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Wednesday, November 8, 2023

The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,  
Speaker

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## THE SENATE

Wednesday, November 8, 2023

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

Prayers.

[*Translation*]

### SENATORS' STATEMENTS

#### NATIONAL PHILANTHROPY DAY

**Hon. Tony Loffreda:** Honourable senators, I rise today to mark National Philanthropy Day.

We set aside November 15 to celebrate this day that seeks to recognize the spirit of giving without expectation of reward, something that is an integral part of who Canadians are.

Thanks to the determination of Senator Mercer and his Bill S-201, we have been celebrating this day since 2012.

[*English*]

In his second-reading speech, Senator Mercer invited everyone to come together to support his bill and said:

In doing so, we will be saying thank you to our neighbours, our friends and the thousands of strangers who work hard every day to make life better for someone they have not even met.

That, in essence, is the epitome of philanthropy: people helping strangers without any expectation of reward or recognition, people being good. And there is a lot of goodness in Canada, but more troubling still is that there are a lot of people in need of goodness, empathy and support.

According to Imagine Canada, the charitable sector contributes \$192 billion in economic activity to Canada annually. The sector employs 2.4 million people, but even more impressive is that 13 million Canadians volunteer nearly 2 billion hours per year to worthy causes.

Honourable colleagues, charities are increasingly relied upon in doing some of the work governments are simply unable to fulfill. They need our support, but I am worried the government may soon be legislating changes to the alternative minimum tax that could hinder the sector. The changes may have unintended consequences and may discourage Canadians from donating, which could result in a drop in charitable revenues.

In 2022, for example, 30% of donations to the charitable sector came from higher-income households. This could have a huge impact on the sector and negatively affect those who benefit from philanthropic donations. These facts should be carefully considered.

Honourable senators, philanthropy helps build strong communities and active civic participation by bringing people together to serve a common goal. Canadians deserve a fair shot at living a life of dignity and quality, which is why it is important to celebrate National Philanthropy Day and honour Canada's spirit of giving.

Thank you.

#### NUNAVUMMIUT

**Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson:** Honourable senators, Nunavut has, without question, the highest cost of living and is the most carbon-intensive region of Canada. You all know the story: no roads, deathly cold early and long winters, and darkness. There is a virtually total reliance on diesel fuel to generate power and to heat both private homes and social housing, where the preponderance of residents live.

We have the highest incidence of food insecurity and the worst social indicators in the country and — in areas like suicide — in the world. So, how is our federal government helping us deal with all these issues? Well, “big daddy Ottawa” added a carbon tax, seemingly heedless of the added cost burdens it imposes on our already sky-high cost of living.

Now, Nunavut did get exempted from paying the tax on aviation fuel for intra-territorial flights. That has been great. But the reality is that everything comes from the South, so we are taxed on it anyway.

We have also been exempted from paying the carbon tax on fuel burned to generate electricity, and it has now been confirmed that on July 1, 2024, the carbon tax will not be levied on home-heating fuel. That is also good. Thanks to Atlantic Canada.

However, this brief three-year reprieve was meant to buy folks a little more time to transition to cleaner energy sources, and I'm sorry to say transitioning Nunavut to clean energy in three years just isn't going to happen. Just yesterday, we heard from Jerry DeMarco, Canada's Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, that Canada is not on track to meet its 2030 emission targets. Canada is the only G7 country that has not achieved any emission reduction since 1990.

Carbon taxes are supposed to change consumer habits and encourage people to seek out alternatives, but the Environment Commissioner's report confirms that this has not happened since the tax was introduced in 2019. Moreover, in the case of Nunavut, there are no alternatives from which to choose. We can't go back to dog teams to hunt. We can't go back to igloos in which to live in the cold. There are still no electric vehicles — not one — in the capital city of Iqaluit. So, Nunavummiut are hurting, and, sadly, there just doesn't seem to be any end in sight.

Thank you.

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

[Translation]

### THE LATE GEORGES R. LEBLANC

**Hon. Rose-May Poirier:** Honourable senators, I rise today to pay tribute to Georges R. LeBlanc, an Acadian veteran who passed away in Moncton on October 15 at the age of 100, surrounded by his family.

Born in Memramcook on January 6, 1923, Mr. Leblanc was a veteran of the Second World War and a highly respected member of his community. He fought in the Canadian army in Eastern Europe in 1945 with the Régiment de la Chaudière.

Last January, he was honoured by the Memramcook Golden Age Club for becoming a centenarian. He was one of the two remaining Acadian World War II veterans from Memramcook.

I want to extend my sincere condolences to Mr. Leblanc's family and friends.

These days, it is becoming increasingly important to honour the veterans who are still with us, along with the memory of those who have died. I had the honour to pay tribute to four Acadian veterans from my region when they were awarded the Senate 150th Anniversary Medal in 2017 and the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal last February. All four of them were very active and engaged in their community, and I commend them for that.

They were Léonard Boucher of Bouctouche, a veteran with the Pictou Highlanders, Paul Maillet of Coal Branch, who made a valuable contribution as a volunteer with the Harcourt Legion, Léonard Pitre of Rogersville, who has been active in his community with the air cadets and the legion, and Edmond Daigle of Richibucto. The most senior member of the Richibucto Legion is still actively involved in his community. Mr. Daigle will be celebrating his 98th birthday on November 13, and I want to wish him a wonderful birthday.

I would also like to thank all the brave women and men who protect our freedom and safety in these times of turmoil. This Remembrance Day, we need to pause for a moment to acknowledge all those who have made sacrifices to give us peace and freedom.

• (1410)

Honourable senators, we must keep honouring them every year on Remembrance Day so that their sacrifice and memory live on. Please join me in commemorating all those who served to protect our freedom and in thanking them for their sacrifice. Lest we forget.

Thank you.

[English]

### VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Morgan Hussey, recipient of the Bronfman scholarship and student at Mount Saint Vincent University. She is the guest of the Honourable Senator Cordy.

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

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

[Translation]

### CELEBRATING ACADIANS

**Hon. René Cormier:** Colleagues, we are living in a time when we often feel as though the world around us is falling apart, so it's comforting to know that there are people of all generations in this country who are driven by a genuine desire to help others and to work for the betterment of their community and their people.

I had the pleasure of seeing this first-hand last weekend during a memorable trip to the west coast of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Stephenville and the Port au Port Peninsula, the heart of Newfoundland's francophone community, played host to an impressive gathering of Acadian organizations from the four Atlantic provinces and Quebec.

From Stephenville in Grand'Terre, to L'Anse-à-Canards, in this magnificent region where the local anglophone population greets you with, "How are you, my love?", a jubilant cohort of Acadians, francophones and francophiles of all generations gathered to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador, or FFTNL.

It was an opportunity to celebrate FFTNL's many achievements and to rally together to face future challenges, because there's no denying that our francophone minority communities are still quite fragile, colleagues.

The Société nationale de l'Acadie, the voice of the Acadian people on the national and international stage, was there to celebrate the renewal of an important agreement with France. The mutual promotion of the French language and French and Acadian cultures, as well as youth and student mobility, are at the heart of this historic agreement. It was an opportunity to thank Johan Schitterer, the Consul General of France in the Atlantic Provinces, whose diplomatic efforts in Acadia have been exemplary and exceptional.

Our new colleague, the Hon. Réjean Aucoin, who will shortly be sworn in as a member of this chamber, was also there. This Chéticamp lawyer, who specializes in criminal law and is an

ardent defender of francophone language rights and a passionate Acadian, was enthusiastically welcomed by those in attendance. Clearly, his appointment to the upper chamber was long overdue.

Colleagues, as I roamed that breathtaking landscape where land and sea are one, my thoughts turned to those around the world who are currently suffering, and I so wish I could have given them a glimpse of the restful, radiant beauty before my eyes.

On the way back, a stop in Montreal gave me the opportunity to celebrate the members of the Acadian band Salebarbes, who received the Félix award for song of the year at the prestigious ADISQ gala on Sunday. It is a distinction that honours all artists who create art under tenuous conditions, but who are keen to share their vision of the world.

Colleagues, we are privileged as parliamentarians to draw inspiration from the vitality of civil society and artists who are buoyed by a common dream: to help make the world a better place.

Newfoundland is an island worth visiting. Its very name evokes hope, the hope we all need in these troubled times to keep up our important work, that of working for minorities and the regions. Colleagues, I had a great weekend and I wish the same to you.

Thank you. *Meegwetch*.

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

#### VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Dianne and Mike Ilesic. 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!

#### THE ILESIC FAMILY

**Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu:** Honourable senators, it is with deep emotion that I rise to speak to you today. My voice carries the weight of stories that tell of both human tragedy and the perseverance of victims of crime and their families.

We have with us today, in the Senate gallery, a family of unwavering courage and dignity. The Ilesic family went through something no parent or loved one should ever have to experience, and that is the loss of their son Brian, who was cut down in the prime of life by an act of unspeakable violence.

On June 15, 2012, Brian Ilesic's fate was forever changed in a tragedy that shook our community to its very core. That day, while he was hard at work at the University of Alberta, he fell victim to a violent, unthinkable crime.

One of his colleagues, blinded by greed and full of contempt for human life, opened fire in what has been described as the deadliest armed robbery in our history. Three armoured guards were gunned down, and Brian was one of them. With his exemplary work ethic and kindness, Brian would have never imagined that his commitment to keeping others safe would lead to his death.

This tragedy left an indelible mark on the hearts of his family members and rocked our entire nation. It reminded us how fragile life is and how important it is to protect our citizens.

Dianne and Mike Ilesic have joined us not only to bear witness to a grief that never truly fades, but also to show exactly what it means to have a broken heart. Their presence here is a poignant reminder that behind every decision, there are faces, names and lives left in disarray.

The solidarity and comfort they found in a support group, and the courage they showed in sharing their story with the public, are bright lights that shine through the darkness of their ordeal. These actions are not only liberating, they are also forging alliances that are effecting positive change in our society.

However, their quest for justice and peace was recently undermined by a Supreme Court of Canada decision. That decision could allow the person who took their son's life to seek parole much sooner than expected. Their story is also the story of too many Canadians whose lives have been affected by similar crimes.

Colleagues, this decision challenges the very foundations of our justice system. It casts light on a deep-seated flaw in our justice system, namely that the severity of the punishment does not always match the gravity of the crime.

That's why I will be introducing a bill this afternoon that seeks to balance the scales of justice.

To the Ilesic family and to all grieving families, I want you to know that I see your pain and I hear your call for justice. Your fight for the memory of your loved ones will henceforth be my fight. Thank you.

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

[*English*]

#### INDIGENOUS VETERANS DAY

**Hon. Brian Francis:** Honourable senators, I rise today to mark Indigenous Veterans Day, which is observed each year on November 8, to pay tribute to all the First Nations, Inuit and Métis people who served — and continue to serve — in the Canadian Armed Forces.

While Indigenous people have made significant contributions to the military history of the country now known as Canada, their service was disregarded for many years. However, due to their campaigns for respect and recognition, there is growing awareness of, for example, the estimated 12,000 First Nations,

Métis and Inuit soldiers who served in the great conflicts of the last century, with at least 500 of them losing their lives and countless others being injured.

There is also now growing awareness that, despite being deemed equals on the battlefield and some receiving decorations for their skills and bravery, Indigenous veterans faced prejudice and discrimination during and after their military service. For example, at the start of the First World War, First Nations registered as status Indians under the Indian Act were exempt from conscription because they were not considered citizens. However, shortly after, the federal government declared that, as British subjects, First Nations could be called up for training and service, which some communities protested.

It is also important to note that First Nations did not have the right to vote federally without conditions until 1960. However, men who served during the First and Second World Wars gained the right to vote in federal elections without giving up their Indian status. Yet, after the wars ended, those who lived on a reserve lost the right to vote. In addition, many were stripped of their Indian status and associated rights which, among others, severed their family and community ties.

Upon their return home, First Nations veterans also did not receive the same benefits as non-Indigenous veterans, and many experienced poverty and other hardships throughout their lives.

Colleagues, let us pause to remember the life and legacy of the thousands of Indigenous people across Mi'kma'ki and beyond who left their loving families and communities and risked their lives abroad for freedoms that, in many cases, they were not entitled to at home.

• (1420)

Although progress has been made in recent decades, including through a federal apology and compensation package for First Nations veterans in 2003 and for Métis veterans in 2019, work is still needed to ensure that all Indigenous veterans receive the care and support they need and deserve. We owe them a debt of gratitude, and we must not forget them — nor the injustices this country inflicted upon them and their families and communities. Thank you. *Wela'liog. Meegweteh.*

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

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### JUSTICE

CHARTER STATEMENT IN RELATION TO BILL S-14—  
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-14, An Act to amend the Canada National Parks Act, the

Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act, the Rouge National Urban Park Act and the National Parks of Canada Fishing Regulations, pursuant to the *Department of Justice Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. J-2, sbs. 4.2(1).

### STUDY ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

SEVENTH REPORT OF NATIONAL SECURITY, DEFENCE AND  
VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE DEPOSITED WITH  
CLERK DURING ADJOURNMENT OF THE SENATE

**Hon. David Richards:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to inform the Senate that pursuant to the orders adopted by the Senate on February 10, 2022, and November 2, 2023, the Standing Senate Committee on National Security, Defence and Veterans Affairs deposited with the Clerk of the Senate on November 8, 2023, its seventh report (Interim) entitled *The Time is Now: Granting equitable access to psychedelic-assisted therapies* 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 Richards, report placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting of the Senate.)

### 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, November 21, 2023, at 2 p.m.

### CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

**Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu** introduced Bill S-281, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (parole review).

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

## CANADA-EUROPE PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

WINTER MEETING OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND  
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY,  
FEBRUARY 23-24, 2023—REPORT TABLED

**Hon. Rosemary Moodie:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association concerning the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly's Winter Meeting, held in Vienna, Austria, from February 23 to 24, 2023.

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## QUESTION PERIOD

### PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

#### AWARDING OF CONTRACTS

**Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):** Government leader, the Trudeau government told Canadians that it would somehow find \$15 billion in savings this year, despite not once following through on their other promises to find savings. In fact, the Trudeau government did just what Canadians have come to expect from them. They spent even more money, and they spent it on consultants.

KPMG was given a contract worth just under \$670,000 to tell the Trudeau government how to spend less money — hear this — on consultants. Unbelievable. This would be a joke if it didn't involve so many hard-earned taxpayers' dollars.

Leader, I know you don't like to hear it, but every day Prime Minister Trudeau shows Canadians that he's not worth the cost. How does your government possibly justify this waste?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question. The government is managing the economy in a prudent and responsible way. Indeed, without having the figures at hand, I do believe the evidence shows that, in fact, government spending is down. I would not assume that the use of outside experts to advise the government is necessarily a waste. I have every expectation that the government will continue to find ways in which to reduce spending and to use its own resources and outside resources in the most responsible way possible.

**Senator Plett:** The Prime Minister is not worth the cost. He has no common sense. He thinks he can outsource leadership. One thing he's good at, though, is taking care of his friends. In 2016, Liberal MPs voted to shut down a committee study into a tax-evasion scheme involving KPMG. At around the same time, a KPMG executive was named Treasurer for the Liberal Party. What a coincidence. Leader, why is it always Liberal insiders who get ahead under this government, while Canadians struggle to get by?

**Senator Gold:** Thank you for your question and for adding to the insinuations of wrongdoing that you make with no evidence or justification whatsoever. The government stands by its practices to manage the economy and its affairs in an honest way for the benefit of Canadians.

### PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

#### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY STRATEGIC PLAN

**Hon. Elizabeth Marshall:** My question is also for Senator Gold.

Senator Gold, last month, the Auditor General of Canada released two reports on the government's aging information technology systems. Here are some of the things she said. She said only 38% of government's 7,500 IT applications are considered healthy. She said work has not proceeded for 65% of approximately 4,500 applications earmarked for modernization.

Departments and agencies are maintaining old and outdated IT applications and relying on old and outdated IT infrastructure. Personnel with knowledge of and expertise on outdated and unsupported technology are diminishing. Some systems no longer have vendor support. There is no strategy or plan to modernize these old IT systems.

Given the magnitude of this critical problem, a whole-of-government approach is required. Can you tell us what the government intends to do to address this problem?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you, Senator Marshall. You put your finger on a real and serious problem, a problem that this government is confronting and, indeed, previous governments have confronted. Regrettably, colleagues, those of you who have worked in business or in IT in large organizations will find the story rather familiar.

Spending lots of money — and it always costs lots of money to update IT systems — is never something of particular appeal to voters, much less to governments seeking to deliver the goods to the electors in areas where electors feel the need.

As a result, generations of governments have regrettably not invested sufficiently in the infrastructure. We have reached the point now where — as you have properly pointed out, and it's only the tip of the iceberg — the problem is significant.

This government is seized with this problem. I can tell you that with some confidence. It will make every effort within the budgetary constraints imposed on us to at least take steps forward to address this problem.

**Senator Marshall:** Thank you very much, Senator Gold, for that response.

The Auditor General's second report on IT systems was also very interesting. That report discussed the largest IT project undertaken by the federal government, estimated to cost \$2.5 billion. It's going to replace the 60-year-old Old Age

Security system, as well as the 50-year-old Employment Insurance system that more than 10 million Canadians receive benefits under.

• (1430)

Since its launch in 2017, numerous obstacles and delays have been encountered in its implementation. The Auditor General has expressed concern over the project —

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Senator Marshall, please —

**Senator Marshall:** — with the Phoenix system.

Can you assure us that the government has control over this program and that it will be successfully implemented?

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Senator Marshall, thank you. Senator Gold, your response.

**Senator Gold:** Thank you for raising the subject.

The report of the Auditor General is important. It shines light on a problem that, as I said, has been neglected by governments. This is not to blame previous governments; many governments going back far too long have neglected it.

The government is seized with the issue and will do everything it can to address this.

## FINANCE

### INDIGENOUS BUSINESSES

**Hon. Tony Loffreda:** Senator Gold, since August 2021, federal departments must ensure that a minimum of 5% of the total value of contracts are held by Indigenous businesses. I have explored this issue at the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance as part of our review of the government's spending priorities. I have reviewed many departmental results reports, and the 5% minimum target is rarely met. For instance, Public Services and Procurement Canada, or PSPC, is struggling and hopes to increase these contracts from a projected 2.1% to 5% in just two years. That's a big undertaking.

As our chair often reminds us, our committee shares a common denominator with the government, which is a desire for transparency, accountability, predictability and reliability for all Canadians, when we review federal spending. Two years into this directive, can you speak to us about the success of this measure?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question. This is an important issue and part of Canada's commitment to advance economic reconciliation by supporting Indigenous businesses through a variety of means, including federal procurement policies.

It's premature for me to be able to measure the success of this program, but I can say that as of March 24, 2022, PSPC has awarded 42 contracts worth over \$197 million to self-identified Indigenous businesses in response to the pandemic and issues

that flowed from that. I am also advised that the government does expect that all departments and agencies will meet or exceed the 5% target no later than the end of fiscal 2024-25.

**Senator Loffreda:** Thank you for that, Senator Gold.

We clearly need to accelerate the pace to ensure we meet our targets. I know the Treasury Board has been mandated to develop policy guidance and ensure that departments have the tools they need to implement the directive. What are these tools that the government is using to encourage and connect with Indigenous businesses so they are aware of procurement opportunities? What criteria are used to determine what constitutes an Indigenous-led business?

**Senator Gold:** Briefly, the central program is the Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Program, which provides access to capital and other support.

With regard to the criteria, I'm informed that for the purposes of the target, an "Indigenous business" is defined as "Elders, band and tribal councils; businesses registered in the Government of Canada's Indigenous Business Directory . . ." and ". . . businesses on a beneficiary business list."

[*Translation*]

## TRANSPORT

### ACCESSIBILITY

**Hon. Chantal Petitclerc:** My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate.

[*English*]

Senator Gold, most Canadians enjoy their flights while watching a movie, working or resting. Wheelchair users spend their flights stressed, not knowing whether they will have a wheelchair when they land.

Stephanie Cadieux, Canada's Chief Accessibility Officer, realized after arriving in Vancouver recently that her wheelchair had been left in Toronto. Rodney Hodgins lives with spastic cerebral palsy. He had to lower himself to the floor and drag himself off a plane because the airline didn't provide him with his wheelchair. A few weeks ago, I had a less dramatic but equally frustrating experience boarding a flight.

The adoption of the Accessible Canada Act in 2019 promised to make Canada a barrier-free country and made all persons with disabilities optimistic. Clearly, however, airlines are not conforming effectively with the Accessible Canada Act. What is the government doing about that?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** First of all, let's just agree that it's unacceptable. Those who suffer from issues of mobility or accessibility deserve to be treated with dignity and have the same opportunities to be so treated as those of us who are not subject to those constraints.



I'm going to bring this to the attention of the relevant minister in the hope that I will get some more information, and I'll do that with dispatch.

**Senator Pettilerc:** Thank you, Senator Gold.

I understand that Minister of Transport Rodriguez has requested to meet with Air Canada. Can you convey to them that solutions to the problems faced by persons with disabilities are not going to be arrived at politically? They need to be solved on the ground. The Rick Hansen Foundation is clear that it has to involve proper training, understanding consequences and letting people bring their wheelchairs on board. Can you pass on that message?

**Senator Gold:** Yes, I undertake to do that. I see the minister on a weekly basis, and I'll make a point to bring that to his attention.

## ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

### CARBON TAX

**Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson:** Senator Gold, last week, Prime Minister Trudeau introduced a three-year reprieve from the carbon tax spent on home heating fuel. However, regarding the supplies in Nunavut, because it's a backstopped jurisdiction, it's complicated. We buy our fuel in bulk ahead of the winter, meaning that some of that home heating fuel now being used has already been taxed. Approximately 60% of the population lives in social housing, meaning it would be the Government of Nunavut both paying those costs and getting the money back, not your average resident.

So my question to you is this: How is your government going to roll this program out in Nunavut to ensure that we are getting properly reimbursed for any carbon tax already paid and Nunavut residents feel less of a pinch through this tax break?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question and for reminding those in the chamber who have perhaps not visited Nunavut, as I have, of the very different circumstances with regard to fuel, energy, food security and the like that residents of Nunavut face on a day-to-day basis.

I don't have the answer to your question, but I will bring to it the attention of the minister. I have every confidence that the government will consider how to adapt the program for the specific circumstances that are unique to the North.

**Senator D. Patterson:** Thank you. I appreciate that.

Senator Gold, as you know, the reason behind this tax break was to give folks more time to transition to clean energy. I'm not aware, though, of a single heat pump in Nunavut, nor are we anywhere close to being able to provide reliable, redundant, clean energy options to Nunavummiut.

So, Senator Gold, I'd also like to ask you this question: How will your government ensure that, after three years, Nunavummiut don't just find themselves paying more money, with no viable alternative energy option?

**Senator Gold:** The reliance in the North, as you know better than I, senator, whether on diesel or home oil, is a fact that has to be taken into account in all adaptations of government programs. There are talented people in Canada and the North exploring alternatives, and I'm sure the government will work in partnership with them and the Government of Nunavut to the benefit of the residents in Nunavut.

### IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

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

Climate change is causing frequent and intense extreme weather events as well as increasing temperatures. The most recent examples are the resulting emergencies we experienced this past year with wildfires and flooding.

As the debate on climate change gallops along, we tend to lose sight of where we started and where we started this discussion. I want to go back to first principles as a starting point, primarily for Canadians who are watching us. What are the most serious climate change issues, and what are governments in Canada and elsewhere doing about them? What do we need to be doing as a society?

• (1440)

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for the question. Although I'm always happy to answer questions, there are so many more people in this country who live it on a day-to-day basis or have the expertise to answer that question properly.

I can't tell you what all levels of governments are doing. Each province has its own approach, and properly so, as do municipalities and individual industries. This government has a suite of measures, a comprehensive climate plan which is designed to address the climate crisis while still providing support for Canadians who need it, and it is doing so in a sustainable and responsible way.

**Senator Cardozo:** My supplementary question is regarding mitigation. The Transport and Communications Committee is looking at the effects of climate change on transportation infrastructure across the country. What are your thoughts on the most important mitigation needs that we should be dealing with as a country?

**Senator Gold:** Thank you. I wish I had the solutions. One thing is clear: Canadians have to understand, as governments do at all levels — federal, provincial and municipal — that we are in the stage of having to mitigate the impact.

Climate change is upon us; the impact is clear. Whatever we do in the future to address climate change has to include mitigating the current and foreseeable impacts of it.

## CONSERVATION OF NATIONAL PARKS

**Hon. Rose-May Poirier:** My question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

On October 24, Minister Guilbeault announced a joint investment of \$30 million with the Nature Conservancy of Canada, or NCC, to further protect 10 national parks, which include Kouchibouguac National Park near my home in Kent County. The press release on the NCC's website states that the funds could be used for land purchase, donation and agreements with land owners. People in Kent County are still reeling from the expropriation of 250 families in 1960.

Government leader, can you guarantee the people of Kent County that the Liberal government will not repeat the mistakes of the past, mistreating and unjustly displacing people without consent around the park in Kouchibouguac?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for that and for reminding those of us, shamefully, who are not necessarily aware of the details of that incident in our history.

This government will do everything that it can in this program to provide for recreational and conservancy space for all of its citizens, and I have every confidence that will also include treating the residents in the area with respect. I will certainly undertake to make inquiries and pass on the understandable preoccupations of the residents of your area.

**Senator Poirier:** Thank you. I appreciate it.

Senator Gold, your government also introduced Bill S-14 on October 19. That was a few days before the \$30-million announcement from Minister Guilbeault. The timing is interesting, as both announcements on a related issue were made at the same time. As government leader, could you shed light on this? Is the announcement of October 24 related in any way to the measures contained in Bill S-14?

**Senator Gold:** I'm not in a position to answer that, senator, other than to say that both represent measures that the government is taking to enhance our park system for the benefit of all Canadians, both to provide the necessary land resources, which is done in consultation with stakeholders and communities, and to provide the funds necessary to achieve the overall purposes of the department.

## PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

## PROCUREMENT PROCESS

**Hon. Leo Housakos:** Senator Gold, yesterday, we heard scathing testimony in the House of Commons committee looking into the ArriveCAN outsourcing scam. The former director general of the Canada Border Services Agency, or CBSA, accused his superior of lying to the committee, in particular about who made the decision to go with GC Strategies. He testified that he had recommended Deloitte, but he was told that they were put in the penalty box. He said he was told by his superior that the decision comes from above.

The only people, Senator Gold, that the director general's superior has above are the President of the CBSA and the minister himself. Who of the two decided to bypass not just the hundreds of IT experts in the public service but also Deloitte in favour of whichever Liberal insiders lined their pockets through GC Strategies?

I'm sure we're all concerned, senators, aren't we?

Who gave the order, Senator Gold? Was it the President of the CBSA, or was it the minister? Who gave the order?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** I will say a number of things.

First, these are very troubling allegations of a superior lying, and I have no comments on the truth or otherwise of the claims of one employee to his former superior.

As you know, colleagues, the CBSA has suspended contracts with GC Strategies, with Coradix Technology and Dalian Enterprises. The government is aware that the RCMP is investigating these allegations.

Misconduct of any kind in procurement is never acceptable. To protect the integrity of the ongoing investigations, the government cannot provide any further comment.

**Senator Housakos:** What else is new? This former director general also testified that when he left the CBSA, the price tag he costed for ArriveCAN was \$6.3 million. He said he was shocked at the news that it had ballooned to over \$54 million — another Canadian realizing Justin Trudeau is just not worth the cost.

Was that a result of putting Deloitte in the penalty box in favour of GC Strategies? Shouldn't the person who made the decision be held accountable, Senator Gold? Don't we believe in accountability? Who took this decision, and why aren't you interested in holding that person to account?

**Senator Gold:** All of the circumstances around this, including which person is telling the truth or not telling the truth, are matters that are being investigated by the RCMP. There will be no further comment from the government or from the representative of the government in this place pending the conclusion of those investigations.

## ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

## CANADA'S EMISSIONS TARGETS

**Hon. Mary Coyle:** Senator Gold, as mentioned earlier by Senator Dennis Patterson, yesterday, Canada's Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development Jerry DeMarco issued a report indicating that Ottawa does not have a clear plan to achieve its 2030 emissions reduction target of at least 40% below the 2005 levels. Canada is the only G7 country whose emissions are higher now than in 1990. In fact, Canada has never met a climate emissions goal, even though we have had 10 plans since 1990.

Senator Gold, what does the government have planned to recalibrate, accelerate and get on track to meet its emissions targets?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** The report to which you refer is an important report, which the government is taking seriously. There are many aspects of that report which indicate that although the government's current plan, which is always being revised, will fall somewhat short of the targets that are identified for 2030, there are many elements of the plan that are working well, including the carbon price on pollution. If the report had one central message, it was that this is one of the most effective measures, not only in theory but in practice.

The government is committed to reaching its targets. It knows it has more work to do in collaboration with the provinces, municipalities and the private sector, and it will continue to do so in as effective and expeditious way as possible.

**Senator Coyle:** I would appreciate hearing more specifics on what that "more" would look like.

#### NATIONAL ADAPTATION STRATEGY

**Hon. Mary Coyle:** Senator Gold, last month, our Senators for Climate Solutions group met with experts on climate adaptation. Ryan Ness of the Canadian Climate Institute applauded Canada's National Adaptation Strategy while pointing out some shortcomings.

Senator Gold, could you tell us when the government will create an accompanying plan to measure and report on progress and create accountability for implementation of this important national climate adaptation plan?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you. I'll certainly make inquiries and pass that on.

Measuring progress is a critical aspect of any plan. Plans aren't fully successful unless there are measures taken to account for progress so that course corrections can be taken. I'll certainly bring this to the attention of the minister.

#### HEALTH

##### PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY

**Hon. Rosemary Moodie:** Senator Gold, as you know, the fall represents a challenging time for respiratory illnesses. Last year, we saw the health care system pushed to the brink because of COVID-19 and the respiratory syncytial virus, RSV, striking at the same time. We also saw pediatric drug shortages affect families across this country.

What steps is the Government of Canada taking this year to prepare for the upcoming flu season? What are the tangible ways our health care system is better prepared to handle this incoming shock that we anticipate?

• (1450)

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question. It's the position of the government, and all responsible professionals and students in this matter, that vaccines are absolutely the best defence to protect Canadians from the flu, respiratory diseases more generally and COVID-19 in particular. We saved countless hundreds of thousands of lives through vaccination programs during the pandemic, and that continues to be the centrepiece of both provincial and federal governments' approach to combatting and protecting Canadians.

It's important that Canadians protect themselves, especially seniors and those most vulnerable. The government will continue to use its national surveillance system. It monitors the spread of influenza and shares that information with provincial counterparts — as well as influenza-like illnesses — throughout the year so that decisions can be better informed. I'm assured that the government will continue to follow the advice of health experts in this important area.

**Senator Moodie:** Thank you. With the recent history of the pandemic that we have lived through, Canadians are justifiably focused on the government's stockpile of essential health care supplies, such as flu and COVID vaccines, masks and other protective equipment. Does the government have a sufficient stockpile of these essentials for the 2023-24 winter season?

**Senator Gold:** Thank you for that. Again, vaccines are our best defence, and to date, I'm advised that more than 11 million total doses of the new formulation — that's mRNA XBB.1.5 COVID-19 vaccines — have already been delivered by the Government of Canada to the provinces and territories to support the immunization programs in those provinces and territories. I'm assured that doses will continue to arrive and be distributed throughout the fall.

#### VETERANS AFFAIRS

##### VETERANS EMERGENCY FUND

**Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Government leader, my question concerns two federal programs aimed at helping homeless veterans. In 2021, your government promised \$45 million for a two-year pilot project to reduce homelessness among veterans through such measures as rent supplements. Rent is now the highest it has ever been in Canada, at an average of \$2,149 in September according to the Rentals.ca National Rent Report. Your new program was finally launched in April of this year and accepted applications for eight weeks.

Government leader, has any of this funding been allocated? Have any veterans been helped under this program? Why did it take so long to get it up and running when rent has doubled in the meantime?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for underlining this important issue, an important one and a moral one for those who have served our country admirably, and their families as well.

I'm advised that the government is investing \$445 million over the coming years to tackle the important issue of housing. It'll be used to build new housing, bases and wings, and renovate a number of existing housing units. That's one piece of it. In addition, I'm advised that the government has put into place a number of policies to support veterans and their families. For example, increasing rates of pay for military members to assure alignment with increases in the federal public sector; implementing an interim relocation policy to enable remote work options; and covering some additional expenses for dual residency for up to six months if a Canadian Armed Forces member cannot sell their residence. This is not a complete answer to the problem, that is for sure. It continues to work on this important matter.

**Senator Martin:** I would appreciate your responses to my specific questions regarding the rent supplement program.

The Veterans Emergency Fund provides financial help to veterans experiencing a crisis. A briefing note produced in March for the Veterans Affairs minister states:

Every year since the program started in April 2018, the demand for the Veterans Emergency Fund has been more than the \$1 million dollars of annual funding.

As this program has been underfunded every single year since it began, are Canada's veterans still asking for more than the government can give, as Prime Minister Trudeau said once before?

**Senator Gold:** It is important that there are proper resources to meet the legitimate demands of veterans, and I certainly will bring this particular matter to the attention of the minister.

## FINANCE

### COST OF LIVING

**Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):** Senator Gold, in March, almost 2 million Canadians used a food bank to feed themselves and their families. This number has increased by almost a third in one year, and it's increased 79% compared to just four years ago.

These aren't just stats, Senator Gold; they are Canadians. They are young people with jobs. They are seniors on a fixed income who can't afford home heating. They are families with children. In fact, one third of all food bank users are now children. After eight long years of the Trudeau government, this is where we are as a country, with record food bank usage. How many more Canadians will go hungry if the Prime Minister gets his way and quadruples his carbon tax?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** The issue of food insecurity for a growing number of Canadian families is a serious one, it is a challenging one and it is one that the government is taking seriously within its areas of jurisdiction.

Not being an economist and not wanting to minimize at all the impact of every aspect of the increased cost of living on Canadians' ability to feed their households with the nourishing food that they deserve, the evidence is not at all clear that the price on pollution adds a significant amount to the growing food costs. We heard that expressed quite clearly in a recent intervention in this chamber.

The fact is Canadians are struggling; the federal government is doing its part, as are our provinces and, thank goodness, the non-profit sector. We should all continue to do our part to help Canadians in need.

**Senator Plett:** How many people would be able to get away from the food banks if we hadn't spent \$670,000 on KPMG, \$54 million on the "ArriveScam" app, \$100 million on Liberal insiders at McKinsey, \$256 million to Beijing's Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and \$35 billion for the failed Canada Infrastructure Bank, leader? It's not worth the cost. How can the Trudeau government justify this waste with a record number of Canadians going hungry?

**Senator Gold:** The government continues to act in a prudent and responsible way. Listing all of these matters does not change the fact that the government remains committed to helping Canadians, whether it's through the rising costs of food with the various measures I have outlined on numerous occasions in this chamber.

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## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR RECONCILIATION BILL

#### THIRD READING—DEBATE

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Audette, seconded by the Honourable Senator LaBoucane-Benson, for the third reading of Bill C-29, An Act to provide for the establishment of a national council for reconciliation, as amended.

**Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson:** Honourable senators, I am pleased to speak briefly to Bill C-29, An Act to provide for the establishment of a national council for reconciliation. I want to say that this has been a very difficult bill to deal with because although it is a direct response to Call to Action 53, it's important, I believe, to provide a little context.

Let's go back to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and recall that they were the result of three years of intense work done by our former colleague, the Honourable Murray Sinclair. The Calls to Action were released in 2015. On December 8, 2015, Prime Minister Trudeau said that:

There is no relationship more important to me — and to Canada — than the one with First Nations, the Métis Nation, and Inuit.

Since then, in December of 2016, the government established permanent bilateral mechanisms with an initial investment of \$88.6 million in the 2017 and 2018 budgets. They created tables where First Nations, Inuit and Métis representatives could raise their specific priorities directly to the federal government. This was a development since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action.

• (1500)

The Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee, or ICPC, table has turned out to have been a very effective tool used to identify and work on Inuit-specific priorities. To date, this table has secured literally hundreds of millions of dollars for issues of importance, such as the construction of housing and other critical infrastructure and the elimination of tuberculosis. It has also helped secure apologies for historic wrongs such as the dog slaughter.

Colleagues, we find ourselves on the brink of signing into law a mechanism that, in the view of some, is no longer required because we now have different accountability mechanisms in place, with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people having a direct line to the government. As well, there is a ministry — Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada — that focuses on this important work. It was very important to Inuit that the work of this council not take away from or erode in any way the good work being done through the ICPC tables. That is why I was happy that the committee supported the adoption of my amendment, brought forward in consultation with Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, or ITK. That amendment clearly kept the mandates of the council and the ICPC table separate.

However, not every concern brought forward by Inuit was able to be addressed through the amendments. The Inuit did express a concern that there was not Inuit specificity in this bill. While I can understand to a certain extent that there cannot be Inuit-specific terminology in a pan-Indigenous bill, it is still important to hold the concerns of Inuit in mind. That's why I wish to speak briefly on this point.

One example would be the importance of ensuring that the staff of the council should have some capacity to work with unilingual Inuktitut-speaking elders. Another large concern is the lack of representation of Inuit women. While the Native Women's Association of Canada, or NWAC, was granted a seat on the council by this bill, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada were not. NWAC has said time and again that they represent Inuit women, but Pauktuutit President Gerri Sharpe told me as recently as today that it is Pauktuutit that truly represents the voice of Inuit women and girls. They have done so very effectively for decades and will be celebrating their fortieth anniversary the year.

Why is this distinction so important? It's important because there is a real fear that the makeup of the council may lead to it becoming unbalanced, with a heavier emphasis on First Nation issues. If this is to be a pan-Indigenous council, reporting on the progress of reconciliation, then it must truly be pan-Indigenous. That means ensuring that Inuit are properly represented.

In this connection, honourable colleagues, without wanting to tamper with this bill any further, I would like to put on the record a challenge to the Native Women's Association of Canada, which would be welcomed by Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, to reach out to and work more closely with them on this reconciliation council.

Thank you. *Qujannamiik.*

**Hon. Mary Jane McCallum:** Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Bill C-29, An Act to provide for the establishment of a national council for reconciliation. I want to thank Senator Audette for sponsoring the bill and the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples for being diligent and respectful in their work.

Colleagues, it is impossible to compress into one speech the history of First Nations when looking through the lens of conciliation. The necessity to be selective leads me to concentrate on narrow dimensions of First Nations' lives, starting with pre-contact, to show their history of independence, and then showing the intentional devolving structure of self-determination of First Nations.

The rippling effects of the trauma and rupture to our lives caused by colonial policies and legislation have served to reinforce and legitimize racist stereotypes about First Nations. Our stories about residential schooling were told to challenge the stories that reinforced the naturalized kind of racism that permeates Canadian society. It is to make ourselves, as parliamentarians, accountable to foster, maintain and build relationships between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples.

I will conclude with an amendment.

Colleagues, in the book *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus*, author Charles C. Mann states:

... researchers have made fascinating discoveries about the first fifteen thousand years of American history ... that fit well in the book's basic arguments: that Indian societies were bigger than had been previously believed; that they were older and more sophisticated than previously believed; and that they had greater impact on the environment than previously believed.

In the book entitled *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life*, author James Daschuk states:

... prehistoric populations on the Canadian plains, rather than small, nomadic, band-level societies, were large, sophisticated, "tribally" organized communities made up of as of many as 1,000 individuals working communally to produce "an almost industrial level of resource exploitation." These large groups provided enough labor to

drive herds over large distances and then kill and process them, creating large surpluses of food that were traded (often for corn and other crops) or stockpiled for future use. Food surpluses gave communities time to pursue quests for more than just food, developing formal institutions within them . . . .

During the Little Ice Age between 1275 and 1300 A.D.:

. . . the choices made by communities were the difference between success and oblivion over the long term. In Greenland, rigid adherence to unsustainable European farming practices marked the beginning of the end for Norse settlement, while their indigenous neighbours shifted their subsistence strategies across the arctic, adapting to the harsh conditions and surviving in the long term.

Honourable senators, after 500 years of sustained contact and interaction, First Nation lives and First Nation government relations have been left in a deplorable, human-generated state of disarray and despair. Government policies and legislation deliberately undermined the viability of Aboriginal communities in order to serve the never-ending quest for assimilation of First Nations and the desire for land.

We were never inherently physically weak peoples as history makes us out to be. The impact of the arrival of epidemic diseases was worsened with the newly imposed reserve system.

• (1510)

As author James William Daschuk wrote:

The most significant factor under human control was the failure of the Canadian government to meet its treaty obligations and its decision to use food as a means to control the Indian population to meet its development agenda rather than as a response to a humanitarian crisis. . . . To the hungry indigenous population, this meant that officials quickly turned the food crisis into a means to control them to facilitate construction of the railway and opening of the country to agrarian settlement. . . . The Dakota, who did not depend on the bison and were not signatories to the treaties, were able to maintain relatively good conditions in their communities. This is evidence that the emerging TB epidemic was not an organic phenomenon but the outcome of prolonged malnutrition and failure of the dominion to meet its treaty commitments.

. . . By 1883, reports of tainted food and reserve deaths were common. In addition, government regulations that kept the distribution of provisions on reserves to a minimum required to sustain life exacerbated the TB problem and led to provisions rotting in storehouses even as the reserve population suffered from malnutrition. . . .

. . . With the infrastructure in place for large-scale settlement and the establishment of agrarian capitalism, the well-being of indigenous people in the west largely disappeared from

the public agenda. Bands considered to have been hostile during the insurrection of 1885 were punished. Their food rations were cut off, and their weapons and horses were confiscated. Reserves became centres of incarceration as the infamous “pass system” was imposed to control movements of the treaty population. . . .

. . . Establishment of the residential school system, now widely recognized as a national disgrace, ensconced TB infection, malnutrition, and abuse in an institutional setting that endured for most of the twentieth century. . . . It is for all Canadians to recognize the collective burden imposed on its indigenous population by the state as it opened the country to our immigrant ancestors to recast the land to suit the needs of the global economy in the late nineteenth century.

The first physical sign of a substandard institutional system is the increase in sickness and illness of a population. Health as a measure of human experience cannot be considered in isolation from the social, political and economic forces that shape the experiences of First Nations through colonization and colonialism.

Colleagues, the colossal denial of human rights and centuries-long assault were for the purpose of obtaining First Nations’ lands. In the book *Seeing Red*, by Mark Cronlund Anderson and Carmen L. Robertson, the authors state:

The idea that Aboriginals desired to cede their lands, imperialism notwithstanding, clearly makes no sense at all unless one embraces a colonial ideology that endorses imperial land theft. Why would anyone freely give up huge regions of traditional territory in return for a degraded status on small areas of marginal land? . . .

Honourable senators, the majority of stories — 92% to 96% of stories — in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, or TRC, are based on the stories of First Nations from effects of the history above. We must acknowledge that the experiences of Inuit and Métis are different from First Nations, and therefore their solutions and the acts of reconciliation required will be different. The stories of trauma experienced by the Métis, the Sixties Scoop survivors, children in care, non-status Indians and those off-reserve remain largely unknown. They also require unique solutions and acts of reconciliation.

Yet Canada continues to conflate all of the Indigenous peoples into one heavily stereotyped monolith. There are numerous traps in discussing Aboriginal peoples as if they were a relatively homogeneous entity with a common set of problems, with a uniform set of solutions. The pan-Indigenous approach championed by Bill C-29 has the ability to do a disservice to all Indigenous peoples. We shall see the outcome.

Colleagues, context is critical in legislation. We are responsible for asking ourselves, as parliamentarians, if we are going to be complacent in undertaking reconciliation for Métis and Inuit peoples through the same lens as that of First Nations.

In the book *Unequal Relations: A Critical Introduction to Race, Ethnic, and Aboriginal Dynamics in Canada* by Augie Fleras, the author states:

The term “aboriginal” itself refers to the first or original or Indigenous occupants of this country. This status as first among equals provides First Nations with the credentials to press claims against the Canadian state for entitlement on the basis of inherent jurisdiction . . . . The term “first” can also be used in less flattering ways. Aboriginal peoples are “first” in those social areas that count least (unemployment, under-education, suicide, and morbidity rates) but last in realms that matter most. . . . They are also “first” in terms of total publicity — much of it reflecting a popular view of aboriginal peoples as “problem people” who “have problems” or “create problems” that cost or provoke. Some of this media exposure is sympathetic, but much reflects degrees of indifference or ignorance. Most coverage is inadequate to provide anything but a fleeting glimpse into changing realities. The circulation of misinformation is unfortunate.

The author continues:

The complex and difficult issues associated with the reconstruction process should never be underestimated. Aboriginal demands are organized around the principle of nationhood rather than social integration, and there is much to be gained by seeing Indigenous efforts toward reconstitution of the elements of their nationality through restoration of aboriginal communities and cultural values as well as self-determination and territorial reappropriation . . . .

As noted by Dave Courchene, a former president of the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, in 1970:

One hundred years of submission and servitude, of protectionism and paternalism have created psychological barriers for Indian people that are far more difficult to break down and conquer than the problems of economic and social poverty. . . .

Honourable senators, in conclusion, I would like to raise that there is an inaccuracy in the preamble of this bill that we would do well to rectify. Specifically, the opening line states:

Whereas, since time immemorial, Indigenous peoples have thrived on and managed and governed their Indigenous lands . . . .

We know that a pan-Indigenous approach to this wording implies that all three are incorporated into this statement. In reality, it was only the First Nations and Inuit peoples who have lived on these lands since time immemorial, since Métis were conceived between First Nations women and European men.

We can’t start this bill off with an untruth. As such, I am requesting that we correct this inaccuracy by changing the term “Indigenous peoples” to more accurately state, “First Nations and Inuit peoples.”

#### MOTION IN AMENDMENT—VOTE DEFERRED

**Hon. Mary Jane McCallum:** Therefore, honourable senators, in amendment, I move:

That Bill C-29, as amended, be not now read a third time, but that it be further amended in the preamble, on page 1, by replacing line 1 with the following:

“Whereas, since time immemorial, First Nations and Inuit peo-”.

Thank you.

• (1520)

**Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, I want to first acknowledge that we’re on the unceded Algonquin Anishinaabe territory.

I want to thank Senator McCallum for her speech and her proposal. As a legislative body, we benefit from the lived experience our honourable friend brings to bear when we study bills that seek to advance reconciliation, as this one does.

“Reconciliation” is not just a bureaucratic buzzword. It’s about healing the real traumas experienced by — and inflicted by — real people. Many of us have survivors in our life who have shared their stories with us, and have helped us understand both the promise and the challenges of reconciliation. We are all fortunate to have a colleague in our chamber who can speak to us on these topics with the passion and perspective that comes from real, personal experience. Once again, I thank the senator for doing so.

I do have concerns, though, about the specifics of this amendment. As we have heard, it proposes to rephrase the opening line of the preamble. Currently, the preamble begins with this: “Whereas, since time immemorial, Indigenous peoples have thrived on and managed and governed their Indigenous lands . . . .” This amendment would replace “Indigenous peoples” with “First Nations and Inuit peoples.”

I understand the distinction that the amendment seeks to draw between First Nations and Inuit peoples, who were here long before the Europeans arrived, and the Métis Nation that developed after European arrival.

The various Indigenous peoples of Canada are distinct in many ways, including when it comes to our histories and origins. I agree completely that we should embrace these distinctions, achieving unity and solidarity not by suppressing them, but by celebrating them.

However, as a Métis person myself, it troubles me to think that we would begin this bill with a line that expressly omits the Métis Nation. The current wording is accurate — Indigenous peoples have been here since time immemorial — and I don’t see the need to change it.

Bill C-29 is landmark legislation. It is a significant milestone on the journey to reconciliation. It will create a national council for reconciliation that will, for years into the future, monitor, evaluate, educate and report about the state of reconciliation in Canada. This is vital work, colleagues.

Given the importance of the work this council will do, it's no wonder that so much of the discussion about it has focused on inclusion. Naturally, with hundreds of Indigenous nations in Canada, the preamble can't name each one, and it is impossible, unfortunately, for each nation to have its own dedicated representative on the council's board.

But surely, at a minimum, colleagues, we can avoid specifically mentioning two of the three distinct Indigenous groups recognized by our Constitution, while excluding the third. I am sure this amendment is not meant to send the message that Métis people are somehow a lesser category, but I worry it would be received that way, regardless of the intent.

Métis people have fought hard for recognition and inclusion. It would be a shame to exclude us in the opening line of this critical bill. I, therefore, will be opposing this amendment.

I do, though, sincerely thank Senator McCallum for her contribution to this debate and her work in committee. It was valuable, and I will take this opportunity to thank everyone who has participated in the Senate study of this legislation. I think that we made it stronger, and increased the likelihood that the national council will be an effective body.

I look forward to seeing it get off the ground and start doing its work in a way that promotes reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in this country — and to promote love. I think we need more love in this country, and I think this council can do that. I want to thank you for your time, colleagues. *Hiy hiy*. Thank you.

**Senator McCallum:** I have spoken to Métis people, and I met with the Manitoba Métis Federation this morning. I have spoken to them about this amendment; they agreed with it. I said to them, “First Nations women are the matriarch of the Métis Nation because without them, and without the people who came over — the French, and the British — there would have been no Métis Nation.”

How can you say, Senator LaBoucane-Benson, that there were three groups here, when the Europeans hadn't come, and there were only the First Nations? First Nations includes all the tribes that were here. It's the original peoples — it is just that we can't come up with one term. In Cree, we call ourselves *nēhiyawak*, but they didn't take that into consideration — it's human beings.

That's why it is very important. This is truth and reconciliation. The truth is there were only First Nations and Inuit peoples when people landed here. Can you comment on that?

**Senator LaBoucane-Benson:** Senator, I don't disagree with your rendition of history at all. I do disagree that in the preamble it says “Indigenous peoples.” It doesn't say “Métis.”

[ Senator LaBoucane-Benson ]

Truly, every law in Canada is written in the language of the colonizer. “Indigenous” is not a Cree word. The Cree people don't call themselves “Cree people.” The Métis people don't necessarily call themselves “Métis people” in Michif, and yet here we are in the language of the colonizer, writing a bill that is talking about reconciliation.

I think the word “Indigenous” meets the standard, and is good enough in this bill at the beginning because it is inclusive. It doesn't leave people out unintentionally, but I don't disagree with the history that you are putting forward.

**Senator McCallum:** We are not leaving anyone out unintentionally. That is the reality.

I disagree with the word “Indigenous.” This country has moved from using “Aboriginal” to now using “Indigenous,” and that includes all the groups.

When I look at the history of how First Nations people were targeted — as were the Inuit people — they were specifically and persistently targeted by legislation to bring them down, and that has to be taken into account. It was all about the land. The country needs to know. We hear “time immemorial,” and when I use that term, that is from the Cree term. There is a Cree word for “time immemorial.” Can you comment on that?

**Senator LaBoucane-Benson:** I thank you for that. If this bill were perfect, it would name the actual nations that were here, and it's not. Using inclusive language would help Métis people understand that we acknowledge that they have traumas as well, that they have suffered as well, that they went to day schools and some residential schools, that they experienced systemic racism, and that they have lived their lives in a country that has seen them as less than — and that is why I am advocating for inclusive language.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Renée Dupuis:** My question is for Senator LaBoucane-Benson. The French version of Bill C-29 uses the term “les Autochtones” when it states, “. . . que, depuis des temps immémoriaux, les Autochtones se sont épanouis sur leur territoire . . .”

When we speak of “les Autochtones,” we are referring to Indigenous peoples as described in section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. Since 1982, we recognize that Indigenous peoples are “. . . Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples . . .”

The English version of Bill C-29 states:

[*English*]

Whereas since time immemorial, Indigenous peoples have . . .



• (1530)

[*Translation*]

Am I correct in thinking that, based on the definition of the expression “time immemorial,” or “temps immémoriaux” in French, if we examine the meaning of these expressions in both English and French, they refer to something that goes back so far as to be beyond memory?

[*English*]

In English, they define it as “originating in the distant past; very old.”

[*Translation*]

They don’t refer to a specific time in human history.

Is it your understanding that defining “time immemorial” in general terms in French or in English does not place the arrival of a specific people at a particular time, either before or after another?

[*English*]

**Senator LaBoucane-Benson:** Thank you, senator. I’m sure my colleagues would all agree that I am not the person to address the translation issues between French and English.

But I take your point. If I understand, what you are saying is “time immemorial” as it’s expressed in French and English may mean different things. No?

[*Translation*]

**Senator Dupuis:** May I clarify my question? Obviously, my colleague didn’t understand my question as I worded it.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Certainly.

**Senator Dupuis:** In both French and English, the word “immemorial” refers to a time in the distant past of human history, without necessarily giving a specific date for the arrival of the Inuit, the arrival of the Indians, the arrival of the Métis, according to the terms used in section 35 of the Constitution Act. These are not my preferred terms, but I’m using the ones we have. Is that how you understand this?

[*English*]

**Senator LaBoucane-Benson:** Yes, I do agree with you. That is my understanding.

**Hon. Rebecca Patterson:** Senator, will you take a question?

**Senator LaBoucane-Benson:** Of course.

**Senator R. Patterson:** Thank you. I’m not Indigenous; I am not Métis, First Nation or Inuit. I appreciate everything that’s been said so that we can understand the history and what “time immemorial” really means.

My question revolves around Métis identity. “Time immemorial,” based on Senator McCallum’s explanation, means “from the beginning into the future”; it’s a continuum — a continuous line. Part of a Métis person comes from settlers and another part comes from an Indigenous culture.

My question to you, as a Métis person, is this: If the language is not inclusive, would Métis people feel that part of them has been denied?

**Senator LaBoucane-Benson:** Thank you for that question. I do not speak on behalf of all Métis people, and I think my honourable colleague said that she had conversations — which I wasn’t a part of — and that that would not be the case.

As a Métis person, I also want to say that the understanding of Métis as mixed blood is a way of thinking about Métis people that is a bit uncomfortable. Métis people are a cultural construct of a group of people who created their own culture, which originated in the Red River. That culture is very specific, and, yes, it was a combination of different things, but it evolved to be something of its own.

As a Métis person, I want to put forward that being inclusive and acknowledging that Métis people have had a traumatic history is important, and using inclusive language would be helpful.

**Hon. Marty Klyne:** I want to say that I understand what Senator McCallum is saying; however, I do take the point with the Métis aspect of that. I think that Senator LaBoucane-Benson and Senator Dupuis covered some of the points I wanted to make, but I want to say that not all Indigenous peoples have been here since time immemorial. Métis are a post-contact Indigenous nation going back close to 400 years or more. They were born from the unions of European fur traders and First Nations women of the 17th century.

As we know, and as was mentioned, the constitutional definition of “Aboriginal people” — or “Indigenous people,” if you prefer — refers to First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

Thank you.

**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:** No.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Those in favour of the motion will please say “yea.”

**Some Hon. Senators:** Yea.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Those opposed to the motion, please say “nay.”

**Some Hon. Senators:** Nay.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** In my opinion, the “nays” have it.

*And two honourable senators having risen:*

**The Hon. the Speaker:** I see two senators rising. Is there an agreement on a bell?

The vote will be deferred until tomorrow at 5:30 p.m.

### BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION BILL, 2023, NO. 1

#### FIFTH REPORT OF ENERGY, THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE ON SUBJECT MATTER— DEBATE ADJOURNED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the fifth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources, entitled *The subject matter of those elements contained in Divisions 20 and 36 of Part 4 of Bill C-47, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023*, deposited with the Clerk of the Senate on June 2, 2023.

**Hon. Pierrette Ringuette:** Honourable senators, for a number of months now, we have been hearing the calling of these different committee reports that deal with a budget bill that we have passed in this chamber.

• (1540)

I find it quite unusual and quite unfortunate, but I guess that today it also provides me with the ability to speak on this particular report with respect to the Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

Now, you will understand that I am trying to recall as many items in that budget bill that I can. And, of course, for some other reason, I’m also on my feet to stop this game that is going on by playing it. Some of you who are playing the game will understand what I’m doing.

Colleagues, it seems to me that the budget bill that we voted on and this particular report — we didn’t vote on it per se because a portion of the budget bill was sent to this committee, but we did vote on the entire budget and the vote was agreed to therefore the budget bill was passed.

Regarding the particular elements contained in the bill that was sent to the Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, I would presume that some of that would touch on how the public policy of our nation tries to deal with the carbon emissions that we have and with the Paris Agreement that our country and all our provinces have agreed to. Also, for your information, as of July 1 of this year, all four Atlantic provinces have embarked on the federal policy to reduce carbon emissions.

Honourable colleagues, that was quite a move for the Atlantic provinces because New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, P.E.I. and Newfoundland and Labrador created their own provincial emissions system. The four premiers, who were all in agreement,

probably saw that their provincial system was maybe not sustainable in meeting the 2030 emissions targets that they had agreed to or maybe, for political reasons, they decided, “Let’s just dump this on the federal government.”

That is the situation with respect to the issue of the environment in the budget, and the provinces — and I will speak, in particular, for New Brunswick — once they dumped their emissions targets and carbon pricing policy to the federal government as of July 1, now, all of a sudden, they want to get out of the agreement. Okay. So it’s become a political football that New Brunswickers are beginning to be quite tired of.

That being said, it doesn’t eliminate the fact that we have a national policy — and, yes, it’s true that Quebec has their own system which seems to be quite comparable to the federal one. The Province of B.C. — quite a number of years ago, in 2008; they were way ahead of the curve on that one — created a provincial public policy that is also mirrored in the current federal government policy.

Now, colleagues, you will say, “Why, all of a sudden, Pierrette, are you telling us all this?” I am telling you all of this because of the discussion we were having last week. On Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday, I did 14 hours of research daily. So today I am able to stand on my feet and talk to you about public policy with respect to the environment that was included in the last budget and in the report that we have before us.

It is also quite interesting that, for instance, because this transfer from the province to the federal policy as of July 1 of this year — which is also applicable to the other three Atlantic provinces — our citizens are not really aware of how the federal tax rebate works. So during the weekend — and this is regarding the policy on the environment and the last budget — I had to inform the citizens of my area that I was in contact with about certain provisions.

I must say it was probably one of the most interesting weekends that I have had for a long time. You see, I have been representing, in particular, these farming communities for 35 years. I know them. They know me. When I was explaining to them what was in the budget with respect to the environment and the scheme that they were part of since July 1, they were quite astonished because, for the last several years, they were being told that the carbon tax was a complete tax grab. They were never informed.

You see, honourable senators, that’s the difference between myth and facts. It’s important to get the facts on paper. They were never informed that, in the federal scheme, they would be getting a rebate currently at the rate of \$1.73 for every \$1,000 of their entire farming income. Wow. Because they never understood that. And nowhere, at any time, did any farmers organization that they were consulting with ever tell them that fact.

• (1550)

I say shame. Shame. We — in this place, at least — have to be honest with our citizens, and they have to be honest and upfront with us.

So, on Friday, I put forth quite a number of policies and challenges that they had. I asked them to go back to their accountants, go back to how they operate and tell me if they are better off financially to increase their investment in their operation by the current system under which they were not told about the refundable tax credit or about a new proposed exemption.

Colleagues, in my area, 99% of farming production is potatoes. You can ask Senator Mockler, and he will confirm that. It is the same situation in P.E.I.: 99% of the farming activities in P.E.I. are potato-based.

There is no use in the farming communities of Atlantic Canada for natural gas because we have no access.

Colleagues, that brings us back to the fundamental issues of, as I said earlier, providing our constituencies with the real facts in order for them to really respond with how the facts would impact them.

And that is just the farming community. It's the same situation in regard to the other scheme that addresses us as consumers. It's completely different because I — like you and our citizens — as a consumer, when we file our income tax, nowhere are we able to take all our operating expenses as a deduction. We are not a business. Therefore, there are two different schemes.

Unfortunately, maybe it was not clear in the budget and in this particular committee report, so I am taking this opportunity to maybe clarify this entire situation.

At the end of the day, the policy of the government is completely different in regard to me as an individual, the farming community as an economic sector, transformation industries like logging or others; it's completely different in regard to carbon policy charges. When we analyze and research — and we do have a responsibility to research — if we are not capable from the outset to make that distinction —

Colleagues, I have so much more to say. Can I have five more minutes?

**Some Hon. Senators:** No.

**Senator Ringuette:** What a shame. But I suspect a colleague would also like to participate in this debate. Thank you.

**Hon. Percy E. Downe:** I'm sure our colleague must have slipped up in her research because potato farms in P.E.I. make up 43.4% of agricultural farm area in the province. I'm sure she would want to correct the record. Thank you.

**Senator Ringuette:** May I respond to that?

**The Hon. the Speaker:** You asked for five more minutes, and I heard a "no." I'm sorry.

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

## LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

### MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY 2023 STATUTES REPEAL ACT—DEBATE

**Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate),** pursuant to notice of November 7, 2023, moved:

That the report on the *Statutes Repeal Act* for the year 2023, tabled in the Senate on February 1, 2023, be referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs for examination and report; and

That the committee submit its report to the Senate no later than Tuesday, December 5, 2023.

**Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Can you kindly remind us which number this is on the Order Paper?

**Hon. Pierrette Ringuette:** I have a question in regard to this. Is there a reason why this particular Statutes Repeal Act report would be sent to the Legal Committee, and for them to report it in such a short period of time? I know they are quite a busy committee in regard to the bills they have to deal with.

[*Translation*]

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Senator Ringuette, I think you need to be on debate.

[*English*]

**Senator Ringuette:** Okay, then let me phrase that in a debate manner.

It seems not very often that we get such kinds of bills; my latest recollection is about 10 or 12 years ago. Yes, I believe that probably the Legal Committee is a good committee to undertake such studies. However, I must admit that, in my mind, I look at the agenda of the Legal Committee in this debate, and I would question if it's reasonable for this chamber to decide that —

• (1600)

[*Translation*]

## BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, it being 4 p.m., I must interrupt the proceedings. Pursuant to rule 9-6, the bells will ring to call in the senators for the taking of a deferred vote at 4:15 p.m., on the adoption of the motion in amendment of the Honourable Senator Boisvenu, seconded by the Honourable Senator Seidman.

Call in the senators.

• (1610)

[English]

### CRIMINAL CODE

#### BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING—MOTION IN AMENDMENT ADOPTED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Gold, P.C., seconded by the Honourable Senator LaBoucane-Benson, for the third reading of Bill C-48, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (bail reform), as amended.

And on the motion in amendment of the Honourable Senator Boisvenu, seconded by the Honourable Senator Seidman:

That Bill C-48, as amended, be not now read a third time, but that it be further amended in clause 1 (as amended by the decision of the Senate on October 26, 2023), on page 2, by replacing lines 28 and 29 with the following:

**“(4) Paragraph 515(6)(b.1) of the Act is replaced by the following:**

**(b.1)** with an offence in the commission of which violence was allegedly used, threatened or attempted against their intimate partner, and the accused has been previously convicted or discharged under section 730 of an offence in the commission of which violence was used, threatened or attempted against any intimate partner of theirs;”.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, the question is as follows: It was moved by the Honourable Senator Boisvenu, seconded by the Honourable Senator Seidman:

That Bill C-48, as amended, be not now read a third time, but —

Shall I dispense, honourable senators?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

Motion in amendment of the Honourable Senator Boisvenu agreed to on the following division:

#### YEAS THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Ataullahjan  
Batters

MacAdam  
MacDonald

Bellemare	Marshall
Black	Martin
Boehm	Massicotte
Boisvenu	McPhedran
Boniface	Mégie
Busson	Miville-Dechéne
Cordy	Mockler
Dagenais	Moodie
Dalphond	Oh
Deacon ( <i>Nova Scotia</i> )	Osler
Deacon ( <i>Ontario</i> )	Patterson ( <i>Nunavut</i> )
Downe	Patterson ( <i>Ontario</i> )
Duncan	Petten
Forest	Plett
Francis	Poirier
Gignac	Prosper
Gold	Ravalia
Greene	Richards
Harder	Ringuette
Hartling	Saint-Germain
Housakos	Seidman
Jaffer	Smith
Klyne	Sorensen
LaBoucane-Benson	Tannas
Loffreda	White—54

#### NAYS THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Clement	McCallum
Cotter	Petitclerc
Coyle	Simons
Dupuis	Yussuff—9
Kutcher	

#### ABSTENTIONS THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Burey	Galvez
Cardozo	Gerba
Cormier	Moncion
Cuzner	Quinn—9
Dasko	

(At 4:23 p.m., pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate on September 21, 2022, the Senate adjourned until 2 p.m., tomorrow.)

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