in this country which, as we all know, too often goes untapped and underutilized. Much of Indigenous Canada is young, vibrant and creative, and we're not making the most of it. Success in much of the business world, of course, starts with education. Let me hasten to add that a good education is not by any means a prerequisite for running a successful business. Indeed, my own view is that we should be esteeming the trades more than we do in this country. But that's for another day.

• (1710)

The fact of the matter is that the number of Indigenous post-secondary degrees continues to significantly lag behind those attained by non-Indigenous Canadians. For example, in 2016, 52% of Indigenous women had a post-secondary qualification, including the 14% of Indigenous women with a bachelor's degree or higher. By contrast, 46% of Indigenous men obtained post-secondary qualifications, including 8% who graduated with a bachelor's degree or higher.

Compare this to the rest of Canada, where 67% of women earn a post-secondary qualification, and 32% graduate with a bachelor's degree or higher. Non-Indigenous men are only slightly behind, at 64% and 27%, respectively. These are huge gaps, and, as a country, we are missing out.

While the unemployment rate for Indigenous Canadians in 2022 was lower than the year before, the gap between Indigenous Canada and the rest of the country is still too wide. In 2022, for example, 8% of Indigenous Canadians were unemployed, compared to 5.2% of non-Indigenous Canadians. That's a gap of almost three points.

Finally, I'd like to address the issue of Indigenous Canadians in the tech and STEM fields, where much of the job growth in our country continues to take place.

First, with respect to STEM, about 4% of Canadian adults are Indigenous, but Indigenous Canadian adults make up less than 2% of people working in science, technology, engineering and math.

In tech, the gap is similar. Among enumerated Indigenous peoples in Canada, participation in tech occupations in 2016 was measured at 2.2%, or about 13,000 people in total, well below Indigenous Canada's proportional share of the Canadian population.

These low numbers make life difficult for Indigenous companies, even those with the best of intentions to hire Indigenous workers. Take, for example, the experience of David Yeo, president and founder of Dalian Enterprises Inc., an Indigenous-owned cybersecurity firm based here in Ottawa. The firm is constantly on the lookout for Indigenous tech grads and has a strong relationship with schools like Algonquin College in Ottawa's West End. But hiring from these pools is not an easy task.

Too often, David will have an eye on an Indigenous grad, only to watch that individual get snapped up by a larger firm. In other cases, potential Indigenous hires head back to their home reserve after graduation. This stumbling block has become a little easier to overcome recently given the new emphasis on working from home. Mr. Yeo also suggests that Indigenous kids wanting to get hired self-identify. That is an issue that we find in the workforce as well.

Mr. Yeo, a descendant of Chief Robert Franklin of the Alderville First Nation, who was an original signatory to the Ontario Williams Treaty of 1923, started Dalian in 2001. As a veteran of Afghanistan and other conflicts, Mr. Yeo now specializes in cybersecurity infrastructure and data centre projects within the federal government. Twenty-two years after the start-up, Dalian has over 200 subject-matter experts embedded in various government departments. The firm has been operating as a trusted government partner over that same period of time and holds a top secret facility security clearance, with most of the staff being cleared "secret" or above.

Mr. Yeo's own interest in tech stems from the fact that his high school in Port Hope, Ontario, was one of the first to receive computers and large mainframes for inclusion in the school curriculum. This forged his love for the sector, triggering his decision to go to college for computer science. Again, there's the importance of education.

Before summing up, I'd like to take a moment to also mention the importance of various on-reserve development agencies whose role in fostering business development cannot be underestimated or underappreciated. These include vibrant and

progressive organizations like Whitecap Development Corporation located south of Saskatoon; the Osoyoos Indian Band of Osoyoos, B.C.; and Membertou Development Corporation of Nova Scotia. The latter has helped to create one of the most prosperous First Nations in the country, boasting several divisions which range from social services and housing to educational programs, including studies in entrepreneurship. Once again, there's the focus on education.

Membertou also numbers as one of its advisers our recently retired colleague senator Dan Christmas, whose wise counsel on Indigenous business issues can only strengthen Membertou's ongoing contribution in this area. We need more like him so we can encourage Indigenous Canadians to enter business.

To sum up, the priorities and objectives of Indigenous Canada change with the era. For a time, the agenda promoting rights held sway. At other times, treaty negotiations and self-government appeared to be at the top of the agenda. Today, it seems to me, a focus on business development and entrepreneurship is higher on the list, and that is a good thing. As senators, we should do all we can to foster that spirit.

In that spirit, I would thank Senator Klyne for this inquiry and invite others to participate in this important debate.

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

#### THE HONOURABLE PATRICIA BOVEY

##### INQUIRY—DEBATE ADJOURNED

**Hon. Jane Cordy** rose pursuant to notice of May 10, 2023:

That she will call the attention of the Senate to the career of the Honourable Patricia Bovey.

She said: Honourable senators, I rise today to initiate debate on this inquiry to allow for those senators who, due to time constraints, were unable to pay tribute to our former colleague Senator Bovey during the time allocated for tributes.

(On motion of Senator Bernard, debate adjourned.)

(*At 5:19 p.m., the Senate was continued until tomorrow at 2 p.m.*)

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