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Tuesday, June 4, 2024

The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,
Speaker

This issue contains the latest listing of Senators,
Officers of the Senate and the Ministry.

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THE SENATE

Tuesday, June 4, 2024

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

Prayers.

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

Thank you.

SENATORS’ STATEMENTS

DEAFBLIND AWARENESS MONTH

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I rise today to recognize the beginning of Deafblind Awareness Month in June.

Across Canada, individuals living with deaf-blindness, and those caring for them, face immense challenges. Nonetheless, they embody resilience, strength and determination. These extraordinary Canadians navigate the world, determined not to let their disability stop them from living productive and fulfilling lives.

I must acknowledge our former colleague the Honourable Vim Kochhar for inspiring me and many others with his decades of tireless involvement in championing the deaf-blind community. With his encouragement, I had the honour of tabling a motion in 2015, which the Senate of Canada unanimously adopted, to designate June as Deafblind Awareness Month. This motion was made possible through the support of our former colleagues the Honourable Senators Jim Munson, Joan Fraser and Asha Seth.

There are many organizations that work to support and empower the deaf-blind community, following in the pioneering efforts of the famous Helen Keller. Helen Keller is world-renowned as one of the most heroic women who ever lived with deaf-blindness. She is a role model for everyone with deaf-blindness, and a role model who showed the world their vast potential. Her life is a testament to the profound fact that everyone — no matter who they are, what challenges they face or where they come from — can impact the world.

Just as Helen Keller needed help from her teacher and mentor, Anne Sullivan, to start her inspiring journey, people living with deaf-blindness need a guiding hand to help them lead more meaningful lives. Therefore, I wish to thank all the intervenors, service providers, volunteers and friends of the deaf-blind community who offer their invaluable support.

In celebration of June as Deafblind Awareness Month, Senator Michèle Audette, Senator Brent Cotter, Senator Gigi Osler and I are co-hosting the annual Deafblind Awareness Month lunch reception on Thursday, June 6, in Room 180 at 1 Wellington Street. Colleagues, we welcome you to join us to meet the amazing deaf-blind community of consumers, intervenors and support workers.

Acknowledging this month as Deafblind Awareness Month is only the beginning. Together, we can create a world where deaf-blind individuals are not just seen and heard, but also fully included and embraced.

ARRIVAL OF TIESSEN AND HARDER FAMILIES IN CANADA

ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY

Hon. Peter Harder: Honourable senators, I rise today to pay tribute to my grandparents: Peter and Elizabeth Tiessen and the Reverend Abram and Anna Harder.

Colleagues may remember that in May 2019, I spoke on the centenary of the order-in-council which prevented my grandparents, parents, their siblings and thousands of other Mennonites who had applied to come to Canada from leaving the Soviet Union. In the words of the order-in-council: “. . . they are not likely to become readily assimilated or assume the duties and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship”

Then, in June 2022, I spoke on the centenary of a much happier occasion, when a newly elected government in Canada rescinded that order. As a result, about 20,000 people — one sixth of the Russian Mennonite population — were able to leave the Soviet Union for Canada in what became known as the Mennonite exodus. Today, I arise to celebrate that centenary.

It was 100 years ago this month when the Tiessen and then the Harder families left the Lichtenau railway station with all their belongings. The train consisted of over 50 freight cars with well over 20 people in each car — all from the villages from which they came. It was a momentous departure.

As the last car passed through the famous “Iron Gate” at the Soviet border, as with one voice, the song “Now Thank We All Our God” could be heard from all of the cars in four-part harmony.

The Harder family departed from Southampton, crossing the Atlantic Ocean on the *SS Empress of France*. Sailing up the St. Lawrence River, Grandfather Harder wrote the following in his journal:

At long last my years of hoping and dreaming are about to be fulfilled. A few more hours of sailing and we will touch Canadian soil in Quebec. Today is my birthday. I am 45 years of age, and I call out with the words of the Psalmist, “And I will walk in liberty, for I seek Thy precepts” (Ps 119:45). On the day of my birth, my mother placed me into a cradle in Kleefeld, province of Taurien, Russia. Today the waves of fate gently rock me unto the shores of [North] America. Where will I find a home for myself and my large family? Where shall we find a home for our daily pursuits? How many days will there be for me in this strange land? With mixed feelings and emotions, and yet with deep conviction that I have done the right thing, I cry out with the words, “My God, my hope is in Thee.”

So, 100 years later, this youngest grandchild can rise in this chamber and say, with the gratitude of generations, “Thank you. You did indeed do the right thing.”

As with all immigration and migration stories, this could not have been done without the support of co-religionists in Canada who lobbied the Government of Canada to allow this migration, and who negotiated a large “travel loan” from the Canadian Pacific Railway to pay for the expenses of travel, as well as the many Mennonite families — first in Kitchener-Waterloo and later in Manitoba — who welcomed my Tiessen and Harder families into their homes. This August, the grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren of Abram and Anna Harder will meet in Vineland, Ontario, to share our story and to give thanks.

I speak today so that we may all redouble our efforts to make Canada an ongoing beacon of protection for refugees, a welcoming home for immigrants, a celebration of pluralism and a guard against falsehoods and other claims of racial or religious discrimination.

VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Oleksandra Matviichuk, Chair of the Center for Civil Liberties in Ukraine, which is a joint recipient of the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize. She is the guest of the Honourable Senator Kutcher.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

CHILDREN IN CONFLICT ZONES

Hon. Stan Kutcher: Honourable senators, as UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell has stated, “Any war is ultimately a war on children.” Or, as those in this chamber of my generation will recall, “War is not healthy for children and other living things.”

Currently, there are upward of 100 armed conflicts raging across the globe that put children directly into the crosshairs of destruction. These children have had no say in the machinations of deluded leaders or the unleashing of weapons that spew death. These children have had their childhoods snatched away. These children have died, been physically or psychologically maimed, have lost a parent or loved one or have been abducted and forced to leave all that was precious and dear to them.

• (1410)

Colleagues, but for the grace of God and good luck, those children could have been our children. They could have been our grandchildren. In a way, all children are our children and our grandchildren, and this is not the life that we want them to experience. The Russian genocidal war on Ukraine is but one example of the horrors that war unleashes on the most innocent. In Ukraine, about 7 million children are directly or indirectly experiencing the horrors of war. Many thousands have been deported or forcefully displaced. They have disappeared, become victims of sexual violence, been wounded or died.

Senators, we have a shared humanity and thus a shared responsibility to do whatever we can to make sure that our children do not now or evermore experience the horrors of war.

Today, we are joined by a leader who has dedicated her career to justice and to shining a light on the atrocities of this aggression. Oleksandra Matviichuk has been documenting Russian war crimes in Ukraine for over a decade and, through the work of the Center for Civil Liberties, received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2022. She is visiting Canada with the support of the Canada-Ukraine Foundation to remind us first-hand of how Ukrainian children are being impacted by Russia’s genocidal war.

Irpın, Bucha, Mariupol and now Kharkiv — to name only a few — are places that will live in infamy. Their children have paid an unfathomable price just because they happen to live in Ukraine — all this because of the delusions of a hostile, imperialistic autocrat and, sadly, the lack of resolve from Western nations to step up quickly and properly to protect these children.

We in this chamber can do something about this. We must continue to increase our support to Ukraine so it can rapidly defeat Russia. We must make further commitments to the recovery and rehabilitation of those children, who will carry the scars of this conflict for their entire lives and into generations yet unborn. We must act with more haste and more resolve.

Colleagues, as I have said, these children are our children. What are we going to do to keep our children safe? What are we going to do to give our children the childhood they need?

Thank you. *D’akuju.*

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

THE LATE JON BROSI JAMES NUTTING

Hon. David M. Arnot: Honourable senators, I rise today to pay tribute to the late Jon Brosi James Nutting, a beloved husband, father and friend and a leading figure in the Canadian legal community.

Brosi, as he was known, has been called a lawyers’ lawyer. He was also called a judge’s judge. That’s because he argued cases in front of the Supreme Court of Canada, and, as a chief judge,

he always said he was just first among equals. He put that theory into practice like no other chief judge I have met. As my friend Gerry Seniuk, also a former chief judge, said of Brosi:

[The] law has a Latin phrase to describe a force like Brosi Nutting. *Sui generis*. *Sui generis*. It means unlike any other, one of a kind, a class unto itself, and Brosi was certainly that.

He was a mentor, a friend and a source of sage guidance to many. He insisted that I understand the people and communities appearing before me. That advice shaped the next two decades of my life. At the time, I asked Brosi why he approved my secondments from an often understaffed provincial court. He looked at me squarely in the eye and said, without missing a beat, “Arnot, it’s because you are just like Wayne Gretzky — neither of you should be on the bench.”

Honourable colleagues, my heavy heart is tempered by such memories and thoughts of his playful sense of humour. He was a champion for judicial independence and an intrepid leader in a decades-long battle to recognize the independence of provincial courts in Canada, which occurred in the 1996 Supreme Court of Canada case known as the *Provincial Court Judges Reference* case. Brosi’s commitment to democratic values and to the rule of law will continue to reverberate through the people, communities and courts he held dear. He was a man of principle and also a man of deep, unwavering faith.

To his wife and soulmate, Noëlla, and his family, which he held so dear, I mourn with you the passing of Jon Brosi Nutting. He was unique and truly one of a kind. With you, I celebrate the difference Brosi has made in our lives, in Saskatchewan and in Canada.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Dr. Jeff Steeves, former president of the New Brunswick Medical Society. He is the guest of the Honourable Senator Quinn.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

PRIDE MONTH

Hon. Flordeliz (Gigi) Osler: Honourable senators, I rise today to wish you all a happy Pride Month. Let me share with you how we celebrate Pride in Winnipeg, a city with a vibrant and inclusive spirit.

The 2024 Pride Winnipeg Festival, a 10-day celebration, just wrapped up. It is one of the largest Pride festivals in central Canada. The festival is marked by events that highlight the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. First, the festival kicks off with the

rainbow flag raising at City Hall. Then there is an evening vigil to honour those who have lost their lives because of hate crimes and to recognize those who have worked hard to uphold the rights of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

A Pride rally takes place at the Manitoba Legislative Building and is followed by an energizing parade. This year, over 6,000 people marched through downtown Winnipeg while thousands more filled the sidewalks to watch and cheer. The celebration culminates at The Forks, a national historic site at the junction of the Red River and the Assiniboine River, with performances and vendors that showcase the diversity of the community.

This weekend, I had the honour of marching in the Pride parade with Bahaghari Pride Manitoba, an organization founded to promote learning, connection and understanding of the queer Filipinx community’s history, culture and stories. *Bahaghari* is a Tagalog word meaning “rainbow.” The group is celebrating two special occasions, as June is also Filipino Heritage Month.

Manitoba’s Pride celebrations have evolved significantly over the years. In 1987, following the incorporation of 2SLGBTQIA+ rights into The Human Rights Code in Manitoba, Winnipeg held its first Pride parade, where 250 people marched — many wearing paper bags over their heads to protect their identities. In 1990, the term “two-spirit” was coined by Elder Myra Laramée at the Intertribal Native American, First Nations, Gay and Lesbian American Conference held in Winnipeg. This term has become important in recognizing the unique identity of Indigenous two-spirit individuals.

Pride Winnipeg’s 2024 theme of “Transcend Together” advocates for the protection of trans rights and celebrates the diverse spectrum of identities.

The courage of those who marched in Winnipeg’s first Pride parade in 1987 laid the foundation for the inclusive celebrations we enjoy today. Let’s celebrate Pride with a spirit of solidarity and respect, recognizing the progress made and the work still needed to end the discrimination, violence and barriers faced by the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

Colleagues, I look forward to hearing how Pride is celebrated in your provinces.

Thank you, *meegwetch* and happy Pride!

• (1420)

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Marty Deacon: Honourable senators, today, I wish to join other colleagues in celebrating June as Pride Month.

The last time I rose to speak on this topic was, very sadly, following the targeted stabbings at the University of Waterloo last year. Yesterday, the accused pleaded guilty in court to all charges. This tragedy demonstrates that there is still work to do. We still need to recognize Pride Month and what it represents — and as leaders, provide our continued public support and acceptance.

For me, this community begins at home. Our daughter Kailee came out to us in 2009. It was not easy. We were surprised, but our love and support dominated and will forever. For my statement today, I asked Kailee to share what Pride Month means to her.

Kailee wrote:

When I came out in 2009, at the age of 20, Pride month meant I could finally see myself in others and celebrate unabashedly amongst my friends who were also navigating the new world of dating other women. It was exciting and new. We were in this community, together. The World Pride Event held in Toronto in 2014 is amongst some of my very favourite memories celebrating what it means to be authentically who I am.

Since then, I have surrounded myself with a community where being gay isn't something I have to think about too often. I am a proud educator who is able to be completely transparent with my students and parents, I am a passionate coach and don't think twice about "coming out" to my athletes and families each season. I get to feel safe, every day, in who I am. I know I am most fortunate for this.

So today, for me, Pride Month means creating opportunities for visibility and celebration for the young people I work with. For the kids who are struggling with figuring it all out, who aren't supported by their families, or by many communities across Canada. It is watching major corporations work at trying to represent all Canadians. It is our government marching, our Olympians, Paralympians, celebrities, and community members. It is queer youth seeing themselves in others.

My belief is that Pride Month continues to save lives. Bring on June, the best month of the year.

Senators, I don't think I could say it any better. I have marched in Pride parades across Canada. I find my daughter Kailee's words profound. Thank you, Kailee. We love you. Your dad, sister and I will continue to love forever, listen to and be allies for so many.

Thank you, *meegwetch*.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

AUDITOR GENERAL

JUNE 2024 REPORTS TABLED

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the June 2024 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada to the Parliament of Canada, pursuant to the *Auditor General Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. A-17, sbs. 7(5).

[*English*]

CHIGNECTO ISTHMUS DYKELAND SYSTEM BILL

NINTH REPORT OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Leo Housakos: Honourable senators, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the ninth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications, which deals with Bill S-273, An Act to declare the Chignecto Isthmus Dykeland System and related works to be for the general advantage of Canada.

A Clerk at the Table: The Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications has the honour to present its

NINTH REPORT

Your committee, to which was referred Bill S-273, An Act to declare the Chignecto Isthmus Dykeland System and related works to be for the general advantage of Canada, has, in obedience to the order of reference of April 17, 2024, examined the said bill and now reports the same with the following amendments:

1. *Clause 2, page 2:*

(a) Replace line 18 with the following:

“Indigenous governing body —

The Hon. the Speaker: Dispense?

Some Hon. Senators: Dispense.

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): No, I want to hear it.

A Clerk at the Table:

— means a council, government or other entity that is authorized to act on behalf of an Indigenous group, community or people that holds rights recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. (*corps dirigeant autochtone*)

Indigenous organization means an Indigenous governing body or any other entity that represents the interests of an Indigenous group and its members. (*organisation autochtone*)

Indigenous peoples has the meaning assigned by the definition *aboriginal peoples of Canada* in subsection 35(2) of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. (*peuples autochtones*)

Minister means the Minister of Infrastructure”; and

- (b) replace lines 20 and 21 with the following:

“**person** means an individual, corporation, partnership, joint venture, Indigenous governing body or Indigenous organization. (*personne*)”.

2. *New clause 2.1, page 2:* Add the following after line 27:

“**2.1** For greater certainty, this Act is to be construed as upholding the Aboriginal and treaty rights of Indigenous peoples recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, and not as abrogating or derogating from them.”.

3. *Clause 7, page 3:*

- (a) Replace line 30 with the following:

“**7 (1)** In response to an emergency, the Governor in Council may, by order, exempt”; and

- (b) replace line 32 with the following:

“cil considers to be in the interest of preventing damage to the environment or in the interest of public health or safety, from any re-”.

4. *Delete clause 8, page 4.*

5. *New clause 9, page 4:* Add the following after line 16:

“Coordinating Amendment

9 If Bill S-13, introduced in the 1st session of the 44th Parliament and entitled *An Act to amend the Interpretation Act and to make related amendments to*

***other Acts, receives royal assent, then on the first day on which both this Act and section 1 of that Act are in force, section 2.1 of this Act is repealed.*”.**

Respectfully submitted,

LEO HOUSAKOS

Chair

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

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

[*Translation*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION BILL, 2024, NO. 1

FOURTH REPORT OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES COMMITTEE ON
SUBJECT MATTER TABLED

Hon. René Cormier: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, which deals with the subject matter of Bill C-69, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 16, 2024.

(Pursuant to the order adopted May 9, 2024, the report was deemed referred to the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance and placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting of the Senate.)

[*English*]

NINTH REPORT OF NATIONAL SECURITY, DEFENCE AND
VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE ON
SUBJECT MATTER TABLED

Hon. Tony Dean: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the ninth report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security, Defence and Veterans Affairs, which deals with the subject matter of Bill C-69, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 16, 2024.

(Pursuant to the order adopted May 9, 2024, the report was deemed referred to the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance and placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting of the Senate.)

• (1430)

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AFFECT SITTINGS ON JUNE 5, 12, 17
AND 19, 2024

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, notwithstanding the order adopted by the Senate on September 21, 2022, the sittings of Wednesday, June 5, 12 and 19, 2024, continue beyond 4 p.m., if Government Business is not completed, and adjourn at the earlier of the completion of Government Business or midnight;

That committees considering Government Business be authorized, notwithstanding rule 12-18(1), to sit on the above dates, even though the Senate may then be sitting; and

That when the Senate sits on Monday, June 17, 2024, it adjourn at the earlier of midnight or the end of Government Business.

NOTICE OF MOTION THAT COMMITTEES ONLY MEET FOR
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS UNTIL THE END OF JUNE 2024

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, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules, previous order or usual practice, from the day following the adoption of this motion until the end of June 2024, Senate committees, other than the Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight, the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators, and the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration, only meet for Government Business.

COUNTERING FOREIGN INTERFERENCE BILL

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE NATIONAL SECURITY,
DEFENCE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
TO STUDY SUBJECT MATTER

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, in accordance with rule 10-11(1), the Standing Senate Committee on National Security, Defence and Veterans Affairs be authorized to examine the subject matter of Bill C-70, An Act respecting countering foreign

interference, introduced in the House of Commons on May 6, 2024, in advance of the said bill coming before the Senate; and

That, for the purposes of this study, the committee be authorized to meet even though the Senate may then be sitting or adjourned, with the application of rules 12-18(1) and 12-18(2) being suspended in relation thereto.

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AFFECT PLACEMENT OF BILL C-69 AND
SUPPLY BILLS ON ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules:

1. in relation to Bill C-69, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 16, 2024, if the Senate receives a message from the House of Commons with the bill before or during the sitting of June 17, 2024, the bill be placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading at the next sitting;
2. in relation to any bill for granting to His Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025, if the Senate receives any message from the House of Commons with such a bill before or during the sitting of June 18, 2024, the bill be placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading at the next sitting; and
3. if any message relating to any of the above bills is received after the relevant date indicated above, the bill be placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading later that sitting, provided that if the message is received after the point where the Senate would normally have dealt with the bill at second reading, the bill either be taken into consideration at second reading forthwith, or, if another item is under consideration at the time the message is read, the bill be placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at second reading as the next item of business.

[Translation]

PHARMACARE BILL

FIRST READING

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-64, An Act respecting pharmacare.

(Bill read first time.)

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

[English]

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

[English]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION BILL, 2024, NO. 1

NOTICE OF MOTION TO SEND MESSAGE TO
COMMONS CONCERNING THE REMOVAL
OF DIVISION 39 FROM PART 4

Hon. Pierre J. Dalfond: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That a message be sent to the House of Commons inviting that house to consider removing Division 39, Immigrant Stations, from Part 4 of Bill C-69, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 16, 2024.

[Translation]

ENERGY, THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO MEET DURING SITTING
OF THE SENATE

Hon. Josée Verner: Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-5(a), I move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources be authorized to meet on Tuesday, June 4, 2024, at 7:30 p.m., even though the Senate may then be sitting, and that rule 12-18(1) be suspended in relation thereto.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

QUESTION PERIOD

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

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

ANSWERS TO ORDER PAPER QUESTIONS TABLED

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD—NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
WRITTEN BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS
AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (including the Canadian Pari-Mutuel Agency), Canadian Grain Commission and Farm Products Council of Canada.

ATLANTIC CANADA OPPORTUNITIES AGENCY—
NEWSPAPER ARTICLES WRITTEN BY
GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

CANADIAN NORTHERN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY—
NEWSPAPER ARTICLES WRITTEN BY GOVERNMENT
DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency.

NATIONAL REVENUE—NEWSPAPER ARTICLES WRITTEN BY
GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the

Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Canada Revenue Agency.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF CANADA FOR THE
REGIONS OF QUEBEC—NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
WRITTEN BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions.

FISHERIES, OCEANS AND THE CANADIAN COAST GUARD—
NEWSPAPER ARTICLES WRITTEN BY GOVERNMENT
DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Fisheries and Oceans Canada, including the Canadian Coast Guard.

INDIGENOUS SERVICES—NEWSPAPER ARTICLES WRITTEN BY
GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Indigenous Services Canada, including Indian Oil and Gas Canada.

NATIONAL DEFENCE—NEWSPAPER ARTICLES WRITTEN BY
GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — National Defence, Communications Security Establishment, Military Grievances External Review Committee, Military Police Complaints Commission and National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces Ombudsman.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE—NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
WRITTEN BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the

Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Environment and Climate Change Canada, Impact Assessment Agency of Canada and Parks Canada.

EMPLOYMENT, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND OFFICIAL
LANGUAGES—NEWSPAPER ARTICLES WRITTEN BY
GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Employment and Social Development Canada, Accessibility Standards Canada and Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety.

FEDERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY FOR
SOUTHERN ONTARIO—NEWSPAPER
ARTICLES WRITTEN BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS
AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario.

FEDERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY FOR
NORTHERN ONTARIO—NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
WRITTEN BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario.

FINANCE—NEWSPAPER ARTICLES WRITTEN BY GOVERNMENT
DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Department of Finance Canada and Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions.

EXPORT PROMOTION, INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT—NEWSPAPER ARTICLES WRITTEN BY
GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Global Affairs Canada and Invest in Canada.

HEALTH—NEWSPAPER ARTICLES WRITTEN BY GOVERNMENT
DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Health Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Canadian Institutes of Health Research and Patented Medicine Prices Review Board.

CROWN-INDIGENOUS RELATIONS—NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
WRITTEN BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS
AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.

HOUSING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES—
NEWSPAPER ARTICLES WRITTEN BY
GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Infrastructure Canada.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP—
NEWSPAPER ARTICLES WRITTEN BY
GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written

by government departments and agencies — Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada.

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY—NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
WRITTEN BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, including special operating agencies, Copyright Board of Canada, Canadian Space Agency, National Research Council Canada, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and Statistics Canada.

JUSTICE AND ATTORNEY GENERAL—NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
WRITTEN BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS
AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Department of Justice, Canadian Human Rights Commission and Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada.

ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES—NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
WRITTEN BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Natural Resources Canada, Canada Energy Regulator, Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and Northern Pipeline Agency.

PACIFIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY—
NEWSPAPER ARTICLES WRITTEN BY
GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Pacific Economic Development Canada.

CANADIAN HERITAGE—NEWSPAPER ARTICLES WRITTEN BY
GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Canadian Heritage, Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, Library and Archives Canada, National Battlefields Commission and National Film Board of Canada.

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE—NEWSPAPER ARTICLES WRITTEN BY
GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Privy Council Office.

PUBLIC PROSECUTION SERVICE—NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
WRITTEN BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS
AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Public Prosecution Service of Canada.

PRAIRIES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT—NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
WRITTEN BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Prairies Economic Development Canada.

PUBLIC SAFETY, DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS
AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS—
NEWSPAPER ARTICLES WRITTEN BY GOVERNMENT
DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Public Safety

Canada, Canada Border Services Agency, Canadian Security Intelligence Service, Correctional Service of Canada, Parole Board of Canada and Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

PUBLIC SAFETY, DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS—CANADIAN
INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT—
NEWSPAPER ARTICLES WRITTEN BY GOVERNMENT
DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT—NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
WRITTEN BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Public Services and Procurement Canada and Shared Services Canada.

WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY AND YOUTH—
NEWSPAPER ARTICLES WRITTEN BY
GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Women and Gender Equality Canada.

TREASURY BOARD—NEWSPAPER ARTICLES WRITTEN BY
GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat and Canada School of Public Service.

TRANSPORT—NEWSPAPER ARTICLES WRITTEN BY GOVERNMENT
DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the

Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Transport Canada and Canadian Transportation Agency.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS—TRANSPORTATION SAFETY
BOARD—NEWSPAPER ARTICLES WRITTEN
BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Public Service Commission of Canada and Transportation Safety Board of Canada.

VETERANS AFFAIRS—NEWSPAPER ARTICLES WRITTEN BY
GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) tabled the response to Question No. 45, dated November 23, 2021, appearing on the *Order Paper and Notice Paper* in the name of the Honourable Senator Plett, regarding newspaper articles written by government departments and agencies — Veterans Affairs Canada and Veterans Review and Appeal Board.

• (1440)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CANADA—NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR ATLANTIC
ACCORD IMPLEMENTATION ACT
CANADA-NOVA SCOTIA OFFSHORE PETROLEUM
RESOURCES ACCORD IMPLEMENTATION ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Iris G. Petten moved second reading of Bill C-49, An Act to amend the Canada—Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

She said: Honourable senators, I rise to speak today as the Senate sponsor of Bill C-49, the Atlantic Accords amendment act. I will begin my remarks with the acknowledgement that I am speaking on the unceded traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe peoples.

I am proud to sponsor this bill because it concerns resource development in Canada's offshore, an issue very close to my heart. I was born in a coastal community, Port de Grave, Newfoundland and Labrador, and I worked in the fishing industry for more than 40 years.

Fishing was the first industry in my province, and it remains a primary industry in Atlantic Canada. It has developed a decades-long history of cooperation and coexistence with key industry players in natural resource development since oil and gas were first discovered in the waters off our shores.

As the global shift to renewable energy projects continues, offshore wind energy projects are poised to become the next frontier in Canada's offshore for resource development.

I was on the Newfoundland and Labrador Premier's Economic Recovery Team in 2019. As part of that work, developing an inventory of wind and other renewable energy opportunities in the province was a key recommendation. I am very proud to play a part in continuing this project through the introduction of Bill C-49 in this chamber.

Honourable colleagues, Newfoundland entered into Confederation with Canada on March 31, 1949, at which point the province's name was Newfoundland. This was officially changed to Newfoundland and Labrador in 2001.

To save honourable colleagues from having to do too much math, this means we are currently celebrating the seventy-fifth anniversary of Newfoundland and Labrador joining Confederation. I see few better ways to participate in this celebration than to sponsor a bill of such importance to the future prosperity of my province and Nova Scotia, and one that recognizes the contribution of both provinces to the prosperity of the country.

Newfoundland and Labrador and the province of Nova Scotia have both seen the potential that offshore energy holds for their people and their economies become a reality over the past 40 years, but the growth of the energy industry was neither rapid nor easy. Commercial oil reserves were discovered in Newfoundland and Labrador in 1979, but commercial oil production began in 1997.

Twenty-five years later, there are four fields producing 240,000 barrels of oil a day. In terms of GDP, the oil industry in the Newfoundland offshore area currently contributes over \$1 billion annually to the Canadian economy. Workers from Atlantic Canada now form one of the most skilled workforces anywhere in offshore energy production.

In order to grow from a potential offshore energy source to a mature offshore energy industry, a legal and regulatory framework was required. This brings me to the existing Accord Acts.

Back in the 1980s, the Government of Canada signed the Atlantic Accords with the provinces of Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia, signalling a commitment to jointly manage the offshore oil and gas industry and giving provinces the right to treat projects in their offshore areas in much the same way as onshore projects in the rest of Canada for royalty and income tax purposes. History shows that this arrangement worked.

Together, under the Accord Acts, Canada and the coastal provinces of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador have built a brand new industry, creating jobs, economic opportunity and one of the most skilled labour forces in the offshore that the world has ever seen.

This bill, like the original accords, is another illustration of an act of cooperative federalism that will help facilitate Nova Scotia's and Newfoundland and Labrador's ability to prosper economically and contribute to the federation. Bill C-49 was developed with both provinces at the table, demonstrating the joint-management principles that are at the heart of these accords. If this bill successfully passes in this Parliament, both provinces will introduce and pass mirror legislation in their respective legislatures. This is a key point. The two provinces must be comfortable with every word in this bill to make the process work. Bill C-49 represents the very spirit of collaborative, cooperative federalism and is built on the successful foundation of the offshore Accord Acts.

The legacy of the Accord Acts was their creation of two independent joint federal-provincial bodies with the responsibility of overseeing offshore oil and gas development, the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board.

Over the past four decades, these regulators have developed subject matter expertise in offshore energy development, established settled processes and procedures and earned broad recognition and credibility for shepherding successful and safe developments in a global industry. Bill C-49 aims to broaden the authority of these two bodies by adding the oversight of offshore renewable energy to their mandates. As one of the colourful former premiers of my province would probably say, "This is a no-brainer." Why establish a new stand-alone regulator for an energy space in the same offshore environment?

• (1450)

Bill C-49 will enable the development of new sources of energy like offshore wind. This offers Nova Scotians and Newfoundlanders and Labradorians a unique chance to get ahead of the curve and tap into a significant and available resource. Not to overstate this, but the Nova Scotia Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables has called offshore wind energy projects the "... greatest economic opportunity since the age of sail. . . ."

Now is the moment for us to direct our attention toward these new opportunities, enable projects of national significance to be reviewed and properly assessed under mature and respected processes and provide the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia with the opportunity to further grow their offshore energy industries and contribute to the economy of the country.

What does this bill do specifically? The amendments in Bill C-49 propose that we amend the existing Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act to make the following seven changes.

First, the bill would update aspects of the land tenure process for current offshore oil and gas activities so they are aligned with global best practices for wind energy projects and able to keep abreast of the latest technologies. In plain terms, the bill would also provide for the type of land titles needed to facilitate the ownership and financing of the wind energy projects approved in the offshore area.

Second, the bill will leverage the existing legislative framework and expand the mandate of the two existing offshore regulatory boards to include the regulation of offshore renewable energy projects. I have talked about this already. The boards have extensive knowledge and experience in offshore regulation, and updating the existing legislation will ensure that each board can effectively oversee the regulation of offshore renewable energy projects in waters surrounding their respective provinces. This bill will ensure that as energy producers pivot to renewable energy projects in the Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador offshore areas, they will deal with a known and trusted regulator.

Third, this bill would change the names of the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board and the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board to the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator and the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Energy Regulator, respectively.

Fourth, this bill specifically recognizes and locates the Crown's duty to consult with the Indigenous peoples of Canada in the offshore energy regulatory process. Because of the federal-provincial joint management of these offshore areas, the bill clarifies that the Government of Canada and the provincial governments can rely on the offshore energy boards for the purpose of fulfilling the Crown's duty to consult Indigenous peoples about proposed projects and accommodate the adverse impacts of any developments.

Fifth, the bill replaces outdated references to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012 with references to the Impact Assessment Act.

Sixth, the bill ensures the preservation of the Government of Canada's commitment to protecting 25% of Canada's oceans by 2025 and 30% by 2030. The proposed amendments uphold the principles of joint management by ensuring that prohibitions on offshore renewable energy and oil and gas activities in current or proposed marine conservation areas established in the Canada-Nova Scotia and Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador offshore areas are made jointly by federal and provincial governments.

Finally, the bill will also expand the application of the existing offshore occupational health and safety regime to offshore renewable energy projects. It also extends the regulatory and liability regime for abandoned facilities relating to petroleum-related works or activities to offshore renewable energy projects.

The bill has already undergone a number of amendments at the Natural Resources Committee in the other place. The vast majority were minor editorial changes to correct typos and ensure

consistency throughout. There were also amendments to allow for a separate coming into force of the Impact Assessment Act-related clauses.

There were more substantive changes made to transboundary hydrocarbon field clauses, to provide more clarity, and an amendment that aimed to address concerns raised by fishers with regard to the submerged land licence issuance process.

Honourable colleagues, Bill C-49 is an essential component of Canada's continuous efforts to address climate change.

Canada is not alone in expanding the powers of existing regulatory bodies to encompass offshore wind energy regulation. Jurisdictions like the United States, the United Kingdom, Norway and Australia are enacting or have enacted such laws.

Economically, Bill C-49 facilitates a considerable opportunity for Canadian workers and Canada's economy. According to the International Energy Agency, the offshore wind industry has the potential to reach a market value of \$1 trillion by the year 2040.

The Public Policy Forum's analysis of this opportunity in Atlantic Canada shows us that this bill represents a project of national significance. It is time for Canada to capitalize on this opportunity.

Offshore wind energy is an industry that is ideally suited for Canada's East Coast. In Newfoundland and Labrador, we would say it's often "blowin' a gale." We have the longest coastlines in the world, and the winds there rival those in the North Sea — where the offshore wind industry was born. Moreover, the offshore area under discussion today is bigger and has better potential than the northeastern coast of the United States, which is also moving ahead with developing its own industry.

We already have highly experienced offshore energy regulators, one of the world's most skilled labour forces when it comes to working offshore and the ability to scale up the entire supply chain — from manufacturing, to skills training, to our ports.

The worldwide offshore wind industry has experienced a huge growth spurt over the last 12 years. Although offshore wind is relatively new with respect to its adoption around the world, with only 20 nations having implemented it so far, significant strides continue to be made.

The International Energy Agency has said that more and more countries are now in the process of implementing — or have intentions to establish — their own offshore wind farms.

• (1500)

G7 members have pledged to collectively increase offshore wind capacity by 150 gigawatts by 2030.

The U.S. has over 40 projects in development. The EU and the U.K. have over 300. China is rapidly developing its offshore wind capacity, now representing nearly half of all offshore wind generation. If these statistics aren't blowing you away, then the wind in Newfoundland and Labrador certainly would.

On a serious note, the International Energy Agency's net-zero emissions scenario sees a drastic increase in wind generation.

Nova Scotia has a target to license five gigawatts of offshore generation by 2030. If Parliament wants to ensure Nova Scotia can make this target better align with the International Energy Agency's net-zero emissions scenario and better enable the domestic 2050 targets — while attracting investment into offshore wind projects and associated industries, like hydrogen production, and the Canadian economy — it is imperative that we support this legislation so we can develop domestic offshore wind projects now. Doing so will facilitate the economic development priorities of the provinces and territories, allow them to compete with other major economies and drive new industries that will be vital in the net-zero economy.

The Progressive Conservative premier of Nova Scotia, the Honourable Tim Houston, has been clear in his province's support for this bill. Premier Houston said:

This will transform our economy. . . . The environmental impact is so positive that we have to be leaders on this.

He continued:

Bill C-49 is a necessary first step in unlocking our energy potential. . . .

Nova Scotia's Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables Tony Rushton testified in committee hearings in the other place:

. . . once Bill C-49 is passed, people will look at this decades from now and say, "Here was a move that made Nova Scotia a capital of renewable energy in the world."

The Public Policy Forum shows that one potential offshore wind area in Nova Scotia alone could create thousands of jobs, including up to 30,000 construction jobs annually. According to the Government of Nova Scotia, one gigawatt of offshore wind can power roughly 750,000 homes.

We have also heard that the province intends to use offshore wind power to generate hydrogen and ammonia for export in order to meet the need for renewable energy globally. Increasingly, the European nations, like Germany, are turning to Canada and signing agreements with us so they can get access to hydrogen produced in Atlantic Canada.

My province is also eager to support the economic and job creation potential that offshore energy offers the province. A direct reference to Bill C-49 was included in the province's recently released Hydrogen Development Action Plan.

Liberal Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Honourable Dr. Andrew Furey, has stated:

This pivotal federal-provincial agreement empowers us to take control and fully capitalize on the abundant opportunities presented by the emerging green economy

He also said:

. . . We continue to support the Government of Canada on Bill C-49 and urge the other federal parties to do the same.

Furthermore, Andrew Parsons, the province's Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology, testified before the Standing Committee on Natural Resources:

I think it's very important when it comes to renewable energy that we be able to move forward quickly and efficiently. . . . there's an excitement within the province regarding the opportunity that comes with our offshore, but there's also the need to get a strong regulatory framework in place. As a province, we've been lucky to have that in place with our offshore oil. We have a great understanding of how this works, how it can work and the opportunities it presents. . . .

Opportunities allowed for once Bill C-49 is adopted will help Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia to remain economically competitive into the future.

In addition to provincial support, Bill C-49 enjoys support from Indigenous communities. I am pleased to say that Indigenous leaders have shown support for offshore wind projects.

Chief Terry Paul from the Membertou Development Corporation in Nova Scotia attended a committee meeting on this bill and testified:

Traditionally, Indigenous Canadians were not invited to participate in major industry projects. I am proud to say that is changing. When we all work together, great things happen. We truly believe that an offshore wind industry can coexist with other industries in a sustainable manner.

When it comes to Indigenous involvement in hydrogen projects — one of the products that will be created by planned offshore wind energy projects — there are opportunities emerging onshore.

Economic opportunities aside, both the Government of Canada and the Government of Nova Scotia recognize the critical importance of environmental protections and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the absolutely vital East Coast fishing industry.

While Minister Rushton emphasized the need for this legislation's prompt approval, he also said that he wanted each project to be vetted carefully to minimize the impact on other sectors of the ocean economy, saying:

Nova Scotia embraces thorough examination to ensure the safe and responsible execution of offshore wind projects, as well as their ability to coexist with other industries and concerns.

As advocates for the fishing industry, working in close collaboration with the provinces, the governments have, together, ensured Bill C-49 gives special recognition to the importance of the fishing industry.

The well-established relationships between the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board, the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board, the offshore energy industry and the fishing industry will continue as they have for decades.

This bill clearly demonstrates the government is fully committed to carrying out meaningful engagement with the fishing industry, project developers, governments and other stakeholders as it designs and implements future land tenure and regulatory processes as well as during the review of specific offshore renewable energy projects.

It's important to note that Bill C-49 provides a variety of tools such as bidding criteria, regulation-making authorities and authorization conditions that will allow governments and regulators to ensure impact mitigation measures are in place.

Furthermore, as I have said, as part of the regional assessments of offshore wind development that are currently underway, Indigenous communities, fishing groups and other stakeholders are having and will continue to have the opportunity to give their input to government on issues related to offshore wind energy development.

We are competing in a global race to develop this industry. Canada is the only G7 country without an offshore wind industry.

• (1510)

Significant offshore energy projects are currently being implemented in the North Sea and off the east coast of the United States, thanks in part to the incentives that were put in place by the Inflation Reduction Act. The United States Department of Energy has estimated that these projects will draw an annual direct investment of \$12 billion. As of May of last year, the maximum power capacity of existing and planned American offshore wind energy projects has a collective power capacity of 52,687 megawatts — enough to power about 18 million households, which is 14% of all households in the U.S.

Just for context for honourable colleagues, 1,000 megawatts is equal to 1 gigawatt. I will be using both terms throughout my speech today.

Outside of the United States, other countries aren't holding back either. Taiwan expects to install over 700 further turbines in the Taiwan Strait by next year to meet its target of 5.7 gigawatts installed by 2025. In Europe, there are over 300 projects in development, and they raised €30 billion for eight new wind farms in 2023.

Honourable colleagues, we need Bill C-49 now in order to allow Canada to benefit from these global investment dollars. Two of Canada's partners in Europe — Denmark and Scotland — made significant strides in April 2024. First, there was the largest offshore wind tender in Danish history, anticipating the resulting build to generate hundreds of offshore wind turbines, cranking out enough energy for 10 million or more European households, allowing Denmark's electricity to achieve a status of 100% green, and producing enormous amounts of hydrogen and green fuels for ships and aircraft. In Scotland, we see the first commercial-scale floating offshore wind farm in Europe, having recently received planning permission for the new 560-megawatt project that will stand up as many as 35 new floating wind turbines that will not only provide power to the U.K., but will also provide green power to offshore oil and gas sites.

To once again quote Nova Scotia Minister Rushton:

There are tremendous opportunities for our coastal communities, for our province and for our country. We cannot afford to wait.

Honourable colleagues, I'll wrap up by saying that now is the time to advance this legislation, showing strong federal support for provincial priorities. Now is the time for Canada to put in place this regulatory regime so that it can join its allies and reap the economic and environmental benefits that come with launching ourselves into the growing international offshore wind energy market. Dr. Peter Nicholson, a native of Nova Scotia and the chair of the board of the Canadian Climate Institute, said it best:

. . . it is quite obvious that we have here a national opportunity of historic proportions, and for that opportunity to come to pass, Canada urgently needs a regulatory framework equal to the unprecedented nature of that opportunity.

To conclude, I will adapt the words of a former premier of my province and say that I believe this bill represents a win-win-win for Canada, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador. Thank you, honourable colleagues, in advance for your support of this important and timely bill.

Hon. David M. Wells: Thank you, Senator Petten, for your speech. Would you take a couple of questions?

Senator Petten: Of course, senator.

Senator Wells: Thank you. You mentioned marine protected areas, or MPAs — 25% in 2025 and 30% in 2030 — which I believe are incorporated in Bill C-49. You may know, having been involved in a fishery, that fish harvesters are quite sensitive when there is expansion of MPAs into their traditional fishing grounds, as well as into fishing grounds that may not be

traditional but may be opportunistic. Has there been — or will there be — consideration for fish harvesters' rights in the application of this bill?

Senator Petten: Thank you for that question. Yes, currently regional assessments are under way, and, of course, a number of fishing interest groups have been involved in those particular meetings. The big part, which is really important under this bill, is that it is jointly managed, so it will be a decision worked through between both levels of government. Any of those considerations and, of course, the regional assessments will be available next year when that report is produced and finished, and they will have input on what that will be.

Senator Wells: Thanks for that. You'll know that, prior to coming to the Senate, I held a position with the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board, so I know a bit about it. I'm a little bit concerned about the provisions of Bill C-69 that were recently deemed unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada. Has provision been made in the legislation to ensure that the unconstitutionality of certain provisions of Bill C-69 are addressed in Bill C-49?

Senator Petten: Thank you again. There will be no delay in the coming into force of the amended Impact Assessment Act. This bill is constitutional and will not delay the provinces. The issue that we need to deal with now is this: It is important that both provinces — once we look at Bill C-69 — propose mirror legislation and ensure, as part of their mirror legislation, the ability to introduce the legislation. They will be able to look at that before they can look at new bids and a new process. I think that will cover it off under that bill.

Senator Wells: Thank you. Senator Petten, will Bill C-49 cover things other than wind, like tidal and solar power offshore?

Senator Petten: That decision will be made by the joint decisions if that comes forward with the bill or with a request, or looking for bidding. Since it is a jointly managed area, they will look at it accordingly.

Hon. Colin Deacon: Senator Petten, you know that I am in favour of this bill, especially for the benefit of our province. However, five years ago, 10 senators from Nova Scotia — so that makes all of us — wrote a letter to our premier, concerned that we did not have any representation of the fishery on the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board, and that's a \$2 billion per year industry in our province. Can you give us greater understanding about how the fishery will be involved — as someone who spent their life in that space, you would know this well — in the decision-making process of this new regulator?

Senator Petten: Under the fisheries, I met with the Fish, Food and Allied Workers Union in Newfoundland and Labrador, and I also met with the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board and Nova Scotia. That was one of the issues that they brought up and were concerned about. In Newfoundland, one of the things they have been doing with the offshore oil is working with a group called One Ocean. They have been meeting and have brought forward some of their concerns.

• (1520)

Also, the big issue that is happening right now — it's the same thing in Nova Scotia. The Nova Scotia offshore regulators have spent 30 years meeting with different member groups airing their concerns. Currently under way are the regional assessments, which are providing opportunities to listen to what their concerns are and to make sure they are providing their input if there are things that need to be changed before they do their mirror legislation. So, right now, they are looking at that process, and next year they will be reporting on that.

We also found out that in the past, because of my former life, if there was an issue with the fisheries, they have been able to solve it. I know, personally speaking, with my dad in the fishing industry, they lost a number of their crab pots, and it was efficiently paid for through their compensation through One Ocean. So it has been working. I'm sure it will continue. If there are concerns, we should certainly be encouraging them — as I have certainly been doing in my meetings — to ensure that their voices are heard.

Senator C. Deacon: Thank you for that, Senator Petten.

I want to build on Senator Wells' point about tidal power and other sources. In Nova Scotia, one of the challenges we have had with tidal power is bringing the fishery and the regulator together and getting Fisheries and Oceans to actually make decisions.

How might this help with moving ahead efforts around tidal power in a way that is accepted by the fishery itself and generates investment in that great resource that we have, certainly in Nova Scotia?

Senator Petten: Yes, I understand that there was a project that was looked at last year in the Minas Basin area, and that was part of a provincial concern. Part of the reason we need a regulatory framework under Bill C-49 is to look at making sure that this process is in place, that whatever comes forward, they can deal with it. It ended up being a provincial issue. It wasn't jointly managed.

Under this new accord with Bill C-49, the bill will be going through the Minister of Natural Resources. They will look at whatever projects might come forward seeking approval and have joint management between the province and the federal government.

Senator C. Deacon: Thank you.

Hon. Stan Kutcher: Thank you, Senator Petten, for that well-crafted speech. It was very helpful.

I want to ask about artificial intelligence, or AI. It is not to do with fish, but artificial intelligence servers are expected to increase sixfold in the next four years. As you know, each server draws inordinate amounts of energy. One of the challenges that Canada has in keeping up with the AI race is we don't have the power to build these servers.

Are you aware of any plans that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador or the Government of Nova Scotia have to use this excess energy to actually build these servers? Are you aware of any activity that the federal government is doing in their AI strategy to help promote that there?

Senator Petten: Thank you for that question, Senator Kutcher.

I guess that will come further down the road. This bill is around the regulatory framework of looking at what the potential for renewable energy could look like. As part of that process of consultation, that would be something they would probably look at further down the road. It is not specifically in this bill right now, but it is something they will connect with between the joint management of this offshore energy as it goes further down the road.

Senator Kutcher: Thank you very much. Perhaps the committee could look into this when they study the bill because we have had discussions on green hydrogen and ammonia, which are really important, but let's not underestimate the future of AI. Places where you can generate the power to support these servers are going to be really huge.

Senator Petten: Yes. Hopefully, the whole idea of having Bill C-49 is an opportunity to promote the opportunities, including hydrogen and all of the opportunities that come with it. Thank you.

Hon. John M. McNair: Senator Petten, thank you for your excellent speech. You talked about how this bill will help to unlock Canada's offshore energy potential. Could you speak a bit more about the environmental impacts, specifically whether this bill will help us achieve the goal of getting to net-zero emissions by 2050?

Senator Petten: Thank you, Senator McNair. Nova Scotia has the dirtiest electricity grid in Canada. They are at about 50% with their reliance on coal. Actually, the province has been asking for this legislation now for some time. This bill will provide an opportunity to transition from coal to a clean electricity grid. Also, they are looking at the opportunity to sell it elsewhere, as I indicated in my speaking notes. I think there are a lot of opportunities to look at in that particular area.

Newfoundland has one of the cleanest grids, with maybe over 90%. It is going to be something that we will be looking at trying to change, and it is important for our environment and the life that we live in this country. Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Wells, debate adjourned.)

JURY DUTY APPRECIATION WEEK BILL*[English]*

THIRD READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Moncion, seconded by the Honourable Senator Sorensen, for the third reading of Bill S-252, An Act respecting Jury Duty Appreciation Week.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and bill read third time and passed.)

• (1530)

[Translation]

FOREIGN INFLUENCE REGISTRY AND ACCOUNTABILITY BILL

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

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

Hon. Bernadette Clement: Honourable senators, I note that this item is at day 15, and I am not ready to speak at this time. 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.)

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK ON SICKLE CELL DISEASE BILL

SECOND READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Mégie, seconded by the Honourable Senator Cotter, for the second reading of Bill S-280, An Act respecting a national framework on sickle cell disease.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and bill read second time.)

[Translation]

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

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

(On motion of Senator Mégie, bill referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology.)

NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CANADA BILL

SECOND READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Moodie, seconded by the Honourable Senator Boehm, for the second reading of Bill S-282, An Act respecting a national strategy for children and youth in Canada.

Hon. Chantal Petitclerc: Honourable senators, I'd like to speak briefly in support of Bill S-282, An Act respecting a national strategy for children and youth in Canada. The bill defines the principles and framework that the federal government will use to develop a comprehensive action plan. I thank Senator Moodie for introducing it and for her ongoing contribution to improving our children's quality of life as a pediatrician, a neonatologist and, now, a parliamentarian.

[English]

Colleagues, Canada is indeed a big country. From the busy streets of Montreal or Toronto to the serene landscapes of British Columbia — from coast to coast — lies our greatest treasure: our children and youth, who are vulnerable and need to be treated as a priority.

This bill, as stated in its preamble, reminds us that despite all the love and care we have for them, we do not yet have, as a country, a clear vision or objectives for their well-being.

[Translation]

Despite numerous investments, the most recent of which is the National School Food Program, we're not taking care of our children as well as we think. In this speech, I'd like to highlight a number of aspects that I believe must be part of any action plan if we want to see real change.

It's well known and well documented that too many children still live in poverty. In addition, children and young people's mental health leaves much to be desired. A 2023 study by the Conference Board of Canada and Children's Healthcare Canada, a pan-Canadian children's health advocacy organization, found that some 1.6 million Canadian children and adolescents suffer from mental disorders. What's more, tens of thousands of them are waiting months, even years, for adequate treatment.

Far too many Canadians between the ages of 5 and 17 are overweight or obese. They're not moving enough. We know this. The national grade for physical activity in the 2024 ParticipACTION Report Card is just D+.

Only 39% of 5- to 17-year-olds met the recommendation, which is to log 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day.

[English]

Children's Healthcare Canada released a report in May 2004 that found that overall child health outcomes in Canada are deteriorating year after year. This organization is categoric:

. . . our historically siloed, patchwork approach to tackling the complex health and social needs of children, youth and families is failing kids, their healthcare providers, and quite frankly, the future of our country.

[Translation]

We all want our children to grow up under the best possible conditions, whether they come from a low- or high-income household. These days, it's hard to know how to make this happen, what resources are adequate to the task, what outcomes are to be expected and what quantifiable indicators are needed to evaluate those outcomes.

[English]

It is possible to fill this gap. Senator Moodie's intention through her bill is to bring us back to our responsibility as stewards of their future, to ensure that every child in Canada is afforded the opportunity to thrive, to grow and to flourish.

[Translation]

On that score, the bill is clear: The proposed strategy has to be rooted in the principle of inclusivity. All children, regardless of their socio-economic background, ethnicity or place of birth, deserve access to the same opportunities and resources needed for them to thrive and grow.

[English]

Education is at the core of any effort to promote children's well-being. As the great Nelson Mandela once said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." We must invest in our educational systems, ensuring they are equipped to nurture the talents and aspirations of every child. This includes fostering a culture of creativity, critical thinking and compassion, empowering our youth to become active participants in shaping a better tomorrow.

[Translation]

I'm confident that the proposed strategy will enable us to value the interconnecting factors that influence a child's well-being. To focus exclusively on their physical health or academic success is not enough. Social, emotional and psychological factors also require consideration.

Of course, no child or youth well-being strategy would be complete without considering their safety and protection.

• (1540)

We have to confront the cruel realities of child abuse, neglect and exploitation, while working tirelessly to create a society where every child feels safe, valued and loved. This requires strong laws and adequate social services, as well as a cultural shift that puts the well-being of children first. We know that Indigenous children face many challenges.

[English]

According to Children First Canada's *Raising Canada 2023* report:

It is well established that First Nation, Métis, and Inuit youth are more likely to experience poorer mental health outcomes than their non-Indigenous counterparts . . .

[Translation]

They are at greater risk of living in poverty than any other children in Canada. Let's not forget that 53.8% of children in foster care are Indigenous, even though they represent only 7.7% of the country's child population.

[English]

In crafting a Canadian strategy for children and youth, we must engage with Indigenous communities in a spirit of partnership and reconciliation. For too long, Indigenous children have faced systemic barriers to their well-being, stemming from a legacy of colonization and marginalization. It is imperative that we listen

to their voices, honour their traditions and work together toward a future where every Indigenous child can thrive within their own cultural context.

Furthermore, in our quest for the well-being of children and youth, it will be important for us to recognize and address the unique needs of children and youth with disabilities. There are about 850,000 in Canada, and these children are often neglected or marginalized by society, and their voices too often silenced by stereotypes and ignorance.

[*Translation*]

Children with disabilities face a multitude of challenges in their daily lives, ranging from physical barriers to social stigma. However, it's not their disabilities that define them, but rather their resilience, strength and unlimited potential. As a society, we have a moral obligation to ensure that every child, regardless of ability, has the opportunity to thrive and succeed.

This begins with access to education, health care and support services tailored to the unique needs of children with disabilities. This means investing in inclusive classrooms, where all children are valued for their contributions and are equipped with the tools they need to reach their full potential. It also means ensuring that our health care system is equipped to provide specialized care and support to children with disabilities and their families.

Beyond access to services, we also need to confront the attitudes and prejudices that too often limit the opportunities available to children with disabilities. We need to challenge the stereotypes that still portray them as "less capable."

What's more, we need to equip children with disabilities to become active participants in their own lives and advocate for their rights and needs. That means providing them with the tools and resources they need to express themselves, make decisions and pursue their dreams. It means fostering a sense of self-confidence and self-esteem that will make all the difference for these kids.

By doing so, we'll not only help children with disabilities achieve more, but also enrich society as a whole, because diversity is not a weakness to be overcome, but a strength to be celebrated. When we embrace each child's unique abilities and perspectives, we open up all kinds of opportunities and possibilities for them.

In closing, honourable senators, as we chart our course toward a national strategy for children and youth, let's remember the words of the great disability rights activist, Helen Keller, who said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

Together, then, let's build a Canada where every child, regardless of ability, has the opportunity to thrive, succeed and aim high. Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[Senator Petitcherc]

[*English*]

Hon. Jane Cordy: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak at second reading in support of Bill S-282, An Act respecting a national strategy for children and youth in Canada. I would also like to acknowledge Senator Moodie and her tireless efforts in advocating for the protection of Canadian children and youth, whether in her life as a pediatrician or with this bill and her previous attempts to establish an office of the commissioner for children and youth in Canada.

Honourable senators, Bill S-282 is a natural extension of the government's commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in November 1989 and ratified by Canada in December 1991. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most ratified United Nations treaty to date. Almost 200 nations have signed on.

It is unfortunate that it is now 25 years since the adoption of the resolution, and a national Canadian strategy may now need to be established to meet our commitments under the treaty. That's not to say the federal government has been idle. In 1989, with all-party support, Parliament pledged to end child poverty in Canada by the year 2000. Unfortunately, they had to renew this pledge in 2009 and then again in 2015.

Earlier this year, we amended and passed in this place Bill C-35, an act respecting early learning and child care in Canada, which set out the Government of Canada's commitment to maintaining long-term funding relating to early learning and child care across Canada and created the National Advisory Council on Early Learning and Child Care.

More recently, we saw the federal government commit \$1 billion to support school meal programs across the country to provide meals to vulnerable students to help meet their nutritional needs.

The child care agreements and the food program support are excellent examples of the government recognizing and addressing specific gaps in child and youth needs in Canada. However, what seems to be missing and what Bill S-282 aims to accomplish is to have the government consider a more holistic approach when it comes to investing in the well-being and growth of Canada's children and youth.

Bill S-282 proposes to establish a national strategy that would facilitate collaboration across jurisdictions to meet the needs of Canadian children and youth and to ensure their right to a standard of living adequate for their physical, mental, spiritual and social development.

We have a challenging task ahead of us. After several years of a pandemic — which was very hard on families, especially on children — with armed conflicts around the world and unprecedented global population displacement, the plight of children's rights worldwide has deteriorated significantly over a short period of time. Reversing these trends will take time and hard work.

In the 2023 KidsRights Index report, it was stated:

These events, alongside others, have resulted in the loss of lives, denial of basic rights, unfulfilled needs, a limiting of potential, and an increase in poverty levels, which are affecting children in every country across the world and will continue to do so for generations.

They also found that one in four children worldwide now live in poverty. Honourable senators, that number is astounding and unacceptable.

The KidsRights Index is the only global ranking survey that annually measures how children's rights are respected worldwide and also to what extent countries are committed to improving the rights of children.

The KidsRights Index is an initiative of the KidsRights foundation, which works in cooperation with Erasmus University Rotterdam: the Erasmus School of Economics and the International Institute of Social Studies. It comprises a ranking of all UN member states that have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and for which sufficient data is available. As of 2023, a total of 193 countries are part of the index.

• (1550)

Honourable senators, Canada is not insulated from the detrimental factors affecting children's rights worldwide. We know all too well that the cost of living has risen significantly, with grocery prices and home prices rising, along with a housing crisis that is drastically affecting Canada's most vulnerable and marginalized. Today, over 1 million Canadian children live below the poverty line. In my province of Nova Scotia, we have seen the poverty rate rise as well.

According to the 2023 report card on child and family poverty in Nova Scotia, by Campaign 2000 and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives:

The 2023 child poverty report card records a rate increase in Nova Scotia in 2021 from 18.4% to 20.5%—this 11.4% increase is the highest single-year increase since 1989 when the promise was made to eradicate child poverty by the year 2000. A poverty rate of 20.5% represents 35,330 children living in low-income families, or more than 1 in 5 children in Nova Scotia.

The significant rise in the cost of living and the end of government pandemic financial supports were seen as the biggest factors for this trend.

Colleagues, subparagraph 4(2)(a)(i) of the bill clearly states that a national strategy for children and youth in Canada must include the elimination of child poverty in Canada. As poverty might be a major root cause of other challenges for children in Canada, it should not be the sole focus of a national strategy. Mitigating the effects of climate change, institutional and systemic racism and child exploitation and abuse, as well as ensuring access to health care and safety are all factors.

UNICEF Canada's Canadian Index of Child and Youth Well-being 2019 Baseline Report looked at 125 different indicators for each child to map their well-being and track government progress. The index brings a wide range of data together into one framework to encourage a comprehensive and balanced view of how kids in Canada are faring and where gaps exist. This data should serve as a guide for government policy and focus.

Honourable senators, it has been several tumultuous years for Canadians due to the pandemic, world conflicts and unprecedented global population displacements. Bill S-282 and its call for a national strategy for children and youth in Canada mandates constant vigilance and assessment through reporting to Parliament at regular intervals. An effective national strategy must be based on policies derived from solid, comprehensive scientific evidence and data, as well as respect for and collaboration with the different jurisdictions that make up Canada, including Indigenous governing bodies and organizations that serve and represent First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and youth.

Honourable senators, goals and milestones must be regularly assessed and policies must be able to pivot and be revised when necessary. To quote the Canadian Index of Child and Youth Well-being 2019 Baseline Report:

The true measure of a nation's standing is how well it attends its children – their health and safety, their material security, their education and socialization, and their sense of being loved, valued, and included in the families and societies to which they were born.

For our sake, honourable senators, and that of future generations, let us show our children that they were born into a country that values them and their successes and truly considers all aspects of their care.

Again, I wish to thank Senator Moodie for her dedication to Canada's youth and her hard work on the issue of their well-being. I look forward to hearing from Canadians when this bill is sent to committee. Thank you.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill S-282, An Act respecting a national strategy for children and youth in Canada.

Bill S-282 encapsulates Senator Moodie's vision contained within her report *From Vision to reality: On a National Strategy for Children and Youth in Canada*. I would like to thank Senator Moodie for her efforts in getting this bill before us today.

The report opens with this statement:

Canada's children deserve every opportunity to grow and flourish. They make up a significant portion of our population, yet despite Canada's human rights obligations they remain underserved by current government policies.

Canada's children and youth are the future of the country and will be tomorrow's innovators, leaders, creators, healers, and builders.

As a former educator, I understand well how early intervention can impact the future of children. A national strategy for children must include a recognition of fundamental principles to protect and promote children's rights. Children must not be seen merely as passive recipients of care and protection but as active advocates for such rights.

To be successful, it must include the right to be heard. Every child has a voice, and it is our duty to ensure that their opinions are considered in matters that affect them. This principle is not just about listening but also creating avenues for meaningful participation in decision-making processes.

It must include the right to health and well-being, including access to quality health care, nutritious food, clean water and safe environments. It must address the importance of quality education that is inclusive and free from discrimination. Education is not just a right but a powerful tool that can break the cycle of poverty and open opportunities for children to reach their full potential.

We must ensure that children are protected from violence, abuse and neglect, and that we create robust systems to safeguard children from harm and provide support to those who have been affected by such experiences. A national strategy must include comprehensive measures to safeguard children in all settings: home, school and community.

No national strategy would be complete without consideration of Indigenous children in Canada. I am pleased to see that Bill S-282 not only takes this into consideration but specifically mentions the need to address UNDRIP and include Indigenous governing bodies and communities in the process. UNDRIP also emphasizes the importance of education that respects Indigenous cultures and languages. For Indigenous children and youth, this means access to education that reflects their cultural heritage and strengthens their identity. It also highlights the need for mainstream educational systems to incorporate Indigenous perspectives and knowledge, fostering an environment of mutual respect and understanding.

As well, we must not forget the key roles of family, community and parents in children's upbringing. My experiences as a mother and educator have underscored how parents are the most influential caregivers in a child's life. Parents serve as the cornerstone of emotional nurturing and attachment for a child. The deep connection established in the early stages of life profoundly influences the child's emotional stability and overall well-being. It is through parents that children first learn vital social and ethical principles. By exemplifying behaviours and teaching empathy, parents are instrumental in shaping their children's ethical compass. These initial teachings are the foundation upon which children build their future interpersonal bonds and moral choices.

[Senator Martin]

Raising children is a challenging endeavour, filled with trial and error. Parents want what is best for their children. They want them to behave, be productive members of society and understand the rules and nuances of getting along with others. Parenting is simply the act and attitude of unconditional love.

Children thrive in environments where they are loved and supported. A national framework should include policies that strengthen families and build resilient communities. Children are not raised in isolation; policies that affect parents will impact children.

To conclude, honourable senators, a national strategy for children and youth in Canada must be a continual reminder of our obligations and the ongoing efforts required to ensure that every child can enjoy their rights fully and equally. I support sending this important bill to committee for further study and commend Senator Moodie once more for her dedication to supporting and empowering children and youth.

• (1600)

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?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and bill read second time.)

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

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

(On motion of Senator Moodie, bill referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology.)

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, it being 4 p.m., the Senate will proceed to Question Period. The minister will take her seat, and we will then proceed.

[Translation]

QUESTION PERIOD

(Pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate on December 7, 2021, to receive a Minister of the Crown, the Honourable Diane Lebovillier, P.C., M.P., Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, appeared before honourable senators during Question Period.)

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, today we have with us for Question Period the Honourable Diane Lebovitchillier, P.C., M.P., Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard. On behalf of all senators, I welcome the minister.

Honourable senators, let me remind you that during question period with a minister the initial question is limited to 60 seconds, and the initial answer to 90 seconds, followed by one supplementary question of at most 45 seconds and an answer of 45 seconds. The reading clerk will stand 10 seconds before these times expire. Pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate, senators do not need to stand. Question Period will last 64 minutes.

[*English*]

MINISTRY OF FISHERIES, OCEANS AND THE CANADIAN COAST GUARD

COAST GUARD PROCUREMENT

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Welcome here, minister.

Minister, the costs have gone up for each of the much-needed procurements for the Canadian Coast Guard. For example, in January, your department confirmed that the budget for two offshore patrol ships had jumped by half a billion dollars in just one year. As well, the estimated budget for one offshore science vessel is \$1 billion over its original budget. Quite frankly, I think this is an embarrassment and is an horrendous mismanagement on the part of your and Prime Minister Trudeau's government. Minister, what involvement, if any, do you have in the oversight of these projects?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Diane Lebovitchillier, P.C., M.P., Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard: I think the Coast Guard is in a position to have the equipment it needs to allow us to meet the challenges we're facing. Canada works very closely with the United States. We must have the equipment required to protect our oceans. Canada is surrounded by three oceans. The work is being done, which means that Canada now has suitable equipment with new equipment and ships. We're now seeing hybrid ships, and new technologies mean that costs have gone up. My priority, and that of the Coast Guard, is to protect our fishers, as well as our borders.

[*English*]

Senator Plett: I'm assuming that if we were surrounded by four oceans, the costs would have gone up even more. You didn't answer my question, minister. The Trudeau government has lost control of these procurements, and no one in the cabinet seems to care. All the while, the Canadian Coast Guard waits for necessary ships, and the cost to taxpayers goes up. Your government still has no project budget for new ice breakers. The

Parliamentary Budget Officer, or PBO, estimates that it will cost more than \$7 billion. If the PBO can provide an estimate, why is your government incapable of doing so?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Lebovitchillier: As I was saying, we need equipment that will enable us to respond to the challenges ahead. We need equipment, ships and icebreakers in the Arctic. We're seeing it with electronics and hybrid ships. New technologies are driving up costs, but we're staying on budget and making sure that the Coast Guard has the equipment it needs to do a job that is important to Canada.

LOBSTER FISHERY

Hon. Rose-May Poirier: Welcome, minister. For years now, lobster fishers have been in limbo. Every year, their livelihood is in danger of being cut off by people in an ivory tower in Ottawa who tell fishers what they can do.

You justified the closure to ensure that our fishers can continue to get good prices for the seafood they harvest. The opposite has happened, with prices at their lowest point since 2020. Your government's actions hurt fishers and their families. When will you stop getting involved in the fishing season and hurting fishers and their communities?

Hon. Diane Lebovitchillier, P.C., M.P., Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard: I disagree with what you said. We have to look at the work that has been done with lobster fishers, and catch rates are up. The price of lobster on Prince Edward Island this winter was apparently \$21 per pound. We heard about lobster going for \$18 per pound. In Quebec right now, lobster is \$7 per pound. We hear about catch rates of 2,000 pounds a day in some places in Nova Scotia, with some fishers harvesting 10,000 pounds a day. Prices are similar for crab. People fished for crab. The season is going well. Fishers' associations are taking steps to protect the species and ensure that quota and what's harvested bring added value to communities.

Senator Poirier: We're talking about a \$25 million to \$30 million loss to the region. I don't know what region you're talking about. I'm talking about New Brunswick. We hear that prices have dropped along with the size of the catch. In hard economic times, fishers need your government's support, not the cold shoulder. The whole situation could have been avoided if only you had listened to the fishers sooner.

Minister, when are you going to listen to the fishers out on the water instead of public servants 1,000 kilometres away?

Ms. Lebovitchillier: I have regular meetings with fishers' associations and processing industry representatives. In terms of the catch rates, I can tell you that the Magdalen Islands and New Brunswick are very close to even. So far, in the Magdalen Islands, we're talking about 6.6 million pounds of lobster since the fishing season opened around the end of April. Based on what I'm hearing from the fishers, catch rates are excellent and still rising. Catch rates this season are going to be even higher than last year.

[English]

ALLOCATION OF FISHERY

Hon. Iris Petten: Thank you for being here today, Minister Lebouthillier.

Last year, the Fisheries and Oceans Canada, or DFO, announced its intentions to reopen the Redfish Unit 1 commercial fisheries in Atlantic Canada and Quebec for the first time since 1995. On Friday, DFO unveiled its management plan for the 2024-25 period, which allocated 58.69% to offshore mobile gear — a fleet sector that has vessels over 100 feet — while about 15% of the quota went to inshore vessels and 10% to Indigenous communities and organizations. How was this allocation determined?

• (1610)

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier, P.C., M.P., Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard: The allocation was determined following work with the provinces. They wanted to keep their existing quotas. We kept the quotas for Quebec. The quotas for Nova Scotia were reduced and went to New Brunswick for the fishers and First Nations communities. Quotas were also granted to Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island. The Redfish Advisory Committee was asked not to allow overfishing, but to ensure responsible fishing that will ensure value-added production. We worked with the Redfish Advisory Committee, which recommended to us that 60,000 tonnes be caught this year. Processing the fish is also a consideration. We are at phase 1 and the consultations will continue for phase 2.

[English]

Senator Petten: The Fish, Food and Allied Workers Union has expressed frustration with this allocation, saying that the federal government is prioritizing corporations over fishermen struggling to survive. How would you respond to this?

[Translation]

Ms. Lebouthillier: Working with large corporations is a reality in the fishing industry. These businesses hire people in rural areas. They supply our processing plants, which also employ people from our communities. The entire fisheries sector is making every effort to keep our people working in rural areas.

[English]

TOXIC WASTE

Hon. Stan Kutcher: My question is regarding the plan to dump toxic pyritic slate waste into Dartmouth Cove in the Halifax Harbour, even though other locations with fewer negative environmental and navigation impacts are available. The harbour has taken decades to clean up from raw sewage and other misuse. Dartmouth Cove is now a thriving biodiverse zone that

includes American eels along with lobster and flounder. It is also home to a growing number of blue economy incubators and oceans research.

How does an infill project such as this make sense in the context of coastal management, habitat protection and oceans innovation, as well as protecting a rich and diverse, unique marine environment?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier, P.C., M.P., Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard: I can assure you that our government and Fisheries and Oceans Canada are committed to protecting fish and fish habitat. The protection of all wildlife species is a priority of mine. I was made aware of a request regarding that plan. Assessments are being done right now, and I can confirm that we will take the time we need to properly assess potential impacts and explore what mitigation measures can be put in place if the plan is authorized.

Nothing has been authorized so far. Fishing is taking place in coastal areas and in freshwater. People expect us to protect habitats and all wildlife.

[English]

Senator Kutcher: Thank you, minister, for being up to date on that file. It is very much appreciated.

Can you assure the citizens of Nova Scotia that you will not permit the dumping of toxic waste that damages the marine environment into a sensitive marine ecosystem?

[Translation]

Ms. Lebouthillier: I can assure you that one of my priorities is to protect all wildlife and ensure that there is no dumping of toxic waste. An in-depth assessment will be conducted, and we will continue to work with the partners. As I said, no authorization has been granted. We're still at the assessment stage and we will take the time we need to do things right.

[English]

ELVER FISHERY

Hon. Colin Deacon: Minister, my question is about digital transformation and innovation in the seafood industry. Innovative Canadian companies have developed digital solutions based on global standards that deliver robust traceability in seafood supply chains. These innovations are key to addressing the priorities of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, or DFO, including stopping illicit activities in the elver fishery.

I would argue that, yet again, DFO's unwillingness to implement innovative solutions has caused the elver fishery to be closed this season, harming licensed fishers and rural communities.

Minister Lebouthillier, why isn't your department adopting best practices and modern technologies to better manage the elver fishery, as is done in the State of Maine? What specific plans does DFO have to harness Canadian expertise in order to create a safer, modernized and better regulated elver fishery?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier, P.C., M.P., Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard: We take no pleasure in making the decision to impose or extend a moratorium, because I'm very aware of the impact that has on communities.

I went to Portland, Maine. I met with people to find out how we can protect the elver, set out clear rules and provide traceability. We've seen it with the operations that have been carried out this year. Again this week, approximately \$300,000 worth of elvers were seized at the Toronto airport. Two weeks ago, \$500,000 worth of elvers were seized. We see the important work that is being done to protect the resource and ensure traceability. I intend to ensure that we can reopen the elver fishery in 2025. The other goal is to ensure that elvers can't just be sold off the back of a truck and that we establish facilities where we can properly monitor the elver harvest. That is one of the solutions that Portland has put in place.

[English]

Senator C. Deacon: Minister, I'm sorry, but that didn't provide me with much assurance that things will be better next year. Just this January, DFO put forward a request for information for an elver traceability system to track the harvesting, possession and movement of elvers across the Canadian supply chain. DFO committed to moving forward in March, but has gone silent since then.

Procurement is an essential tool. The experience in Maine has proven to be highly successful. When will this fishery open again?

[Translation]

Ms. Lebouthillier: I can tell you that the fishery will be open in 2025. We're working with Treasury Board to ensure that the new regulations and the necessary traceability measures will be in place.

[English]

LOBSTER FISHERY

Hon. Rodger Cuzner: It is great to see you, minister. With regard to an earlier question on the lobster, we know that lobster is sold on the open market, and, because of the abundance of lobster this year, they are having record catches in Atlantic Canada and Quebec. I know that you can't find a lobster crate in Cape Breton to store a lobster, so the price has naturally come down.

You did something really good: Fishermen know that we need access to the U.S. market. Unless we do our part with protecting North Atlantic right whales, we don't have access. The National

Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or NOAA, will shut that part of the market down. What steps is your department taking to ensure that we protect the North Atlantic right whale?

• (1620)

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier, P.C., M.P., Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard: I can tell you that we've been taking steps since 2016. An advisory committee was created to protect whales. As you said, there are laws protecting marine mammals. The threat is real. The price of lobster would drop precipitously if the U.S. and European markets were to close.

I've had conversations with processors, and our conclusion was that we need to make sure we get the MSC certifications that show we use environmentally friendly fishing practices. Without that, the price of lobster could fall below \$3 per pound, which would effectively kill the market for all species in Eastern Canada.

Last week, I announced an \$800,000 investment in a new organization called Whale Seeker, which offers real-time whale monitoring to provide predictability to our fishers and the marine transport, cruise ship and cargo ship sector.

[English]

Senator Cuzner: Obviously, the steps taken have continued to keep that U.S. market open and available to Canadian lobster, but there was an issue in the Acadian Peninsula in New Brunswick that caused a great deal of concern, and you were able to find resolution on that particular issue. Could you sort of walk through the genesis of your decision and where that situation stands now? I understand the fishermen are still in the water.

[Translation]

Ms. Lebouthillier: In 2017, we had just started implementing the new measures. In my riding, we had to take the lobster traps out of the water for two weeks. Meetings were held in New Brunswick with the advisory committee, made up of different types of fishery associations and processors. I asked to have discussions with the fishers. For those of you who know a little about fishing, when fishers set their traps in the water, they measure in a unit called the fathom. We don't use the same unit of measurement at Fisheries and Oceans Canada. I asked for a Canadian Coast Guard vessel to come with the president—

The Hon. the Speaker: Thank you, minister.

[English]

COMMERCIAL SEAL HUNT

Hon. Fabian Manning: Minister, welcome. On May 23, the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans released its latest report, *Sealing the Future: A Call to Action*. The report puts forward nine recommendations, many of which call on the government to take urgent action to deal with the ever-increasing seal population, decimation of other species and a continued

destruction of our ocean's ecosystem because of the overabundance of seals as well as the dire need for research and recommendations to counter the lies, misinformation and disinformation which continue to be spread about this industry.

Minister, knowing the area that you represent, do you believe the issues we have raised require urgent action today? Can the people in this industry count on you to be their champion in this cause?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier, P.C., M.P., Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard: Depending on the province, the seal hunt is one of my top three priorities. Work has been done and financial investments have been made. We're working extensively with Indigenous communities to gain market access, but also to access the domestic market. Markets aren't limited to those outside Canada. We need this product to reach our food supply chains and our restaurants. Next, we have to consider developing markets outside Canada as well. All of that work is being done right now with the provinces and Indigenous communities.

[English]

Senator Manning: Thank you, minister. In November of last year, a Canada-European Union summit was held in Newfoundland and Labrador. The European ban on seal products, in place since 2009, was not a priority during these talks. When asked if the sealing industry was discussed, Prime Minister Trudeau's reply was, "This is a complex time in the world and there's a lot of subjects to discuss."

Well, minister, this is not a complex issue. The approximately 8 million seals off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador are not eating Kentucky Fried Chicken or Tim Hortons doughnuts. They are eating other fish species and destroying our ocean's ecosystem. Minister, what action is the government taking today, right now, in having the EU ban on seal products removed?

An Hon. Senator: Good question.

[Translation]

Ms. Lebouthillier: You're correct. As I mentioned earlier, seals eat our fishermen's bread and butter. The aim of processing seal products isn't to destroy a resource. Seals can also be a resource for economic development. Nearly every part of them can be used, 98%. I'm currently working with France. At the UN Ocean Conference in 2025, we will have the opportunity to discuss invasive species. Seals will definitely be one of the subjects for discussion.

As I was saying, it isn't just about seeing how we can work with the EU when it comes to seals, it's also about what we can do here at home.

The Hon. the Speaker: Thank you, minister.

[Senator Manning]

[English]

SYSTEMIC RACISM

Hon. Salma Atallahjan: Good to see you again, minister. In 2022, the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans released the report, *Peace on the Water*, which addressed systemic racism within Fisheries and Oceans Canada, or DFO. Despite the department's assurances that it recognizes the urgency of eliminating systemic racism, in April, two Mi'kmaw fishermen were forced to walk along the highway at night without their phones or shoes after fishery officers seized their belongings.

Minister, the current action plan is clearly ineffective, and we have consistently heard of instances of racism in testimony before our committee. How will your department put an end to discriminatory practices within the DFO? Does the department have any plan?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier, P.C., M.P., Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard: I was in Nova Scotia last weekend, and I met with folks in the Eskasoni First Nation. I also met with one of the fishermen, one of the young men who had been left without shoes on the side of the road in the middle of the night. As I mentioned, I see these kinds of incidents as completely unacceptable. The deputy minister also attended the meeting in the Eskasoni community with me. A committee is going to be struck. Discussions are taking place this week to determine who will serve on the committee. We also want to make sure that the committee's mandate is discussed with Indigenous communities to ensure that these situations never happen again. As I said, what happened is unacceptable.

[English]

Senator Atallahjan: Minister, there are processes and protocols in place, and yet these two fishermen went through an unnecessary traumatic ordeal which in turn affected their entire community. How was this investigated or is it being investigated, and how were or are the fishery officers being disciplined? What action was taken by your department?

[Translation]

Ms. Lebouthillier: Internal investigations are currently under way. It's an administrative process. We're waiting for the results. At the same time, it was important to have another committee that's not under the supervision of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. It was important to me that this committee be independent. We're looking into who could head up that committee, and we'd like people from the Indigenous community to be included. Names of former senators have been submitted as possible members of the committee. As I said, we're going to make sure we move forward so that these situations don't happen again.

[English]

COMMERCIAL COD FISHERY

Hon. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia: Thank you for being here, minister. A recent study published in the *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences* suggested that Newfoundland and Labrador's northern cod have returned to their historical migration patterns. Combined with the new DFO assessment model indicating that northern cod stocks have been out of the critical zone since 2016, this suggests the potential for reopening the commercial cod fishery in the future.

• (1630)

Given the historical and economic significance of the cod fishery to our province, as well as the profound impact of the 1992 moratorium on the livelihood of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, what steps is your department taking to evaluate the feasibility of reopening the commercial cod fishery?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier, P.C., M.P., Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard: Yes, I've been made aware of that. I've also attended briefing sessions, and I should soon be announcing how we will go about reopening the cod fishery.

I want to be clear that we're moving forward cautiously. I lived through the cod moratorium and witnessed the catastrophic effects it had on communities. I want to assure you and reassure you that I have no intention of living through a second cod moratorium. We're going to do things in such a way that future generations will have access to these important resources.

[English]

Senator Ravalia: Thank you, minister.

Perhaps you could highlight the lessons your department learned from the 1992 moratorium that will guide the management of any potential reopening of this fishery and ensure long-term sustainability. Thank you.

[Translation]

Ms. Lebouthillier: As I mentioned, we're moving forward cautiously, and we will make sure that there is no overfishing because that is what causes prices to drop.

We want a responsible fishery, a fishery that is certified to the Marine Stewardship Council, or MSC, standard, and we will accomplish that by ensuring that we use all parts of the product. We're also seeing this with what is happening right now around the world with global warming and the warming of the oceans. We need to be careful about how we go about reopening the cod fishery.

FISHING INDUSTRY IN NEW BRUNSWICK

Hon. René Cormier: Welcome to the Senate, minister.

With respect to the balance between protecting right whales and protecting the interests of the workers and commercial fishers, you told my colleague, Senator Cuzner, that fishers use a calculation method different than the one used by your department. That seems quite astonishing to me. How can you reassure fishers and the industry that the Technical Advisory Committee on North Atlantic Right Whales that you're creating truly takes account of the realities of fishers and the industry, particularly in my region, the Acadian Peninsula, in northeastern New Brunswick?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier, P.C., M.P., Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard: Over the next few weeks, the advisory committee will meet again. When measures are put in place and they don't affect us personally, no one minds because it makes no difference to them. However, when the measures hit close to home, suddenly they might not be everything that was hoped for.

It's an evolutionary process. How can we ensure that we make our calculations in the same way with the same units of measurement? Fishers measure in fathoms, but that makes it a little more difficult for Fisheries and Oceans Canada to get a full image of the seabed.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada calculates based on lines: no fishing between such and such a line, hence the importance of using artificial intelligence and the Mer numérique tool. Fishers are already aware of the policies implemented to avoid situations like the one that happened two weeks ago.

Senator Cormier: I'm surprised that the department calculates in this manner. That brings me to my second question. A recent article in *Acadie nouvelle* raised some very important concerns expressed by experts and industry stakeholders regarding your department.

The language used was quite powerful, with references to decisions that are out of touch with reality, the ultra-centralization of power over all issues, operating in silos, and so on. The article even used the term "bunker" to describe your department.

Minister, what do you intend to do to alleviate these recurring frustrations, which are discouraging the fishers of our region? How are you going to restore, or rather establish, I would say, a climate of enduring trust between your department and the fishing industry in my region?

Ms. Lebouthillier: What matters to me is that the Technical Advisory Committee on North Atlantic Right Whales include fishers as well as industry representatives. As far as the processing industry is concerned, processors have advised fishers that if they don't comply with MSC certification and whale protection rules, processors won't buy their seafood. No processor wants to build up a stockpile of seafood in their freezer.

Products need to be imported and exported. For products to be exported, rules have to be followed, and this includes whale protection rules, in order to keep the markets open, both on the American side and on the side of—

[English]

TREATMENT OF MI'KMAQ FISHERS

Hon. Paul J. Prosper: Welcome, Minister Lebouthillier.

It has been two months since the inhumane treatment of two young Mi'kmaq fishers in Nova Scotia and two months since you agreed to use an independent third party to investigate the issue.

I have followed up with the Mi'kmaq leadership and have been told that there has been no movement.

Minister, the safety and security of Mi'kmaq fishers exercising their constitutionally affirmed rights are at stake here. We cannot risk or afford the investigation and report being dragged on into the next election cycle.

Minister, my question is this: When, exactly, can we expect a new, independent process to be in place?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier, P.C., M.P., Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard: Meetings are planned for this week, hence my visit to Nova Scotia last week and the meeting I had with the Eskasoni community, to advise them that the process would begin this week on the committee being created.

[English]

Senator Prosper: Thank you, minister.

The officers involved in the incident, and in subsequent incidents throughout Mi'kma'ki, continue to work in the community. This does nothing to promote trust and goodwill between the Mi'kmaq and your department.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada's, or DFO's, 2019 reconciliation strategy provides a commitment to a renewed relationship based on recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnership.

Minister, as we wait for this independent process, what concrete actions are you undertaking in the interim to ensure you are addressing the concerns of Mi'kmaq? Are you, for instance, providing training in de-escalation techniques?

[Translation]

Ms. Lebouthillier: I want to reassure the senator. In the wake of the unacceptable situation that occurred, the department will really ensure that it provide proper training. We truly have to do better so that these unacceptable situations never happen again.

[Ms. Lebouthillier]

[English]

COMMERCIAL SEAL HUNT

Hon. Jane Cordy: Thank you, minister, for being with us today.

My question is also focused on Canada's seal harvest. During the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans study of the sealing industry, we heard many fishers' concerns about the management of the seal harvest. The sealers stated that too few seals are harvested, leaving many species of fish at risk on both the east and west coasts. Currently, Canada doesn't have a seal fishery on the West Coast.

In the House Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans report, it was noted there have been informal calls to establish a West Coast harvest.

Minister, has DFO, under their new emerging fishery policies, received any proposals to establish a West Coast harvest? Would DFO consider that possibility?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier, P.C., M.P., Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard: I have to say that I went to the west coast for a week last December, and every time I broached the subject of seals people were very uncomfortable talking to me about it. In the end, they said that, yes, there are seals and that is creating a problem for the fishery. Of course, that is a priority for me. This is a much easier topic to address on the East Coast of Canada and in the Arctic, but we have some work to do on the West Coast when it comes to talking more openly about this.

• (1640)

Three weeks ago, a seal turned up on the beach and people dubbed it Emerson. He was getting out of the water and wandering the streets of Victoria. Fishery officials were taking him back to the water and he kept coming back. That was a real problem. It cost a lot of money to deal with Emerson. People on the West Coast are more sensitive when we talk about making this a sector of the economy and an activity that could be very successful.

[English]

Senator Cordy: Thank you, minister. It is good to hear that you are opening the dialogue on the West Coast.

It was noted in the House of Commons seal report that of the 4,482 licences issued by DFO in 2022, only 330 were actively being used on the East Coast. Does DFO investigate inactive sealing licences to determine why there are so many licences that are being given out but that are not being used by fishers?

[Translation]

Ms. Lebouthillier: Yes, we've looked at the situation, and you're right to bring it up. Sealers aren't even able to harvest the allotted quotas, which is why it's important to work here in Canada to make seal a product that people want to eat and use. By the way, I'll say that seal meat is delicious when it's prepared properly. I consider it a source of protein. The fur can also be used. This will even enable Indigenous communities to — that's why I think it's very important for Indigenous communities to provide leadership and contribute, so that we can help women economically with the fur trade. Ninety-eight percent of the animal can be used.

The Hon. the Speaker: Thank you, minister.

COAST GUARD PROCUREMENT

Hon. Leo Housakos: Minister, Canadians learned last year that the construction budget for the Coast Guard's new offshore oceanographic research vessel jumped again to \$1.28 billion. That amount is now 10 times higher than the initial cost estimate shared with the public, and it's for a single vessel. Your department told the media that it found out about the price hike a year ago, in June 2023, but didn't inform Canadians until October.

Minister, what is the actual cost of this project? Has there been another cost overrun we're unaware of?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier, P.C., M.P., Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard: I can't answer your question, but I'd be happy to get back to you with a written answer.

Senator Housakos: Minister, in addition to vastly overspending, the Trudeau government postponed delivery of the vessel five times.

Minister, how many times have you met with Minister Duclos since being appointed to your position last July? Will this vessel be commissioned in 2025, as promised, or should Canadians expect yet another delay?

Ms. Lebouthillier: Some vessels have been commissioned, but if you're asking me if a vessel that hasn't been built will be in service in 2025, obviously the answer is no. I'm not going to lie to you here, today.

[English]

OPEN-NET PEN SALMON FARMS

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Minister, since 2019, the mandate letters for various ministers of fisheries specify a plan to transition away from open-net pen salmon farming in British Columbia waters by 2025. The sector supports over 500 jobs for local First Nations and injects \$50 million a year into those communities.

Minister, will your government support the communities that depend on this industry, or will you phase out open-net pen salmon farming in British Columbia?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier, P.C., M.P., Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard: In British Columbia last December, I met with Indigenous communities, whom I had the pleasure of meeting again in Ottawa. We want to ensure that the plan we introduce is realistic, responsible and reasonable.

[English]

Senator Martin: Last October, you told MPs of the House of Commons Fisheries Committee that you need to continue to have conversations with people working in the field and to work on the transition plan. First Nations in British Columbia are getting impatient with the government's dragging its feet instead of making a clear decision on open-net pen salmon farming. I know you are doing these consultations, but, minister, how much longer will your government stall its decision on whether or not you will phase out open-net pen salmon farming in B.C.?

[Translation]

Ms. Lebouthillier: You should be informed of the direction we're going to take very soon.

SHRIMP INDUSTRY

Hon. Éric Forest: Thank you for joining us today, minister. It will come as no surprise to you that many fisheries in Eastern Quebec and the Maritimes are struggling. Times are especially hard for fishers, plant workers and people in the shrimp sector.

The closure of Eastern Seafood came as a shock to Matane and the entire region. Technically, half of the shrimp fishing businesses in the Quebec fleet are bankrupt. According to Patrice Element, director of the Office des pêcheurs de crevette du Québec, the biomass will not return.

I know, minister, that you're working very hard to find solutions for the shrimpers, but in the circumstances, the time has come to let people interested in leaving the industry leave. In the past, when moratoriums were announced, the federal government set up license buyback programs and industry restructuring measures.

Does your department realize that unless quick action is taken, dozens of families will be condemned to a life of poverty and economic fragility?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier, P.C., M.P., Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard: I've been in close contact with shrimp fishers, so I can tell you that, since 2016, global warming has caused declining shrimp stocks in the gulf.

Had I listened to the fishers this year, they wanted to maintain the status quo from two or three years ago. What we saw last year was that there were no more shrimp in the gulf, or hardly any. Attempts were made this year. These boats have their nets in the

water for six hours and bring in 150 pounds of shrimp. Things aren't going well in the gulf because of global warming, and the same goes for other species, too.

I felt it was important to look at opening the redfish fishery to let shrimp fishers take advantage of that reopened fishery and develop it into a value-added product.

Senator Forest: Thank you. I think we all recognize that shrimp stocks are not going to recover any time soon. That is why I think it's vital to help fishers, processors and, above all, plant workers to retrain.

How does the minister plan to respond to this challenge?

Ms. Lebouthillier: When it comes to retraining, there is money in the Canada's fisheries funds to help fishers retrain in other fisheries. I'm very concerned right now about the next generation of fishers given how much fishing licenses cost these days and because there are young people who have gone deep into debt. I'm currently in discussions with colleagues in fisheries committees to ensure that we have a next generation of fishers.

[English]

COMMERCIAL SEAL HUNT

Hon. Pat Duncan: Welcome, minister. The Senate's Fisheries and Oceans Committee released its report on the seal study, which you heard about earlier today. It's clear from our formal and informal work that the data available from Canada's West Coast and Alaska's southeast coast is sorely lacking. There's a big difference between Victoria, British Columbia, and Haines, Alaska, near and dear to our hearts.

• (1650)

We remain aware through anecdotal evidence from fisheries and First Nations that an overabundance of seals — specifically on the Alsek, Stikine and Taku rivers — is a factor in dwindling salmon stocks. What specific work is Fisheries and Oceans Canada, or DFO, doing or funding with B.C., Yukon and southeast Alaska to establish the size of the seal population in the Northwest?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier, P.C., M.P., Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard: As I mentioned a little earlier, when I visited the East Coast, the idea that seals could be economically profitable and properly harvested for the benefit of all communities was a very delicate subject for people in the fishery and the processing sector, as well as for the Government of British Columbia.

It is therefore important for me that we have more openness toward an environmentally responsible fishery. That is why it is so important to get Indigenous communities involved and to have access to their traditional knowledge so that we can fish other species. Seals eat fish and that harms other wildlife.

[English]

Senator Duncan: Respectfully, minister, there's a big difference between having a conversation in southern British Columbia and having a conversation in southeast Alaska and Yukon, where this is clearly an issue — an international one.

Will you commit to having a conversation with your Alaskan counterparts and with the First Nations that cross borders between the Yukon, northern B.C. and southeast Alaska?

[Translation]

Ms. Lebouthillier: We entered into discussions with Alaska to reach an agreement to suspend wild salmon fishing for seven years to allow stocks to rebuild. That work is being done in partnership with First Nations and governments. It is one of my priorities in terms of marketing seal products.

[English]

CANADIAN SALMON

Hon. Robert Black: Minister, I have another question about salmon farming.

In a recent press release, the Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance, or CAIA, outlined concerns regarding the disappearance of 390 million Canadian-produced salmon meals from our markets and restaurants. This loss, replaced by imported salmon with higher costs and a larger carbon footprint, has significant implications for Canadian consumers and our domestic aquaculture sector.

According to CAIA's latest data, farm-raised salmon production in Canada has plummeted from 148,000 metric tons in 2016 to 90,000 metric tons in 2023, marking the lowest production since 2000. This decline is primarily attributed to government-mandated farm closures in British Columbia.

Could you shed light on your government's strategy to address these challenges and support the resurgence of Canadian-produced salmon for the benefit of our citizens, the environment and our economy?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier, P.C., M.P., Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard: As far as aquaculture is concerned, it is important to have a responsible and feasible plan and to ensure that aquaculture development doesn't impact wild species. I also mentioned global warming. We have to work with that balance in mind. As far as British Columbia is concerned, we're currently in a holding pattern with the Discovery Islands case. We're waiting for the ruling.

[English]

GREAT LAKES FISHERY COMMISSION

Hon. Robert Black: Thank you, minister. To pivot — on May 9, you appeared at the House Fisheries and Oceans Committee and were asked about the Great Lakes Fishery Commission and its request to be moved from DFO to Global Affairs Canada. I wrote a letter to the former Minister of Fisheries in 2020 on this same request and never received a response.

In committee, you were asked about your department being in a conflict of interest, acting as both a contractor and contractee, and the industry was surprised to see \$3 million voted by Parliament withheld in 2022. The money was later returned, after significant political pressure, but concerns remain.

In your testimony, you maintained your department's view is that no conflict of interest exists. Can you provide the rationale for this position?

[Translation]

Ms. Lebouthillier: Following the discussions we had — and I was also in contact with the U.S. ambassador — we've reinstated the funding earmarked for protecting the Great Lakes. Everything seems to be going well with the Great Lakes right now. Fisheries and Oceans Canada will remain on the board of directors of the Great Lakes commission.

[English]

MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

Hon. Rodger Cuzner: Minister, I have a question on Marine Protected Areas, or MPAs. Your government has been very aggressive and ambitious with respect to Marine Protected Areas, wanting to look after coastal and marine environments and grow them 25% by 2025, and 30% by 2030.

In Nova Scotia, there was talk about a process entered into on the Eastern Shore Islands. Could you update the Senate on where we are in that process, including in relation to your global targets?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier, P.C., M.P., Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard: We really want to achieve our global targets. I also want to talk about the importance of marine protected areas, because they are our nurseries. These are the areas that enable fishers to protect our fisheries for the future. A lot of important work remains to raise awareness among fishers who are concerned that it may harm them in terms of catches.

We're constantly working to raise awareness among fishers, but we're also working with Indigenous communities, who place great emphasis on protecting species in accordance with their knowledge.

[English]

Senator Cuzner: Earlier, I mentioned the record catches in Atlantic Canada. In 2017-18, two MPAs were established just off the coast of Cape Breton, in the Gully and St. Anns Bank.

Many things impact the level of the catch. Do you have the science within the department to determine whether the MPAs are having that type of impact on the overall catch or the great success that they've been having?

[Translation]

Ms. Lebouthillier: When it comes to marine protected areas, we're working to ensure that these sectors are able to protect biodiversity. I signed an agreement with the United Nations, the BBNJ Agreement, to protect our fishery.

With what is happening in the ocean as a result of climate change, everything below the water is constantly moving under our feet, so that's why we need science. A marine area that is protected today may change in 15 or 20 years because the fish move around under the water.

[English]

RECREATIONAL FISHERY

Hon. Elizabeth Marshall: Welcome to the Senate, minister. My question comes from Mr. Ford Adams, a resident of Newfoundland and Labrador.

A recent petition concerning the recreational cod fishery was initiated by Mr. Graham Wood of Lewisporte and presented to your government by MP Clifford Small. It notes that providing 3 days per week in the summer and 10 days in the fall creates an urgency amongst participants to go fishing, even when the weather causes safety issues. The boats participating in this fishery are often small; I can see them out on the bay when the fog allows it.

DFO says the biomass assessment methodology has recently changed. It now provides evidence of more cod than in previous assessments. Does the minister intend to adjust the open dates of this fishery to allow for a longer, less risk-prone schedule?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier, P.C., M.P., Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard: I'm currently looking into the situation with the recreational fishery, so that we can account for the impact that it may have on cod stocks.

[English]

• (1700)

Senator Marshall: Minister, does DFO have any plans to delay the announcement of the recreational food fishery dates and regulations until mid to late June? The recent petition notes that this disadvantages both fishers and tourists in scheduling

their participation in the fishery. Isn't it possible for DFO to announce the dates and regulations by May 1 of each year? This would facilitate people's participation in the fishery.

[Translation]

Ms. Lebouthillier: I hear what you're saying, but it depends on what kind of winter we have. We'll try to get the information out to people as quickly as possible.

This winter, there was no ice in the gulf or on the St. Lawrence River, and the fishing season started earlier. We will have to adapt from year to year because of climate change and the impact it's having on our oceans.

NORTHERN RESUPPLY

Hon. Tony Loffreda: Welcome to the Senate, Minister Lebouthillier.

I would like to talk about the Canadian Coast Guard and your department's activities in the Arctic.

More specifically, I would like to focus on the government's commitment to supporting the summer resupply of communities in Canada's North.

Can you tell us about your work with Transport Canada and your partners in the North to make sure that supplies get to northerners quickly and effectively?

We all know that summers are short up north and that we need to make the most of the little time we have to supply the North with the goods and supplies it needs for the whole year.

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier, P.C., M.P., Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard: We are working very closely with Transport Canada and northern communities, which are important partners in supplying northern communities.

We are also seeing the effects of climate change in the North since they're happening much more quickly there. That even caused delivery problems this winter. We were unable to use the ice roads. It is important to work with people to do things right and to give them access to the products they need.

Senator Loffreda: I'm particularly interested in your department's work because it plays either a leading or a supporting role in shipping building materials to meet some of the main housing needs in the North.

What steps is your department taking to meet those needs and help speed up construction projects?

We know that residential housing construction slowed in all three territories in 2023, which suggests there will likely be housing shortages in the future.

We also know that many housing units don't provide adequate or appropriate living conditions.

[Senator Marshall]

Ms. Lebouthillier: As I said, we're working closely with northern communities in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories and Yukon, and with other departments involved in ensuring that northern communities can access the goods they need.

ELVER FISHERY

Hon. Jean-Guy Dagenais: Minister, I would like to go back to the elver fishery.

The shutdown of the elver fishery this year cost elver fishers \$46 million. I would also mention that the transfer of 14% of quotas to First Nations cost them another \$6 million.

Do you plan to compensate the people living with the consequences of these decisions, considering the financial impact on elver fishers who have been there for 30 years?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier, P.C., M.P., Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard: No.

Senator Dagenais: We have certainly heard a lot of criticism from lobster, shrimp, redfish and even elver fishers.

Do you listen to your officials? Do they not hear or understand the demands of fishers? It seems like there's a lot of confusion between what's being said and what should normally be done.

Ms. Lebouthillier: I have a reputation as someone with very close ties to the community. I've had discussions with Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and I've been in contact with fisher associations, fishers and processors. It's important to me that everyone is able to work together. We need to think about the fisheries of the future. I've said it before and I'll say it again: In the next 10 years, I expect that the warming of the gulf and what's happening now will make things difficult for the fisheries sector. I also meet with my counterparts, the provincial fisheries ministers.

FUTURE OF THE FISHING INDUSTRY

Hon. Andrew Cardozo: Welcome, minister. I think my question is a good last question for you.

Like most other industries, the fishing industry went through a very difficult period during the COVID-19 pandemic. How do you see the sector today and over the next five years? What are the specific indicators?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier, P.C., M.P., Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard: Fishers continued working during the COVID-19 pandemic. Fishing continued and the processing industry also kept working. Fishers were getting excellent prices for their catches at the time.

The really important thing for me to work on in the coming years is supporting the next generation of fishers. How can we help the next generation? With climate change, since some species are disappearing and others are becoming invasive, how can we ensure that these species become part of the economy of the entire Gulf of St. Lawrence region?

Senator Cardozo: You mentioned a few challenges in the coming years. Are there other challenges you're working on with your department?

Ms. Lebouthillier: We're currently working on promoting artificial intelligence with the Mer numérique AI tool and electronic logs. Some provinces are still using paper logs.

As I was saying earlier, I opened the redfish fishery, but not for bycatch, even though I know full well that bycatch is more important for the fishers. They'll need to make sure they're fishing the right species and not using the redfish fishery to fish other species that might be threatened.

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

I am sure you will join me in thanking Minister Lebouthillier for being with us today.

[English]

We will now resume the proceedings that were interrupted at the start of Question Period.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

FALL ECONOMIC STATEMENT IMPLEMENTATION BILL, 2023

SECOND READING

Leave having been given to revert to Government Business, Bills, Second Reading, Order No. 3:

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Moncion, seconded by the Honourable Senator Duncan, for the second reading of Bill C-59, An Act to implement certain provisions of the fall economic statement tabled in Parliament on November 21, 2023 and certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023.

Hon. Elizabeth Marshall: Honourable senators, I rise to speak to Bill C-59, An Act to implement certain provisions of the fall economic statement tabled in Parliament on November 21, 2023 and certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023. Before I begin, I would like to thank Senator Moncion for her speech last week.

Honourable senators, Bill C-59 is an omnibus bill. That means it is a bill that includes many measures affecting many subjects. It includes many amendments to existing legislation, including

the Income Tax Act, the Excise Tax Act, the Bank Act, the Trust and Loan Companies Act, the Insurance Companies Act, the Canadian Payments Act, the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, and the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act, as well as many other acts.

• (1710)

Bill C-59 also proposes to enact new legislation, including the digital services tax act, the Canada water agency act and the department of housing, infrastructure and communities act, all of which should be established under their own legislation to provide for thorough parliamentary debate.

Honourable senators, in its 2015 election platform, this government put forward as "A New Plan for a Strong Middle Class" a promise to end omnibus bills, calling it an undemocratic process that prevented Parliament from properly reviewing and debating government legislation. Fast forward to 2024, and we can now see numerous omnibus bills put forward by this government over the past nine years.

Bill C-59 will enact certain provisions of the Fall Economic Statement which was tabled on November 21 of last year. It was referred to the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance on February 8 for pre-study. Many omnibus bills are split, and different sections are referred to different Senate committees for study, such as Bill C-69. However, this 546-page bill was referred solely to our National Finance Committee for study.

In February, the Senate approved a motion by Senator Tannas that the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance be authorized to examine and report on the practice of including non-financial matters in bills implementing provisions of budgets and economic statements. Although the stated intention of the motion is not to do away with omnibus bills, change the supply process or change our Rules, I maintain that both omnibus bills and the supply process do, indeed, need to change.

Since Bill C-59 implements certain provisions of the Fall Economic Statement, the bill cannot be studied in isolation of the statement. The statement is 130 pages long. It provides an economic and fiscal overview, disclosing details of economic and fiscal projections over a five-year period to fiscal year 2026-27. It outlines new initiatives with some details, including the estimated costs of those initiatives. The statement also provides updates to major government initiatives that have already commenced, such as the Housing Accelerator Fund, the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Plan and the additional funding of our universal health care system. The Fall Economic Statement also updates the government's Debt Management Strategy and provides a statement on gender diversity and inclusion.

As a background to Bill C-59, the Fall Economic Statement also provides a list of legislative changes required to implement the Fall Economic Statement, along with information on personal income tax measures, business income tax measures and sales and excise tax measures, which are included in the bill.

One of the most significant problems with the Fall Economic Statement is the inconsistency of the dollar estimates provided in the fiscal projections. The fiscal projections are the most important aspect of the Fall Economic Statement, as they indicate the government's financial projections, including estimated revenues, expenses and deficits for each of the seven years beginning with 2022-23. Because this information is provided in each budget and fall economic statement, readers can track how reliable the government's projections are. The estimates provided are simply not reliable based on estimates provided in earlier fiscal documents.

I had previously indicated how the estimates for public debt charges increase as the government releases subsequent fiscal documents. For example, the estimate for public debt charges for 2023-24 — that's the year just ended — increased from \$32 billion in Budget 2022 to \$43 billion in the *2022 Fall Economic Statement* over a mere six-month period. Similarly, Budget 2022 estimated program expenses for last year to be \$430 billion. Just six months later, the *2022 Fall Economic Statement* increased the \$430 billion to \$443 billion.

With the release of Budget 2024 in April, we can now see how the estimates for program expenses and debt service costs for this year, 2024-25, have increased with each budget and fall economic statement, starting with Budget 2022. Program expenses for this year were estimated at \$439 billion in Budget 2022. Then the estimate increased to \$457 billion in the fall fiscal update in 2022. Then it increased to \$463 billion, and then it increased to \$466 billion, and now it is at \$480 billion in Budget 2024.

Public debt charges show a similar trajectory. Debt service charges for this year were estimated at \$37 billion in Budget 2022. Then the estimate increased to \$42 billion, then to \$46 billion, then to \$52 billion, and now it is at \$54.1 billion in Budget 2024. This problem does not apply to just these few examples. Estimates change frequently and by significant amounts. The projected estimates in any budget document or fall economic statement are simply not reliable.

There is a similar problem with the information provided on the government's borrowing program. The Debt Management Strategy outlined in Budget 2023 indicated that the government would issue \$414 billion in treasury bills and bonds, yet the Fall Economic Statement — issued just seven months later — has increased this \$414 billion to \$485 billion, an increase of \$71 billion — with no explanation.

In other cases, numbers in the financial projections appear without adequate explanation. Costs of new initiatives are reduced using the explanation of "funds previously provisioned in the fiscal framework," without indicating where in the fiscal framework these funds are located. Similarly, estimates related to non-announced measures provide no further information or explanation.

In a recent National Finance Committee meeting, this problem was raised with the Parliamentary Budget Officer. He told the committee that he could provide no insight into these financial transactions, indicating that future fiscal documents would not add any clarity or explanation to these questions. When the government speaks about being transparent and accountable, it cannot possibly be referring to its financial documents.

The costs of many new initiatives outlined in the Fall Economic Statement are back-end loaded; that is, the majority of the costs will be incurred toward the end of the program rather than at the front end. For example, removing the GST from new co-op rental housing — called the GST New Residential Rental Property Rebate program — was estimated to cost \$4.5 billion and is now expected to cost \$150 million in 2023-24 and 2024-25. The remaining \$4.3 billion is projected to be spent after the next federal election. In fact, the Fall Economic Statement estimated that the newly announced housing programs will cost \$6.249 billion up to March 31, 2029, yet only \$140 million will be incurred in this fiscal year.

Honourable senators, Canada is in the midst of a housing crisis. There is a shortage of homes. Those with homes are renewing their mortgages at higher rates. Apartments are in short supply, and the cost of rental housing has increased significantly. As well, Canada now has tent cities within many of its towns and cities. Homelessness has also increased.

The central theme of the Fall Economic Statement is the housing crisis, with the major program being the removal of the GST from new rental housing at an estimated cost of \$4.5 billion over the next five years. In addition, Bill C-59 will enact the department of housing, infrastructure and communities act, with the objective of improving accessibility to housing.

The removal of the GST from new co-op rental housing is intended to create financial incentives to build more homes faster by removing the GST from new purpose-built rental housing projects such as apartment buildings, student housing and senior residences. Although the program was estimated to cost \$4.5 billion over five years, the government has provided no estimate of the number of homes to be constructed over the five-year period. The Minister of Finance, in addressing this question, acknowledged that the government had not estimated the number of housing units to be built with the \$4.5 billion but said that one of Canada's top housing experts had estimated that 200,000 to 300,000 homes could be built with the \$4.5 billion.

• (1720)

The GST rental rebate program was enacted in December by Bill C-56. Government officials indicated at the time that the details of the program, which were noticeably absent from the bill, would be provided at a future date in regulations. It is now June, and while there are draft regulations, there are no final regulations. Government officials recently told us that

regulations usually take 18 to 24 months after the legislation has been enacted. The regulations include the details, and we cannot understand a program until we see the details.

The Fall Economic Statement indicated that the GST rental rebate program will run until 2035, or for 12 years. However, the estimated costs provided were for six years only — to 2028-29. No estimated costs were provided for the following six years.

Subsequent to the release of the Fall Economic Statement, the government released its housing plan, *Solving the Housing Crisis*. I expected the information in the fall fiscal update on the GST rental rebate program to align with the information on the GST rental rebate program in Canada's Housing Plan.

The housing plan is expected to build 3.5 million new housing units by 2031, with 1.2 million homes being built by federal government programs. The plan indicates that the GST rental rebate program will kick-start the construction of up to 300,000 new homes. I was surprised to see the reference to 300,000 new homes in the housing plan — because the government had not used their own estimate but rather the upper bounds of an estimate provided by a third party.

In addition, the cost of the GST rental rebate program only extends to 2028-29, yet the deadline for construction of those 300,000 units is 2036 — seven years after the funding ends. And there is no estimate of the cost of the program from 2029 to 2036. Since the 300,000 new housing units do not have to be constructed until 2036, how does this fit into the government's objective to construct 1.2 million new housing units by 2031?

The numbers just don't align.

The government had no housing plan before April of this year. This was confirmed by the former president and CEO of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, or CMHC, in a Finance Committee meeting and the Minister of Housing at a Banking Committee meeting. Although the government released its National Housing Strategy in 2017 and has announced many housing programs since then, the lack of a plan significantly hinders understanding around how the various housing programs will work together to address the housing problems being experienced.

While many of the housing programs announced the number of housing units to be created in the future, there is little to no information on the homes actually built under each program. For example, the *2023 Fall Economic Statement*, which supports this bill, spends two pages outlining the homes to be built in the future under the Housing Accelerator Fund, but there is a scarcity of information as to the number of homes actually built thus far under this program, and no commitment to indicating when the housing units being funded will actually be completed.

In 2022, the Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation released a report which indicated that Canada needs an additional 3.5 million housing units by 2030. Last September, an update to the 2022 report indicated that the gap of 3.5 million housing units by 2030 still exists, although the supply gap has changed across provinces — so the numbers shifted a bit, but still total 3.5 million.

On April 12 of this year, the government finally released its housing plan entitled "*Solving the Housing Crisis: Canada's Housing Plan*." According to a press release from that day, the objective of the plan is "... to unlock 3.87 million new homes by 2031. . . ." In that press release, the Prime Minister referenced that the plan is intended to support the building of 1.2 million housing units. For the remaining 2.6 million housing units, the Prime Minister called upon all orders of government to build 800,000 housing units by 2031, indicating that the remaining 1.87 million housing units were — as the Prime Minister phrased it — "... being built anyway"

Honourable senators, Canada's Housing Plan has serious shortcomings. The plan itself does not indicate the government's housing objectives. Rather, the objectives were disclosed in the Prime Minister's press release.

The housing plan merely lists off the various housing programs funded by the federal government, their costs and the number of housing units to be built by each housing program by 2031. There is no plan with respect to how many of the 1.2 million housing units will be built each year leading up to 2031. Must we wait until 2031 for a progress report?

The government's own commitment to build 1.2 million housing units is as exceedingly ambitious as the overall objective to construct 3.87 million housing units by 2031. This means that over the next seven years, an average of 550,000 housing units must be created annually, and yet there is no requirement for the government to report on the number of housing units created by any program on an annual basis.

Even the participants in the government's own surveys on housing were of the view that until the government presented tangible, measurable information that showed that the government was making progress on the housing crisis, they would continue to feel that the federal government was on the wrong track for housing.

The CMHC recently reported on housing capacity last year, which indicates how the housing plan is progressing. They indicated that there were 650,000 workers in the construction sector last year, but housing starts only totalled 240,000, below the 400,000 that could have been built if those workers were used to capacity.

These 240,000 housing units were nowhere near the number required for the government's target of 3.87 million new homes by 2031. The CMHC indicated that so far this year, housing data to April 2024 indicated that the six-month trend in housing starts decreased 2.2%, from 243,900 units in March to 238,500 units in

April. They said the six-month trend measure is a six-month moving average of the seasonally adjusted annual rate of total housing starts for all areas of Canada.

The federal government has spent and continues to spend billions of dollars for new housing construction, loans and tax breaks, creating new programs and increasing the amounts spent on existing ones to encourage the construction of new homes, but these initiatives have not had a major impact. In fact, housing starts have declined rather than increased.

Honourable senators, Bill C-59 establishes the Department of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities. Given that the government is creating a new housing department to respond to the housing crisis, I expected the new housing act to be more robust. Excluding the transitional provisions of the bill and the consequential amendments, the proposed act is a mere three and a half pages. Noticeably absent from the proposed housing act is a requirement for an accountability report to be tabled in Parliament annually by the Minister of Housing. It was not lost on me that the official presenting the new housing act at our Finance Committee was the ADM of Policy and Results, because there is nothing in this bill that requires any reporting on results. At a minimum, the minister should be required to annually report the number of housing units actually built under each of the federal housing programs. This would give an annual update as to the progress government was making in its own goal of constructing 1.2 million housing units.

Compare this proposed act to Bill C-50 — and I am not supporting Bill C-50 when I say this; I am just outlining what is in that legislation. That bill is also before Parliament, but it requires a detailed action plan, identifies what is to be included in that action plan and requires the plan to be tabled in Parliament.

In addition, Bill C-50 requires progress reports, which must also be tabled in Parliament. Given that Canada is in the midst of a housing crisis and creating a new ministry to respond to it, it is unfathomable that the new act does not require annual reports to Parliament.

• (1730)

Honourable senators, while the government is struggling to build more housing units, Canadians are struggling with the higher costs of mortgage debt. A recent survey by the Angus Reid Institute found that the number of Canadians who say that their mortgage is very difficult to pay has doubled since last March. Specifically, in March of last year, 8% of mortgage borrowers said they're struggling. Last October, this 8% had increased to 15%, and it continues to increase.

Mortgage borrowers with variable-rate mortgages have seen their payments climb steadily since the Bank of Canada raised interest rates 10 times since March 2022 — just two years ago. Rates were raised by the Bank of Canada from 0.25% in March 2022 to 5% in September 2023. For those who took out mortgages between 2018 and 2020, their payments will most likely see significant increases when they renew their mortgages. Almost 60% of those who must renew their mortgages within the next 12 months are very worried.

Canadians who rent are facing similar concerns. Data released in March by Rentals.ca and Urbanation indicates that the average asking price for rental housing in Canada was \$2,193 per month in February — up 10.5% year over year and the fastest annual growth since September 2023.

Compared to two years ago, rents in Canada have increased 21% or, on average, \$384 per month. The Angus Reid Institute survey found that Canadians are increasingly negative about their financial situation and prospects, and 50% say they are in worse financial shape than a year ago, while 35% expect to be in worse financial shape a year from now. The Angus Reid Institute said that this data ties with the worst data seen in 13 years of data collection by them.

Similar data released by the institute in January indicated that 61% of Canadians say they cannot keep up with the cost of living — the third year in which a majority of those surveyed expressed a similar concern. Of those surveyed, 43% say they are always or often stressed about money — a 12-point increase since 2018.

Increasing mortgage payments and rising rents are contributing to this environment. There are 49% of renters who say they are worried that they won't be able to cover their housing costs within the next six months, and 32% of mortgage holders say that without reduced interest rates, they are also worried that they won't be able to cover their housing costs within the next six months.

There are 61% of Canadians who say they cannot keep up with the cost of living. Rising costs appear to be affecting lower incomes more, as we would expect, but even a majority of households earning six figures or more say they can no longer keep up. This data is consistent with the government's own data.

While Canadians with mortgages and Canadians who rent are facing difficulties, there's another group of Canadians who are facing housing challenges: It's Canadians who are homeless, some of whom are living in encampments, or tent cities, as they are commonly known. These are people who do not have any housing due to reasons such as unavailability of affordable housing.

Many Canadian cities now have tent cities or encampments. Some residents of encampments have previously used homeless shelters, but even homeless shelters are being stretched during the affordability crisis.

Last year, Canada's first Federal Housing Advocate launched a formal review of encampments in Canada, with the objective of presenting a report along with recommendations to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities to address the systemic housing issues faced by people who are homeless. In February of this year, she released a report on homeless encampments. She indicated that she had met with and heard from people who had experienced encampments across the country. Her report was designed to place them at the centre of efforts to reduce homelessness.

In her report, she said that there's been a significant rise in encampments in the last five years, and particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic. Canada has the capacity, she said, to solve

the crisis. What is lacking is sufficient political will, resources and coordination. The absence of effective coordination between many agencies, departments and jurisdictions involved limits the effectiveness of responses to the homelessness crisis. She said the national crisis calls for a national response.

In her report, the Federal Housing Advocate is recommending that the federal government establish a national encampments response plan by August 31 of this year. The report's findings and recommendations were submitted to the federal Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities on February 8, which was a few days before it was officially released, at which time the Federal Housing Advocate met with the minister.

The National Housing Strategy Act specifies that when the federal government receives the report of such a systemic review, the minister responsible for housing must respond within 120 days. We have not yet reached the 120-day deadline, so the minister's response at this time is not known.

Last week, the Parliamentary Budget Officer released a report on federal funding to address homelessness. Federal funding to prevent and reduce homelessness is almost entirely allocated to the Reaching Home program at Infrastructure Canada, and Infrastructure Canada will reside in the new housing department. That program provides funding to communities to reduce and prevent homelessness.

The report indicates actual and planned spending on homelessness programs at Infrastructure Canada by year over a 20-year period from 2008 to 2027-28. Actual and planned spending averages \$561 million a year between 2018-19 and 2027-28, and this is an increase in nominal spending of \$443 million over the prior 10 years.

Between 2019-20 and 2022-23, the funding of the Reaching Home program has supported placements in more stable housing for almost 18,000 people annually, emergency housing funds for 5,400 people annually, and core prevention services for 31,000 people annually.

Canada's National Housing Strategy initially set a target to reduce chronic homelessness by 50% by 2027-28, and, more recently, the government has committed to eliminating chronic homelessness by 2030.

The report of the Parliamentary Budget Officer concludes that the best available evidence suggests that homelessness has increased, despite the funding provided under the Reaching Home program. According to data published by Infrastructure Canada, the number of homeless people had increased by 20% relative to 2018, reaching 34,000 people, while the number of chronically homeless people had increased by 38% relative to 2018, and the number of people living in unsheltered locations had also increased by 88%.

Given these two recent reports addressing homelessness in Canada — one by the Federal Housing Advocate, and one by the Parliamentary Budget Officer — I expect Canada's housing plan will have to be revisited by the minister responsible for housing to determine whether the plan requires any changes.

Honourable senators, nine years ago, this government released a 2015 election platform called *Real Change: A New Plan for a Strong Middle Class*. They promised they would make it easier for Canadians to find an affordable place to call home. They promised they would renew federal leadership in housing, and they promised to prioritize investments in affordable housing, build more new housing units and refurbish old ones. They also promised to review home prices in high-priced markets, such as Toronto and Vancouver, to keep home ownership within reach for more Canadians.

They promised to encourage the construction of new rental housing by removing all GST on new capital investments in affordable rental housing. They did keep this promise, but they just didn't tell us that we would have to wait nine years — until we had a major housing crisis — before they would honour their promise.

Honourable senators, the Fall Economic Statement and Bill C-59 continue the government's focus on supporting a strong middle class. Since 2015, the government has focused on the middle class and those working hard to join it. The government put forward a new plan for a strong middle class, growth for the middle class and economic security for the middle class. Each budget and fiscal update released by this government was focused on the middle class: growing the middle class, building a strong middle class, equality and growth for a strong middle class, investing in the middle class, and *A Made-in-Canada Plan: Strong Middle Class, Affordable Economy, Healthy Future*.

Even the fall fiscal updates were focused on the middle class. Chapter 2 of the *2023 Fall Economic Statement*, which was released just before Christmas, focuses on supporting a strong middle class. We even had a Minister of Middle Class Prosperity at one point in time. However, despite the government's focus on the middle class, the middle class is not doing well under this government.

Former finance minister Bill Morneau — this government's first finance minister — was consistently asked in our National Finance Committee meetings to define the "middle class" since it was the intended recipient of the government's many programs. Unfortunately, he did not know. When Mona Fortier, the former Minister of Middle Class Prosperity, was asked to define "middle class," she also did not know.

• (1740)

I could not understand how a government could know if its middle class was growing if it did not define the criteria to determine who was in the middle class. This information was needed to determine who was in the middle class at the beginning of the initiative, and updated data would be used to determine whether or not the middle class was growing.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, or OECD, has released data that shows Canada's middle class is actually shrinking and not growing, despite this government's programs over the past nine years focusing on the middle class. The OECD profile said that Canada was losing its middle class relative to the rest of the developed world, and that Canada's share of middle-income earners has shrunk more than

most others. The OECD said the number of Canadians living in middle-income households was 58% compared to the OECD average of 61%.

In a 2020 poll by Polaris Strategy + Insight, 79% of respondents expressed confidence that their children would reach the middle class through hard work. In 2023, just three years later, that 79% had dropped to 52%.

Honourable senators, the shrinking of the middle class is just one indication that Canada is becoming poorer compared to its peers. Per capita GDP in Canada has been trending downward for four decades, accelerating under this government. While the government likes to tell us that total GDP is growing, so is our population, and each person's share of that GDP is shrinking. Adjusting for inflation, each Canadian's share of the GDP is actually lower than it was in 2014. In 1981, Canada's per capita GDP was 92% of that of the U.S. We were sixth among OECD countries in GDP per capita. By 2022, our per capita GDP, compared to the U.S., had fallen from 92% in 1981 to 73%, and we have fallen from sixth place in GDP in 1981 per capita to fifteenth place. Countries that were poorer than us in 1981 have moved ahead and are now richer than us, and we are moving toward being one of the poorer countries.

Budget 2022 told us — this is in Minister Freeland's budget book — that “. . . the OECD projects that Canada will have the lowest per-capita GDP growth among its member countries . . .” from 2020 to 2060.

Honourable senators, there have been numerous media articles with references to Canada's GDP growth and the decline in Canada's GDP per person, and I offer my comments on these economic indicators.

The real value of final goods and services produced in the economy during the period of inflation-adjusted GDP is the most widely used measure of overall economic activity. GDP is not the only indicator of economic performance. Measures of business investment and labour market outcomes are also important indicators of economic performance, and many of those are included in the minister's budget documents.

The government cites GDP growth in many of its fiscal documents, including the *2023 Fall Economic Statement*, which supports this Bill C-59 that we are debating today. The *2023 Fall Economic Statement* includes data on real GDP growth, both historical and projected, as well as data on the labour market. In fact, the Fall Economic Statement indicates that between the first quarter of 2022 and the second quarter of 2023, Canada had the highest real GDP growth among G7 countries. The G7 countries include Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the U.K. and the U.S. In addition, between 2000 and 2023 Canada had the second-highest rate of GDP growth in the G7.

GDP is usually measured in aggregate or per person, and many economists are of the opinion that GDP per person is a more useful measure of a country's living standards when comparing data over time or among countries. When I say this, I say it as an

accountant because I'm not an economist, although I've been reading to try to become familiar with what's happening in the economy.

While Canada's GDP growth in aggregate appears favourable when compared to other G7 countries, it had among the lowest growth rates when measuring GDP per person. In fact, when measuring GDP growth per person, Canada had the lowest growth rate in the G7. The Fraser Institute recently released a study in which they carried out a very detailed analysis of GDP per person over each of the 40 quarterly periods between 1985 and 2023. In other words, they analyzed data from 40 fiscal quarters in detail. Their analysis focused on the relative depth and length of each decline in GDP per person, as well as the length of recovery. Their analysis also compared the duration and extent of real GDP per person growth between the various periods of decline.

Their analysis indicated the following: Over the 40-year period there were nine periods of consecutive quarters of declining real GDP per person, followed by subsequent periods of growth. The 12-quarter decline from the second quarter of 1989 to the second quarter of 1992 was the longest period of decline over the entire 40 years analyzed, during which the GDP per person declined by 5.3%. The declines in the fourth quarter of 2014 to the second quarter of 2016 and from the second quarter of 2022 to the fourth quarter of 2023, which just ended, are tied for the second-longest decline of six quarters each. For the period between 2014 and 2016, real GDP per person decreased by 1.5%.

For the more recent period, between the second quarter of 2022 and the fourth quarter of 2023, there was a decline of 3.4% in GDP per person. I wrote here that the data is not yet available to determine whether there will be a continuing decline in 2024, but the information was actually released this morning. However, the fourth quarter of 2023 declined 0.8% from the third quarter of 2023, so it cannot be assumed that the decline in GDP per person ended in the fourth quarter of 2023. The fourth-largest decline occurred between the second quarter of 2019 and the second quarter of 2020, when there was a 13.6% decline.

The analysis concluded that since the middle of 2019 — that's the second quarter of 2019 — Canada has experienced one of the longest and deepest declines in real GDP per person over the last four decades. There was a brief recovery in the second quarter of 2022, but it appears that it was simply a brief interruption of what seems to be a larger decline. For 16 of 18 quarters between the second quarter of 2019 and the fourth quarter of 2023, real GDP per person has been below the level recorded in the second quarter of 2019. It is said that the decline since the second quarter of 2019 represents one of the longest and deepest declines in GDP per person since 1985, exceeded in both respects only by the decline in recovery that occurred from the second quarter of 1989 to the third quarter of 1994. However, the decline since 2019 is ongoing and may exceed in length the downturn of the late 1980s and early 1990s.

This morning, I got an email that said they now have the numbers for the first quarter of 2024. Inflation-adjusted GDP per person actually fell 0.2% during the first quarter of 2024. It said that the reason the economy is growing while living standards are falling is due to the rate of economic growth not being fast

enough to account for the growth in population. During the first three months of 2024, the economy grew by 0.4%, while the population grew by 0.6%.

I'm going to move on to universal health care, because the fall fiscal update provides an overview of the health care funding to provinces and territories over the next 10 years, including incremental funding over the levels provided in 2022-23.

• (1750)

Health care funding provided in 2022-23 was \$47 billion, increasing to \$52 billion this year and increasing in the future to \$62.8 billion in 2028-29. Despite historic levels of spending on health care, 6.5 million Canadians do not have a doctor, and this number is expected to increase.

Emergency rooms are full, and we have all heard stories of people dying in emergency rooms while waiting for health care. Many Canadians are wait-listed for medical procedures and surgeries, and many people are living in pain while waiting in the queue for health care.

A study last year indicated that Canada spends more on health care than the majority of high-income Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, or OECD, countries with universal health care systems. The study compared the cost and performance of 30 universal health care systems in high-income countries. After adjusting for age — that is the percentage of the population over 65 years old — Canada ranks highest for expenditure as a percentage of GDP and ninth highest for health care expenditures per capita.

Data from the study also suggests that Canada has fewer human capital medical resources than many peer jurisdictions that spend comparable amounts of money on health care. For example, we have fewer positions and fewer medical technologies than the average high-income OECD countries with universal health care for which comparable data is available.

In summary, the data suggests that although Canada has one of the most expensive universal access health care systems in the OECD, its performance is modest to poor.

I wanted to talk about a poll that was commissioned by the Montreal Economic Institute. I see my time is short, so I'm going to speak fast.

Government continues to explain the virtues of Canada's universal health care system, saying that the promise of access to our universal health care system is at the heart of Canada's social safety net. The poll included a sample of 1,116 Canadian residents aged 18 years and over with an over sample of residents in Quebec who were interviewed between March 22 and March 27 of this year. The weighting of quotas according to age, gender, region and language were employed to ensure the sample's composition reflects the overall population, according to the latest census.

Here are the key findings, and I thought this was interesting: Less than half of Canadians — 48% — are satisfied with their provincial health care system. Satisfaction is lowest among Atlantic Canadians at 30%. Seven in ten Canadians believe that

private entrepreneurs can deliver health care services faster than the hospitals managed by the government, with 77% of Quebec residents thinking this way.

Only a quarter of Canadians — 25% — think that the additional monies injected into the health care system over the past 10 years — that's billions of dollars — has led to improvements, and 33% have said that the system has actually worsened.

Half of Canadians would like increased access to health care provided by independent entrepreneurs, and more than half of Canadians agree that the rate of spending in their provincial health care system is unsustainable.

Honourable senators, private health care has arrived in Canada, regardless of whether we agree with it or not. Our universal health care system is on the brink of collapse — some people say it has actually collapsed — with a shortage of doctors, nurses and health care professionals. Canadians seeking health care are tired of queuing up.

While many Canadians will be able to pay for private health care, many Canadians languish on long waiting lists and will not be able to afford private care.

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): I have a few words to say on this. I spent a bit of time preparing. I may not take questions.

The *2023 Fall Economic Statement* provides an update on the implementation of the Canada-wide early learning and child care program, which was announced in the 2021 budget. Budget 2021 included a \$30 billion commitment to establish a \$10-a-day child care program within five years. The federal government negotiated with each province and territory and negotiated a unique agreement with Quebec — which had a program already — to jointly determine the funding and goals. These negotiations resulted in a Canada-wide early learning and child care agreement with each province and territory.

Two of the commitments of the program are to create 250,000 new child care spaces across the country by March of 2026 as well as the hiring of another 40,000 early learning childhood educators, also by March of 2026.

In addition to providing an update of the program by province and territory, the Fall Economic Statement also discloses separately the annual cost of the program up to and including fiscal year 2028-29. While the Fall Economic Statement indicates some provinces and territories are already delivering \$10-a-day child care, not all families are able to access \$10-a-day child care spaces. In fact, many families are unable to access any child care at all, leading to a crisis across the country in many places which are now being referred to as "child care deserts."

Child care waiting lists have ballooned across the country as demand is far outpacing the creation of new spaces. In addition, operators of child care centres in some provinces are threatening to pull out of the program or close their centres, saying that

they're going bankrupt trying to make ends meet. They say that the federal-provincial agreements which limit the fees they can charge are not providing enough funding to cover costs.

While funding to cover operating costs is a major problem in many areas, staffing daycares is another issue. Many child care programs are operating at a reduced capacity and are limiting their enrolment because they cannot recruit enough early childhood education workers. The staffing crisis is a major obstacle to expanding the child care sector and meeting the objectives of the new early learning and child care program.

An analysis by Cardus, a public policy group, said that the roll out of the child care expansion programs in British Columbia, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick have all been slow to start and have an underwhelming result. In its first year, New Brunswick created only 300 new child care spaces out of the 3,400 additional spaces, which is their five-year target.

The Fall Economic Statement says that more than 50,000 new spaces have already been created across Canada. However, we are now into the fourth year of the five-year program, and the objective by the federal government was to create 250,000 child care spaces by March of 2026 — less than two years away.

Budget 2024 includes \$1 billion for a child care expansion loan program. However, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, or CMHC, officials have indicated that the loan program has yet to be established, and loans are not expected to be available until the next fiscal year.

It remains to be seen whether many of the child care centres will survive their financial difficulties or whether the promised loan program will provide the financial assistance needed. Given the problems being encountered, it is highly doubtful that 250,000 child care spaces will be created by March of 2026, nor will there be 40,000 new child care educators.

Earlier this month, the Bank of Canada released its *Financial Stability Report—2024*. This report assesses the stability of the Canadian financial system. The report concludes that Canada's financial system remains resilient. However, risks to financial stability remain, and the following summarizes some of the concerns highlighted in the bank's report, which are symptomatic of the affordability crisis.

• (1800)

Although the report indicates that most households are adapting to higher interest rates, some are showing signs of financial stress. The share of borrowers without a mortgage who are behind on their credit card and auto loan payments have returned since the pandemic to more normal levels or have surpassed them. Signs of stress are concentrated primarily among households without a mortgage, and survey data suggests that renters are most affected.

As I mentioned in my earlier comments — or as somebody else did — the cost of rental accommodations has increased significantly over the past few years, and this is impacting householders' ability to repay their debts.

The rate of arrears on credit cards and auto loans for households without a mortgage, which includes renters and outright homeowners, are back to pre-pandemic levels and continue to increase. However, arrears on credit cards and auto loans for households with a mortgage have remained low and stable. Borrowers without a mortgage who carry a credit card balance of at least 80% of their credit limit are significantly more likely to miss a future payment. Over the past year, the share of these borrowers has continued to increase.

For those holding mortgages, about half of them have yet to face higher rates. They will generally face a larger payment increase than those who have already renewed. Households that took out mortgages in 2021 and early 2022, when house prices were close to their peak and the mortgage rates were very low, will experience the largest increase. Regardless of whether a household rents or holds a mortgage, both categories will be faced with financial pressures.

The increasing stress that borrowers face have not significantly impacted large banks, but some smaller mortgage lenders have seen a sharp increase in credit arrears. Mortgage holders will also face pressure as they refinance their existing mortgages at higher prices.

Honourable senators, the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions, or OSFI, is an independent agency of the Government of Canada responsible for supervising federally regulated financial institutions and pension plans to contribute to public confidence in Canada's financial system. It regulates and supervises more than 400 financial institutions and 1,200 pension plans.

On May 22, 2024, the office released its Annual Risk Outlook for 2024-25, providing an overview of the current risk environment and identifying the top risks facing Canada's financial system. While the outlook focuses on a number of risks, including risks from commercial real estate lending as well as corporate and commercial debt, which remain a significant exposure for institutions, my comments focus on the risks associated with mortgage debt and the impact that mortgage debt has on the affordability crisis affecting Canadian families.

The Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions expects that elevated interest rates and market volatility will result in increased mortgage renewal refinancing risk, higher borrowing costs, decreased consumer spending and decreased business investment. The Canadian labour market at this time remains relatively strong, but the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions cautions that if the labour market weakens, it could have a material impact on the credit quality of mortgages and other consumer debt.

There are signs that higher mortgage payments are taking up a larger part of some households' incomes, leading to increases in the number of borrowers not being able to make payments on other loans and debts. Of the mortgages outstanding as of February 2024, 76% will be renewing by the end of 2026. The payment shock caused by their higher, revised payments will be significant for homeowners who took out mortgages when interest rates were lower in 2020 to 2022. Households which are more heavily leveraged and have mortgages with variable rates but fixed payments will feel the shock more acutely. OSFI

expects payment increases to lead to a higher incidence of residential mortgage loans falling into arrears or defaults. Mortgages that have already experienced payment increases due to renewal or product type, such as adjustable-rate mortgages, are already showing higher rates of non-performance.

During his appearance at the Banking Committee, the Superintendent of Financial Institutions has emphasized on many occasions that variable-rate mortgages with fixed payments are of specific concern. Variable-rate mortgages with fixed payments make up a significant portion of outstanding residential mortgages in Canada. At 15%, some of these mortgages are negatively amortizing, meaning the mortgage payments are no longer sufficient to pay the interest or the principal. As a result, the shortfall is added to the principal of the mortgage, and new mortgage payments will be based on the now-increased principal.

The Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions indicates that it will continue to engage with industry to ensure that institutions actively assess the risks posed by variable-rate mortgages with fixed payments. This would include:

... ensuring that adequate provisions and capital are in place to offset the increased credit risk, as well as promoting early intervention (prior to renewal) with borrowers vulnerable to payment shock.

Honourable senators, since the government released its *2023 Fall Economic Statement* last November, it has released two reports on Canada's debt.

The government has seen recurring deficits each and every year since it was elected in 2015. As a result, it has to borrow to finance the expenditures in excess of government revenues. I think they are still waiting for this to balance itself. That wasn't Senator Marshall's comment. That was my comment.

Included in each and every budget and fall economic statement is an update of the government's Debt Management Strategy, which describes, among other things, planned borrowing activities, the sources and amounts of borrowing, how those borrowings will be used and the outlook for public debt charges.

The Fall Economic Statement provides an update to the Debt Management Strategy published in last year's budget. In its strategy, the government is reporting an increase in the issuance of bonds and treasury bills from \$414 billion to \$485 billion, an increase of \$71 billion. No reason for the increase is provided. The government is also reporting an increase in public debt charges for the last fiscal year — that is, 2023-24 — from the \$43.9 billion published in Budget 2023 to the \$46.5 billion now being reported in the Fall Economic Statement.

The Fall Economic Statement is also reporting an increase in the public debt charges for this fiscal year — that is, 2024-25 — from the \$46 billion in last year's Budget 2023 to the \$52.4 billion in the *2023 Fall Economic Statement*. With the recent tabling of the new budget, for 2024-25, the government has once again increased the estimated cost of debt servicing charges for this year to \$54.1 billion.

To summarize, debt servicing costs for this year have increased over a 12-month period from \$46 billion in last year's budget to \$52.4 billion in the Fall Economic Statement and then to \$54.1 billion in this year's budget. That is an \$8.1 billion increase over a 12-month period, which is 18%.

• (1810)

All of the estimated debt servicing costs have shown significant increases. Budget 2023 estimated that debt servicing costs for 2027-28 would be \$50.3 billion. One year later, the \$50.3 billion has increased to a staggering \$60.9 billion.

An Hon. Senator: Wow.

Senator Plett: Estimates for debt servicing continually increase as the government releases each new fiscal document. In addition to providing an update on its debt management strategy in each budget in the form of the fall economic statement, there is a statutory requirement in the Financial Administration Act to table a debt management report each year within 30 days of tabling of the Public Accounts.

Unfortunately, the government does not release the debt management report until the last day, the statutory deadline, in which case the debt management report was released before Christmas — the data was nine months old.

That report indicated that, as of March of 2023, the government's market debt was \$1.259 trillion, including the market debt of Crown corporations. This \$1.259 trillion increases to \$1.574 trillion.

An Hon. Senator: Wow.

Senator Plett: Tabling a borrowing authority report once every three years is also a statutory requirement under the borrowing authority.

I'm getting depressed.

The most recent borrowing authority report was tabled on May 3 of this year. The Borrowing Authority Act specifies a maximum debt limit for the government; it currently stands at \$1.831 trillion. This report indicates a more current total borrowing of \$1.710 trillion as of March 23, 2024.

Given that government borrowing is nearing its ceiling, we have been expecting legislation that proposes to increase the ceiling. This increase is included in Bill C-69, which proposes to raise the government's debt ceiling from \$1.831 trillion to more than \$2 trillion.

An Hon. Senator: Oh, my goodness.

Senator Plett: Colleagues, this is a depressing scenario.

I want to thank Senator Marshall for the tremendous work she did and for the help she gave me in preparing my speech.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Plett: As I am sure Senator Marshall would agree, this is something we cannot support. We would certainly encourage everyone to take another look at this. We would be prepared to vote against this today. I will let the chips fall where they may.

Thank you, colleagues.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Pamela Wallin: I will put my question to Senator Plett; even though he is no Senator Marshall, we'll give him the opportunity to answer.

I have a follow-up question to those staggering numbers. We asked the Governor of the Bank of Canada about this at the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Commerce and the Economy. The same week that the budget was released, also quietly, the new borrowing authority numbers were uncovered. That was up, again, 16% to \$2.13 trillion.

Is it your understanding that the borrowing authority increase indicates the intention of government to continue to spend by that amount over and above the budgetary numbers that were laid out in both the fall economic statement and the budget?

You could look to Senator Marshall.

Senator Plett: Thank you for that question, Senator Wallin. It reminds me of the question that Senator Cuzner asked the Minister of Fisheries earlier: he lobbed it out there and let her bat it out of the park.

This government has shown clearly, as was illustrated in my and Senator Marshall's remarks, that this government has no ability to rein anything in. Our Minister of Finance has shown us that. They have gone on a spending spree that will continue.

I know this is an old cliché and an old saying: The budget will balance itself. I think the Prime Minister believes that, because he has never balanced a bank book in his life, and he is not about to start now.

Senator Wallin: Thank you. I did notice that others in your group, including Senator Marshall, nodded in the affirmative when asked the very specific question I posed, which was whether this indicates that spending will increase by \$2.13 trillion; does the borrowing authority indicate that?

Senator Plett: I'm sorry. Yes, I would suggest that is what it indicates.

Hon. Frances Lankin: Senator Plett, will you take another question?

Senator Plett: If it is an easy one.

Senator Lankin: An easy one you asked for; an easy one I will deliver.

I want to remark that the speech you delivered was informative, balanced and reasonable. In saying that, I thank Senator Marshall for her ongoing work in this chamber. I think of her as a resource for all of us, and I truly appreciate that.

My question, Senator Plett, is, would you consider asking Senator Marshall to hold the editing pen on all of your speeches in the future?

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Plett: Well, Senator Lankin, I also appreciate Senator Marshall. I can only hope and pray that Senator Marshall will be in this august chamber in 2025 when the right people will be on the other side of the chamber and Senator Marshall will, indeed, be able to help the Pierre Poilievre government balance the books, which this government has never been able to do.

I always cherish Senator Marshall's input in anything and everything I say in the Senate. Thank you.

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

Hon. Senators: Question.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Some Hon. Senators: No.

An Hon. Senator: On division.

The Hon. the Speaker: On division?

Some Hon. Senators: No.

The Hon. the Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say "yea."

Some Hon. Senators: Yea.

The Hon. the Speaker: All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

Some Hon. Senators: Nay.

The Hon. the Speaker: In my opinion the "yeas" have it.

And two honourable senators having risen:

The Hon. the Speaker: I see senators rising.

Is there an agreement on a bell?

An Hon. Senator: Fifteen minutes.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Saint-Germain, Senator Downe, is there agreement on a 15-minute bell?

Senator Downe: Yes.

The Hon. the Speaker: A 15-minute bell, Senator Dalphond?

Senator Dalphond: Yes.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

The Hon. the Speaker: The vote will be at 6:33. Call in the senators.

• (1830)

Motion agreed to and bill read second time on the following division:

YEAS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Al Zaibak	MacAdam
Anderson	McBean
Arnot	McCallum
Bellemare	McNair
Boniface	McPhedran
Boyer	Mégie
Burey	Miville-Dechéne
Cardozo	Moncion
Clement	Moodie
Cordy	Omidvar
Cormier	Osler
Cotter	Oudar
Coyle	Pate
Dalphond	Patterson
Dasko	Petitclerc
Deacon (<i>Nova Scotia</i>)	Petten
Downe	Prosper
Duncan	Quinn
Forest	Ravalia
Francis	Ringuette
Galvez	Robinson
Gerba	Ross
Gold	Saint-Germain
Harder	Simons
Hartling	Smith
Kingston	Tannas
Klyne	Verner
Kutcher	White
LaBoucane-Benson	Woo—59
Lankin	

NAYS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Ataullahjan	Oh
Batters	Plett
Carignan	Poirier
Housakos	Richards
MacDonald	Seidman
Manning	Wallin
Marshall	Wells—15
Martin	

ABSTENTIONS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Nil

• (1840)

[*Translation*]

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

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

(On motion of Senator Moncion, bill referred to the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance.)

PUBLIC SECTOR INTEGRITY BILL

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

On Other Business, Commons Public Bills, Second Reading, Order No. 1:

Second reading of Bill C-290, An Act to amend the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Conflict of Interest Act.

Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond: Honourable senators, I note that this item is at day 15. Therefore, with leave of the Senate, I ask that consideration of this item be postponed until the next sitting of the Senate.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Debate postponed until the next sitting of the Senate.)

RULES, PROCEDURES AND THE RIGHTS OF PARLIAMENT

FIFTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the consideration of the fifth report (interim) of the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament, entitled *Equity between recognized parties and recognized parliamentary groups*, tabled in the Senate on March 9, 2023.

Hon. Diane Bellemare: Honourable senators, I note that this item is at day 15. 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]

INTERNAL ECONOMY, BUDGETS AND ADMINISTRATION

TENTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Moncion, seconded by the Honourable Senator Cormier, for the adoption of the tenth report of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration, entitled *Senate Budget 2024-25*, presented in the Senate on December 15, 2023.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I note that this item is on day 15, so I move the adjournment of the debate for the balance of my time.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE EFFECTS OF IDENTITY FRAUD ON FURTHER MARGINALIZING INDIGENOUS PEOPLE—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator McCallum, seconded by the Honourable Senator Campbell:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples be authorized to examine and report on the misrepresentation of Indigenous ancestry, inadequate

self-identification standards and the profound effects that such identity fraud has on further marginalizing Indigenous people, in particular Indigenous women; and

That the committee submit its final report no later than December 31, 2023.

Hon. Leo Housakos: Honourable senators, I note that this item is at day 15, and I'm not ready to speak at this time. Therefore, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 4-4(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.)

THE SENATE

MOTION TO URGE GOVERNMENT TO RECOGNIZE THE ERASURE OF AFGHAN WOMEN AND GIRLS FROM PUBLIC LIFE AS GENDER APARTHEID ADOPTED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Ataullahjan, seconded by the Honourable Senator Marshall:

That the Senate call on the Government of Canada to recognize the erasure of Afghan women and girls from public life as gender apartheid.

Hon. Rebecca Patterson: Honourable senators, I stand today to join my colleagues Senator Omidvar and Senator Coyle to speak in support of Senator Ataullahjan's Motion No. 139, which calls on the Government of Canada to recognize the Taliban regime's erasure of Afghan women and girls from public life as gender apartheid.

I am privileged to be able to stand here today because it was only as recent as 1929 that Canadian women were found to be persons under the law — less than 100 years ago — and could be considered eligible to be appointed to the Senate and serve Canadians in this capacity.

I'm humbled because I am one of 53 women currently in the Senate out of 139 women who have ever been appointed since 1867.

As senators, we have a responsibility and an obligation to amplify the voices of those who are not heard, those who are under-represented, the marginalized and the overlooked. But more importantly, we can speak for those who do not have voices.

In the context of peace and security, giving women and girls the ability to fully engage in society and engage our voice at all levels of decision making helps to ensure a more peaceful and prosperous future for all.

Honourable senators, the women and girls of Afghanistan under the current Taliban regime have been barred from engagement in society and do not have a voice at all. These amazing women who — not five years ago — were integrated and engaged in all areas of their communities and societies have now been silenced.

Worse than that, women and girls in Afghanistan are being denied more than just their voice; they are being denied even the most basic rights and are barred from participating in civil society. They are being erased. Their very existence reduced to that of property and a restrictive life that focuses on child-bearing and servitude.

I want to share something with you. In April, I attended the International Forum for Women, Peace and Security in Kosovo. Various political and cultural leaders, academics, experts and members of various advocacy groups came together to discuss present and future threats to women's security around the globe.

At this women, peace and security forum, a group of Afghan women were presented with the Presidential Medal of Courage by the President of the Republic of Kosovo, Dr. Vjosa Osmani Sadriu, recognizing the courage and activism of all Afghan women.

Among those present was Zahra Nader, an Afghan-Canadian journalist and editor-in-chief of *Zan Times*, a digital platform that covers human rights violations in Afghanistan focusing on women, the 2SLGBTQI+ community and environmental issues. She spoke of the broader delegation of Afghan women who received the award — all advocates for their rights in Afghanistan. They were invited to attend, but they were prevented from attending to accept the award in recognition of their work.

They were Adela Yadegar of Forum for Afghan Women, Mahnaz Baluch of the International Organisation for Migration, Negina Ahmadi of the Just for Afghan Capacity and Knowledge Institute and Freshta Yaqubi of the Organisation for Sustainable Aid in Afghanistan.

They were denied permission to travel to the summit. Do you know why? Because they did not have an appropriate male escort, as decreed by the Taliban regime and enforced by the Ministry for Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice. Even those who did manage to attend were still escorted by men, and thankfully these men were allies.

My fellow senators have focused very much on the different challenges that Afghan women and girls face, and I am now going to focus my comments on health care.

The recipients at this awards ceremony spoke about how under the Taliban women's and girls' access to basic medical care is extremely limited because of the requirement that they only be seen by women health care providers. But women have largely been barred from providing these services, thus creating a circular problem of access to health care.

Girls are prevented from attending schools after the age of 11, denying an estimated 20 million women and girls an education. Generations of women are barred from university studies.

With an education that ends at 11 years of age, they face insurmountable barriers to accessing higher education even if it is desirable. Denied access to education, and without trained women nurses and doctors, where will future women health care providers come from? Better yet, how will women and girls be cared for?

The systemic exclusion of women from actively participating in health care while decreeing that women and girls can only access health care from women health care providers is how you basically and effectively deny these services and exert control over women. This will only lead to increased instances of otherwise preventable diseases and will result in premature death for women and girls. Can any of us imagine oneself, one's mother, sister, wife or daughter being faced with this dire situation?

Honourable senators, as I have previously shared, I spent 13 months in Kabul in 2011 to 2012 as part of the Canadian contribution to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO, training mission in Afghanistan. I had the honour of working very closely with many esteemed and dedicated Afghan Army doctors, nurses and other health care professionals, both men and women. I led a team to assist them in re-establishing their medical and dental education training system, which was once a leader in that part of the world.

• (1850)

While there, I heard how, under the previous Taliban regime, that a once well-functioning medical education system was subjected to destruction whether it was the expulsion of women students; the destruction of medical textbooks that had any images of people or human patients in them; the obliteration of any training dedicated to women's health care needs; the barring of the use of anatomy labs for education purposes; and, yes, it included the requirement for men or religious leaders to have the final say on whether certain life-saving medical procedures should proceed, which included Caesarean sections, and yes, women needlessly died then and we're starting to see it happen again.

Further, gender-based violence continues unchecked with impunity under the Taliban regime. Victims of gender-based sexual violence and their families are shamed, shunned and vilified under Taliban rule. Afghan women and girls have no recourse to justice, and, worse, they are often imprisoned themselves if they complain or even try to get away.

Faced with being restricted from public spaces, denied the means for economic self-support and prevented from seeking justice, many Afghan women and girls are driven to take their own lives, out of despair and desperation.

In the time since the end of the previous Taliban regime and previous civil war, Afghan women were slowly but surely engaging in and having access to health care, justice and decision making they needed. There was hope for a better future, and it was of their own making.

But that hope is gone with this oppressive regime. I see it in the eyes of my new Afghan family here in Canada who were able to leave the country when Kabul fell, and I hear it in the stories

of their families left behind. Over 20 years of progress in Afghan women's human rights, engagement in society and empowerment continue to erode and be erased. As a result, more Afghan women and girls will live in quiet despair and they will die needlessly.

Canada has a policy framework that already exists to support this motion. By doing so, the government would be in keeping with Canada's third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, where there is an objective that very clearly states a focus on:

. . . reducing sexual and gender-based violence — including online — in conflict, post-conflict and humanitarian contexts, and ensuring perpetrators are held accountable . . . in Canada or abroad . . .

Therefore, I believe it is incumbent on the Government of Canada to acknowledge the ongoing gender apartheid in Afghanistan, consistent with our commitments. We cannot allow this to be normal. We cannot ignore the coordinated attack by the Taliban on the human rights of Afghan women and girls.

A country stripped of the voices of women and girls can become a radicalized country, affecting not just regional but also global security.

Honourable senators, symbols, words — this motion — can serve to raise awareness of our sisters' suffering in Afghanistan under Taliban rule. We must add our voices to the international condemnation of the Taliban policies of gender apartheid, and we can join together to foster hope for all these women and girls of Afghanistan who are resisting with every fibre of their being.

In closing, I'd like to go back to my recent experience in Kosovo. In her remarks, President Osmani described the women of Afghanistan and their struggle with a passage from the Afghan novelist Khaled Hosseini:

The mountains might crumble, the rivers might dry up, but you are a woman, and you will stand, you will endure.

Thank you, honourable senators, and thank you, Senator Ataullahjan, for this very important motion.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Marilou McPhedran: I want to acknowledge that I come to this chamber from Manitoba, in Treaty 1 territory and the homeland of the Red River Métis Nation, and that the Parliament of Canada is on the unceded territories of the Algonquin and Anishinaabeg First Nations.

On March 12, about two months ago, representatives from 22 United Nations, or UN, member states, as well as civil society representatives and several Canadian senators, attended a groundbreaking panel during the 68th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, or CSW 68, in New York on gendered expressions of crimes against humanity, specifically those occurring in Afghanistan under Taliban rule.

More than 100 Taliban decrees have systematically obliterated Afghan women's status, effectively erasing women and girls from public life. This systemic attack on women's rights is a form of what we now understand to be gender apartheid.

Senators, today, my comments are based on my decades of work as an international human rights lawyer and 25 years of working with Afghan women refugees. I also rely on the excellent research and advocacy spearheaded by Canada's Feminist Forum for Afghanistan, chaired by former Afghan cabinet minister Nargis Nehan, now settled in Canada. The forum convened a standing-room-only panel at CSW 68 on gender apartheid, which I just mentioned. More recently, some of you attended the gender apartheid panel on May 21, co-hosted with the forum and with Senators Ataullahjan, Omidvar and myself and members of Parliament Salma Zahid, Garnett Genuis and Ali Ehsassi.

Canada's Feminist Forum for Afghanistan is a project of the Women's Regional Network, which focuses on Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, founded by Canadian philanthropist Patricia Cooper. Other important contributors to this growing initiative include the Atlantic Council; the Global Justice Center; Peace Direct; the International Civil Society Action Network, or ICAN, which has been chaired by our own Senator Mobina Jaffer; and the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, of which I am a founding board member.

Here is a proposed definition that you might find helpful: Gender apartheid is a system of governance based on laws and policies which impose systematic segregation of women from men and systematically excludes women from public spaces and spheres.

At CSW 68 in March, senators learned more about the growing consensus among UN experts, legal scholars and international civil society experts that gender apartheid must be recognized, codified and incorporated into international legal mechanisms to end the impunity currently enjoyed by the Taliban and other perpetrators.

Codification of gender apartheid would enhance the capacity of states to exert political and legal pressure on perpetrators to reverse course. The UN Working Group on Discrimination Against Women and Girls recently noted:

This recognition would not only honour the aim of the apartheid prohibitions in general, but would also be a crucial step towards respecting and asserting the centrality of gender equality.

International treaty protections usually come out of what can be a long process of multilateral consultation and negotiation. Progress is being made. UN member states are exchanging views on draft articles presented by the International Law Commission on preventing and punishing crimes against humanity. These drafts, currently before the General Assembly's Sixth Committee, could form the basis for a new convention and present a unique opportunity to correct this major gap in international law, specifically to address instances of systematic oppression of women and girls occurring or likely to occur around the world.

Those 100-plus decrees target Afghan women and girls who have not been able to escape the Taliban, systematically reducing many to subhuman existence, restricting and denying fundamental rights to work, to education, to freedom of movement, to religious practice, to assembly, to health care — rights and dignities that we take for granted here in Canada.

Gender apartheid is not just about repression of women and girls. Just as the original *talib* were indoctrinated to detest and oppress females, in Afghanistan today, men and boys are forcefully indoctrinated to impose in their own communities and families the draconian restrictions on half their population as normal, as necessary. This is gender apartheid in practice, but it is not formally recognized under international law. The absence of such a law is a major gap in human rights.

The 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court does —

• (1900)

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Honourable senators, it is now seven o'clock. Pursuant to rule 3-3(1), I am obliged to leave the chair until eight o'clock, when we will resume, unless it is your wish, honourable senators, to not see the clock.

Is it agreed to not see the clock?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Senator McPhedran, please continue.

Senator McPhedran: That's a very pleasant surprise. Thank you very much.

An Hon. Senator: Just because it is you.

Senator McPhedran: The 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court does codify a form of apartheid, but it focuses on the race-based apartheid that was enforced in South Africa. An expanded clause could read:

. . . “the crime of apartheid” means inhumane acts of a character similar to those referred to in paragraph 1, committed in the context of an institutionalized regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over any other racial group or groups and committed with the intention of maintaining that regime

This proposed definition is included as Article 2 of the *Draft articles on Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Humanity*, which is presently before the UN Sixth Committee.

There is growing consensus among UN experts, legal scholars, international civil society and activists that gender apartheid must be recognized, codified and incorporated into international legal mechanisms. Doing so would enhance the capacity of states to exert political and legal pressure to hold perpetrators accountable for their heinous crimes. Codification of gender apartheid will

assist victims and survivors in holding perpetrators to account for the totality of crimes committed against them, and assist states by providing the currently missing framework necessary to take coordinated, legal action in order to exert pressure on gender apartheid states to stop violating the rights of women and girls.

Honourable colleagues, let us add our voices to the many who are calling out the perpetrators of gender apartheid through our support for Senator Salma Ataullahjan's Motion No. 139. I assure you that this action of the Senate of Canada will strengthen the movement toward codified legal recognition of gender apartheid as a crime against humanity. Our support for this motion is an expression of respect for the essential need for gender equality as a priority in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals for our planet.

Today, let us stand with women and girls silenced and persecuted in countries like Afghanistan and Iran. Thank you. *Meegwetçh.*

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I think it's about time that we have at least one man speak to this great motion that we have here. So far, I have only heard women speak. If somebody else has, I apologize. I did ask my office, so we'll take that up with them when I get there.

I rise today to speak to my colleague Senator Ataullahjan's critically important motion, which calls on the Government of Canada to recognize the erasure of Afghan women and girls from public life as gender apartheid.

I want to begin by acknowledging Senator Ataullahjan and all the work she has done to call our attention to the plights of women and girls living under oppressive regimes internationally. Many of us in this chamber remember that on November 21, 2012, Senator Ataullahjan travelled to Birmingham, England, on her own dime, walked into the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and met with Malala Yousafzai's mother and father while Malala was in a nearby room recovering from two gunshot wounds. Malala's story is well known.

In 2009, after speaking out in opposition to Taliban rules that forbade girls from attending school, Malala was shot in the head by an Islamist militant who boarded her bus to school and targeted her following a Taliban vote to kill her.

Malala was despised by the Taliban. She was repeatedly threatened, and yet, with unfathomable bravery, she stood her ground. Her story affected us all. Senator Ataullahjan used her platform as a senator and her ability to speak in their native tongue of Pashto to connect with Malala's family in order to convey her respect and appreciation for Malala's unparalleled courage, and to personally deliver the message that Canada stands with Malala and her fight for the rights of women and girls.

Senator Ataullahjan has kept the issue of women and girls living under oppressive regimes at the forefront of parliamentary discussions. She proposed and oversaw committee studies on the topic, has put pressure on the government to stop barring humanitarian workers from responding to crises in Afghanistan and has now brought forward this important motion at a critical

time. As she noted in her speech introducing this motion, Pashtun women are fearless warriors. Senator Ataulhjan's fearlessness, integrity and resolve on matters of injustice are emblematic of the Pashtun spirit, and Canada and those who depend on our support are better for it.

Malala has since been the recipient of numerous awards and honours. Her charity, the Malala Fund, has joined Afghan activists, legal scholars and human rights defenders to call on world leaders to recognize gender apartheid as a crime against humanity.

Malala knows all too well what it feels like to be denied the right to education. At the prestigious 2023 Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture in December, Malala used her speech to draw the world's attention to the gravity of gender apartheid, and called for a global movement to end it.

Malala explained:

Girls kept out of school are experiencing depression and anxiety.

Some are turning to narcotics, attempting suicide.

No girl, anywhere in the world, should have to suffer this way.

If we, as a global community, accept the Taliban's edicts, we are sending a devastating message to girls everywhere: that they are less human. That your rights are up for debate. That we are willing to look away.

Advocates for classifying the oppression of women and girls under this regime as "gender apartheid" describe the term as laws, decrees and policies that exclude girls and women from public life and spaces. It is a system that intentionally maintains institutionalized, systemic oppression and control of one gender group over another.

Today, in Afghanistan, girls cannot go to secondary school and women are forbidden to work or leave the house on their own, not even to go to a doctor's appointment or a park. Since their takeover in August 2021, the Taliban has introduced more than 50 decrees that directly curtail the rights of women. Not a single one of these decrees has been reversed. It is clear that the Taliban's vision for Afghanistan is to perpetuate an outright denial of women's rights and personhood. In a quick and very methodical manner, the Taliban is tarnishing the humanity of women and girls in Afghanistan.

Allow me to briefly walk you through some of the decrees and directives targeting women. In the sphere of education, in August 2021, a ban on coeducation was instated, followed by an

outright ban on girls attending high school one month later. In September 2021, women were banned from teaching at universities.

In January 2022, girls' schools for the blind were closed, followed by a complete closure of all schools for girls in Grades 7 and up. In June 2022, female students in Grades 4 to 6 were ordered to cover their faces while commuting to school, or face expulsion. In August 2022, female university students were ordered to cover their faces in classrooms.

In October 2022, women were blocked from choosing agriculture, mining, civil engineering, veterinary medicine or journalism as their university major, as the Taliban deemed these subjects "... too difficult for women to handle."

Two months later, in December 2022, female students were banned from all public and private universities until further notice. Institutions were then directed to only admit male students in the forthcoming academic year, and were banned from issuing transcripts and certificates for female university graduates.

• (1910)

In June 2023, foreign NGOs were banned from providing educational programs, including community-based education. According to UNICEF, the directive impacts roughly half a million students and, specifically, 300,000 girls. In terms of decrees surrounding employment, one day at a time, sector by sector, the Taliban began forbidding women to work or obtain employment, even remotely.

For perspective, prior to the Taliban takeover, there were 69 female parliamentarians, over 250 female judges, hundreds of thousands of women-owned businesses, more than 100,000 women in universities and about 2.5 million girls in primary schools. Now, fewer than 7% of women participate in the labour force and only 2 in 10 primary school-aged girls are in school.

As for other areas of social engagement and participation, in 2021, women were banned from playing sports. In 2022, they banned women and girls from parks and gyms. In May 2022, women were instructed to observe the hijab. A UN report on this topic says:

In much of the Arab and wider Muslim world, "hijab" refers to a woman covering her head, but in Afghanistan, it tends to describe clothing that covers the head and body more fully. The DFA decree defined the hijab as either a burqa or "customary black clothing and shawl"

It also stated, however, that the Taliban "... indicated that the best hijab is for women to not leave their homes at all, unless absolutely necessary."

In August 2022, they established a female moral police department, which replaced the Women's Affairs Ministry. In 2022, women were banned from entering health centres or doctors' offices without a male family member. One year later, in May 2023, young and unmarried women were banned from going

to health centres, doctors' offices and shrines altogether in the province of Kandahar. In 2023, women were banned from restaurants.

Last month, a *Washington Post* opinion piece written by three international peace and security policy experts shed light on some early ramifications of denying health care access to women in Afghanistan. The authors stated:

Because of their diminishing educational and economic prospects, women and girls are increasingly forced into early marriage, with families resorting to selling their elementary-school-aged daughters to put food on the table. As many as 9 of every 10 of these child brides will experience gender-based violence, and many will be placed at further risk because of Taliban-imposed obstacles to health-care access. Today in Afghanistan, one woman dies every two hours during childbirth, and birth control has been banned. These conditions exacerbate the grave humanitarian crisis in a country full of war widows.

In February of this year, a multi-agency UN report was released, shining a light on the increased level of fear among women following the growing erosion of their rights in Afghanistan. Beginning one year after the Taliban took power, three UN agencies — UN Women, the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan — began publishing quarterly consultations with diverse Afghan women. Participating in the latest survey were 745 women across all 34 provinces, and the reported trends were disturbing, to say the least. Some of the key findings were as follows: over half of women — 57% — felt unsafe leaving the house without a male family member; only 1% of women indicated they had “good” or “full” influence on decision making at the community level — a stark decrease from 17% in January 2023; and inside the home, when it came to women’s “good” or “full” influence on household decision making, that number drastically decreased from 90% in January 2023 to 32% in January 2024. Tragically — yet perhaps not surprisingly — this suggests that as their ability to receive an education and work was taken away, their power in the home declined steadily as well.

According to the report, women described the intergenerational and gendered impact of Taliban restrictions and the accompanying shifts in social attitudes on children. Boys appeared to be internalizing the social and political subordination of their mothers and sisters, reinforcing a belief that they should remain in the home in a position of servitude. Girls' perceptions of their prospects were changing their values alongside their understanding of their future possibilities. Women who were surveyed indicated they were worried that exposure to misogynistic policies was creating a perception among men and boys that women and girls have neither capacity nor need for social, political or economic opportunities.

As for the motion itself, when we make a statement as important as this — either as a chamber or as a government — getting the wording right is essential. Senator Ataullahjan has chosen the term “erasure” to describe what is happening to women and girls in public life in Afghanistan. “Erasure” is, indeed, a very strong word. We live in an era of hyperbolic

language, but in this case, I believe this term is accurate. It is important to not water down the experience of Afghan women or the intent of the Taliban.

Likewise, the term “apartheid” holds tremendous legal and historical significance. While it has been misused in recent years — recklessly thrown around as a mere insult by some politicians and reporters — the term has a clear definition in international law. The development of apartheid standards in international law was designed to address racial apartheid. The term “apartheid” came from the Afrikaans word for “apartness,” which described the methodical racial segregation and oppression of South Africa’s Black majority from 1948 to 1994. The widespread and persistent international response resulted in its recognition as a crime against humanity under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Apartheid describes inhumane acts committed for the purpose of establishing domination of one group over another. Motions like the one before us are brought forward as part of a larger effort to include gender apartheid as part of the international framework.

The reality is that women in Afghanistan are being prevented from participating in any form of public life. The oppressive decrees instituted by the Taliban and the broader legal systems they belong to seek to establish and maintain women’s subjugation to men and the state. Violation of these laws can lead to violence, imprisonment and death. Some have described women and girls in Afghanistan as living as second-class citizens, while others have referred to their treatment as an extreme or severe form of gender discrimination. But this does not go far enough. As End Gender Apartheid states:

The situations in the Islamic Republic of Iran and under the Taliban in Afghanistan are not simply cases of gender discrimination. Rather, these systems are perpetuating a more extreme, systematic and structural war against women designed to dehumanize and repress them for purposes of entrenching power.

While apartheid is recognized in international law as a crime against humanity, gender is not currently included in the official definition. Thus, there is limited ability or recourse available to challenge the Taliban’s actions.

UN Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan Richard Bennett described the reality facing Afghan women as “. . . the most comprehensive, systematic, and unparalleled assault on the rights of women and girls. . . .” Importantly, he called it “an institutionalized framework of gender apartheid.”

The first step for organizations and nations who stand with the women of Afghanistan is to raise awareness about the experiences of Afghan women and the increasingly oppressive structures the Taliban has imposed upon them. Our colleagues Senator Ataullahjan, Senator McPhedran, member of Parliament Garnett Genuis and others have done an exceptional job of raising awareness and ensuring this issue remains a priority.

The next step is for governments to acknowledge that what is occurring in Afghanistan is, in fact, gender apartheid. This motion is an initiation of this important step for the Government of Canada. The government's acceptance of this Senate motion would bolster any efforts to make the required change in international law, with the ultimate goal of holding the Taliban accountable with the hopes of making meaningful change in the lives of Afghan women and girls.

- (1920)

The Taliban are on a relentless mission to erase women from the political, economic and societal discourse of Afghanistan. The news stories we continue to see are horrific. We have seen reports of the Taliban lashing women in front of hundreds of spectators and beating men for allowing their female relatives to wear bright clothing. We are seeing a piece-by-piece eradication of nearly every right women have fought for, forcing them out of society and into their homes, where many live in a constant state of fear.

The Taliban's systematic campaign against women and girls aims to eliminate their autonomy by stripping away fundamental rights such as freedom, employment and education, while also employing ruthless tactics like harassment and the arresting and detaining of female protesters.

In the words of Nayera Kohistani, a former teacher and protester who was arrested and detained by the regime, "The Taliban have criminalized our whole existence."

What is equally troubling is that this pervasive ideology is starting to poison the minds of future generations. Young boys are beginning to think women have no place outside the home, and young girls have lost their ability to dream of a future.

Colleagues, it is no secret to anyone in this chamber that I am a proud grandfather. Watching my six granddaughters pursue their dreams has been one of the great joys of my life. I feel so privileged to get a front-row seat to watch these incredible young women live the lives they aspire to. One is actively pursuing a PhD; one has embarked on a successful career in business; one, as you know, is a very successful curler; another is making tremendous strides in competitive volleyball. One is a wonderful teacher whose greatest hope is to become a mother. And when that day comes, she will be able to look into that baby's eyes and feel nothing but hope and optimism for the beautiful life that lies ahead. My youngest granddaughter has remarkable musical talents, and I have no doubt she will share that gift with the world.

My granddaughters grew up observing incredible role models and never had any doubt that they were full and equal members of society who possess the ability to build the life they want on their own terms.

As a grandparent, it is all the more devastating to consider the stark contrast of the daily lives of girls of the same age in Afghanistan, girls who want nothing more than to go to school, to live freely without the threat of violence and to dream. Of all the evil the Taliban have inflicted on the regions they control, robbing young girls of the ability to dream is, to me, among the most heartbreaking.

It's time for us to act.

Colleagues, I encourage you all to support this motion so that Canada can begin to do its part in our shared goal to end the Taliban's war on Afghan women and girls. Thank you, colleagues.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

MOTION TO RECOGNIZE OCTOBER AS KOREAN HERITAGE
MONTH ADOPTED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Martin, seconded by the Honourable Senator Seidman:

That the Senate recognize the month of October, each and every year, as Korean Heritage Month, given the contributions that Korean Canadians have made to Canadian society, the deep-rooted friendship and bilateral ties between Canada and Korea, and the importance of Korean heritage and culture within the fabric of Canadian society.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Your Honour, I just want to say it is such a privilege to be serving with everyone and to listen to such moving statements. These words have such an impact. I want to just stand with all of you in what you have done. It is a privilege for me to stand today.

Honourable senators, I'm honoured to rise and speak on Motion No. 187, that the Senate recognize the month of October each and every year as Korean heritage month, given the contributions that Korean Canadians have made to Canadian society, the deep-rooted friendship and bilateral ties between Canada and Korea and the importance of Korean heritage and culture within the fabric of Canadian society.

For the record, this motion is co-sponsored by Senator Amina Gerba, Senator Rebecca Patterson and Senator Hassan Yussuff, who each have their own genuine and personal relationship with Korea or the Korean community and, of course, are fellow colleagues in this chamber.

The month of October has special significance for people of Korean descent across Canada, in Korea and around the world. The third day of October is Gaecheonjeol, known as National Foundation Day in its English name. This national holiday of Korea celebrates the legendary formation of the first Korean state of Gojoseon in 2333 B.C. This date has been traditionally regarded as the date of the founding of the Korean people.

October 9 is Hangul Day, a national holiday to commemorate the creation and publication of Hangul, the Korean alphabet. This was developed by King Sejong, fourth king of the Joseon dynasty, in 1443 to eradicate illiteracy.

In 1446, Hangul was made the official writing system of Korea. Indeed, King Sejong would be pleased to know that Korea's literacy rate in 2024 is 98%.

Korean peoples, like cultures around the world, have endured and accomplished much. The Canadian chapter of the Korean people is one rich in stories of love, survival, sacrifice, resilience, family, community and success. Canada is home to a sizable and dynamic Korean-Canadian population with communities thriving across the country, from bustling urban centres to picturesque rural towns.

Korean immigration to Canada began with seminary students in the 1940s and accelerated in the decades that followed. According to the 2021 Canadian Census, there were nearly 220,000 Korean Canadians in Canada, making them the fourth largest Korean diaspora population in the world.

Since the first wave of Korean immigrants arrived in Canada, the community has grown steadily, driven by a spirit of entrepreneurship, determination and a quest for new opportunities.

Korean Canadians have played a vital role in driving innovation, growth and prosperity in various sectors of the Canadian economy. From small businesses and start-ups to large corporations, Korean-Canadian entrepreneurs have made their mark, creating jobs, stimulating economic growth and contributing to Canada's prosperity.

Moreover, Korean Canadians have made significant contributions to Canada's cultural landscape, enriching our society with their vibrant traditions, arts and cuisine. Korean cultural practices, events and celebrations have become an integral part of Canada's multicultural tapestry, celebrated and embraced by Canadians of all backgrounds.

In addition to their economic and cultural contributions, Korean Canadians actively engage in philanthropy, community service and civic participation, demonstrating a deep commitment to giving back and making a positive impact in their communities. Whether through volunteer work, charitable donations or advocacy efforts, Korean Canadians contribute to building stronger, more resilient communities and fostering social cohesion and solidarity.

• (1930)

Over the years, Canada and Korea have forged a robust partnership based on shared values, mutual respect and a commitment to prosperity and peace. As we reflect upon the journey of this relationship, it becomes evident that the bonds between Canada and South Korea have only grown stronger with time, encompassing various sectors and fostering collaboration on multiple fronts. Canada and South Korea share a common commitment to democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

These shared values form the bedrock of our bilateral relationship and serve as a solid foundation for cooperation in diplomatic, economic, cultural and security domains.

One of the cornerstones of the Canada-South Korea relationship is trade and investment. Both nations are staunch supporters of open markets and free trade, which has facilitated the growth of bilateral trade and investment flows. The Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement, which came into effect in 2015, has significantly enhanced economic cooperation by reducing tariffs and other trade barriers and has created new opportunities for businesses and entrepreneurs on both sides. The bilateral relationship was upgraded to a comprehensive strategic partnership in 2022. Today, South Korea stands as one of Canada's most important trading partners in the Asia-Pacific region, with trade volumes continuing to expand across many sectors.

In the realm of security and defence cooperation, Canada and South Korea are committed partners in promoting peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. Both countries have participated in joint military exercises, peacekeeping operations and security dialogues aimed at addressing shared security challenges, including regional tensions and non-proliferation efforts.

Our cooperation in those areas underscores our shared commitment to upholding international peace and security, and promoting a rules-based international order.

This strong bond of cooperation was forged in fire during the communist invasion of South Korea in 1950 when North Korean forces crossed the thirty-eighth parallel, igniting the Korean War. Canada was among the first nations to commit military support on the seas, in the air, on the hills and in the valleys to uphold peace and defend South Korea from the aggression of the communist north. The sacrifices made by Canadians during the Korean War and during the peacekeeping years that followed, including the ultimate sacrifice of giving their lives, will be forever remembered and honoured by the people of Korea and Canada alike.

Beyond military contributions, Canada provided humanitarian aid and support to alleviate the suffering of Korean civilians affected by the war. Canadian medical personnel served in field hospitals, providing critical care to wounded soldiers and civilians alike.

As we look to the future, the Canada-Korea partnership holds immense potential for further growth and collaboration, whether it's addressing global challenges, advancing innovation and technology or promoting sustainable development. Our two nations are poised to work together to tackle the pressing issues of our time.

I want to take a moment to shed light on the importance of recognizing cultures through designated heritage months. In our increasingly diverse societies, where people from various backgrounds coexist and contribute to the tapestry of our communities, it's crucial to celebrate and honour the rich cultural heritage of different ethnic groups. Heritage months provide us with the valuable opportunity to do just that. One of the key benefits of celebrating a heritage month is the promotion of

cultural diversity and cultural pride. When individuals see their cultural heritage being acknowledged and celebrated on a broader scale, it instills a sense of pride and belonging within the community. It validates their identity and reaffirms the importance of their cultural heritage in shaping who they are.

Heritage months also play a crucial role in preserving and promoting cultural heritage for future generations. By showcasing the rich history, language, art, music and cuisine of different cultures, heritage months inspire younger generations to learn about their heritage and take pride in their cultural roots. This intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge ensures that traditions are passed down and preserved for years to come.

Honourable senators, the Korean-Canadian community is a shining example of the richness and diversity of Canada's multicultural mosaic. Through their entrepreneurship, cultural contributions and community engagement, Korean Canadians enrich our society, strengthen our community and inspire us to embrace the values of diversity, inclusion and mutual respect.

As we celebrate the achievements and contributions of the Korean-Canadian community, let us reaffirm our commitment to building a more inclusive, equitable and welcoming Canada for all. Thank you, *gamsahamnida*.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

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

Hon. Senators: Question.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE YUKON ACT

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Duncan, calling the attention of the Senate to the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of the *Yukon Act*, an Act of Parliament adopted on June 13, 1898.

Hon. Mary Coyle: Honourable senators, this item stands adjourned in the name of the Honourable Senator Clement. After my intervention today, I ask for leave that it remain adjourned in her name.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Coyle: Honourable senators, I rise today on the lands of the Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation to speak to you of the lands, the people and part of the story of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation, the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dün, the Kluane First Nation, the Kwanlin Dün First Nation, the Liard First Nation, the Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation, the Ross River Dena Council, the Selkirk First Nation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, the Teslin Tlingit Council, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and the White River First Nation.

Honourable colleagues, I rise to speak to Senator Duncan's Inquiry No. 14 calling our attention to the one hundred twenty-fifth anniversary of the Yukon Act last year. Senator Duncan is a proud Yukoner — have you noticed? — and Yukon is proud of her, as are we. She was the first and only female premier of the Yukon from 2000 to 2002. Senator Duncan signed the devolution agreement with Canada. The Yukon was the first territory to sign such an agreement, which gave the people of the Yukon the power to manage their own lands and natural resources, and to foster economic development and job creation for themselves. Senator Duncan was involved in the negotiation and implementation of land claims agreements with the First Nations of the Yukon, and she was premier when the self-government agreement with the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council was signed.

Senator Duncan asked me to speak to her inquiry, because she knows that I share her passion for the spellbinding beauty and majesty of the Yukon and its people. I have had the good fortune to visit the Yukon many times to see my daughter, Lauren McCarthy; her husband, Jamie; and my grandchildren, Jack, Amelia and Sophie over the seven years they lived there. Lauren taught at Whitehorse Elementary, and Jamie worked for the Carcross/Tagish and then the Kwanlin Dün First Nations.

I had the good fortune to hike the trails of the research forest with Senator Duncan and her dog. I went kick-sledding in the wildlife preserve, tobogganed the hills of the Carcross Desert, skied at the Whitehorse Nordic Centre, soaked in the healing waters of the Takhini Hot Springs, trekked across the frozen surface of Kathleen Lake in the Kluane National Park, feasted at the Klondike Salmon & Rib, spoke to my grandson's class at Elijah Smith Elementary, visited the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre, met with students and faculty at the Yukon University, meandered along the pathway of the Yukon River and so much more.

Colleagues, I also had the good fortune of visiting Whitehorse with the Senate. It was the last stop on the Senate Special Committee on the Arctic's fact-finding trip.

• (1940)

Colleagues, Senator Duncan has explained to us the context of the Yukon Act. Gold was discovered in the Yukon in 1896 by a Tagish First Nation Woman, Kate Carmack — otherwise known as Shaaw Tláa — her brother and her husband. Word of the gold spread like wildfire, and by the next year Dawson City, Yukon, became the largest city north of San Francisco and west of Chicago.

Against the backdrop of the gold rush, the assertion of Canadian sovereignty and the regulation of liquor consumption in the territory were the motivations for the Yukon Act.

Senator Duncan has told us that the act, which was given Royal Assent on June 13, has been amended several times over the years. Senator Duncan also referred to another important anniversary in the story of the Yukon and, in particular, to the Indigenous people of the 14 nations I mentioned earlier. This is what I wanted to highlight in a little more detail.

Today, approximately 25% of the population of the Yukon is Indigenous; 11 of the 14 First Nations have signed modern treaties. Yukon land claims:

. . . had been put forward as early as 1901 and 1902 when Chief Jim Boss of the present-day Ta'an Kwach'an and surrounding area, wrote letters to the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs in Ottawa and to the Commissioner of the Yukon.

He outlined, way back at the turn of that century, the concerns of his people:

. . . in terms of the alienation of lands and resources in their traditional areas and their need to have a say in their own affairs and governance.

The Klondike gold rush brought many settlers to the Yukon, but most left after the rush was over. However, it was the construction of the Alaska Highway in 1942 that changed life in the Yukon forever. More and more settlers moved in, taking land and building homes along the 892-kilometre Yukon stretch and beyond. By the 1960s, Indigenous peoples were further pushed off their lands due to resource development.

In 1968, the Yukon Native Brotherhood, with Elijah Smith as its chief, was founded to:

“. . . protect the civil rights of all Yukon Indians” and “assist all Indians in determining their legal status in reference to the natural resources of Canada.”

In January 1973, more than 100 First Nations communities in the Yukon came together and finalized *Together Today for our Children Tomorrow*. The following month, on February 14, 1973, Chief Elijah Smith and a delegation of Yukon chiefs went to Ottawa to present their historic *Together Today for our Children Tomorrow* document to then prime minister Pierre Trudeau and to then minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Jean Chrétien.

For many of the chiefs, it was their first time out of the Yukon. The *Together Today for our Children Tomorrow* document painted a picture of how the Indigenous people of the Yukon viewed themselves and their experiences since colonization. It made proposals for land rights, royalties and a cash settlement. It asked the federal government to establish a committee to study the document and draft legislation based upon it.

Former prime minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau committed to acting quickly and agreed to set up a negotiation committee and a process for modern treaties. After two decades — not so quick — of negotiations, the *Umbrella Final Agreement* between Canada, Yukon and the Council of Yukon First Nations was finalized. It covered land, monetary compensation, self-government and the creation of boards, committees and tribunals to give First Nations joint management in certain areas. The baton of leadership on these matters is now firmly in the hands of the “children of tomorrow,” as was envisioned by those who came together in 1973.

Fifty years later, leaders representing Yukon's First Nations, Yukon and Canada met on a government-to-government basis at the intergovernmental forum in Ottawa this past December to advance common priorities, including affordable housing, homelessness, health and mental wellness, land use planning, language revitalization, emergency preparedness, financial agreements and declining salmon stocks.

Honourable colleagues, the Yukon Act asserted Canadian sovereignty over that territory. The devolution agreement between Canada and the Yukon, signed by our colleague Senator Duncan, gave the people of the Yukon authority over their lands, resources and opportunities.

The modern treaties and the fulfillment of the vision of the 14 Yukon First Nations articulated in the historic *Together Today for our Children Tomorrow* document returns the rights to lands, resources and governance to those original people of the territory. Honourable colleagues, what all Yukoners share is a love for that magnificent land.

Colleagues, Senator Duncan quoted a small section of *The Spell of the Yukon* in her speech. The last part of my speech today will be the recitation of the rest of that poem — Robert Service's love letter to the land:

I wanted the gold, and I sought it,
I scabbled and mucked like a slave.
Was it famine or scurvy — I fought it;
I hurled my youth into a grave.
I wanted the gold, and I got it —
Came out with a fortune last fall, —
Yet somehow life's not what I thought it,
And somehow the gold isn't all.
No! There's the land. (Have you seen it?)
It's the cussedest land that I know,
From the big, dizzy mountains that screen it
To the deep, deathlike valleys below. . . .
Some say it's a fine land to shun;
Maybe; but there's some as would trade it
For no land on earth — and I'm one.
You come to get rich (damned good reason);
You feel like an exile at first;
You hate it like hell for a season,
And then you are worse than the worst.

It grips you like some kinds of sinning;
 It twists you from foe to a friend;
 It seems it's been since the beginning;
 It seems it will be to the end.
 I've stood in some mighty-mouthed hollow
 That's plumb-full of hush to the brim;
 I've watched the big, husky sun wallow
 In crimson and gold, and grow dim,
 Till the moon set the pearly peaks gleaming,
 And the stars tumbled out, neck and crop;
 And I've thought that I surely was dreaming,
 With the peace o' the world piled on top.
 The summer — no sweeter was ever;
 The sunshiny woods all athrill;
 The grayling aleap in the river,
 The bighorn asleep on the hill.
 The strong life that never knows harness;
 The wilds where the caribou call;
 The freshness, the freedom, the farness —
 O God! how I'm stuck on it all.
 The winter! the brightness that blinds you,
 The white land locked tight as a drum,
 The cold fear that follows and finds you,
 The silence that bludgeons you dumb.
 The snows that are older than history,
 The woods where the weird shadows slant;
 The stillness, the moonlight, the mystery,
 I've bade 'em good-by — but I can't.
 There's a land where the mountains are nameless,
 And the rivers all run God knows where;
 There are lives that are erring and aimless
 And deaths that just hang by a hair;
 There are hardships that nobody reckons;
 There are valleys unpeopled and still;
 There's a land — oh, it beckons and beckons,
 And I want to go back — and I will.
 They're making my money diminish;
 I'm sick of the taste of champagne.
 Thank God! when I'm skinned to a finish
 I'll pike to the Yukon again.
 I'll fight — and you bet it's no sham-fight;
 It's hell! — but I've been there before;
 And it's better than this by a damside —
 So me for the Yukon once more.
 There's gold, and it's haunting and haunting;
 It's luring me on as of old;
 Yet it isn't the gold that I'm wanting
 So much as just finding the gold.
 It's the great, big, broad land 'way up yonder,
 It's the forests where silence has lease;
 It's the beauty that thrills me with wonder,
 It's the stillness that fills me with peace.

Honourable colleagues, as we mark the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of the Yukon Act last year and the fiftieth anniversary of *Together Today for our Children Tomorrow*, again last year, let's join Senator Duncan in celebrating this remarkable place which, as Robert Service says, “. . . thrills me with wonder . . .” and “. . . fills me with peace” as it “. . . beckons and beckons, And I want to go back — and I will.” Thank you. *Wela'liog*.

(Debate adjourned.)

[Senator Coyle]

• (1950)

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

CONTRIBUTIONS AND CHALLENGES—INQUIRY—
 DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Ratna Omidvar rose pursuant to notice of November 28, 2023:

That she will call the attention of the Senate to the contributions of international students in Canada and the various challenges, such as fraud and physical, emotional, and sometimes sexual abuse, that many of them face.

She said: Honourable senators, I seem to often draw the short straw, always standing between you and your dinner, but I promise once again to whet your appetite with information and ideas before you get on to your well-earned rest.

This is an inquiry about international students in Canada. It is a story about people, about their hopes and dreams, their aspirations, but it is also a story about money and greed. It is a story about severe unintended consequences and disappointment. When I think about it, it has all elements of “the good, the bad and the ugly” wrapped up in it.

I don't want to start on a positive note. I'm going to start with the bad, which started to come to light in 2021 through media stories that were documenting the abuse of international students, for example — and we read about it in *Maclean's* and the CBC and the *Toronto Star* — about eight students crammed into one apartment where even the corridor to the apartment was rentable space, about harassment by landlords, about disappointed students who realized that they had been sold a false basket of goods and about the truly ugly side of it, which was trafficking and even suicides.

Senator Woo, former senator Marwah, Senator Yussuff and myself pooled our concerns and our resources to investigate these further. Last fall, almost exactly on the date when the international student bubble burst, we made our report and recommendations public.

I have waited to speak to this for almost a year because so many changes have been announced, and any thoughtful discussion on international students must take these changes into account.

But it is important to go back to the basics, and the basics are pretty straightforward for me. Canada aims to provide a world-class education to students, both domestic and international. If some international students stay, then that's terrific for Canada. If some international students choose to leave, that's also terrific for Canada because they become ambassadors for our country.

Somewhere along this way, however, we lost our way. As a result, our world-class universities and colleges, which we rely on to provide education to our children — my grandchildren now — domestic students in the first line, have become overreliant on an external source of funding over which they

have no control, namely, fees derived from international students. In other words, at stake is not only the treatment of international students but also the future of Canadian children and, in fact, the future of our country.

How did this happen? I'm going to take you back to 2011. At that time, we lagged behind the U.K., the U.S. and Australia in attracting international students. It became an aspiration of our country to catch up, so we launched the International Education Strategy to enhance Canada's global competitiveness. Our goal was to double the number of international students, from 240,000 in 2011 to over 450,000 by 2022. In fact, we surpassed this target by 2017 and significantly exceeded it by 2022. Success we could claim. Canada now hosts close to 1 million international students, who contribute over \$22 billion to our economy and support more than 218,000 jobs, revitalizing, in particular, smaller communities. That is the good part of the story.

In the best scenario, international students contribute to the financial base of our system. They fill labour market needs. They transition to permanent residence and then become citizens. In 2022, 95,000 international students became permanent residents, a significant rise from 19,000 in 2015.

My nephew pursued this path. He came to study at the University of Toronto and did an undergrad in business. He graduated, found a job at HSBC, transitioned to CIBC, and somewhere along the line he became a permanent resident and has now put in an application for citizenship.

What more could a country want? Students like my nephew, who have worked here, who speak one of our official languages, whose credentials are accepted are the literal low-hanging fruit for us. However, success has its costs. There are now integrity challenges, housing challenges, unmet expectations and reports of unhealthy relationships between public and private colleges, which appear to be a sham and a scam.

At the core of these challenges is a human being. It's the student. Many live in overcrowded conditions, face landlord abuse and struggle with false promises of work opportunities and permanent residency. Despite these challenges, most want to stay.

I live in a part of Toronto, and I love taking the subway because it brings me face to face with people. At a certain subway stop, a huge crowd of international students gets in. They look like me. They're clearly from India. Because I speak their language, I engage with them. I say to them, "Are you here to study and to stay? Have you heard about the new rules?" And they say to me, "We've heard about them. We're worried about them. But under no condition can we leave, because it would be such a loss of face for us and for our families."

We've gotten into this mess. I think it's normal when we get into a mess that we look over our shoulder and find someone to blame, but I think this is, frankly, unproductive. Everyone shares in this mess: the federal government; the provincial government; territorial governments; educational consultants; international students themselves, because some of them use it as a backdoor entry; landlords; employers; and, of course, our designated learning institutions, colleges and universities.

At the heart of this is one inescapable truth, and it is this: We have collectively and deliberately beggared our colleges and universities, and the numbers bear me out. Provincial funding for post-secondary educational institutions has plummeted from 28.2% to 21.5% in 11 years. At the national level, funding for post-secondary educational institutions has remained stagnant for the last 15 years.

Provincial governments have either frozen domestic student fees or been extremely stingy with transfers to educational institutions. In Ontario, it is particularly bad. Provincial funding per full-time domestic public college student was the lowest in 2018-19. In order to make up for this lost revenue — on the one hand, they've frozen domestic fees, and on the other hand, they're cutting back on grants; I can't actually blame colleges and universities for looking for a source of revenue — they reach for international students, and international students are being used as their ATM.

Another proof point is the widening fee gap between domestic fees, which are frozen, and international fees, which can go up as the institute or province decrees. International student fees now constitute, in my province, 69% of the base of funding for universities and colleges. If this is not dependency, I don't quite know what is.

Whilst I understand that post-secondary institutions have had to rely increasingly on foreign student fees to cover their base, our report takes issue with the focus on revenue over quality education. Partnerships between public and private career colleges are used as a revenue-generating tactic, very often compromising quality.

• (2000)

It works like this: A non-urban college or university in a part of Canada where it is difficult to attract international foreign students — who are the only source of revenue that universities and colleges can grab — will partner with a private college in a place like Toronto, Vancouver or Montreal and share the revenue with them. The student never goes to the host college and stays in an urban centre. They are promised that through this partnership, they will be able to work and gain permanent residency. The problem is that these arrangements surpass enrollment limits and lack compliance and quality assurance audits.

I was in Chandigarh last year, which is in the Punjab region. It has the single largest visa-producing facility for applicants coming to Canada in all the world. I visited the consulate general to examine this phenomenon. Early one morning, there was a snaking line of people waiting around the plaza where our consulate is located. I spoke to these people. Again, because I look like them and speak their language, they opened up to me. All of them said they wanted to come to Canada and to stay in Canada. They were not really clear about what they were going to study or what colleges they were applying to. But they were clear that they were going to use all their resources — and possibly their families' — to get here.

It was also very clear to me that they were being advised by educational consultants. The city was filled with advertisements stating, "I will help you come to Canada. I will help you pass your exam. I will help you get your visa," et cetera. Everybody I

spoke to used a consultant. To some extent, it is a matter of culture. As a matter of culture, the people in the Punjab region — and I am one of them so I can state this — tend to use consultants. It is hard to beat culture.

Consultants provide some bona fide services to the students, such as prepping for ESL tests or obtaining a letter of admission, et cetera. They are compensated. They charge almost no fees to the student — and this should be a giveaway. Instead, they are paid on a commission basis by Canadian colleges and universities. Sometimes these commissions are as high as 15% to 30%. This is a very sweet deal all around. The Canadian post-secondary institutions can attract students from arm's length, and the consultants get a pretty sweet commission. However, it is not such a sweet deal for the international student, who is often referred by the consultant to a course of study or institution that is not made out to be what it is.

A CBC article from March highlighted a particular case where an Indian student was misled by an agent who enrolled them in a private college and falsely assured them of an easy transfer to a public institution. This situation reveals significant ethical issues. There is minimal incentive and insufficient oversight by Canadian governments to ensure that this kind of fraud is not perpetrated. There are also “ghost consultants” who pose as immigration consultants and claim to provide services but charge fees for absolutely nothing.

The entry of private colleges into this mix is problematic. I want to be careful here because private colleges have called me and some have told me that they do provide bona fide services, but not all do. They don't receive public funding and operate privately, leading to minimal oversight of class sizes, educational quality and financial stability. A January 2023 article in *Macleans* highlighted issues with a Quebec-based private college that closed suddenly in 2022, leaving international students in a difficult situation.

Since we made our report public, certain corrective measures have been taken. Global Affairs Canada has sought input for a new international education strategy, including better regulation of educational agents. This might offer us clues for going forward.

Am I done? May I have more time?

The Hon. the Speaker: I would need leave from your colleagues if you want extra time. Is leave granted?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Omidvar: That's generous of you.

We must get back to the basics. We must stop overpromising international students that they can come, work and stay. Check the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, or IRCC, website. It says, “Come to Canada. Learn, work, stay.” That is a false promise we should not be making. We should be tabling numbers every year with our annual immigration plan as to how many international students we plan to land, just as we put out a plan for grandparents, et cetera.

There are many other things that we can do, but we must address the root problem by providing predictable, sustained funding for Canadian colleges and universities so they are able to provide a quality education, in the first line to domestic students. The reliance on international fees for financial stability is risky.

Look at the political situation between India and Canada. I can project quite confidently that the number of students from India will fall, and India makes up 40% of the international student cohort. What will universities and colleges do?

We must have a serious, grown-up, national conversation about restoring financial stability to the post-secondary education system. It is not a conversation about power, control, credit or blame. It is about the future of our country. If we don't do this and lose sight of the fundamentals, we will shortchange our entire future.

So, colleagues, I leave you with this thought: Our study started out by focusing on international students, but I have come to the conclusion that international students are merely a symptom of a severe root cause. If we don't address the root cause, I can promise you that the tail will wag the dog. Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Clement, debate adjourned.)

(At 8:08 p.m., the Senate was continued until tomorrow at 2 p.m.)

THE SPEAKER

The Honourable Raymonde Gagné

THE GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE IN THE SENATE

The Honourable Marc Gold

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

The Honourable Donald Neil Plett

FACILITATOR OF THE INDEPENDENT SENATORS GROUP

The Honourable Raymonde Saint-Germain

THE LEADER OF THE CANADIAN SENATORS GROUP

The Honourable Scott Tannas

THE LEADER OF THE PROGRESSIVE SENATE GROUP

The Honourable Pierre J. Dalphond

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CLERK OF THE SENATE AND CLERK OF THE PARLIAMENTS

Shaila Anwar

LAW CLERK AND PARLIAMENTARY COUNSEL

Philippe Hallée

USHER OF THE BLACK ROD

J. Greg Peters

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(In order of precedence)

(June 1, 2024)

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	Deputy Prime Minister
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(June 1, 2024)

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Jim Quinn	New Brunswick	Saint John, N.B.
Karen Sorensen	Alberta	Banff, Alta.
Amina Gerba	Rigaud	Blainville, Que.
Clément Gignac	Kennebec	Lac Saint-Joseph, Que.
Michèle Audette	De Salaberry	Quebec City, Que.
David M. Arnot	Saskatchewan	Saskatoon, Sask.
Flordeliz (Gigi) Osler	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.
Margo Greenwood	British Columbia	Vernon, B.C.
Sharon Burey	Ontario	Windsor, Ont.
Andrew Cardozo	Ontario	Ottawa, Ont.
Rebecca Patterson	Ontario	Ottawa, Ont.
Iris G. Petten	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John's, Nfld. & Lab.
Jane MacAdam	Prince Edward Island	West St. Peters, P.E.I.
Judy A. White	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. George's, Nfld. & Lab.
Paul J. Prosper	Nova Scotia	Hants County, N.S.
Joan Kingston	New Brunswick	New Maryland, N.B.
John M. McNair	New Brunswick	Grand-Bouctouche, N.B.
Réjean Aucoin	Nova Scotia	Cape Breton, N.S.
Krista Ross	New Brunswick	Fredericton, N.B.
Rodger Cuzner	Nova Scotia	Cape Breton, N.S.
Marnie McBean	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.
Toni Varone	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.
Paulette Senior	Ontario	Pickering, Ont.
Mary Robinson	Prince Edward Island	Charlottetown, P.E.I.
Mohammad Al Zaibak	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.
Manuelle Oudar	La Salle	Quebec City, Que.

SENATORS OF CANADA

ALPHABETICAL LIST

(June 1, 2024)

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address	Political Affiliation
The Honourable			
Al Zaibak, Mohammad	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Non-affiliated
Anderson, Dawn	Northwest Territories	Yellowknife, N.W.T.	Progressive Senate Group
Arnot, David M.	Saskatchewan	Saskatoon, Sask.	Independent Senators Group
Ataullahjan, Salma	Ontario (Toronto)	Toronto, Ont.	Conservative Party of Canada
Aucoin, Réjean	Nova Scotia	Cape Breton, N.S.	Canadian Senators Group
Audette, Michèle	De Salaberry	Quebec City, Que.	Progressive Senate Group
Batters, Denise	Saskatchewan	Regina, Sask.	Conservative Party of Canada
Bellemare, Diane	Alma	Outremont, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Bernard, Wanda Thomas	Nova Scotia (East Preston)	East Preston, N.S.	Progressive Senate Group
Black, Robert	Ontario	Centre Wellington, Ont.	Canadian Senators Group
Boehm, Peter M.	Ontario	Ottawa, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Boniface, Gwen	Ontario	Orillia, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Boyer, Yvonne	Ontario	Merrickville-Wolford, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Brazeau, Patrick	Repentigny	Maniwaki, Que.	Non-affiliated
Burey, Sharon	Ontario	Windsor, Ont.	Canadian Senators Group
Busson, Bev	British Columbia	North Okanagan Region, B.C.	Independent Senators Group
Cardozo, Andrew	Ontario	Ottawa, Ont.	Progressive Senate Group
Carignan, Claude, P.C.	Mille Isles	Saint-Eustache, Que.	Conservative Party of Canada
Clement, Bernadette	Ontario	Cornwall, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Cordy, Jane	Nova Scotia	Dartmouth, N.S.	Progressive Senate Group
Cormier, René	New Brunswick	Caraquet, N.B.	Independent Senators Group
Cotter, Brent	Saskatchewan	Saskatoon, Sask.	Independent Senators Group
Coyle, Mary	Nova Scotia	Antigonish, N.S.	Independent Senators Group
Cuzner, Rodger	Nova Scotia	Cape Breton, N.S.	Progressive Senate Group
Dagenais, Jean-Guy	Victoria	Blainville, Que.	Canadian Senators Group
Dalphond, Pierre J.	De Lorimier	Montreal, Que.	Progressive Senate Group
Dasko, Donna	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Deacon, Colin	Nova Scotia	Halifax, N.S.	Canadian Senators Group
Deacon, Marty	Waterloo Region	Waterloo, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Dean, Tony	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Downe, Percy E.	Charlottetown	Charlottetown, P.E.I.	Canadian Senators Group
Duncan, Pat	Yukon	Whitehorse, Yukon	Independent Senators Group
Forest, Éric	Gulf	Rimouski, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Francis, Brian	Prince Edward Island	Rocky Point, P.E.I.	Progressive Senate Group
Gagné, Raymonde, <i>Speaker</i>	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.	Non-affiliated
Galvez, Rosa	Bedford	Lévis, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Gerba, Amina	Rigaud	Blainville, Que.	Progressive Senate Group
Gignac, Clément	Kennebec	Lac Saint-Joseph, Que.	Progressive Senate Group
Gold, Marc	Stadacona	Westmount, Que.	Non-affiliated
Greene, Stephen	Halifax - The Citadel	Halifax, N.S.	Canadian Senators Group
Greenwood, Margo	British Columbia	Vernon, B.C.	Independent Senators Group
Harder, Peter, P.C.	Ottawa	Manotick, Ont.	Progressive Senate Group
Hartling, Nancy J.	New Brunswick	Riverview, N.B.	Independent Senators Group
Housakos, Leo	Wellington	Laval, Que.	Conservative Party of Canada
Jaffer, Mobina S. B.	British Columbia	North Vancouver, B.C.	Independent Senators Group
Kingston, Joan	New Brunswick	New Maryland, N.B.	Independent Senators Group
Klyne, Marty	Saskatchewan	White City, Sask.	Progressive Senate Group
Kutcher, Stan	Nova Scotia	Halifax, N.S.	Independent Senators Group
LaBoucane-Benson, Patti	Alberta	Spruce Grove, Alta.	Non-affiliated
Lankin, Frances, P.C.	Ontario	Restoule, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Loffreda, Tony	Shawinegan	Montreal, Que.	Independent Senators Group

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address	Political Affiliation
MacAdam, Jane	Prince Edward Island	West St. Peters, P.E.I.	Independent Senators Group
MacDonald, Michael L.	Cape Breton	Dartmouth, N.S.	Conservative Party of Canada
Manning, Fabian	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. Bride's, Nfld. & Lab.	Conservative Party of Canada
Marshall, Elizabeth	Newfoundland and Labrador	Paradise, Nfld. & Lab.	Conservative Party of Canada
Martin, Yonah	British Columbia	Vancouver, B.C.	Conservative Party of Canada
Massicotte, Paul J.	De Lanaudière	Mont-Saint-Hilaire, Que.	Independent Senators Group
McBean, Marnie	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
McCallum, Mary Jane	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.	Non-affiliated
McNair, John M.	New Brunswick	Grand-Bouctouche, N.B.	Independent Senators Group
McPhedran, Marilou	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.	Non-affiliated
Mégie, Marie-Françoise	Rougemont	Montreal, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Miville-Dechéne, Julie	Inkerman	Mont-Royal, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Moncion, Lucie	Ontario	North Bay, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Moodie, Rosemary	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Oh, Victor	Mississauga	Mississauga, Ont.	Conservative Party of Canada
Omidvar, Ratna	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Osler, Flordeliz (Gigi)	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.	Canadian Senators Group
Oudar, Manuelle	La Salle	Quebec City, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Pate, Kim	Ontario	Ottawa, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Patterson, Rebecca	Ontario	Ottawa, Ont.	Canadian Senators Group
Petitclerc, Chantal	Grandville	Montreal, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Petten, Iris G.	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John's, Nfld. & Lab.	Independent Senators Group
Plett, Donald Neil	Landmark	Landmark, Man.	Conservative Party of Canada
Poirier, Rose-May	New Brunswick—Saint-Louis-de-Kent	Saint-Louis-de-Kent, N.B.	Conservative Party of Canada
Prosper, Paul J.	Nova Scotia	Hants County, N.S.	Canadian Senators Group
Quinn, Jim	New Brunswick	Saint John, N.B.	Canadian Senators Group
Ravalia, Mohamed-Iqbal	Newfoundland and Labrador	Twillingate, Nfld. & Lab.	Independent Senators Group
Richards, David	New Brunswick	Fredericton, N.B.	Non-affiliated
Ringuette, Pierrette	New Brunswick	Edmundston, N.B.	Independent Senators Group
Robinson, Mary	Prince Edward Island	Charlottetown, P.E.I.	Non-affiliated
Ross, Krista	New Brunswick	Fredericton, N.B.	Canadian Senators Group
Saint-Germain, Raymonde	De la Vallière	Quebec City, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Seidman, Judith G.	De la Durantaye	Saint-Raphaël, Que.	Conservative Party of Canada
Senior, Paulette	Ontario	Pickering, Ont.	Non-affiliated
Simons, Paula	Alberta	Edmonton, Alta.	Independent Senators Group
Smith, Larry W.	Saurel	Hudson, Que.	Canadian Senators Group
Sorensen, Karen	Alberta	Banff, Alta.	Independent Senators Group
Tannas, Scott	Alberta	High River, Alta.	Canadian Senators Group
Varone, Toni	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Verner, Josée, P.C.	Montarville	Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures, Que.	Canadian Senators Group
Wallin, Pamela	Saskatchewan	Wadena, Sask.	Canadian Senators Group
Wells, David M.	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John's, Nfld. & Lab.	Conservative Party of Canada
White, Judy A.	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. George's, Nfld. & Lab.	Progressive Senate Group
Woo, Yuen Pau	British Columbia	North Vancouver, B.C.	Independent Senators Group
Yussuff, Hassan	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Independent Senators Group

SENATORS OF CANADA
BY PROVINCE AND TERRITORY

(June 1, 2024)

ONTARIO—24

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1	Salma Ataullahjan.....Ontario (Toronto)	Toronto
2	Victor Oh.....Mississauga	Mississauga
3	Peter Harder, P.C.....Ottawa	Manotick
4	Frances Lankin, P.C.....Ontario	Restoule
5	Ratna Omidvar.....Ontario	Toronto
6	Kim Pate.....Ontario	Ottawa
7	Tony Dean.....Ontario	Toronto
8	Lucie Moncion.....Ontario	North Bay
9	Gwen Boniface.....Ontario	Orillia
10	Robert Black.....Ontario	Centre Wellington
11	Marty Deacon.....Waterloo Region	Waterloo
12	Yvonne Boyer.....Ontario	Merrickville-Wolford
13	Donna Dasko.....Ontario	Toronto
14	Peter M. Boehm.....Ontario	Ottawa
15	Rosemary Moodie.....Ontario	Toronto
16	Hassan Yussuff.....Ontario	Toronto
17	Bernadette Clement.....Ontario	Cornwall
18	Sharon Burey.....Ontario	Windsor
19	Andrew Cardozo.....Ontario	Ottawa
20	Rebecca Patterson.....Ontario	Ottawa
21	Marnie McBean.....Ontario	Toronto
22	Toni Varone.....Ontario	Toronto
23	Paulette Senior.....Ontario	Pickering
24	Mohammad Al Zaibak.....Ontario	Toronto

SENATORS BY PROVINCE AND TERRITORY

QUEBEC—24

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Paul J. Massicotte	De Lanaudière	Mont-Saint-Hilaire
2 Patrick Brazeau	Repentigny	Maniwaki
3 Leo Housakos	Wellington	Laval
4 Claude Carignan, P.C.	Mille Isles	Saint-Eustache
5 Judith G. Seidman	De la Durantaye	Saint-Raphaël
6 Larry W. Smith	Saurel	Hudson
7 Josée Verner, P.C.	Montarville	Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures
8 Jean-Guy Dagenais	Victoria	Blainville
9 Diane Bellemare	Alma	Outremont
10 Chantal Petitclerc	Grandville	Montreal
11 Éric Forest	Gulf	Rimouski
12 Marc Gold	Stadacona	Westmount
13 Marie-Françoise Mégie	Rougemont	Montreal
14 Raymonde Saint-Germain	De la Vallière	Quebec City
15 Rosa Galvez	Bedford	Lévis
16 Pierre J. Dalphond	De Lorimier	Montreal
17 Julie Miville-Dechéne	Inkerman	Mont-Royal
18 Tony Loffreda	Shawinegan	Montreal
19 Amina Gerba	Rigaud	Blainville
20 Clément Gignac	Kennebec	Lac Saint-Joseph
21 Michèle Audette	De Salaberry	Quebec City
22 Manuelle Oudar	La Salle	Quebec City
23
24

SENATORS BY PROVINCE—MARITIME DIVISION

NOVA SCOTIA—10

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Jane Cordy	Nova Scotia	Dartmouth
2 Stephen Greene	Halifax - The Citadel	Halifax
3 Michael L. MacDonald	Cape Breton	Dartmouth
4 Wanda Thomas Bernard	Nova Scotia (East Preston)	East Preston
5 Mary Coyle	Nova Scotia	Antigonish
6 Colin Deacon	Nova Scotia	Halifax
7 Stan Kutcher	Nova Scotia	Halifax
8 Paul J. Prosper	Nova Scotia	Hants County
9 Réjean Aucoin	Nova Scotia	Cape Breton
10 Rodger Cuzner	Nova Scotia	Cape Breton

NEW BRUNSWICK—10

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Pierrette Ringuette	New Brunswick	Edmundston
2 Rose-May Poirier	New Brunswick—Saint-Louis-de-Kent	Saint-Louis-de-Kent
3 René Cormier	New Brunswick	Caraquet
4 Nancy J. Hartling	New Brunswick	Riverview
5 David Richards	New Brunswick	Fredericton
6 Jim Quinn	New Brunswick	Saint John
7 Joan Kingston	New Brunswick	New Maryland
8 John M. McNair	New Brunswick	Grand-Bouctouche
9 Krista Ross	New Brunswick	Fredericton
10

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND—4

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Percy E. Downe	Charlottetown	Charlottetown
2 Brian Francis	Prince Edward Island	Rocky Point
3 Jane MacAdam	Prince Edward Island	West St. Peters
4 Mary Robinson	Prince Edward Island	Charlottetown

SENATORS BY PROVINCE—WESTERN DIVISION

MANITOBA—6

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Donald Neil Plett	Landmark	Landmark
2 Raymonde Gagné, <i>Speaker</i>	Manitoba	Winnipeg
3 Marilou McPhedran	Manitoba	Winnipeg
4 Mary Jane McCallum.....	Manitoba	Winnipeg
5 Flordeliz (Gigi) Osler.....	Manitoba	Winnipeg
6		

BRITISH COLUMBIA—6

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Mobina S. B. Jaffer	British Columbia	North Vancouver
2 Yonah Martin.....	British Columbia	Vancouver
3 Yuen Pau Woo.....	British Columbia	North Vancouver
4 Bev Busson	British Columbia	North Okanagan Region
5 Margo Greenwood	British Columbia	Vernon
6		

SASKATCHEWAN—6

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Pamela Wallin.....	Saskatchewan	Wadena
2 Denise Batters	Saskatchewan	Regina
3 Marty Klyne.....	Saskatchewan	White City
4 Brent Cotter	Saskatchewan	Saskatoon
5 David M. Arnot.....	Saskatchewan	Saskatoon
6		

ALBERTA—6

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Scott Tannas.....	Alberta.....	High River
2 Patti LaBoucane-Benson.....	Alberta.....	Spruce Grove
3 Paula Simons	Alberta.....	Edmonton
4 Karen Sorensen	Alberta.....	Banff
5		
6		

SENATORS BY PROVINCE AND TERRITORY

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR—6

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Elizabeth Marshall	Newfoundland and Labrador	Paradise
2 Fabian Manning	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. Bride's
3 David M. Wells	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John's
4 Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia.....	Newfoundland and Labrador	Twillingate
5 Iris G. Petten	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John's
6 Judy A. White	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. George's

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES—1

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Dawn Anderson	Northwest Territories	Yellowknife

NUNAVUT—1

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1		

YUKON—1

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Pat Duncan.....	Yukon.....	Whitehorse

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