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The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,
Speaker

CONTENTS

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THE SENATE

Wednesday, September 20, 2023

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

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

MOUNT SAINT VINCENT UNIVERSITY

CONGRATULATIONS ON ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Hon. Jane Cordy: Honourable senators, I am pleased to bring the attention of the Senate to my alma mater, Mount Saint Vincent University. This year, Mount Saint Vincent University, the longest-standing university in Canada for the advancement of women, is celebrating its one hundred and fiftieth anniversary.

Founded in 1873 by the Sisters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul, Halifax, the school was initially established in order to train novices and young sisters to be teachers. However, the sisters eventually realized that young women in the province were being overlooked and underserved when it came to opportunities for higher education. The sisters recognized that they were in a position to make a difference in the lives of young Nova Scotian women, so they opened their doors to them.

In 1925, the Nova Scotia Legislature awarded the school the right to grant degrees, making it the only independent women's college in the entire British Commonwealth. In 1966, the school became a university. The following year, it admitted its first male students.

Honourable senators, I cannot speak about the university's history and not acknowledge its role in Canada's shameful residential school system.

Like all Canadians, Mount Saint Vincent University has had to face the hard truth and reflect on how that painful history has impacted entire generations of Indigenous peoples in Canada, and the devastating consequences it has had on their culture.

On October 20, 2021, Mount Saint Vincent University apologized to survivors, their families, communities and all Indigenous peoples for its role in helping to staff, specifically, the Shubenacadie Residential School in Nova Scotia and St. Eugene's Residential School in British Columbia. The apology was accompanied by a list of commitments to Indigenous peoples, particularly commitments to listening, learning and ensuring action — things we should all commit to doing.

Honourable senators, the school is no longer run by the Sisters of Charity. Ownership and operations were transferred to independent boards of governors and senate in 1988. The school continues to grow, evolve and challenge the status quo, building on its commitments to social justice and promoting equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility for all. The advancement of

women and girls through the pursuit of knowledge and academic excellence, inspired by a strong tradition of social responsibility, remains its mission.

I am a proud alumnus of "the Mount," one of 37,000, and I am delighted to wish the school a happy one hundred and fiftieth anniversary.

Thank you.

SHEREE FITCH, O.C.

CONGRATULATIONS ON APPOINTMENT TO ORDER OF CANADA

Hon. Mary Coyle: Honourable senators, I rise today to pay tribute to Sheree Fitch, the talented writing powerhouse with the beautiful heart, the pride of River John, Nova Scotia, and my friend who was recently named to the Order of Canada for her outstanding contributions to children's literature and to the Canadian literary community as a writer and literacy advocate.

Lian Goodall describes Sheree Fitch as a:

Dazzling disco ball of word energy and Canada's spunky, funky queen of nonsense poems and stories for the very young who has slow danced her way into the minds of novel readers.

This award-winning single mother, grandmother and wife of the deeply dimpled Gilles Plante has written dozens of children's books, including *Sleeping Dragons All Around*; books of poetry, including *In This House Are Many Women*; and novels, such as *Pluto's Ghost*.

Sheree is a storyteller and educator who has travelled the globe from Baffin Island to Bhutan. Her Mabel Murple's Book Shoppe and Dreamery is a magical creation and a gift to all children, young and old.

In the foreword to her book *If You Could Wear My Sneakers*, Peter Gzowski wrote:

Sheree, as you'll see, creates sounds for every living creature. She is open to everything as only a child can be and as with any child, she plays with words, wisdom and a sense that the world can work. We should listen to her; she speaks for children everywhere.

Sheree's poem *The Way it Is* goes like this:

Why doth the sloth
Moveth so slow?
Why doth the sloth
Have three sloth toes?
Why doth the sloth
Hangeth upside down?
Why doth he?
The sloth is

Just weird, I suppoth.
 I sayeth! Saith the sloth
 I am slow because
 That's the way it is
 The way it was
 My three toes doth
 What three toes do
 I am happy for me
 As you are for you
 And the wayeth the world
 Spinneth upside down?
 It's just different, not weird
 My sky is your ground
 And if-eth you thinketh
 That faster is better
 I sayeth to you
 That it doesn't much matter
 For if you're a sloth
 Slow seemeth just fine
 You doeth things your way
 I'll doeth things mine.

Thank you, Sheree Fitch, for sharing your creative genius with us and for caring so deeply about children, their imaginations and rights. Congratulations to you on your Order of Canada; that honour is so richly deserved.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Lucia Almeida and Nodin Outten-Joseph, who are the Manitoba winners of the Your Voice is Power Coding and Indigenous Music and Histories Competition. They are accompanied by their family. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator McPhedran.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Hon. Robert Black: Honourable senators, I rise today in the Senate Chamber to highlight that September is Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. It is an opportunity to celebrate, support and raise awareness of the thousands of children and their families who have fought — and continue to fight — childhood cancer. It is also a month dedicated to supporting the hard work of health care workers and the many researchers who support these children and their families.

As I'm sure you're aware, cancer is relentless no matter whom it strikes, but it is particularly cruel when it affects the youngest among us. According to Statistics Canada, pediatric cancer is the number one cause of disease-related deaths in Canadian children. Each day, young lives are disrupted by diagnoses that bring fear, pain and uncertainty.

One of the most effective ways we can contribute to this cause is by raising awareness. Awareness sparks conversation. Conversation leads to understanding. Understanding drives change.

Honourable colleagues, the symbol for childhood cancer awareness is a gold ribbon. I rise today to ask that you join me in supporting this initiative and raise awareness by wearing the gold pin that I have sent to each of your offices.

Raising awareness is not limited to one month; it's a year-round mission. It involves supporting organizations that tirelessly work to find cures, aiding families in need and celebrating groups like Childcan, an organization dedicated to providing emotional, social and financial relief for families working through cancer treatments with their children.

As we wear our gold ribbons and share stories of hope and resilience, we send a powerful message that the battle with pediatric cancer is one we are committed to winning.

Honourable colleagues, let us commit ourselves to the cause of childhood cancer awareness, not only this month, but every day of each and every month. Let us work tirelessly to ensure that, one day, no child will face the daunting prospect of cancer. Together, we can make a profound impact, save lives and offer brighter tomorrows to our young fighters.

Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

• (1410)

THE LATE MAHSA AMINI

FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF DEATH

Hon. Ratna Omidvar: Honourable senators, this month, we marked the one-year anniversary of the death of Mahsa Amini — her murder, in fact, at the hands of the morality police in Iran.

Her death unleashed a roar of defiance by women in Iran, whose lives and freedoms are restricted not simply by law but, in fact, by the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Women who are LGBTQ, religious and/or ethnic minorities face double and triple jeopardy.

After Mahsa's death, women took to the streets in droves to protest gender apartheid, temporarily shutting down the morality police. But they paid a heavy price for this — 22,000 were arrested and hundreds were blinded, raped and tortured for simply being part of a protest. More than 500 were killed — 70 of them mere children.

But the women took courage from the solidarity expressed in their fight for freedom, including here on the streets in Canada and, indeed, by remarks here in this chamber.

After one year, the headlines of the revolt have retreated, and some of us may think that the revolution has been snuffed out and that this was a mere brief moment in time. This is why I stand to inform the chamber that the revolution has not retreated. It has taken on another subverted form of expression.

Civil disobedience and micro protests have replaced marches on the street. Women flout the compulsory hijab law every day, leaving the authorities incapable of dealing with the volume of the infractions of the law. Young boys and men are wearing shorts in solidarity because wearing shorts is also illegal in Iran. There are flash protests by women who roller skate, ride on a bike and sing and dance for a nanosecond on the street because — guess what — joy itself is a crime for the women in Iran.

In the face of these organic protests, the regime has set up video surveillance, face recognition technology and misinformation on social media to entrap the protesters.

I cannot predict when women in Iran will enjoy the freedoms they deserve, but in their hearts and minds, there will always be a time that was before Mahsa, and now there is a time after Mahsa. There is a reason why *TIME* magazine named Iranian women the heroes of 2022.

Mahsa's death was senseless, but it was not in vain. She died for women, life and freedom.

WALK FOR REMEMBRANCE AND PEACE

Hon. Tony Loffreda: Honourable senators, I rise to speak about a transformative event I experienced this summer. July 2023 marked the eightieth anniversary of Operation Husky, the Allied landing in Sicily during the Second World War.

In the summer of 1943, 25,000 Canadian soldiers fought to help liberate Italy. To celebrate this occasion, my wife and I joined hundreds of volunteers, civilians and military personnel for The Walk for Remembrance and Peace, a 325-kilometre journey through towns and villages throughout the island. This was a civilian and personal initiative that I paid for personally in its entirety — I felt that passionately about it.

Sicilians were equally passionate about receiving us.

[Translation]

Our hosts were generous and extremely welcoming. They are eternally grateful for the sacrifices made by Canadian soldiers who crossed the ocean to join our allies and fight for peace and freedom at a time when Italy needed them most.

[English]

Two events were especially touching for me. At a cemetery in Agira, Canadian tombstones were finally assigned the faces of most of our fallen soldiers. A gentleman who works at the cemetery shed tears as he saw, for the very first time, the faces of the brave soldiers who helped free his country.

In Rosolini, I addressed a large crowd who had gathered in the public square to welcome our group. We were greeted by the Italian army's Bersaglieri. My father and my great-uncles were members of this infantry corps. To be in their presence was a full-circle moment.

All of this was possible because of the passion of Steve Gregory from Montreal. He has been the driving force behind our "Canadian Camino." Dozens of volunteers, both here and in Italy, also made the entire journey possible, and I commend them for their commitment to ensuring its success. I also extend my thanks to General Scardino and the Italian Armed Forces for their many contributions. *Grazie mille!*

Hearing stories of war and devastation combined with messages of hope and resiliency reminded us of our good fortune to live in peaceful democracies. Colleagues, please join me in honouring our heroes who fought and died in Italy. May their sacrifice serve as a reminder of how blessed we are to live in a country where peace, democracy and the rule of law are celebrated and protected.

Thank you.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

JUSTICE

CHARTER STATEMENT IN RELATION TO BILL C-35—
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 C-35, An Act respecting early learning and child care in Canada, pursuant to the *Department of Justice Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. J-2, sbs. 4.2(1).

CHARTER STATEMENT IN RELATION TO BILL C-42—
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 C-42, An Act to amend the Canada Business Corporations Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts, pursuant to the *Department of Justice Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. J-2, sbs. 4.2(1).

ADJOURNMENT

NOTICE OF MOTION

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

That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, September 26, 2023, at 2 p.m.

[Translation]

BALANCING THE BANK OF CANADA'S INDEPENDENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY BILL

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Diane Bellemare introduced Bill S-275, An Act to amend the Bank of Canada Act (mandate, monetary policy governance and accountability).

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

[English]

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO EXTEND
DATE OF FINAL REPORT ON STUDY OF THE STATUS OF
SOIL HEALTH

Hon. Robert Black: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That, notwithstanding the order of the Senate adopted on Tuesday, April 26, 2022, the date for the final report of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry in relation to its study on the status of soil health in Canada be extended from December 31, 2023, to December 31, 2024; and

That the committee be permitted, notwithstanding usual practices, to deposit with the Clerk of the Senate its report relating to this study, if the Senate is not then sitting, and that the report be deemed to have been tabled in the Senate.

• (1420)

QUESTION PERIOD

CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION

NATIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Senator Gold, prior to my full-time involvement in politics, I spent my life in construction, both as a tradesman and while running a plumbing and heating company, so I know just how important the summer months are to building homes in Canada.

On Monday, Senator Gold, Statistics Canada reported that residential construction investment was down in the month of July, with declines seen in eight provinces and two territories. Single-family home construction fell to its lowest level since August of 2020, and multi-unit construction investment was down for the ninth consecutive month.

Leader, yesterday in this chamber you told Senator Cordy that your government had taken important action on housing and was showing leadership. If the Trudeau government's track record is so great, why is residential building investment down in July during a housing crisis?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question, and thank you for finally addressing a question that I know is at the heart of so many Canadians' preoccupations.

Things are not great. Things are challenging for so many Canadians, and the government is aware of this. The government has taken very important action to do its part in addressing the challenge. That includes removing the federal GST on the construction of new rental apartment buildings, urging all provinces to follow suit — as many are doing and more, I hope, will — and entering and announcing, finally, the first Housing Accelerator Fund agreement with London, which will create 2,000 new homes over three years, the most significant investment in London's history, as the mayor announced. The government is also looking at further solutions regarding supply chain and transport issues and is exercising its leadership — as I said yesterday to Senator Cordy — with the provinces, municipalities and the private sector in order to address the shortfall in supply that is at the heart of our crisis.

Senator Plett: Well, one thing the Liberal government is very good at is making announcements. Following through on them is a little more difficult for them.

Leader, in my province of Manitoba, residential construction investment fell by over 12% in the month of July. It fell in your province of Quebec as well. That is not something to be very proud of.

Last month, the Prime Minister stood behind a podium with a sign that read, "Building More Homes, Faster," and then he told Canadians that housing wasn't his responsibility. Nothing is ever his responsibility. He is pretty good at taking credit. He has a really hard time accepting responsibility, even after eight long, long, long years in this government. Last week, he remembered a 2015 election campaign promise that he broke six years ago and is passing it off as action.

Leader, how much rental housing would have been built over the last eight years if the Trudeau government had followed through on their promise?

Senator Gold: As everyone who has studied the issue knows, the issue of housing supply is not only a complex one, but one that engages the private sector, municipalities, zoning regulations, neighbourhoods, provinces, supply chain issues and the like. So to your question, I do not know.

What I do know is that the government is exercising leadership with the provinces and municipalities. It is taking measures within its jurisdiction to address the situation, and it hopes very much that the situation improves for the well-being of all Canadians who are seeking better homes or access to homes — a fundamental right that all Canadians should enjoy.

FINANCE

CANADA'S INFLATION RATE

Hon. Leo Housakos: Senator Gold, in your answer to Senator Plett just a second ago, you acknowledged finally that things are not great, but things are not just not great. Things are in a state of catastrophe right now, yet we had our Minister of Finance at the beginning of the summer doing this massive victory lap, stating that “Canada’s plan to bring down inflation is working.” She said it was a “milestone moment,” and went on to say:

I really want to thank Canadians, it has been a really tough time economically since COVID first hit ... and this is a really good moment ... It has been a real struggle for Canadians and the Canadian economy to get back down to 2.8%, and I am really grateful to everyone who has ... (stayed) the course.

“Inflation in Canada has come down!” she claimed with excitement.

I don’t know what planet Minister Freeland and Prime Minister Trudeau live on, because inflation right now is at the highest level it has been in 35 years. We just got the figures out for the month of August, and inflation is well into 4%. All economists are claiming it will continue to grow until the end of the year, and they suspect we will have more rate hikes by the Bank of Canada. And we’ve had, by the way, 10 bank rate hikes since March of 2022, which is pummelling working-class Canadians.

The question is simple: Will you finally acknowledge as a government that the Freeland-Trudeau economics of more debt and more deficit are not working and are leading to record-high inflation, and will you commit to finally putting in place a fiscal anchor, which we so desperately need?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. That inflation has risen in the last report is true. It is also true that inflation is down significantly from the level of 8.1% in July of 2022 to its current level. The most recent bump in inflation, if I understand it correctly and if the analysts are correct, is due to global oil prices that are independent of any government policy in this country or elsewhere.

With regard to your larger question about the government’s economic performance, there are approximately 950,000 more Canadians employed now than there were before the pandemic. Our credit rating is strong. We have the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7.

I could continue, but you’ve heard this all from me before, as you have heard the same litany of statements from the opposition in this chamber.

The government is doing a good job of managing our economy through very challenging times.

Senator Housakos: Government leader, the question is not employment or unemployment. Canadians can work as hard as they want, but when they go to the grocery store, they can’t afford to buy food to feed their families.

And you want to go into a statistics war? Did you know that in the month of August, the cost of lettuce went up 94%? You want to talk about statistics? Rent in this country has gone up 6.5% in the last couple of months. I can go on and on and on, if you want to go through every single commodity in this country, not to mention the fact that mortgages are costing Canadians 31% more right now than they did a few months ago.

The fact of the matter is that when it comes to the cost of living right now in this country, working-class and poor Canadians are suffering to a degree we haven’t seen before, and for the first time in more than 153 years, young people in this country are feeling pessimistic and hopeless, and that they will not be able to aspire to the kind of lifestyle and success that their parents and grandparents had.

We talked earlier about inflation and the runaway debts and deficits of this government, and as usual, you’re blaming the cost of living on global issues, international issues and the cost of oil and energy. Well, your carbon tax on oil and energy has not helped.

The Hon. the Speaker: Do you have a question, Senator Housakos?

Senator Housakos: That is the question. The question, government leader, is: Will your government make the commitment of axing the tax?

Senator Gold: No. I seem to be one of the few people who have read your leader’s letter, so the short answer is no.

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

RUSSIAN SANCTIONS

Hon. Stan Kutcher: Senator Gold, on September 15, a piece in *The Globe and Mail* highlighted Canada’s lax approach to sanctions enforcement. It revealed that Canada is one of the top 10 countries evading export controls related to Russia’s illegal war on Ukraine. Canadian companies have been flagged for purchasing prohibited American goods and selling them to Russia, violating U.S. sanctions laws. These banned goods, which include products like electronics, are tools Russia uses to continue the genocidal war against Ukraine.

As the Canadian government continues to support Ukraine, we can’t let Russia benefit from this lack of oversight and lack of enforcement. Can you please tell us what the Government of

Canada is going to do to address this important issue and ensure that Russia's invasion is not aided by sanctions evasions by Canadians?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Senator, thank you for your question. As we all know, Canada imposes sanctions under the Special Economic Measures Act and the Sergei Magnitsky Law, which the government passed in 2017. It's my understanding that the government created a new sanctions bureau, and that Canada is the first of our allies to make use of new seizure and forfeiture authorities. I remind the chamber that the government has also imposed sanctions that have been adopted by the UN Security Council, and, as we all know, the enforcement of this Canada sanctions regime is the responsibility of the RCMP and the Canada Border Services Agency. Canada remains committed to enforcing its laws appropriately in light of the Russian aggression in Ukraine.

• (1430)

Senator Kutcher: Thank you very much, Senator Gold. We appreciate all of those good things, but the problem still remains: Goods from the United States are coming into Canada and then being sent to Russia — that's evading. So we have a problem somewhere. Since the war began, Russia has relied on those parts to manufacture their weapons, which have killed countless numbers of people. I've also been told that there are Canadian companies heavily involved in providing these essential parts for Russian weapons. They seem to be doing it in spite of all the work you've said has been done.

What is the government's plan to prohibit the production and export of goods — by Canadian companies — aiding Russia's illegal war? When will these enforcements, if they exist, actually be imposed?

Senator Gold: Thank you for the questions. Among the economic and unprecedented sanctions announced against over 2,000 individuals and entities, it's my understanding that the government has ended all export permits to Russia, and has further stopped the issuance of new permits for the export and brokering of controlled goods and technology to Russia. Indeed, Minister Joly has notably announced the cancellation of existing otherwise valid permits.

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

SUPPORT FOR 2SLGBTQI+ CHILDREN

Hon. René Cormier: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate.

Senator Gold, I'm sure you noticed, as I did, the demonstrations that are currently taking place on Parliament Hill.

The "1 Million March 4 Children" group invited its members to demonstrate for parental rights at the expense of 2SLGBTQI+ policies. At the same time, a counter-demonstration was organized to advocate for the rights of 2SLGBTQI+ communities.

[Senator Kutcher]

In the groundswell of debate surrounding transgender students' pronoun choices and access to gender-neutral washrooms in schools, important questions arise that extend far beyond provincial jurisdiction, specifically the protection of the fundamental rights of Canadian children.

Senator Gold, how does the federal government intend to act, and act swiftly, to protect 2SLGBTQI+ children in their schools and beyond?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. Every 2SLGBTQI+ child has the right to feel safe at school. That is fundamental. Those who work with children and listen to what they have to say are telling us that children must be at the heart of these decisions. We need to maintain a central position focused on children's well-being. I have been assured that the Government of Canada is committed to doing everything in its power to protect the mental health and safety of queer and trans children.

Senator Cormier: Thank you for your answer, Senator Gold.

2SLGBTQI+ communities are dealing with an unprecedented rise in acts of hate. The predecessor of the current Minister of Canadian Heritage was planning to introduce a bill on online hate in the fall of 2023, and we are still waiting for an action plan to combat hate. When does your government intend to take action to ensure that these two essential measures to combat hate in Canada finally become a reality?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question and for drawing attention to this unacceptable situation involving hatred towards these children and their families.

I have been assured that the government still intends to introduce new legislation to combat harmful online content, including child sexual abuse material.

[*English*]

INDIGENOUS SERVICES

NURSING HEALTH HUMAN RESOURCES FRAMEWORK

Hon. Flordeliz (Gigi) Osler: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate. Manitoba has the highest proportion of First Nations residents among Canadian provinces. For many indicators of health, there is a widening gap between First Nations residents and other Manitobans. In 2021, Indigenous Services Canada established the Nursing Health Human Resources Framework to respond to nursing shortages and to address nursing station closures in remote and isolated First Nations communities. Yet, in a media conference last week, the Chief of the Pimicikamak Cree Nation, a First Nation in northern Manitoba that is home to over 8,000 on-reserve residents, stated that their nursing station repeatedly faces closures due to nursing staff shortages.

Senator Gold, what is the government doing to ensure the effectiveness of the Nursing Health Human Resources Framework as we continue to hear about nursing shortages and nursing station closures in Manitoba?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): The Government of Canada knows and accepts that the shortage of nurses in First Nations communities is simply unacceptable. With the help of partners, the Government of Canada is working to ensure that every community has access to reliable resources and services.

I understand that First Nations organizations and partners are working with the Government of Canada to strengthen nursing recruitment so that culturally appropriate care can be provided. As well, I'm advised that currently there are rosters of contracted health professional resources on hand to fill any gaps, and, importantly, work is under way to recruit more nurses.

Senator Osler: Senator Gold, Indigenous Services Canada runs 21 of the 22 nursing stations in Manitoba. Dr. Barry Lavallee, the head of a northern health and wellness advocacy agency, has said that nursing shortages in southern Manitoba can't be compared to those located in the North, and that mixed models of primary care need to be considered.

Has the federal government considered multidisciplinary teams — which could include community health workers, doctors and pharmacists — to remove the pressure off nurses, and improve health care delivery in First Nations communities?

Senator Gold: Senator, thank you for raising the issue of multidisciplinary teams. The Government of Canada would welcome any innovations along those lines to address this important shortage.

I'm not aware of whether or not the government is considering this, but I certainly will take this from the Senate to the government, and encourage them to reflect upon it appropriately.

FINANCE

AFFORDABILITY FOR CANADIANS

Hon. Andrew Cardozo: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate, and it is on the topic of affordability. Let me start by painting the context of where we are.

I note several measures — from recent years — to help make life more affordable: the Canada Child Benefit in 2016; the National Housing Strategy in 2017; the increase to the Canada Pension Plan in 2019; and the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Plan, which is the national child care program that went into effect a couple of years ago, and we're considering the bill related to this now.

Earlier this year, Parliament passed bills on the Grocery Rebate, the dental plan for children and the Canada Disability Benefit. All of these measures help Canadians in this

affordability crisis. Perhaps you can tell your government to talk a bit more about some of these measures that they have taken so that we have a better idea of what they have done.

My question is simple: What other measures is the government planning? Would you consider price controls, perhaps, on basic Canadian groceries, or working with provincial governments to have strong national rent control?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. The government is considering many possibilities to address the affordability challenges that many Canadians are facing. Indeed, the government announced earlier this week that they will be introducing a bill in Parliament soon to address aspects of this issue. When that bill is introduced, we'll have the opportunity to learn more about the plans and to study it.

It is public knowledge that, in addition to other measures, the bill will include modifications and amendments to strengthen our competition law, which is one aspect of ensuring that — through robust competition — prices can be controlled. But as for the specific question, all issues are being discussed, and when the government is in a position to announce further measures — whether through legislation or otherwise — it will be announced.

• (1440)

Senator Cardozo: Indeed, sooner rather than later would be nicer.

For my supplementary, Senator Gold, let me drill down a little further on the issue of housing with regard to affordability.

At the Progressive Senate Group retreat earlier this week, we heard from housing experts who put forward several recommendations. Indeed, the government has made two announcements in London, Ontario, as you mentioned, last week. Let me ask you about one particular one. Would the government consider measures such as requiring universities and colleges to ensure that they provide housing for all international students when they admit them?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question. Again, I do not know what — and I'm not able to provide information as to what the government may decide to do, only to remind senators that, as I sometimes am at pains to do, jurisdiction over universities and colleges is a matter of provincial jurisdiction. But the levers that the government has at its disposal under our constitution are being examined carefully in all areas so as to allow the government, in a robust way, to do what it can — its part — in addressing affordability and housing issues in Canada.

CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION

NATIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Senator Gold, back in May, I raised with you the massive shortfall between the amount of housing the Trudeau government is promising and the amount Canada needs just to restore housing affordability by 2030. Earlier this month, the Canada Mortgage

and Housing Corporation, or CMHC, said our country needs about 3.5 million more houses over and above what is already projected. This is roughly the same amount CMHC said we needed in a report released last year. So more than a year later, we haven't seen progress.

Leader, your government first promised the Housing Accelerator Fund in 2021, yet it didn't accept applications until this past July and it hasn't built a single house. Why did it take so long for the Trudeau government to get an accelerator fund up and running during a housing crisis?

Senator Plett: Sounds like deceleration.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. Indeed, the CMHC report underlines the critical and urgent need for the supply of new houses to be increased, and that's why the government brought forth — as I reported in this chamber and I will not elaborate further — a suite of new measures to tackle this crisis by putting Canada on track to double the number of construction of new homes over the next decade.

I will only say, in an echo to Senator Plett, prior to my political life, I was in business and was involved with real estate. Those of you who have experience in real estate know there are many factors that go into an entrepreneur's decision whether to build or not to build, and those have to do with many factors that help explain, to some degree, why we are having a challenge in this country in building sufficient houses and homes to meet the increasing demands.

Senator Martin: CMHC says the gap between the amount of housing needed to restore affordability and the amount projected to be built by 2030 has gotten worse over the last year in my province of British Columbia. Statistics Canada said that in July residential housing permits in B.C. fell over 30% year over year. On Tuesday, it reported that investment in residential building construction also fell in B.C. in July.

Leader, the Trudeau government has been too late in acknowledging the housing crisis they created, and nothing they have put forward will come close to fixing it. If the Prime Minister believes he's not responsible for housing, how can he bring homes to Canadians that they can afford?

Senator Gold: Respectfully, you mischaracterize both the statement that the Prime Minister made, which was a statement more about the jurisdictional issues than the government's moral responsibility — which it is exercising — to take leadership with the provinces, the municipalities and the private sector to address this crisis. Nor is it correct to say that the housing crisis was something that the government created when anyone who has had any experience — as I have, and many here have had — in this

sector, regardless of where you come from — whether it's from the banking sector, the construction sector, the building materials sector or the labour market sector — knows how complex it is.

Anyone who has had the privilege, as I have, of living in your wonderful province, knows there are also issues of land availability and municipal zoning to say nothing of vested interests, dare I say, who have resisted to some degree some of the solutions that are clearly available to address at least some aspect of this crisis. It is a complicated crisis and problem. The government is exercising leadership in its areas of jurisdiction with the levers that it has, and it will continue to do so.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

CARBON TAX

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Government leader, yesterday you said:

It is important and responsible for this government and, indeed, all governments to work with all governments in this world to combat climate change.

I find your comment interesting given that Minister Guilbeault failed to provide the Atlantic premiers with information on how their provinces will be impacted by the Prime Minister's second carbon tax. The minister has no problem cooperating with Beijing, leader, but couldn't find the time to give the premiers information that he promised he would provide.

Leader, in June, you said you would look into why your government didn't give that information to the Atlantic premiers. You had all summer long to think about this. Do you have an answer, leader?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for bringing this back to my attention, and I will certainly inquire. I do not have an answer at this juncture.

Senator Plett: Leader, on June 13, the Liberal premier of Newfoundland and Labrador said the Trudeau government's approach to their carbon taxes was illogical, and again I quote, "... it's as insulting to us as it is simplistic."

A liberal premier.

Earlier this year, Premier Furey was joined by other premiers of different political stripes across Canada, asking the Prime Minister to axe the tax. This isn't a partisan issue. This is premiers from right across our country. Instead, the Prime Minister hiked his first carbon tax and added a second one, even as Canadians struggled to pay for gas to drive to work and buy food for their children.

Leader, it's never too late to admit a mistake. Trudeau is good at apologizing. Never too late, especially when it's causing so many Canadians financial hardship. When will the Prime Minister axe his carbon tax, which drives up the cost of gas, home heating and groceries?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question. I am not advised that the government has any plans to axe its carbon tax. The price on carbon is one of a large suite of measures that are designed to address climate change — climate change that has devastated our forests and our communities this summer — while at the same time helping Canadian businesses, individuals, provinces and communities transition to a cleaner, more sustainable economic future.

• (1450)

[Translation]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CANADA EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Moodie, seconded by the Honourable Senator Cormier, for the second reading of Bill C-35, An Act respecting early learning and child care in Canada.

Hon. Sharon Burey: Colleagues, I rise today in support of Bill C-35, An Act respecting early learning and child care in Canada, and to encourage you to work quickly and diligently to send this bill to committee as soon as possible.

[English]

Senator Moodie, thank you for the extensive and comprehensive history and overview of the promise and vision of Bill C-35.

I just attended the technical briefing on Bill C-35; it was very informative and laid out the various partnerships, including the national and regional Indigenous early learning and child care partnership tables, as well as the provincial and territorial partnerships, that have led us to this day.

This bill enshrines a framework for a national early learning and child care system in law. It also sets out a national advisory council that is necessary to maintain best practices through evidence and research, to report on progress toward achieving these goals and, even more important, to course correct when needed.

It is bold and forward-looking, and shows that Canada values children, families and women who often, but not always, bear the brunt of child rearing. It is about today and our future. It is about helping families find the right work-life balance.

[Translation]

Esteemed colleagues, I address you today as a mother, grandmother, pediatrician and now a senator.

[English]

As a pediatrics resident some 30-plus years ago, I experienced the significant impact of not having readily available and affordable child care. It would have made a world of difference if child care had been readily available in my institution or close by. Many parents of my patients struggle to find high-quality, affordable child care that will allow them to earn an income and/or obtain training that will improve their earning potential — and also improve the trajectory of their child's development and health.

My remarks will focus on two main areas: the economic cost of not having a national early learning and child care framework; and the health and educational impacts of not having a national early learning and child care framework.

The Institute for Research on Public Policy report entitled *Early Learning and Child Care in Canada: Where Have We Come From, Where Are We Going?* notes:

... child care fees have continued to rise and there has been mixed progress across provinces and territories on staff-child ratios, wages for early childhood educators . . .

According to the report from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives entitled *In progress: Child care fees in Canada 2019*, the median cost in Toronto for an infant was \$1,774; in Quebec, thankfully, it is an average of \$179; and, in Manitoba, it is a set fee of \$651 per month. This is important. The report concludes, “. . . lower child care fees in Canada are due to public policy, not market pressures.”

Analyses on the effect of affordable child care — in Quebec — on workforce participation by women and on the gross domestic product of Quebec are very positive. This means it makes economic sense to facilitate the re-entry of mothers into the workforce.

My second area of focus is the impact of early child care on development and mitigating the consequences of poverty and early adversity. Of course, this needs to be high-quality child care that respects the needs of the various children's and families' circumstances, as well as Indigenous services and culturally relevant services.

My mother was a teacher, and, as a young mother, she was able to take me to school with her when I was two years old. Dear colleagues, I've been in formal school of some form since two years old, and now, at this stage in my life, I have entered another kind of school. More importantly, that meant that I had an early start — a head start — and that, in no small part, explains why I became a doctor, and why I have been honoured to be appointed to the Senate of Canada.

We know that children who are exposed to enriched environments enter school with vocabularies that far exceed children who have early adversity. Early education and high-quality child care is an investment in the prevention of a host of lifelong health outcomes, like diabetes, heart disease and mental health problems, as well as low educational achievement.

Some might say it is like an insurance policy — against the adversities of life — that promotes resilience and prosperity for all.

The Institute for Research on Public Policy has several recommendations. I would highlight this one in particular: “Rapidly expand not-for-profit and public child care facilities.” This can be achieved by encouraging “. . . the delivery of more child care services by municipalities, colleges and school boards.”

I would also add “large institutions and employers.”

Many parents would relay to me the long distances and early wake-up times of 5 a.m. for children because they would need to take them to a child care facility due to there not being any spaces at the child care centre at the child’s school. The same process would be repeated in the evening. Many of those children presented behavioural and learning issues due to the lack of sleep. Need I say more?

In closing, colleagues, as Senator Moodie stated in her speech yesterday:

The pandemic led to a new wave of advocacy by parents, families, child care experts, labour unions, academics and economists, all of whom wanted high-quality, affordable, accessible and inclusive child care as a crucial step to reversing the harms of the pandemic and building a society for all.

This is an investment in our children and families. It is an investment in our future.

I urge you, honourable colleagues, to move with due diligence, sober second thought and some haste to ensure that this bill reaches committee as soon as possible. Children, families and Canadians are depending on us.

Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

[Senator Burey]

• (1500)

[*Translation*]

LANGUAGE SKILLS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

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

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

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

Hon Senators: Agreed.

(Debate adjourned.)

[*English*]

ROMAN CATHOLIC EPISCOPAL CORPORATION OF OTTAWA ROMAN CATHOLIC EPISCOPAL CORPORATION FOR THE DIOCESE OF ALEXANDRIA-CORNWALL

PRIVATE BILL TO REPLACE AN ACT OF INCORPORATION—
SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Clement, seconded by the Honourable Senator Duncan, for the second reading of Bill S-1001, An Act to amalgamate The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Ottawa and The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation for the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall, in Ontario, Canada.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Bill S-1001, An Act to amalgamate The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Ottawa and The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation for the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall, in Ontario, Canada.

This bill seeks to legally formalize the amalgamation of the two religious entities by combining them into a single federally incorporated not-for-profit corporation. The Catholic Pope announced the merger on May 6, 2020, and these two corporations, by way of a petition, have prayed for an act of incorporation to make legal effect to the merger announcement. Bill S-1001 is the legislative response to that prayer.

For context, Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall in January 2016, Archbishop Terrence J. Prendergast, was given the mandate of making recommendations regarding a possible merger between his diocese and the Archdiocese of Ottawa. The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation for the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall, in Ontario, Canada, is incorporated provincially under the Statutes of the Province of Ontario in 1979. In 1884, The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Ottawa was incorporated federally under the Statutes of Canada, which brings us to the debates before us today.

The bill is quite straightforward. For the purposes of the debate at second reading today, I will highlight four of the clauses of particular importance.

For the specifics of the amalgamation, clause 3 creates The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation for the Diocese of Ottawa-Cornwall, for which a certificate of continuance is deemed to have been issued under clause 10(3) of the bill, according to subsection 211(1) of the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act, and the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Ottawa.

Subsection 2 of clause 3 specifies that the new entity will have the status of a corporation without share capital as incorporated by a special act of Parliament and not continued under any other act.

Clause 4 states the effects there will be upon amalgamation. These include the consolidation of all property; obligations; liabilities; civil, criminal or administrative actions or proceedings; convictions, rulings, orders or judgments; claims, rights and privileges; as well as any devise, testament, bequest, donation, beneficial trust or other transfers of property for the benefit of any of the amalgamating corporations.

That is to say that any legal obligations or potential criminal proceedings are not nullified through the act of amalgamating these two entities.

Clause 7 defines the not-for-profit nature of the corporation to be established. And clause 10(2) provides that The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation for the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall is deemed to have applied for a certificate of continuance under subsection 211(1) of the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act before the bill receives Royal Assent.

Clause 10(4) explains how, for the purposes of subsection 211(7) of the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act, the bill serves as the certificate of continuance for The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation for the Diocese of Ottawa-Cornwall Act.

Now I turn to the importance of this bill for the proponents, the two Catholic communities that have been praying in earnest for the amalgamation.

This bill will create one large archdiocese stretching from Ottawa South to the St. Lawrence River, merging Alexandria-Cornwall, with 27 parishes with a Catholic population of about 60,000, with the larger Ottawa archdiocese, which serves about 395,000 Catholics with 107 parishes and missions.

• (1510)

One of the reasons for amalgamating Ottawa with Alexandria-Cornwall is the protection of French-language Catholic services in eastern Ontario because of the difficulty of finding bilingual priests who could serve as bishops. That, coupled with demographic changes and aging buildings that will eventually need to be closed, led to the decision.

While many parishioners felt that the two separate dioceses were a good fit because many of the parishes of both Ottawa and Alexandria-Cornwall dioceses are near the same highway and more closely linked to each other than to the neighbouring Archdiocese of Kingston, not everyone agreed. Opponents feared that the region would be lost within the larger archdiocese. They also raised concerns over a loss of history. The Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall's roots go back to the very first settlements of Catholics in Upper Canada. While it seems that many recognize the merger was inevitable, it is my sincere hope that the archbishop will do whatever possible to honour and preserve the history of the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall.

My honourable colleague Senator Clement, as the former mayor of Cornwall, participated in numerous community consultations on the merger and knows well the desires of these two communities. That is why the honourable senator worked diligently with her community to establish a petition to call on the Senate to pass a private act to amalgamate the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Ottawa and the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation for the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall into a single episcopal corporation. To quote the senator from her sponsor speech:

If there is one thing that comes through from all my interventions over the coming years, I hope that it's the voices of the many people impacted by policy; they deserve to be heard loud and clear.

I think this is what Bill S-1001 is all about — hearing the voices of those impacted. I am glad that other voices — and I'm thinking mostly of Indigenous voices here — are not silenced either, and that there are provisions so that, should the unfortunate need arise, this bill will not preclude litigation that may need to proceed against one of the former entities. While I pray that this clause will never be necessary, it is important that, as parliamentarians, we ensure that past wrongs against Indigenous peoples are not forgotten.

I will close my remarks with two comments I read in an article on the recent Catholic Women's League Convention in Cornwall. Angela Gaudet, the Catholic Women's League Alexandria-Cornwall Diocese president, said:

It's the end of an era, and the beginning of a new journey . . . I'm excited and nervous at the same time.

Emma Rose Rayburn, communications director of the Catholic Women's League said, "We're all on board and everyone is ready to move on."

I think these sentiments wrap up the feelings well. Life is a journey — one that can be both exciting and scary. Yet when we are all on board and move forward together, great things can be accomplished. Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Housakos, debate adjourned.)

THE SENATE

MOTION TO CALL ON THE GOVERNMENT TO DENOUNCE THE
ILLEGITIMACY OF THE CUBAN REGIME—
DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Housakos, seconded by the Honourable Senator Wells:

That the Senate call on the Government of Canada to:

- (a) denounce the illegitimacy of the Cuban regime and recognize the Cuban opposition and civil society as valid interlocutors; and

- (b) call on the Cuban regime to ensure the right of the Cuban people to protest peacefully without fear of reprisal and repudiation.

(On motion of Senator Clement, debate adjourned.)

AUDIT AND OVERSIGHT

MOTION TO AFFECT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP ADOPTED

Hon. Scott Tannas, pursuant to notice of September 19, 2023, moved:

That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules or previous order, the Honourable Senator Deacon (*Nova Scotia*) take the place of the Honourable Senator Downe as one of the members of the Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

(At 3:19 p.m., the Senate was continued until tomorrow at 2 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Wednesday, September 20, 2023

	PAGE		PAGE
SENATORS' STATEMENTS			
Mount Saint Vincent University			
Congratulations on One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary			
Hon. Jane Cordy	4325		
Sheree Fitch, O.C.			
Congratulations on Appointment to Order of Canada			
Hon. Mary Coyle	4325		
Visitors in the Gallery			
The Hon. the Speaker	4326		
Childhood Cancer Awareness Month			
Hon. Robert Black	4326		
The Late Mahsa Amini			
First Anniversary of Death			
Hon. Ratna Omidvar	4326		
Walk for Remembrance and Peace			
Hon. Tony Loffreda	4327		
<hr/>			
ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Justice			
Charter Statement in Relation to Bill C-35—Document			
Tabled			
Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson	4327		
Charter Statement in Relation to Bill C-42—Document			
Tabled			
Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson	4327		
Adjournment			
Notice of Motion			
Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson	4327		
Balancing the Bank of Canada's Independence and Accountability Bill (Bill S-275)			
Bill to Amend—First Reading			
Hon. Diane Bellemare	4328		
Agriculture and Forestry			
Notice of Motion to Authorize Committee to Extend Date of			
Final Report on Study of the Status of Soil Health			
Hon. Robert Black	4328		
QUESTION PERIOD			
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation			
National Housing Strategy			
Hon. Donald Neil Plett	4328		
Hon. Marc Gold	4328		
Finance			
Canada's Inflation Rate			
Hon. Leo Housakos	4329		
Hon. Marc Gold	4329		
		Global Affairs	
		Russian Sanctions	
		Hon. Stan Kutcher	4329
		Hon. Marc Gold	4330
		Canadian Heritage	
		Support for 2SLGBTQI+ Children	
		Hon. René Cormier	4330
		Hon. Marc Gold	4330
		Indigenous Services	
		Nursing Health Human Resources Framework	
		Hon. Flordeliz (Gigi) Osler	4330
		Hon. Marc Gold	4331
		Finance	
		Affordability for Canadians	
		Hon. Andrew Cardozo	4331
		Hon. Marc Gold	4331
		Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation	
		National Housing Strategy	
		Hon. Yonah Martin	4331
		Hon. Marc Gold	4332
		Environment and Climate Change	
		Carbon Tax	
		Hon. Donald Neil Plett	4332
		Hon. Marc Gold	4332
		<hr/>	
		ORDERS OF THE DAY	
		Canada Early Learning and Child Care Bill (Bill C-35)	
		Second Reading—Debate Continued	
		Hon. Sharon Burey	4333
		Language Skills Act (Bill S-220)	
		Bill to Amend—Second Reading—Debate Continued	
		Hon. Bernadette Clement	4334
		Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Ottawa Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation for the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall (Bill S-1001)	
		Private Bill to Replace an Act of Incorporation—Second	
		Reading—Debate Continued	
		Hon. Yonah Martin	4334
		The Senate	
		Motion to Call on the Government to Denounce the	
		Illegitimacy of the Cuban Regime—Debate Continued	4336
		Audit and Oversight	
		Motion to Affect Committee Membership Adopted	
		Hon. Scott Tannas	4336