SENATE SÉNAT

CANADA

DEBATES OF THE SENATE

1st SESSION • 44th PARLIAMENT • VOLUME 153 • NUMBER 213

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Monday, June 17, 2024

The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,
Speaker

CONTENTS

(Daily index of proceedings appears at back of this issue).

Publications Centre: Publications@sen.parl.gc.ca

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

THE SENATE

Monday, June 17, 2024

The Senate met at 6 p.m., the Speaker in the chair.

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

PRIDE MONTH

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I am pleased to share some thoughts with you as we mark Pride Month in Canada.

I am proud to be a citizen of Canada, a country that has a constitutional Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and I am proud to have participated in the Senate study on Bill C-16 that became law seven years ago this week, which added gender identity or expression to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination in the Canadian Human Rights Act and to the list of characteristics of identifiable groups protected from hate propaganda in the Criminal Code.

But my pride is tempered by the lived reality of many within the 2SLGBTQI+ community. Too many still encounter rejection and discrimination in their daily lives and are too often at risk of violence at the hands of others. Yes, we have laws to protect them, but these laws only apply after the fact — and "after the fact" for gay, lesbian, trans, gender-fluid or non-binary people is sometimes too late.

Colleagues, my wife Nancy and I have two beautiful kids. Our eldest is a gay woman and the other — our younger — is a trans woman, so this is not abstract for me. It is deeply personal, and it goes to the core of our fundamental values as people.

At the heart of the religious and philosophical traditions with which I am most familiar, and which have shaped my moral and political outlook, stands the ideal of equality. From the command in Leviticus to love thy neighbour as thyself, the exhortation in the Gospel of Luke to treat others as you wish to be treated; from the categorical imperative of Immanuel Kant to the work of the legal philosopher Ronald Dworkin, the core value that makes living together possible in our pluralistic democracy is that everyone has the right to be treated with equal concern and respect. Not only those who look like us or those who look like how we think they ought to look, act, love or, plainly and simply, just to be.

Pride Month is an occasion to learn about the diversity both within the 2SLGBTQI+ community and, by extension, within Canadian society as a whole. Let it also be an occasion where we affirm our commitment to the core values of our country — a diverse, pluralistic, democratic Canada in which all have a place and in which we all can be proud. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Frances Lankin: Honourable senators, I'm pleased to join my colleagues who have spoken to give recognition, acknowledgement and celebration of Pride Month. I note that many colleagues have spoken about this from important societal angles and also from a personal angle.

I am going to take that route, but it is a little bit different because I'm going to talk about legislative and policy changes from a brief window of opportunity, having been in the Ontario legislature at a time that was quite volatile, important and progressively trying to make changes to give recognition, duly earned and deserved rights and acknowledgement of that legislatively.

I was elected in September 1990, and sworn into cabinet. During that winter session, there was a ministerial statement that was made, and I remember feeling a sense of pride in our government taking this step forward. It was a statement to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that the Ontario public service would extend family coverage for all insured and non-insured benefits to couples of the same sex, including those employed by agencies, boards and commissions that were part of the Ontario public service benefit plan.

As I said, I was brand new to all of this, but I have the honour to say that was my very first ministerial statement as a minister of the Crown. From the Hansard of the Ontario legislature on December 20, 1990, I rose to say:

> I wish, as the employer of the Ontario public service, to inform members of the House about an internal administrative change which I believe demonstrates visibly this government's commitment to recognizing the diversity of its workforce and to social reform.
>
> Effective l January 1991 the Ontario public service will extend family coverage for all insured and non-insured benefits to couples of the same sex, including those employed by the agencies, boards and commissions . . . .

That statement went on. I wrapped it up by saying:

> The principle that all of Ontario's laws and programs must treat people fairly, regardless of the nature of their personal relationships or their family unit, is the major consideration in these changes.

I may also say that this was a period of time of great court action, of cases being brought forward. I want to pay tribute to the former attorney general Ian Scott — may he rest in peace — who brought forward legislation in government, supported by the NDP in opposition, to change the Ontario Human Rights Code to end discrimination.

After this statement of a policy change, our government looked to introduce legislation to effect 79 statutes to change the definition of "spouse." That bill was defeated. It's a great political story that I don't have time to tell you today, but the courts intervened again and the successor government — the Mike Harris government — was forced to introduce the legislation they had voted against.

I'll wrap up by saying that this is a dangerous time. We need to continue to expand rights, but we are also finding ourselves in a situation where there are attacks to take rights away. As parliamentarians, we must be on guard and on defence, and we must stand in solidarity with the lesbian and gay community to ensure that the hard-fought gains are not lost in a tempest of political, personal and societal intolerance. Thank you very much.

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 Jacques Roy, Senator Kingston's husband.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

12 NEIGHBOURS

Hon. Joan Kingston: Honourable senators, I would ask you to celebrate with me today the completion of the building phase of a social enterprise that serves as an example of an innovative way to address the multiple needs of those who find themselves chronically homelessness. I am talking about 12 Neighbours, a community of tiny, crayon-coloured permanent homes near a Walmart parking lot and on a city bus route in Fredericton, New Brunswick.

In two short years, there have been ninety-six 250-square-foot homes built and occupied. Yes, that is 8 groupings of 12 homes with tiny covered porches, shared yards and solar panels on each tiny roof. Some are homes to a couple.

Staff of 12 Neighbours are on site 24/7. Residents have access to goal-setting programs and counselling for addictions and mental health to help set them up to work for one of the social enterprises connected to the community. One of those enterprises is the building of more tiny homes, some as large as 350 square feet to be sold as a cottage or a granny suite. Fifty of the originally designed tiny homes have been ordered by a non-profit group on the Miramichi whose plan is to build a similar project to 12 Neighbours.

• (1810)

Last week, Neighbourly Coffee — the jewel of the social enterprises, which has a bakery and a teaching kitchen — opened to the public inside the non-profit's sprawling sunlit community centre. My husband and I have enjoyed the delicious food and specialty coffees, and I predict that Neighbourly Coffee will become a local favourite. One of the people working there as a cook is a woman whom I first met when she and her partner were sleeping rough during the pandemic. These days, she spends her spare time cooking up pots of chili in the kitchen of her own tiny home to welcome her new neighbours.

To quote Marcel LeBrun, a social entrepreneur and the founder of 12 Neighbours, "I saw the power of purpose . . . how a poverty of circumstances leads to a poverty of identity."

Marcel was persuaded by the "housing first" philosophy: the notion, supported by research, that putting people into safe, warm and proprietary places better sets them up to access other services.

"It's investing in people as opposed to emergency relief," he said during a recent interview with *The Globe and Mail*.

He continued:

> You take someone who was living outside, working full-time just to get food, and you put them in a house — they can finally start to deal with trauma.

Congratulations on the success of 12 Neighbours, Marcel.

Thank you. *Wela'lin*.

[*Translation*]

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Martin Théberge, President of the Société Nationale de l'Acadie, and Émilie Caissie-Richard, Acting Director General of the Société Nationale de l'Acadie. They are the guests of the Honourable Senators Cormier and Aucoin.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

PRIDE MONTH

Hon. René Cormier: Colleagues, as June is both Pride Month and National Indigenous History Month, I want to acknowledge that I am speaking from the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe people.

This month is an opportunity to celebrate the rich history, heritage, resilience and diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, and to thank all those members of Indigenous groups who identify as two-spirited and generously share their realities and world views.

[*English*]

As two-spirit teacher Alex Wilson of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation said:

> Two-spirit identity is about circling back to where we belong, reclaiming, reinventing, and redefining our beginnings, our roots, our communities, our support systems, and our collective and individual selves. . . .

Pride Month is indeed a time to reflect on support systems that help 2SLGBTQIA+ communities thrive.

[*Translation*]

Today, I would like to pay tribute to the allies and, in particular, to the parents who listen, show compassion and lovingly accompany their children on this difficult journey of affirming their differences. Thank you to senators Diane Bellemare, Paula Simons, Marty Deacon, Marc Gold and all the other parents out there.

[*English*]

At a time when issues of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression are under high tension in our country due to the unprecedented rise in hatred toward 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, we are at a crossroads. We must be there, speak out and act, because there is no place in our country for violence, no place in our provinces, territories, regions or municipalities for hatred, and no place in our schools for discrimination and bullying.

All human beings are precious, and they deserve respect no matter their age, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

For parents and those who are working in schools to support our children in asserting their identities, know that you are not alone. We are here and will continue to work alongside you to ensure the well-being of all young people who identify as members of the queer community.

It is a collective responsibility, colleagues. Whether we are members of the queer community, allies or just citizens, Pride Season is the perfect time to show our support and work together with compassion.

[*Translation*]

As the late, great Quebec songwriter Jean-Pierre Ferland once sang, “We’re so lucky to have each other, so lucky to love each other.”

[*English*]

I will add that we’re so lucky to live in this magnificent country.

Let’s continue supporting one another, and loving each other with the conviction that equality, diversity, inclusion and freedom are values that all Canadians share. Let’s commit to living these values 365 days a year.

Happy Pride Season. Thank you. *Meegwetch*.

[*Translation*]

QUEBEC’S NATIONAL HOLIDAY

Hon. Tony Loffreda: Honourable senators, in a few days, it will be June 24.

It will be a day of great celebration and commemoration for Quebecers and all francophones across the country.

In Quebec, we will gather to celebrate our national holiday, while francophones and francophiles in other parts of the country will celebrate Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day.

It will be the perfect opportunity to showcase our rich francophone heritage and to celebrate the many contributions that Quebecers, French Canadians and francophone immigrants have made to our country’s cultural landscape.

Together, we are a strong, resilient people, who are clearly proud of our heritage.

June 24 reminds us of the extent to which our history and our culture have served to build bridges between us and the rest of Canada, through the generations and the ages, and to contribute to the multicultural dynamic of our country. Despite its various accents and regional dialects, French is the common thread that unites us and makes us proud to be francophone.

Spoken across the country and around the world, French remains one of the most comforting, warm and contagious languages in the world.

According to the Organisation internationale de la francophonie, or OIF, there are 321 million francophones around the world, including over 10 million in Canada.

As the world’s fifth most spoken language, French continues to win over people around the world, with over 50 million people currently learning French.

[*English*]

Colleagues, being raised in Quebec has given me so many opportunities. It’s been my home for over 60 years, and I am forever thankful for having had the privilege of learning and living in French and immersing myself in the rich culture of Quebec. Whether you are from Quebec or not, and whether you speak French or not, Canada’s bilingualism is one of our most important assets.

[*Translation*]

It is up to us proud francophones to do everything we can to protect, promote and ensure the vitality of our language and culture.

Honourable senators, as parliamentarians, it is also our duty to ensure that the French fact is respected and valued at a national level.

As we pursue this objective, let us take the time to celebrate our francophonie and express our pride loud and clear.

Happy Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day and happy national holiday.

[*English*]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

AUDIT AND OVERSIGHT

TWELFTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Marty Klyne: Honourable senators, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the twelfth report (interim) of the Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight, which deals with the implementation of the risk-based audit plan.

(*For text of report, see today's* Journals of the Senate*, p. 2937*.)

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

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

• (1820)

[*Translation*]

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AFFECT PROCEEDINGS ON BILL C-69

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, previous order or usual practice, and without affecting provisions of the order of June 5, 2024, relating to proceedings on Bill C-69, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 16, 2024:
>
> 1. if the Senate receives the bill and adopts it at second reading, it stand referred to the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance;
>
> 2. the committee be authorized to meet for the purposes of its consideration of Bill C-69, even though the Senate may then be sitting, with rule 12-18(1) being suspended in relation thereto;
>
> 3. the committee be authorized to report the bill at any time the Senate is sitting, except during Question Period;
>
> 4. if the committee reports the bill without amendment, the bill be placed on the Orders of the Day for third reading later that sitting, provided that if the report is presented after the point where the Senate would normally have dealt with the bill at third reading, the bill either be taken into consideration at third reading forthwith, or, if another item is under consideration at the time the report is presented, the bill be placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at third reading as the next item of business; and
>
> 5. if the committee reports the bill with amendment or with a recommendation that the Senate not proceed further with the bill:
>
>   (a) the report be placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration later that sitting, provided that if the report is presented after the point where the Senate would normally have dealt with the report, it either be taken into consideration forthwith, or, if another item is under consideration at the time the report is presented, it be placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration as the next item of business; and
>
>   (b) once the Senate decides on the report, the bill, if still before the Senate, be taken into consideration at third reading forthwith.

APPROPRIATION BILL NO. 2, 2024-25

FIRST READING

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-74, An Act for granting to His Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025.

(Bill read first time.)

(Pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate on June 5, 2024, the bill was placed on the Orders of the Day for a second reading at the next sitting.)

[*English*]

APPROPRIATION BILL NO. 3, 2024-25

FIRST READING

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-75, An Act for granting to His Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025.

(Bill read first time.)

(Pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate on June 5, 2024, the bill was placed on the Orders of the Day for a second reading at the next sitting.)

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

ANNUAL PARLIAMENTARY HEARING AT THE UNITED NATIONS, FEBRUARY 13-15, 2023—REPORT TABLED

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Inter-Parliamentary Union concerning the Annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations, held in New York, New York, United States of America, from February 13 to 15, 2023.

PARLIAMENTARY MEETING ON THE OCCASION OF THE SIXTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, MARCH 7-8, 2023—REPORT TABLED

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Inter-Parliamentary Union concerning the Parliamentary Meeting on the Occasion of the Sixty-seventh Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, held in New York, New York, United States of America, from March 7 to 8, 2023.

ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS, MARCH 11-15, 2023—REPORT TABLED

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) concerning the One Hundred and Forty-sixth IPU Assembly and Related Meetings, held in Manama, Bahrain, from March 11 to 15, 2023.

PARLIAMENTARY FORUM AT THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, JULY 18, 2023—REPORT TABLED

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Inter-Parliamentary Union concerning the Parliamentary Forum at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, held in New York, New York, United States of America, on July 18, 2023.

ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS, OCTOBER 23-27, 2023—REPORT TABLED

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) concerning the One Hundred and Forty-seventh IPU Assembly and Related Meetings, held in Luanda, Angola, from October 23 to 27, 2023.

PARLIAMENTARY MEETING ON THE OCCASION OF THE SIXTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, MARCH 12-13, 2024—REPORT TABLED

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Inter-Parliamentary Union concerning the Parliamentary Meeting on the Occasion of the Sixty-eighth Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, held in New York, New York, United States of America, from March 12 to 13, 2024.

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO CONDEMN THE DEATH SENTENCE OF TOOMAJ SALEHI

Hon. Julie Miville-Dechêne: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Senate:

(a) condemn the death sentence of Iranian musician and vocal critic of the Iranian regime, Toomaj Salehi;

(b) urge the Government of Canada to impose targeted sanctions on the 31 judges, prosecutors, and investigators of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Courts included on the "TOOMAJ" list, who are responsible for sham trials, torture, and the inhumane treatment of Iranian protesters and political dissidents;

(c) condemn gender apartheid, violations of civil liberties, killings, intimidation, and acts of violence initiated by the Islamic Republic against the people of Iran; and

(d) reiterate its unconditional support for Iranians advocating for human rights and democracy as part of the "Women, Life, Freedom" movement.

QUESTION PERIOD

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

CARBON TAX

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Leader, during Question Period last Thursday, I asked you about the leak to the CBC concerning the economic cost of the carbon tax. This is information the Trudeau government has desperately been trying to hide from Canadians. The CBC reported that the carbon tax is costing our economy $20 billion.

I should have known better than to trust the CBC, the government's sponsor in the media. The true number, adjusted for inflation, is $30.5 billion per year. Even the CBC didn't want to report that. That works out to about $1,800 for every single family in our country, leader.

How could the Prime Minister and his radical Minister of Environment and Climate Change be so reckless with our economy? Why have they been hiding it?

• (1830)

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. They are neither reckless with the economy nor hiding. The fact remains that a full, proper analysis of the report of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, or PBO, and the government's full analysis of the cost and benefits of its carbon pricing regime demonstrate clearly that, on balance, the tax on pollution — the carbon pricing regime — addresses in an economically effective and responsible way the actual costs to our country — indeed, our planet — of climate change.

The government has released data that not only confirms that pollution pricing will help us reach our climate goals and account for one third of our overall reductions in emissions by 2030, but also shows that acting significantly outweighs the cost. Climate change is set to cost the Canadian economy $35 billion by 2030, leaving further generations the costs to bear.

Senator Plett: Whose calculator have you been using: the incompetent Prime Minister's or the radical environment minister's?

Minister Guilbeault knew all along that the carbon tax was economic vandalism. That's why he put a gag order on the Parliamentary Budget Officer, forbidding him from exposing the real numbers, leader. Why is this radical and secretive environment minister still in cabinet? If he won't step down, leader, why doesn't the Prime Minister fire him?

Senator Gold: No amount of slurs that you can manage to squeeze into your question is going to change the fact that, first of all, the Minister of Environment has the confidence of this government. Second, as I've just said — and will continue to say — the overall cost of doing nothing about climate is enormous, with existential consequences for our economy and for our future. This government is acting on climate change and will continue to do so.

Hon. Leo Housakos: Senator Gold, you and your government knew all along how devastating this tax has been on individual Canadians and our economy. You knew the Trudeau government lied about it and covered it up, and you refused Conservative efforts to give Canadians even a speck of relief so families can enjoy a bit of a vacation this summer. Minister Holland even demonized hard-working Canadians for wanting to take a road trip this summer, when they can't afford anything else after nine years of this Trudeau government.

You lied about Canadians getting more back in rebates than they were putting out. The PBO made it clear that you lied about the negative impact on our economy. And you tried to destroy the credibility and integrity of the public servant willing to tell the truth. Because that's what your government has continuously done to people who stand up to do the right thing — they seek to destroy them.

Will you finally do the right thing and axe the tax and give Canadians a break?

Senator Gold: All roads seem to lead to your same, rather tired exhortation, Senator Housakos. I am not going to repeat or use the same language that you used to not only smear but misrepresent — fundamentally misrepresent — the integrity of public officials and government alike. I'm not going to use that same language, but you are knowingly misleading this chamber for strictly electoral, partisan purposes. If that is what you believe the role of the Senate should be — and clearly, by your behaviour, that's what it is; by one's actions, one knows oneself — then we can respectfully disagree.

I'm hoping that the Canadians who are watching this and the members of this chamber think that we have more important things to do than simply parrot electoral talking points for electoral, partisan purposes.

Senator Housakos: Senator Gold, what Canadians are tired of is this government standing in the way of a Parliamentary Budget Officer who is telling the truth — that's what they're tired of — or a motion in the House last week that required the Trudeau government to turn over all data showing you knew all along how devastating this tax has been to the Canadian economy, data that Minister Guilbeault tried to cover up before attacking the PBO when he tried to expose the truth. By the way, the PBO is hired by this government.

Senator Gold, why hasn't Mr. Guilbeault been fired, or is that only reserved by this government for people who tell the truth? Why doesn't your government respect the findings —

[*Translation*]

The Hon. the Speaker: Thank you, Senator Housakos, but I would ask that you respect order and decorum when I rise.

[*English*]

Senator Gold: The Government of Canada stands by its analysis that the actions it's taking to combat climate change through — among other things — a price on pollution are responsible and prudent measures.

Again, misrepresenting the position of the government does not do Canadians any service whatsoever.

JUSTICE

COERCIVE CONTROL

Hon. Kim Pate: Senator Gold, last week, the other place unanimously supported attempts to address coercive control. Today, representatives of 250 feminist organizations are asking us to similarly denounce tactics that attack and label mothers attempting to extricate themselves and their children from controlling and sometimes violent relationships as engaging in parent alienation.

A proliferation of so-called experts have put children at risk of further violence through enabling an alarming practice of abusive fathers systematically accusing mothers who try to protect their children of being alienators. This is especially true when children express a desire to not live with their abusive fathers.

Last April, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls released a report calling on all states, including Canada, to legislate to stop parental alienation accusations.

Senator Gold, does the government agree with this recommendation?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question and for your advocacy on this issue.

Colleagues, I want to make it clear that coercive and controlling behaviour is manipulative, dangerous and — indeed — puts lives at risk. There's an epidemic of gender-based violence in Canada, and far more needs to be done to keep women and their families safe.

Having said that, I'm not in a position to comment on the government's position regarding the UN Special Rapporteur's recommendation. However, I'll certainly bring it to the minister's attention.

Senator Pate: Thank you Senator Gold, I appreciate that.

Just as the government worked to protect victims of violence with the 2019 family law reforms, we're hoping it will hear the call of these organizations and end the harmful and unscientific practice of parent alienation accusations before the next election.

Can I count on you to assist us with that process?

Senator Gold: Thank you. I'll certainly underline this point when I do raise it with the minister.

[*Translation*]

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

ECONOMIC SANCTIONS

Hon. Julie Miville-Dechêne: Senator Gold, in the past two and a half years, ever since the suspicious death of Mahsa Amini in Tehran, Canada has imposed sanctions on 200 Iranians and 250 Iranian organizations for aiding and abetting the Iranian regime, particularly in its repression of the people or attacks on international peace and security. Beyond announcing the names of the individuals targeted by these sanctions, however, it seems that little or nothing has been done in practical terms, either through the seizure of funds held in banks or deportations from Canada. Where, exactly, do things stand on this issue?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. The Special Economic Measures (Iran) Regulations prohibit transactions with individuals or other entities named on the list, which effectively freezes any assets they may have in Canada. Any person in Canada or any Canadian outside Canada is prohibited from engaging in transactions involving the property of listed persons. Listed persons are also prohibited from entering Canada under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. Specific prohibitions are set out in the regulations.

Senator Miville-Dechêne: Thank you for reading the regulations, but my question was about whether any assets have been frozen. Have assets been frozen? Have any of the people subject to sanctions been expelled from Canada? We know that $76 million has been earmarked for this program, but have any concrete results been achieved? If you don't have the answers, could I have a written summary of what meaningful action has been taken on these issues?

Senator Gold: Thank you for the question. The Minister of Foreign Affairs is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Special Economic Measures Act and its regulations. However, one of the roles of the RCMP under this legislation is to collect information on assets in the possession or control of a designated person. I understand that the RCMP regularly issues press releases with information on assets owned or controlled by a designated person that have been seized or restrained.

• (1840)

[*English*]

FINANCE

CAPITAL GAINS INCLUSION RATE

Hon. Robert Black: Senator Gold, I asked you a question about the government's awareness of the policy impacts the capital gains tax will have on farm families. You stated that the government is aware of the impacts, and as such the government was increasing the lifetime capital gains exemption for capital gains on the sale of a small business or farm by 25%. However, according to the Grain Growers of Canada, the average grain farm will pay additional capital gains and easily surpass the proposed $1.25 million lifetime capital gains. In addition, most young farmers taking over the family business will not be eligible for the proposed Canadian entrepreneurs' incentive.

Given these issues, what further measures are the government considering to adequately support farm families and young farmers in light of the capital gains tax implications?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. As you know, colleague, the government already has numerous programs available for farmers and producers. Although I can't list all of them, let me cite a few as an example: the AgriInvest program that helps cover income declines and supports investments to help mitigate risk; the AgriInsurance program, which offers protection against production losses caused by hail, drought, flooding, disease and other national hazards; and the AgriStability program, which offers protection against declines in farm income as a result of low prices, rising input costs and production losses. These are just a few of the programs. I'm not aware of any further measures the government is considering with regard to the specific question you asked.

Senator Black: Senator Gold, statistics show that Canada is losing 700 to 1,000 family farms annually. Considering the proposed measures you just mentioned and previously mentioned may not sufficiently address financial challenges faced by farm families and young farmers, especially those with larger operations, when will your government wake up and put in place workable solutions to ensure that these crucial contributors to our agricultural sector are not disproportionately burdened by the capital gains tax?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question. As I said, I'm not aware of any plans for the government to make further changes to the capital gains tax. The government is aware that the measures will affect certain segments of our economy and society, notably farmers but not only farmers, and is not of the view that it is disproportionate in its impact.

CROWN-INDIGENOUS RELATIONS

INDIGENOUS SELF-DETERMINATION

Hon. Marty Klyne: June is National Indigenous History Month, as colleagues in this chamber know, bringing awareness to the history of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples across the land now known as Canada. Learning about this history is essential to understanding the present and each other. Many Canadians may not fully grasp what treaties represent, nor the fact that Canada and the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, or MN-S, are currently negotiating a modern treaty.

Once ratified by the citizens of the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, there will be federal legislation to implement the agreement upholding MN-S's right to self-determination and treaty relationship. Senator Gold, will the government commit to ensuring that this anticipated legislation will be presented to Parliament in a timely manner upon our return in the fall?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question, senator, and for raising this important issue.

The government is committed to achieving reconciliation with Indigenous peoples through a renewed nation-to-nation, government-to-government and Inuit-Crown relationship based on the recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnership as the foundation for transformative change.

Having said that, I'm not in a position to speculate as to when legislation may or may not be tabled.

Senator Klyne: Senator Gold, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Action Plan released last year identifies Métis priorities, including Canada's recognition in support of Métis rights to self-determination. Walking the path of reconciliation is often slow going; however, we're now seeing negotiations with Métis people, as laid out in the action plan. Should that give Canadians heart that our great nation of nations is indeed progressing towards better relationships and a brighter future?

Senator Gold: You're right, senator, that this is a process. It's an ongoing one, and indeed positive strides have been made over the past decades.

The government is working in collaboration with First Nations, Inuit and Métis partners to identify priorities for aligning federal laws with the declaration and for holding Canada accountable for its implementation. I have been assured that the government will continue to commit to the full and effective implementation of the declaration.

[*Translation*]

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

CARBON TAX

Hon. Claude Carignan: Leader, last week, as a result of pressure from the Conservative Party, the government disclosed the numbers regarding the economic impact of the infamous carbon tax. This tax will cost the Quebec economy $5 billion and the Canadian economy $30.5 billion. Those numbers were given to the Parliamentary Budget Officer on the sine qua non condition that he not disclose them. Senator Gold, why did the government insist on silencing the Parliamentary Budget Officer, an officer of Parliament? Were you afraid of the truth?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for his question. As I explained, the information that was provided to the officer of Parliament was not a full analysis. From what I understand, the numbers provided pertained only to one aspect of the pollution pricing situation. As the Parliamentary Budget Officer told the *National Post* today, he was not prohibited from disclosing all of the information. The information in question was only part of an analysis, not a full analysis, and that is why it was not disclosed.

Senator Carignan: So you're confirming not only that Steven Guilbeault hid the truth from Quebecers and Canadians, but also that, as a consequence of that, he also lied about the cost of the carbon tax when he said the cost would be zero and have no economic impact. Will the minister resign and, if so, when?

Senator Gold: He is not going to resign. He didn't lie. As I said, respectfully, if you add up the cost of doing nothing about climate change, if you keep saying "axe the tax," as you keep repeating, if you don't calculate the money that is returned to Canadians, which represents roughly $10 million every year, then that paints a fair and appropriate picture.

[*English*]

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Leader, page 24 of the Liberal Party's 2015 election platform stated, "Government and its information should be open by default. Data paid for by Canadians belongs to Canadians."

Here we are, nine years later, and the Environment Minister was caught trying to prevent the Parliamentary Budget Officer, or PBO, from revealing the truth about the carbon tax. As well, leader, you would not commit to tabling an answer when I asked you last week how many times the PBO and other officers or agents of Parliament had received similar requests of silence from the Trudeau government.

Leader, are there any more reports or data sets about the carbon tax your government is hiding from Canadians, whose tax dollars paid for this information?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Again, and with respect, clearly you're entitled to continue to say what you want to say and disregard my answers. However, the fact is that the information that was provided and that is regularly provided by the government or is commissioned for the government goes into a proper, fulsome and responsible analysis of the costs and benefits.

Let me quote from the Parliamentary Budget Officer. I believe this was a quote that he gave at committee today, where he said that:

> The government is not muzzling me. Obviously, I was making a reference to data that was provided to me and my office that the government or Environment and Climate Change Canada . . . .

Senator Martin: We can choose to have a different perspective on this, but, leader, how do we square this gag order that Minister Guilbeault placed on the Parliamentary Budget Officer with the Trudeau government's 2015 promise of a government "open by default"? If transparency and accountability mean anything to your government, how do you reconcile Minister Guilbeault trying to keep this report secret and his attempt to discredit the PBO?

Senator Gold: There's no attempt to the discredit the PBO. The government has been clear in its analysis and in its conclusions that the price on pollution when all factors are taken into account — rebates to Canadians, the investments coming into Canada, the risk of losing capital investment if we don't have a credible climate change policy — makes this the most market-sensitive and appropriate policy for this government, for any government, for this country.

• (1850)

PUBLIC SAFETY

NATIONAL SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS

Hon. Percy E. Downe: Senator Gold, as you know, the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, or NSICOP, is a joint committee of the Senate and the House of Commons. All the leaders in the House of Commons have had the opportunity to read the unredacted committee report and, if necessary, take any required action. I trust the four leaders at the various Senate groups to read the report, keep the confidence and, if necessary — and it is a big if — take the required action. They all understand the ethics rules of the Senate and their responsibility requirement to uphold the highest standards of behaviour. Why are Senate leaders barred from reading the report? I trust those senators. Why doesn't the government trust them?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. As I've said, the government is carefully reviewing the issue of expanding access to Senate leadership, and senators can have confidence that when I have more to share, I will revert to the Senate's leadership with that decision. As it stands, consistent with the process that's recommended by the Special Rapporteur, party leaders in the other place are included notably because they have stewardship and accountability for the oversight of a range of democratic national party affairs, including, most notably, nominations from coast to coast to coast.

I should also note that concurrently the Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference has been asked to examine the content of the NSICOP report, and just today the commission publicly took note of the government's decision to resort to the process of an independent commission of inquiry to shed light on the facts.

Senator Downe: Senator Gold, to remove the cloud hanging over all senators — indeed one of our colleagues was questioned by a reporter just last week about his loyalty — the government has two choices: announce that no senators are named in the report as showing disloyalty to Canada or let the four leaders read the unredacted report, which they have allowed all the leaders in the House of Commons to do. Which is it? The government cannot continue treating the Senate in this manner.

Senator Gold: As I've said and will continue to say, the government is reviewing the request that we brought to their attention to expand access to senator leaders, and when the government has made a decision, I will revert to the Senate leadership to advise them accordingly.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

CARBON TAX

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Leader, when it comes to Minister Guilbeault's actions, ultimately, we know that he is not doing anything that the Prime Minister disagrees with, nothing. Right from the very start, common-sense Conservatives have called on the Trudeau government to release all documents about the true cost of the carbon tax in their original and uncensored form. Right from the start, long before Minister Guilbeault was named to his post, this incompetent and secretive government tried to hide the truth from Canadians. Seeing as Minister Guilbeault won't step down, and the Prime Minister won't fire him, Canadians need a carbon tax election, leader, don't they?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): What Canadians need is an adult conversation about how we should invest in climate change. What Canadians need, what Canadian businesses need, what the oil patch needs and what all sectors of the economy need is to have a plan and a program and legislation in place so that Canada can continue to attract foreign investment, investment that increasingly requires countries and businesses to have serious plans towards arriving at carbon neutrality. That is what Canadians need. That's actually what Canadian entrepreneurs need. That's what capital markets need. That's what economists tell us we need.

What we don't need is what we seem to be exposed to in this rather less-than-adult conversation about a serious existential issue.

Senator Plett: If we want an adult conversation, we'd need an adult in the Prime Minister's Office, not a snowboard instructor. Canadians already know the cost of carbon tax. They see it every time they buy groceries or fill their tank to drive to work. Everyday life is more expensive. Last year, Minister Guilbeault said there would be no more carbon tax carve-outs as long as he's the minister. He's more concerned about his job than the affordability crisis. That's one more reason for the carbon tax election, leader, isn't it?

Senator Gold: I will continue to simply summarize — and the record will show that I've answered this question on numerous occasions — there's no credible evidence that the tax on pollution has had a material impact on food prices or other measures that Canadians are still struggling with, but, again, I can only put facts on the table and let others judge accordingly.

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

MYANMAR—SUPPORT FOR ROHINGYA REFUGEES

Hon. Marilou McPhedran: Senator Gold, since 2017, over 1 million Rohingya have been displaced by Tatmadaw military violence in Myanmar. In May, the UN announced receipt of "frightening and disturbing reports" of new violence, including beheadings, in Rakhine State against Rohingya civilians by both the Tatmadaw military and the Arakan Army.

This government's 2024 budget failed to renew Canada's multi-year strategy providing specific humanitarian assistance to Rohingya refugees, including for health and education of girls and women now in camps in Bangladesh. No budget equals no access to education and health care for Rohingya. Senator Gold, has Canada abandoned the Rohingya?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question and for reminding us of the horrible circumstances that the Rohingya are facing. Canada has not abandoned the Rohingya. I will certainly raise your concerns with the minister about the budget measures to which you referred.

Senator McPhedran: Senator Gold, genocide and civil war have displaced over 1.2 million Rohingya. The report by now Ambassador Bob Rae when he was Canada's Special Envoy to Myanmar entitled *"Tell them we're human"* galvanized Canada to take positive action. I've been to the camps in Bangladesh, and I can attest to the positive results of Canadian aid. Why has Canada decided to stop aid to Rohingya women and girls?

Senator Gold: I'm not in a position to answer that question, senator, but I certainly will raise it with the minister.

FINANCE

TAX RATES

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Leader, my next question is about changes to the capital gains tax. Last Monday, the International Monetary Fund, or IMF, issued a statement which gave Canadians a heads-up that when it comes to tax hikes, raising the capital gains inclusion rate is just the beginning. This wasteful and incompetent NDP-Trudeau government needs a lot more cash to pay for its uncontrolled spending, so the IMF recommends hiking the GST.

Leader, now that the Minister of Finance has done part 1 of IMF's plan, when can Canadians expect part 2? Is a GST hike under consideration? Yes or no?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): I'm not aware of any plans surrounding the GST. The decision that the government made to increase the inclusion rate of capital gains was, in the view of the government, a responsible measure to provide for a greater fairness and equity within our tax code.

Senator Plett: Projections from the Trudeau government's very own budget only two months ago show that every dime it collects through GST this fiscal year — $54.1 billion — is already spoken for, every nickel. This $54.1 billion will cover just the interest on the NDP government's massive debt. That's it. So that begs the question: What other surprise tax hikes are coming, leader?

Senator Gold: I'm not aware of any other tax hikes or surprises, and if the government has more legislation to introduce or announce, I'm sure that we will be the first to know.

• (1900)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 4-12(3), I would like to inform the Senate that as we proceed with Government Business, the Senate will address the items in the following order: second reading of Bill C-70, followed by third reading of Bill C-58, followed by third reading of Bill C-50, followed by third reading of Bill C-59, followed by all remaining items in the order that they appear on the Order Paper.

COUNTERING FOREIGN INTERFERENCE BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. Tony Dean moved second reading of Bill C-70, An Act respecting countering foreign interference.

He said: Honourable senators, today, I am pleased to speak as the sponsor of Bill C-70, An Act respecting countering foreign interference, which has received rare unanimous support of the House of Commons.

We have learned over the past months, and at our National Security, Defence and Veterans Affairs Committee last week, that foreign interference poses one of the greatest threats to Canadian society, our economic prosperity and our sovereignty.

Colleagues, this proposed legislation begins the process of providing our law enforcement and intelligence agencies with the enhanced tools and authorities that they need in order to strengthen our ability to detect and disrupt foreign interference threats to our national security while ensuring oversight and transparency.

Colleagues, Canada is not immune to this. Indeed, we are a prime target. We know that a growing number of foreign state actors have built and deployed programs dedicated to deceptive online and offline influence as part of their strategies to harm Canada.

In 2019, before a general election, the government announced the plan to protect Canada's democracy. Measures introduced as part of the plan included the Critical Election Incident Public Protocol, the Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections Task Force, the Digital Citizen Initiative, the G7 Rapid Response Mechanism, and the Canada Declaration on Electoral Integrity Online. These measures were in place for the 2019 election with the intention of countering any foreign interference attempts.

Fast-forward to 2022 when the media reported on the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, or CSIS, leaks that alleged that China had engaged in foreign interference in the 2019 and 2021 elections. At this point, it became clear that the measures put in place were not enough to protect us from foreign powers interfering in our elections. This prompted committee studies on foreign interference in the House of Commons.

In March 2023, the Prime Minister announced a number of independent reviews. The National Security and Intelligence Review Agency, or NSIRA, was asked to conduct a review of the flow of information from national security agencies to decision makers during the forty-third and forty-fourth general elections. Their review focused on the production and dissemination of intelligence on foreign interference, including how it was communicated across the government.

Key recommendations in this report include the following: to make explicit CSIS's thresholds and practices for the communication and dissemination of intelligence regarding political interference — this would include the relevant levels of confidence, corroboration, contextualization and characterization necessary for intelligence to be reported; to clearly articulate CSIS's risk tolerance for taking action against threats of political interference; to make clear any special requirements or procedures that would apply during election and writ periods as necessary, including particular procedures for the timely dissemination of intelligence about political foreign interference; and also to look at best practices from international partners, including the Five Eyes, regarding investigating and reporting on political foreign interference.

The Prime Minister also requested that the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, or NSICOP, "complete a review to assess the state of foreign interference in federal election processes" with respect to:

> . . . foreign interference attempts that occurred in the 43rd and 44th federal general elections, including potential effects on Canada's democracy and institutions . . . .

NSICOP published its report on foreign interference at the beginning of June. Three of our colleagues in this chamber are members of the committee.

Building on its highly informative 2019 report, NSICOP concluded:

> Foreign states conduct sophisticated and pervasive foreign interference specifically targeting Canada's democratic processes and institutions, occurring before, during and after elections and in all orders of government. These activities continue to pose a significant threat to national security, and to the overall integrity of Canada's democracy. . . .

NSICOP reported that key tactics in foreign interference include the following: covertly influencing the opinions and positions of voters, ethnocultural communities and parliamentarians; leveraging relationships with influential Canadians; exploiting vulnerabilities in political party governance and administration; deploying a variety of cyber tools to attain specific objectives; and using mainstream media, social media and other digital means to conduct interference activities.

These interference activities were conducted by foreign diplomats, intelligence officers, state proxies and co-optees, and directed at all levels of government, civil society groups, ethnocultural communities, business persons and journalists.

In the fall of 2023, the government launched the Foreign Interference Commission to respond to concerns about foreign interference in the last two elections. The commission heard directly from witnesses that foreign state actors are monitoring, intimidating and harassing those in many communities across Canada, particularly in diaspora communities. Members of these communities testified about their experience of that foreign interference, or the experience of others. This includes threats to them or their families back home.

Finally, the government held public consultations to guide the creation of a foreign influence transparency registry in Canada, and separate consultations that focused on potential legislative amendments to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act, the Criminal Code, the Security of Information Act, and the Canada Evidence Act.

Colleagues, we have very clear and pressing legal, policy, operational and national security challenges at our doorstep, and this demands action.

This is represented in Bill C-70, which would enhance Canada's ability to detect and disrupt foreign interference and better protect citizens against threats posed by malign foreign influence.

A centrepiece of this bill is the foreign influence transparency and accountability act, or FITAA, which would mandate the establishment of a new registry. The registry, as outlined in clause 9 of Part 4 of the bill, would be administered and enforced by an independent foreign influence transparency commissioner, who would be appointed by the Governor-in-Council, which, by the way, distinguishes it from its Australian and U.K. counterparts.

Clause 9(2) would require that prior to making the appointment of the commissioner, the government must consult with Senate leaders and facilitators of recognized parties or parliamentary groups, the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons, and the leader in the House of Commons of each party having at least 12 members in that house.

These were strengthened during the House of Commons committee study when an NDP amendment was approved unanimously by the committee, which would require that the approval of a commissioner occur by resolution of the Senate and the House of Commons. This amendment strengthens the independence of the commissioner while also ensuring that the commissioner is situated within the machinery of government in the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

The bill defines foreign influence arrangements in clause 2 of Part 4 of the bill as an activity:

> . . . a person undertakes to carry out, under the direction of or in association with a foreign principal, any of the following activities in relation to a political or governmental process in Canada . . . .
>
> (a) communicating with a public office holder;
>
> (b) communicating or disseminating or causing to be communicated or disseminated by any means, including social media, information that is related to the political or governmental process;
>
> (c) distributing money or items of value or providing a service or the use of a facility.

• (1910)

This definition is critical, as certain information related to an "arrangement" would be disclosed on the registry. The classes of information to be disclosed would be set out by way of regulation.

An arrangement would require three elements: for a person to act under the direction of or in association with a foreign principal; the person would have to engage in at least one of the foreign influence activities listed in the definition; and the activity would need to be done in relation to a political or governmental process in Canada.

The bill also defines "foreign principal" as the following:

> . . . *a foreign economic entity*, a *foreign entity*, a *foreign power* or a *foreign state*, as those expressions are defined in subsection 2(1) of the *Security of Information Act*.

This definition is broad and intended to incorporate the wide and diverse ways in which foreign governments hold power.

As laid out in clause 3 of Part 4, it is designed to bring transparency to efforts by foreign actors to interfere in our political or governmental processes while also increasing public awareness.

Under clause 5(1) of Part 4:

> A person who enters into an arrangement with a foreign principal must, within 14 days after the day on which they enter into the arrangement, provide the Commissioner with the information specified in the regulations.

The window to provide information is set at 14 days to allow time for the individual to finalize their arrangement and then undertake to register it in a reasonable period of time.

The proposed act is not intended to prohibit arrangements with foreign principals in Canada; it is only that those activities and certain details surrounding those arrangements should be made transparent.

Amendments were advanced by the government during the House of Commons committee study to introduce additional transition provisions to ensure that pre-existing arrangements are captured by the act and apply between foreign principals and federal, provincial, territorial or Indigenous processes. The information on these arrangements would need to be provided to the commissioner within 60 days after the act comes into force.

The existence of AMPs, or administrative monetary penalties, in the proposed act bolsters the commissioner's ability to bring individuals into compliance with the law and dissuades actors who may otherwise seek to actively avoid registration obligations.

Clause 23 of Part 4 is concerned with the same violations of clauses 5(1), 5(2) and 7; however, instead of administrative monetary penalties, it provides the commissioner with the ability to pursue these violations as criminal offences, which police of jurisdiction could investigate.

Importantly, Canadians would also be able to examine the registry online to see whether an individual or organization with whom they have come into contact is registered as acting at the direction of or in association with a foreign principal, or if the commissioner has imposed a penalty on any individual or organization for not upholding their registration obligations.

Finally, one further amendment introduced by the Bloc Québécois changed the five-year statutory parliamentary review provision and received unanimous support from the committee. With this new change, the foreign influence transparency and accountability act, or FITAA, will be reviewed during the first year after a federal general election moving forward. This will ensure that the provisions of FITAA stay up to date with emerging threats and the challenges they produce.

Colleagues, we know that there are established legal and legitimate forms of engagement with foreign actors, including lobbying, advocacy efforts and regular diplomatic activity. This bill is not intended to limit these activities. However, we also know that there are activities undertaken by foreign actors in non-transparent ways that seek to influence our political or governmental processes. This bill would bring us into alignment with international best practices and with our Five Eyes allies, most of whom have introduced registries of their own to counter malign foreign influence.

The registry, colleagues, would be an important first step in addressing the threat of foreign interference, but foreign interference is a complex national security threat that requires a multi-faceted approach. As I mentioned, Bill C-70 also contains amendments to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act, or CSIS Act, the Criminal Code, the Security of Information Act, or SOIA, and the Canada Evidence Act, or CEA.

Let's first turn to the Security of Information Act provisions in Part 2 of the act.

Changes to the SOIA would better address foreign interference risks to Canada and ensure that surreptitious or deceptive hostile activities — including those directed at our democratic processes, such as the nomination of political candidates — are addressed by criminal law. They would also better address transnational threats or violence by foreign states and those who work on their behalf to intimidate people living in Canada and their families, wherever those family members might be.

The bill would amend the SOIA by creating three new offences relating to foreign interference and by amending the existing offences for intimidation, threats and violence to make them more responsive to modern-day threats. The three new offences include a general foreign interference offence committed for a foreign entity, an indictable offence committed for a foreign entity and political interference for a foreign entity.

The first new offence is a general foreign interference offence where a person knowingly engages in surreptitious or deceptive conduct, or omits to do anything, at the direction of, for the benefit of or in association with a foreign entity. An example of this offence could be knowingly facilitating the entry into Canada of agents of a foreign entity who are posing as tourists.

Second, the bill would make it a distinct offence to commit an indictable offence at the direction of, for the benefit of or in association with a foreign entity. An example of this offence could be if an individual who commits bribery, which is an existing offence under the Criminal Code, bribes a Canadian official for the benefit of the foreign state that they support.

Third, the bill would make it an offence to engage in surreptitious or deceptive conduct at the direction of or in association with a foreign entity with the intent to influence a Canadian political or governmental process, or to influence the exercise of a democratic right in Canada. An example of this offence would be someone who, acting at the direction of a foreign entity, creates large numbers of counterfeit party memberships in order to influence the result of a party leadership vote.

Finally, as I mentioned, the bill would amend the existing section 20 offence in the SOIA to focus on the intimidation, threat of violence done on behalf of or in association with a foreign state. It removes the need to prove that the act was for the purpose of harming Canadian interests or increasing foreign capacity to do so. An example of a section 20 offence could be an individual in Canada who is working on behalf of a foreign state and threatening to harm relatives of a Canadian citizen who live in that foreign state if the citizen does not stop their criticism of the foreign state.

The bill also creates a new offence in the SOIA that captures threats or violence on behalf of a foreign entity that take place outside of Canada in limited circumstances.

All of these proposed offences would be punishable by a maximum penalty of imprisonment for life.

The bill would also increase the penalty for preparatory acts — actions taken to prepare to commit the most serious SOIA offences — from two years' imprisonment to five years.

Sentencing judges will still be bound by the principle of proportionality, but these changes are reflective of the serious nature of the criminality associated with foreign interference.

I now turn to the Criminal Code amendments. The bill would modernize the existing sabotage offence in the Criminal Code and add two new companion offences concerning essential infrastructure and the making, possession or distribution of devices that are designed to be used for sabotage, such as bots and malware. This modernization will ensure the offence is responsive to today's threat environment and includes acts that are taken in preparation to commit economic espionage.

• (1920)

Colleagues, this provision was further amended during the House of Commons committee consideration to extend the scope of the provision to essential infrastructure that is in the construction phase and not yet operational.

This extension of the provisions found in clause 61 is important, as interference with the construction or installation of essential infrastructure could be done with the intent of causing harms to Canada. For example, impeding the installation of an emergency water supply might constitute such an act.

The bill would also clarify that activities undertaken in the context of advocacy, protest or dissent would not constitute sabotage where the person did not intend to commit sabotage. To quote from the Charter statement tabled by the government:

> Because these proposed offences give rise to the possibility of imprisonment, they engage the section 7 right to liberty and so must respect the principles of fundamental justice. To the extent that these offences have the potential to impact individuals engaged in advocacy or protest, they may also engage the freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly under sections 2(b) and 2(c) of the Charter. The following considerations support the consistency of the proposed sabotage offences with the Charter.
>
> The scope of the proposed sabotage offences is tailored to the legislative objective of protecting important Canadian interests and essential infrastructure against serious harms. The main sabotage offence and the essential infrastructure sabotage offence both incorporate a stringent guilty mind component, requiring an intent to cause specified and serious harms. Legitimate protest, advocacy and dissent, in circumstances where there is no intention to cause the specified harms, is not captured by the offences. The companion offence of making, possessing, selling or distributing a device for the commission of a sabotage offence is limited to devices that have been specifically designed for the harmful purpose of facilitating a sabotage offence. All three offences preserve the discretion of the trial judge to craft a fit and appropriate sentence.

Colleagues, on top of Charter protections that exist for protests and freedom of expression, there is a specific "For greater certainty" clause included in the bill, which states that the sabotage offence does not capture any person who is engaged in advocacy, protest or dissent and did not intend to cause harm to critical infrastructure. Additionally, for this offence to be charged, there must be an Attorney General's consent provided, adding an additional layer of accountability.

Colleagues, I now move on to amendments to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act, or CSIS Act.

Under this legislation, targeted amendments to the CSIS Act would better equip the government to build resilience and counter modern threats that Canada faces today.

While it has been amended before, the CSIS Act was first enacted in 1984, a time when the prolific use and expansion of digital technology was still nascent. Today, as you know, digital technologies are a part of every aspect of our lives.

Technological innovations make it more difficult to detect and identify threat actors, including those engaged in foreign interference activities. These innovations have created new avenues for threat actors to interfere in Canadian society and institutions, especially in the online space.

CSIS must therefore be able to operate in a digital world that is constantly and rapidly changing. To that end, there are a few key changes to the CSIS Act, including giving CSIS the power to collect, from within Canada, foreign intelligence that resides outside Canada. This is an important new addition to CSIS's powers. Also, new warrant and order provisions will allow CSIS to better carry out investigations. Another change regards the use and sharing of datasets, which are certainly clarified in ways that are responsive to the March 27, 2024, report of the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency, or NSIRA. Importantly, new powers would also enable CSIS to share sensitive information with non-federal partners at all levels of government, in academia and in the private sector, something that for a long time people have been calling for.

First, court decisions have made it clear that CSIS can't collect foreign intelligence from within Canada when the information is outside Canada. But this geographic limitation restricts foreign intelligence collection in ways that could not have been foreseen in 1984, given how information today is largely digital and borderless. Electronic information that was previously collected in support of Canada's foreign affairs or national defence is now frequently located outside our borders. Amendments seek to clarify CSIS's authority to collect from within Canada foreign intelligence that is located outside Canada while still maintaining other limitations originally intended by Parliament.

Second, the bill introduces several new powers to assist CSIS in its investigation of foreign interference. Clause 37 introduces preservation and production orders. While they would be new to the CSIS Act, preservation and production orders are not in

themselves new tools. The proposed amendments are modelled on orders routinely relied upon by Canadian law enforcement and intelligence agencies and in other democracies.

For a preservation order, CSIS may seek a warrant to order a third party to preserve any information, record, document or thing. The proposed threshold for obtaining a preservation order is reasonable grounds to suspect. Making such an application does not require the prior approval of the minister because CSIS would not be able to collect any information, record, document or thing. However, the minister would have to be notified once a preservation order application has been filed.

In the event that the Federal Court grants the preservation order, CSIS would still be required under the new provisions to return to the court, having obtained the minister's approval, and demonstrate reasonable grounds to believe that a production order or warrant is required to obtain the preserved information, record, document or thing.

As such, the threshold for CSIS to collect information would remain high, with additional safeguards and oversight from the minister, the court, NSIRA and the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, or NSICOP.

For example, if CSIS were to receive information that a foreign interference threat is linked to an individual's phone number, it could quickly obtain a preservation order from the Federal Court to ensure that call logs and text messages implicated in the foreign interference activities are not destroyed. They could then seek a production order from the court to obtain the messages along with the identity of the subscriber.

This, colleagues, would help CSIS to more effectively identify and investigate foreign interference threat actors and activities and, if necessary, take action to disrupt those threats.

Second, in clause 39, the bill introduces a new single-use warrant which is much like a search warrant for law enforcement. Unlike a normal warrant, this would be a tool available to CSIS without exhausting other investigative methods, such as recruiting sources or conducting interviews. This would enable the service to obtain important information earlier in an investigation. These amendments would continue to respect Canadian fundamental rights and freedoms, with strong review, oversight and transparency measures still in place and unchanged.

To obtain a single collection activity warrant, CSIS would still be required to satisfy all other core requirements of normal warrant applications, including obtaining ministerial approval, as well as demonstrating to the Federal Court that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the warrant is required and will assist in the investigation. The court must also be informed of all previous warrant applications against the same subject of investigation.

This requirement would ensure that the court would be aware of how many times this new warrant authority had been previously granted against the same subject of investigation.

These proposals reflect the high expectation of privacy that people in Canada have, including the protections provided by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Third is the ability to use and share datasets. A dataset is defined in the act as a collection of information stored as an electronic record and characterized by a common subject matter and that does not directly and immediately relate to a threat to the security of Canada. CSIS may collect the dataset if it can demonstrate that the dataset is, however, relevant to the performance of its functions.

• (1930)

There is a higher threshold for the retention of foreign Canadian datasets, where CSIS must establish a "likely to assist" threshold. Proposed changes to the dataset regime are designed to clarify the application of the dataset and to allow more flexibility in the evaluation and retention of datasets, extending the initial evaluation period from 90 to 100 days, which recognizes, for example, requirements for decryption, translation and evaluation.

Fourth, the new authorized disclosure provisions found in clause 34 of the bill will help build resiliency against threats.

At the time of enacting the CSIS Act, national security was primarily the purview of the federal government, where espionage and foreign interference targeted military technology and federal government institutions. For that reason, CSIS is authorized to collect, retain and provide necessary intelligence to the federal government to make decisions to protect Canada's national security.

Today, threats to the security of Canada, including foreign interference, impact every order of government and all sectors of society, including Canadian communities, provincial and municipal governments, academia, the media and private enterprises.

CSIS's expertise and information are increasingly relevant to those outside of the federal government, and these partners are increasingly turning to CSIS for more information that can help them better understand, recognize and build resilience against threats. This is a very important change to the CSIS regime.

This provision was amended during the House of Commons study to add an exception to ensure CSIS could disclose an individual's personal information to that individual. This amendment, which received all-party support, would allow CSIS to be more candid and transparent with Canadians by disclosing information around specific threats and vulnerabilities affecting them.

For example, colleagues, without this amendment, CSIS would not be able to tell a senator that their personal email address was found in a forum on the dark web known to be used by hostile state actors. That has now been rectified.

A report-stage amendment in the other place has ensured that these new exceptions are also mirrored for corporations and entities.

This new disclosure authority would require that the information CSIS seeks to disclose also be provided to the federal department or agency that performs duties and functions to which the information is relevant where one exists. The information disclosed under this provision cannot include any personal information pertaining to a Canadian citizen, permanent resident or any individual in Canada, or contain the name of a Canadian entity or a corporation incorporated under federal or provincial law.

CSIS can, however, disclose information it holds about foreign states or non-Canadian entities who pose threats to Canada's national security.

In cases where disclosing personal information or naming the name of a Canadian entity would be essential to the public interest, the minister would decide whether disclosure outweighs the potential privacy intrusion.

Finally, the government has included an ongoing five-year parliamentary review of the CSIS Act. Currently, there is no statutory requirement for Parliament to review the CSIS Act on a regular basis. Clause 44 would set out a mechanism for parliamentary review of the act every five years to ensure that it keeps pace with new technologies and evolving national security threats and to provide additional oversight of the service's powers.

In conclusion, colleagues, Canadians have been very clear about what they need to feel safe and better protected from foreign interference threats. They have said that our country needs a foreign interference registry. They've said that they need information that will help them understand and address this threat. In particular, scientists, universities, enterprises, municipalities and other entities that frequently deal with foreign principals need guidance on how to do this transparently. Importantly, Canadians have said that we need to move quickly on this to have it in place by the next election.

During our Senate pre-study, former director of CSIS Richard Fadden stated:

> To delay Bill C-70 to the point that it will not be in place before the next election would be a gift to our adversaries.

Katherine Leung, Policy Advisor at Hong Kong Watch, said:

> This bill would give Canada a much stronger framework to combat foreign interference than we currently have in place and should be in place before the next election.

Honourable senators, foreign interference undermines public confidence in governments, public servants and democratic institutions and processes. Canadians need and must be equipped with tools to be able to recognize when foreign powers are attempting to influence them or to intimidate them or their families in their homes.

Colleagues, it's my recommendation that this chamber deal with this proposed legislation expeditiously, but that, as always, lies in your experienced hands. Thank you.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Dean, will you take a question?

Senator Dean: Yes.

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan: Senator Dean, thank you for your speech on Bill C-70. I've heard from stakeholders who are concerned that we may be rushing to make changes to our national security legislation which could ultimately impact Canadian civil liberties. I am concerned by the use of the term "intimidation" in clause 53. It lacks a clear definition, and yet it could lead to a person's life imprisonment. Would you consider either removing the term "intimidation" from clause 53 or, alternatively, amending clause 53 to include a specific definition of "intimidation"?

Senator Dean: I can't at this point indicate my own inclination on this. I don't know what the government's is, but there have been concerns raised in this respect. I'm confident, senator, that the checks and balances that we find in this legislation and the oversight that will be attached to these new provisions will find the right balance between protecting Canadians from foreign interference and, at the same time, ensuring that Canadians are not inadvertently negatively affected by it in a way that is not intended.

Senator Ataullahjan: Senator Dean, will you accept a question? I'm also concerned about the expansion of the inadmissibility provisions of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. This new provision suggests the minister would have an ability to intervene based on international relations. Would this mean Canada's international relations take precedence over the human rights activists; for example, would Rohingya or Uighur activists find themselves excluded from the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act?

Senator Dean: I don't believe that's the case, Senator Ataullahjan, no.

Hon. David Richards: We talked about pharmacare the other day. The issue that bothered me was that two thirds of Canadians don't have a doctor, which sets things back, and I'm thinking of the same thing with this bill. The problem might be that we do not really have the resources in the RCMP, CSIS or any other Canadian organization to be able to implement these procedures effectively. Was that discussed? I know it was discussed because I was there. What is your opinion on that?

Senator Dean: Senator Richards, resources are always important in making legislative interventions and changes successful. We know that, and it does come up periodically.

• (1940)

I believe that representatives of the RCMP at the National Security, Defence and Veterans Affairs Committee received this question directly, and my recollection is that they told committee members that they felt adequately resourced to police and assist with the provisions in this bill. I have no doubt that if more resources are needed, given the priority that the government places on this legislation, that those resources will be found in order to make the very important provisions of this bill successful.

Hon. Mary Coyle: Thank you very much, Senator Dean, for sponsoring this very important piece of legislation, as well as for hosting the very well-attended and thorough briefing that we received just before coming to the chamber.

As I understand it, this is a modernization of our tool kit. That is how it has been described. I've heard that understanding all the parts of this is complicated.

My question is not so much what is in the bill. My question is more to your final point, which is: Canadians are asking us to pass this bill quickly. Let's assume we do pass the bill. What has to happen between that point and actually implementing the various provisions of the bill that is making us move so very quickly at this time this week?

We want it in place before the next election. Well, hopefully, that's not until the fall of 2025. So what has to happen between now and then, and is it really going to take all that time? It would be important for us to understand that.

Senator Dean: First, I would say that my knowledge of government process is such that I have seen far less complicated, far less consequential and impactful bills that required longer than the time available for this one.

Let me put it this way to you: The government would like to see this in place, and Canadians would like to see this in place before the next election. Our officials in various departments are going to have to work very hard to develop the mechanisms and to build the architecture. There will need to be the appointment of personnel and the commissioner for the foreign interference act, and that search will have to be under way. This will be a priority for the government, I assume.

Furthermore, I'd say that the government has to do its work in developing regulations, and I'm sure there will be consultations on those regulations. I'm not sure about the notion that once, if approved, this bill is passed, everything goes into a closed box that we don't hear any more until it's all announced in one go.

I think what we have here, in some cases, are new provisions and, in many cases, existing ones that we're relying on. It's not all brand new. There are some new powers in this legislation. They're important ones, but they rest on the foundation of our current legal system and the foundation of our national Security Intelligence Review Committee that I would suspect would want to have some input into this as well.

This is going to be work that engages many. I believe that consultations will continue as regulations are developed. I assume that we in this chamber will want to keep an eye on that process as well and see how it's developed and perhaps want to be briefed on where the government is in the stages of putting in place the various elements of this architecture.

It's a big job, yes, but this is what governments do, and I have every confidence that the mechanisms here, many of which are pre-existing, can be put in place for the next election, but that would require us to act with haste.

The Hon. the Speaker: There are only 30 seconds left. Senator Quinn, if it's a short question, you may ask it.

Hon. Jim Quinn: Would the senator take a quick question? Just to build on what Senator Coyle asked, I understand this was introduced in the other place on June 4. There's a process there. How many days was it in committee being examined?

Senator Dean: In the Senate committee?

Senator Quinn: The briefing made it sound complicated to me. How much examination did the House committee have?

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Dean, you will have to ask leave for more time to answer the question. Are you asking for more time?

Senator Dean: Yes, Your Honour.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Dean: I don't have the House of Commons information in front of me. I can tell you that the Security and Defence Committee heard 36 witnesses from 26 organizations at several hearings and that, generally speaking, many witnesses were supportive of rapid passage of the bill.

Hon. Yuen Pau Woo: Barely two hours ago, 20 of our colleagues were at 1 Wellington to receive a technical briefing on Bill C-70. That's less than a quarter of our complement of senators. I'm now standing before you, rushed to make a speech after receiving this briefing on short notice, with inadequate preparation, but, nevertheless, I would like to put some things on the record.

The first thing, which should be obvious from my preamble, is that we are rushing this bill. There is no question that we are pushing this through with a kind of haste that is not becoming of the upper chamber. I think it is correct to say that at the technical briefing there were many questions that were not asked because of a lack of time, and there were many answers given that were, to some of us, unsatisfactory.

Colleagues, the purpose of second reading, typically, is to talk about the principle of the bill. Let me say, first off, that I support the principle of the bill, but the idea of discussing the principle is in anticipation of the bill being sent to a committee where the details of the bill can be studied carefully and possible flaws in that bill can be scrutinized and possibly fixed. What we have instead, as you all know, is a pre-study that took place last week,

also rushed, and when the National Security and Defence Committee meets tomorrow — starting 8 a.m., by the way, for those of you who are interested — it will go directly into clause-by-clause consideration. We are essentially skipping — leapfrogging — from second reading to clause by clause, and then, presumably, a third reading vote by Thursday.

Colleagues, we are taking less time to review this consequential bill than we did with anti-terrorism bills in the last three decades — in 2001, 2012, 2015 and 2019 — all of which were passed quickly enough in the heat of the moment and were flawed. Some of them had to be fixed a few years later.

You may remember, for example, the 2019 amendments to what was previously Bill C-51, the anti-terrorism bill.

• (1950)

The likelihood of Bill C-70 is that it will go through to a third reading vote and pass before we rise for the summer — flaws and all. And perhaps we will have a chance down the years to fix some of those flaws, but in the meantime, the price to be paid by the flaws in the bill will be the individuals and organizations who will be trapped or caught by what I think is an overly wide and overly sticky spider's web that is Bill C-70.

Before I get to just a very small number of the flaws that I see in this bill, allow me to demonstrate my bona fides in this area. Almost from the time that I joined the Senate in late 2016, I have been working on countering foreign interference in Canada and on Parliament Hill.

In 2018, well before the hullabaloo, well before the media leaks, well before the febrile discussion about foreign interference being widespread, I organized in Centre Block a workshop for parliamentarians to talk about Chinese foreign interference in Canada. I did that because I could see — even back then — that this was going to be a very difficult topic, one that was already being weaponized, first of all, in the United States, where we saw a lot of anti-foreign interference activities directed at China and Chinese people in the United States that was stigmatizing, discriminatory and justified by the imperatives of national security.

I hoped at the time that we could have a grown-up conversation about foreign interference so that we can avoid the excesses that I think we're beginning to enter into. I failed because today we are in a fevered environment where there is, it would seem, overwhelming support — indeed, unanimous approval — for a bill on countering foreign interference that has manifest flaws in it that have been raised to all of us through a variety of sources in civil society, academia and from ordinary Canadians.

I've also, as some of you know, participated in the Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference. I am a formal intervener, and I had the opportunity to witness and partake of the information that was made available. I also participated in the public consultation that led to Bill C-70 on developing a foreign interference transparency registry, which we have now in this bill, and I've made formal submissions to the Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference, expressing my concern about the quality of intelligence and about the failure to consider the consequences of foreign interference zealotry, which is causing harm to the freedom of expression of diaspora communities including during an election.

Let me now get to a number of the flaws that I see in the bill that I hope others will pick up and that we can perhaps put some thought into ameliorating. These are only a few examples.

The first has to do with the Security of Information Act where there's a new offence related to political interference. I agree with the need to stop political interference from foreign principals, but there's a special provision where there is an offence of preparing the act of political interference. It says that this offence is when someone does anything that is directed towards or done in preparation of the commission of the offence, "the offence" being political interference.

In this provision, we are copying from the Australian example, where they also have a provision against the preparation and planning of an act of foreign interference, and they had their first conviction last year. Let me tell you that story.

A Vietnamese Australian has been sentenced to two years in jail for the act of preparing or planning an act of foreign interference. What was that act? He organized a fundraiser during COVID, raising money from Vietnamese and Indo-Chinese-Australian communities to buy personal protective equipment and other medical supplies, and he donated that money to a hospital. At the ceremony where the donation was made, he invited a politician — I think he was a sitting minister at the time — to stand with him on the stage holding one of these fake cheques for $25,000 Australian. That was used as evidence that this Vietnamese Australian person was cultivating the minister for a future act of foreign interference.

Just think about that. The Australian system is the Australian system, and they have the right to conduct themselves in the way that they want to. But are we going down the road where someone who develops a relationship with a politician or a public official who may have the potential to rise up the ladder sometime in the near or distant future, that that act in itself is a crime of planning or preparing an act of foreign interference? It drives shivers down the spine.

Let me move now to Part 4 of the bill, which is the proposed "Foreign Influence Transparency Accountability Act." Let me start by telling you what I like about the bill. I commented during the consultation phase and participated vigorously in the public debate. There are many things I like about it. In fact, some of the suggestions that I and many others offered were taken up.

The first is that it's country agnostic — it does not require a gazetting or a focus on one country or another.

Secondly, it doesn't try to use the registry to deal with the very real problem of transnational repression. In the private member's versions of the bill of a foreign influence registry that we have seen previously in the House of Commons and in this chamber, the notion is that a registry can somehow stop bad acts of foreign interference — particularly the most vile kinds of acts, which is the repression of Canadians by foreign governments through threats and intimidation.

This bill doesn't try to do that. Instead, it creates a separate new category of criminal offences that have to do with the actual commission of repression and intimidation. I have concerns about the word "intimidation," but I think that is the correct way to deal with criminal acts rather than to use the registry as a proxy.

I also like this registry in that it doesn't use the concept of related entity, which is such a broad and vague term that it can capture just about anyone who is associated with an organization that is in some way connected to a foreign power. Instead, it uses the term "arrangements." I recommended the idea of using the word "arrangements," but I would have preferred that it focus on material arrangements because that's concrete — a contract, a quid pro quo, a trip to Taiwan, for example, to Israel, to China or to Mexico. That's a material arrangement. Instead, what we have is ". . . arrangements . . ." or ". . . in association with . . ." Here, I have grave concerns. What does ". . . in association with . . ." mean? The best clue is found in the consultation paper that was issued by Public Safety in preparation for this bill, which gave us a case study of what I think they mean. Here is the case study.

• (2000)

An academic has a meeting with a foreign principal. It could be a diplomat; it is somebody who represents another government. They have a conversation or maybe multiple conversations. Shortly after, the academic writes an op-ed that is in favour of that country's position on a given issue. Maybe the academic also gives some lectures on campus in favour of or aligned — shall we say — with that government's position. That example is described in the consultation paper as an act of malign foreign interference, and it is my interpretation that the intent of this bill and the use of the term ". . . in association with . . ." would capture the acts of that academic.

But, colleagues, if an academic has a meeting with a foreign official and that academic later expresses a view which is closely aligned with the foreign government, how do we know that the foreign official —

Your Honour, may I have another five minutes?

The Hon. the Speaker: Is leave granted?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Woo: Thank you, colleagues.

How do we know that the academic did not share the view in the first place?

Let me give you an example of why this is so problematic. An issue that will come before us very soon is the question of whether we should impose tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles, or EVs. Some of you know that the Americans have imposed a 100% tariff on Chinese EVs. The Europeans have imposed a tariff on them as well, though at a lower level. There is already a debate in this country as to whether we should follow suit. The automotive manufacturers and other lobbying groups are in conversation with American interests, including state interests, to suggest that we should impose a similar tariff for a good reason: to protect our industry.

At the same time, there are voices in this country saying we should not impose a 100% tariff on Chinese EVs because it is against our interests in the fight against climate change. I won't get into which side is correct here, but do you think that someone arguing in favour of a 100% tariff under the influence of, say, an American state-linked entity would get the same treatment as someone arguing against a 100% tariff who may have had a connection with a Chinese or Asian entity? I'm suspicious. I don't know. This is the kind of question we should be asking.

Colleagues, there is a lot more to say, but this bill has major blind spots. One other major blind spot is that it does not include non-state actors. You may know that the bill includes interference in governance of educational institutions as one of the no-go areas. However, most foreign interference in educational institutions is not from states, but from religious groups and lobbying groups interested in gender rights, reproductive rights, firearms and so on. Again, you can take whatever position you want on these issues, but these are the groups that will be the most active in trying to affect the governance of our educational institutions, and they are not covered in this bill.

There is so much more to talk about, but let me say that foreign interference is a serious issue. We should not stand for foreign interference. I understand the febrile nature of this debate and that no one wants to be seen as being on the wrong side of it. However, a bad bill will not help us in our fight against foreign interference, especially if it is cast so widely that fundamental rights are threatened and it leads to the stigmatization of individuals and groups who are seen as holding the wrong views.

We have not given this bill the scrutiny it deserves, and I fear we will come to regret rushing it through our chamber. I will have more to say at third reading. I thank you for your attention.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Leo Housakos: Honourable senators, where do I even begin? This legislation before us is — for unnecessary, unreasonable and cynical reasons — long overdue.

While I support this bill and its quick passage, many of you won't like what I have to say about this government's and this chamber's track records on dealing with foreign interference.

I don't doubt that I'll be accused of partisanship in my remarks, but there's no greater partisanship than that which has been displayed by the Trudeau government — and by many of you — when it comes to Conservative efforts to fight foreign interference and transnational repression, through the creation of a foreign agent registry in particular.

Let's start there, colleagues. Let's start with, if you check the scroll, Bill S-237.

I tabled this bill in February of 2022. That's more than two years ago, and it has sat in this place collecting dust. With one exception, none of you found foreign interference to be interesting or pressing enough to stand in this place and utter one word about it in relation to this bill. Is it good, positive or neutral? Should it be amended? Should we take it and run with it?

I didn't hear from Senator Woo, who earlier espoused his great concern about foreign interference. He didn't rise to speak about Bill S-237. Could that be because many of you received calls from the PMO or from a minister telling you not to? Probably not, but I know one thing for certain: None of you received calls from the government or the Leader of the Government asking you to deal with the bill because it was of such importance to national security and foreign interference wouldn't be tolerated.

There are two possible reasons why there was no interest on that bill. Perhaps the government thought there was no problem with foreign interference and carried on. Or perhaps there were partisan considerations and they didn't want to debate a serious issue put forward by the official opposition. Whatever the reason, colleagues, your silence and the silence of the government on this bill speak volumes.

The only one who showed true independence on this issue, true concern over foreign interference and transnational repression and chose to speak from a principled position was the Honourable David Adams Richards. I thank him for it.

With that said, I would be remiss if I didn't also acknowledge that this bill was resurrected from a private member's bill tabled during the previous Parliament by former Conservative MP Kenny Chiu. All credit must go to him, even if the government currently refuses to acknowledge that. Kenny became a victim of the very foreign interference he was trying to expose and fight.

During the subsequent election after he tabled his bill, Mr. Chiu was the target of an aggressive campaign of disinformation spearheaded by the Communist regime in Beijing and propagated by those acting on their behalf here on Canadian soil. This campaign was largely conducted through Beijing-controlled social media apps and Beijing-infiltrated Chinese-language media, right here in places like British Columbia.

Disinformation was used to create fear amongst Chinese Canadians by invoking a very dark chapter in Canadian history — disinformation in which Mr. Chiu's Liberal opponent and now MP Parm Bains was all too happy to engage.

In the dying days of the 2021 election, Mr. Bains, a former Liberal staffer, was quoted by a media platform believed to have close ties with the Communist regime in China, saying he believed Chiu's bill to be a discriminatory policy. That same day, the magazine publicly endorsed Mr. Bains, urging readers in the largely Chinese-Canadian riding to vote for him and for Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

• (2010)

It didn't stop there, according to investigative journalist Sam Cooper in "The Bureau," who wrote:

> . . . one Chinese community leader campaigning for Bains with CCGV has so much power in Vancouver's diaspora that he was later personally recognized in a meeting with President Xi Jinping and Beijing's United Front Work Department cadres, after the RCMP opened investigations into his group's alleged involvement in Chinese police stations in Canada.

Mr. Cooper's piece also reports that Mr. Bains was seen in a video echoing Beijing's allegations of racism and Sinophobia against Mr. Chiu and former Conservative leader Erin O'Toole.

Does that sound familiar, colleagues? It should because it's the exact same regurgitation of Beijing's talking points that have been levelled against me in interviews, private and public events and right here in this very chamber. It's nothing new. Beijing's talking points were also repeated here in this chamber when we were scolded and told that Canada had no place to speak on the genocide being carried out against the Uighurs because of our own history with residential schools. If you're noticing a pattern, it's because there is one.

We have so many human rights advocates in this chamber and so many who are concerned about the rise of Islamophobia but collectively not concerned enough about the Muslims being eradicated by Beijing to condemn it as a genocide. How many of you met with Uighurs here in Canada in recent years, colleagues? How many of you listened to their heart-wrenching stories about their loved ones being rounded up and forced into detention camps in the Xinjiang region? How many of you have heard their stories about the phone calls they receive here in Canada from authorities in the People's Republic of China, or PRC, or people here in Canada acting on behalf of the PRC, telling them their mother is dead, their brothers are all dead, and threatening them to stop talking about the genocide or more of their family members will die? We heard testimony right here in a Senate committee.

This is the kind of transnational repression, threats and intimidation happening right here on Canadian soil that my bill and Mr. Chiu's bill were designed to combat. This legislation wasn't racist. The motivation behind it wasn't racist. On the contrary, it was Chinese Canadians themselves who came to us begging for help for years.

I also hear it through my work with Hong Kong Watch. That's why I became involved with them and follow their work. I've had meetings with Hong Kongers in Canada who are afraid to show their faces or use their full names for fear of repercussions from Beijing, especially now, with the draconian national security law the Communist regime has enacted in Hong Kong.

It's not just the Communist thugs in Beijing that are engaging in these activities here on Canadian soil, not by a long shot. I've also met with Iranian Canadians who share similar stories of feeling threatened here in Canada by representatives of the malign regime in Iran, including members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, or IRGC. We also have Cuban Canadians who fear for the safety of their loved ones in Cuba every time they speak out for freedom here in Canada. We see the handiwork of Putin's attempts at disruption, especially

through social media accounts and by funding protests like the ones we are seeing now on our university campuses from coast to coast to coast.

Speaking of Putin and Cuba, how must it make Cuban Canadians feel to see Canada send one of our naval vessels to dock alongside a Russian warship as a sign of our "long-standing bilateral relationship" with the Communist regime there? That's the latest lunacy from this government, who claim to be fighting authoritarianism and taking seriously the threat of foreign interference. Over the weekend, we learned that a Canadian warship had been sent to anchor in Cuba alongside a Russian warship as a token of friendship with the Communist regime of Cuba. Wonderful.

What's worse is that when our Minister of Foreign Affairs was asked about this during a television interview, she replied this weekend that it was news to her. Doesn't this sound like something our foreign affairs minister ought to know, especially if it was a well-planned decision, as it has since been described by Minister Blair? Then again, this is the same minister who also supposedly didn't know that her staff attended a garden party at the Russian embassy shortly after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

This is the same department — Global Affairs — that we now know, thanks to NSICOP's confirmation of a story in *The Globe and Mail*, had been warned numerous times about the suspect action of a Chinese diplomat here in Canada. We had to learn that from *The Globe and Mail*.

They claimed that CSIS didn't have a proper understanding of what regular diplomacy looks like. I would argue that these officials and the Trudeau government don't have a proper understanding of what foreign interference looks like. It's something that's highlighted in the NSICOP report — don't take my word for it — the lack of a common intervention threshold.

We talked about this in our Defence Committee right in this chamber. While other nations and Five Eyes partners have legislation in place and have empowered their national security forces to take action, we are still debating the definition of foreign interference in Canada. This is where we are in 2024.

This is the same diplomat who was ultimately expelled from Canada, but only after someone at CSIS anonymously blew the whistle. That is when Global Affairs Canada took action. And yet, Minister Joly had the unmitigated gall to go on television this past weekend and tell Vassy Kapelos that Canada is the most "forward leaning" of the G7 countries in combatting foreign interference. Colleagues, I fell off my chair when I heard that: "forward leaning."

Canada has become a laughingstock among the Five Eyes allies when it comes to fighting foreign interference. They are ahead of us not only in the implementation of measures included in this legislation pertaining to intelligence sharing but also in establishing foreign agent registries. We are the last to come to this party, and Ms. Joly thinks we are the most forward leaning because we are having a public inquiry right now on foreign interference, which her government was dragged into kicking and screaming. We have the Hogue inquiry in spite of Justin Trudeau's best efforts not to call one, and this minister wants to point to that as a measure of the government's success. Like everything else with this government, they say all the right things, then do the very opposite, and then act like something's being done to them, not by them.

The Trudeau government has been, at best, one abysmal failure after another every time they've been faced with the threat of foreign interference, especially in our elections, and in some cases, wittingly turned a blind eye because the foreign interference was politically beneficial to them.

CSIS warnings were ignored not only by Mélanie Joly and Global Affairs but also by the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister's Office and senior officials within the Liberal Party and the Liberal campaign team. They turned a blind eye, did nothing to guard against the meddling in our democratic institutions, and when the truth started coming out, they lied about having any knowledge of it. Instead, they focused on finding out who leaked the information. Because we want to get the leakers — that's the real problem, the people telling the truth.

When reports first surfaced that CSIS had briefed Justin Trudeau about Beijing's interference in the previous two federal elections, he returned to one of his favourite phrases. He claimed that the story in *The Globe and Mail* was false. He denied repeatedly, including in the House of Commons, knowing anything or even having been briefed by CSIS. It was also news to him. He denied it repeatedly.

In March 2023, he was asked point-blank in a television interview:

> Did you know that there was interference in those elections, not prior to but during that campaign? Were you made aware that there was interference?

The Prime Minister's response to this very simple question was, "We put together a panel so that the question could be looked at."

He put together a panel to do what? Tell us what was in his own head? He's the Prime Minister. When it comes to national security, the buck stops with him.

In April of that year, at the public inquiry, the Prime Minister was shamed into finally telling the truth by the commissioner. It was revealed that the Prime Minister's Office was briefed by CSIS on foreign interference at least 34 times between June 2018 and December 2022 and that the Prime Minister himself was personally briefed on at least three occasions during that time. That's the public inquiry. I am not making this up. These are the facts, Senator Gold. CSIS drew his attention to foreign meddling in the 2018 and 2019 elections and offered recommendations to guard against it in future elections.

Since then, we have had two bills go through the House. There is a bill collecting dust here, and we needed a public inquiry to get the Prime Minister to come clean. Our Prime Minister ignored all of the recommendations. He did nothing with the information he was provided through those briefings.

Furthermore, he went on to lie about those briefings. He lied to the Canadian people, and he lied to Parliament. Mr. Trudeau tried to claim that the information didn't reach him. During his testimony at the Hogue inquiry, he claimed that he doesn't really do much reading — shocking — and the only way to ensure he's aware of something is to tell him verbally. Yet, during a previous appearance at a House of Commons committee, the Prime Minister's chief of staff Katie Telford testified that Mr. Trudeau reads every document that he's given. Talk about the left hand not knowing what the right hand is doing.

• (2020)

Whichever it was, those were 34 missed opportunities to do something about foreign interference, and Justin Trudeau chose to ignore the warnings instead.

In December 2019, December 2020 and again in February 2022, the Prime Minister was briefed about electoral interference and was asked to sign-off on measures to combat it in future elections. On all three occasions, he refused to do so. He has also received three reports from the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, or NSICOP, outlining concerns of foreign interference, and he's done nothing to respond — hardly what can be described as forward-leaning.

We also now know, thanks to Justice Hogue, that the Prime Minister was made aware of Beijing's meddling in Liberal member of Parliament, or MP, Han Dong's nomination in Toronto and that he wittingly chose to do nothing about it because, as he himself admitted to Justice Hogue, he didn't want to lose that riding. That's the Prime Minister, colleagues, and not anyone else. The Prime Minister put his own electoral interests ahead of the interests of Canadian democracy. He put his political fortunes and thirst for power above national security and above the fundamental integrity of our elections. That is beyond rich for someone who constantly accuses others of eroding confidence in our democratic institutions.

Mr. Trudeau also failed to act again on information about a Chinese diplomat here in Canada targeting sitting MP Michael Chong, including threats to Mr. Chong's family in Hong Kong. This is the diplomat I mentioned a moment ago, the one the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, or CSIS, repeatedly warned Global Affairs Canada about, only to get blown off by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The latest NSICOP report supports what was reported in *The Globe and Mail* last year about Global Affairs Canada ignoring those repeated warnings. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister's own words last fall belie his failure to act on this information when he was first presented the opportunity to do so. The Prime Minister said that he ordered an investigation into the matter as soon as it became public, not that he ordered an investigation into it when he first learned about it two years previous; it was only after it became public.

By the way, those threats against MP Chong and his family came at the time the House was debating a motion to recognize the Uighur genocide. It was a similar motion to the one that was shamefully defeated here in the Senate. Senators had previously been issued a warning against such motions by China's then ambassador to Canada. The point of him doing so while in my hometown of Montreal was not lost on me. It was at a public event.

Beijing's meddling didn't work in the House — even though I have to remind you that the government did not vote for the motion — but it worked perfectly well in this chamber, the only chamber in the Western democratic world to vote down the recognition of what is happening to the Uighur people. It was a shameful day when it happened in this institution, and I still can't get my head around it.

Another motion that did pass in the House of Commons, not once but now twice, is a motion calling on the government to declare the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, or IRGC, a terrorist organization. The first motion passed six years ago and a second one during this session of Parliament. The Trudeau Liberals continue to refuse to adhere to either motion. This government doesn't just refuse to list the IRGC as a terrorist entity, they've allowed members of this murderous death cult to come to Canada to do things like lecture at our universities. What could possibly go wrong?

For starters, the malign regime of Iran is the world's worst sponsor of state terrorism, and you can be sure they are involved with some of the pro-Hamas protests we have been seeing on our university campuses and in our streets for the past several months. Why isn't our government asking questions about those connections, especially where the funding is coming from?

Speaking of asking questions, remember all the questions we had about the firing of two scientists from the country's National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg, scientists we now know were intentionally working to benefit the interests of the Chinese Communist Party, not Canada? Was it forward-leaning when the Trudeau government did everything in its power for several years to prevent Canadians from learning the truth about what happened at that lab? We only recently learned the truth because, again, the opposition relentlessly pursued it. The Trudeau government tried for as long as they could to cover it up by, first, invoking privacy and security concerns to avoid four motions of the House and its committees requiring the tabling of relevant documents. That eventually resulted in the House holding the President of the Public Health Agency of Canada in contempt of Parliament, followed by Justin Trudeau taking Parliament to court. Imagine it: The Prime Minister used the federal court to block the parliamentary order.

That cynical move not only underlines how unserious Justin Trudeau has been about foreign interference but is just another example of the contempt he has for the supremacy of Parliament. He wanted the court — the judicial branch — to insert itself into the privilege of the legislative branch. It's really quite something that could have done untold damage to our parliamentary system and democracy.

That's how far he's willing to go, not to fight foreign interference but to cover up his government's inaction on fighting it.

The court was saved from having to rule when the Prime Minister conveniently dissolved Parliament. It was eventually an ad-hoc committee of four MPs and three former justices who

ultimately made the decision to release the pertinent documents on this issue. In doing so, they said that while some amount of secrecy was warranted as it pertained to certain CSIS documents, most of the documents were held back by the government out of concern for protecting the organization from embarrassment more so than any legitimate national security concerns.

The Trudeau government is using the same play even now with the Hogue inquiry on foreign interference. They are either heavily redacting or withholding altogether all relevant cabinet documents that were proposed to the inquiry by Minister of Public Safety Dominic LeBlanc last September, regardless of their sensitive nature.

Again, they are saying the right thing one minute but then doing the very opposite.

I'll remind everyone here that the Prime Minister can and should waive cabinet confidentiality, as he promised he would. He has the power and authority to do so, just as he does with the NSICOP report.

Justin Trudeau is the only one who can release the unredacted report or parts of it, including the names of any parliamentarians believed to have wittingly or unwittingly been implicated in foreign interference. Canadians and Parliament deserve to know, regardless of their political stripes. Instead, we have the fourth- and fifth-place party leaders making public statements that do nothing more than muddy the water on what is or isn't in the report. Between Elizabeth May and Jagmeet Singh, Canadians can't make heads or tails of it.

By the way colleagues, there are two things that we heard during our committee study on Bill C-70 that must be on the record here. First, claims that the allegations against parliamentarians can't be discussed because they are under RCMP investigation are bogus; and second, there likely aren't mechanisms in the Criminal Code to investigate these allegations because what's being described doesn't likely give rise to the very high bar of treason.

This testimony made it all the more clear that these allegations will have to be dealt with by some other measure, such as publicly naming the implicated parliamentarians. Parliamentarians are politicians, and there is political accountability in Parliament. That is where we get to the bottom of political accountability.

However, again, the Trudeau government says one thing and does the opposite. After initially appearing to agree to send the NSICOP report to Justice Hogue to investigate the allegations against parliamentarians — publicly named MPs and senators — that she believes are implicated, Minister LeBlanc balked during his Senate committee appearance when asked if the relevant documents would be turned over. It was a pointed question, I think from Senator Carignan. He just balked; he did not give a clear answer.

Meanwhile, over the weekend, the Minister of Foreign Affairs decided to add some mud of her own. She doesn't know that we have a warship docked alongside the Russians in Cuba, but she had no problem confidently telling Vassy Kapelos that there are no Liberal caucus members implicated in the report. That's odd because when the Prime Minister was asked at the G7 this weekend if any Liberals were on the list, he refused to answer one way or the other. Either the Minister of Foreign Affairs is, as usual, confused and the Prime Minister is back to not reading his briefing notes or they're not being honest. I will give them the benefit of the doubt, of course.

What the Prime Minister did say to Canadians and the media at the G7, though, was to call into question the work of NSICOP. The Prime Minister echoed the words of the Minister of Public Safety Dominic LeBlanc in saying that he disagrees with NSICOP's interpretation of foreign interference and that he made clear to them the problems he has with their work. That is NSICOP, about which we all talk and about which we're all so confident. He certainly isn't.

Why is it with this guy that he's always the ultimate authority on everything and resorts to degrading and dissing the work of anyone who disagrees with him, even if they're his own hand-picked experts? Here is a reminder of what Mr. Trudeau said about this committee of parliamentarians in March 2023:

> . . . NSICOP is well placed to look at foreign interference attempts that occurred in the 43rd and 44th federal general elections, including potential effects on Canada's democracy and institutions . . . .

• (2030)

It's one thing today, and another thing tomorrow.

I will remind you about what his Senate leader — our very own Senator Gold — said less than two weeks ago about the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, or NSICOP. In his latest report, he highlighted the value of the work that committee does and said that his government thanks them for their work. Well, send a memo to Prime Minister Trudeau, Senator Gold, because you guys are not on the same page — not at all.

Mr. Trudeau will also call into question the work of Justice Hogue's inquiry when it concludes. Do you know whose work he didn't question? He didn't question the work of his Independent Special Rapporteur on Foreign Interference: family friend and, yes, former governor general David Johnston. The fact that Mr. Harper wasn't dissuaded from appointing such a close Trudeau family friend shows his lack of partisanship in such matters. It's too bad Mr. Trudeau and Mr. Johnston don't have the same lack of partisanship.

At any rate, Minister Joly and Prime Minister Trudeau like to cite the special rapporteur as another example of how Canada is the most forward-leaning G7 country in combatting foreign interference. Remember, appointing the special rapporteur was the initial response by the Trudeau government to Conservative calls for a public inquiry and for a foreign registry. The special rapporteur was going to solve all problems.

It was never about accountability or taking foreign interference seriously, colleagues. It was about ragging the puck. It was about delays. The special rapporteur didn't even talk to Liberal MP Han Dong, who was at the centre of the electoral interference allegations. On June 6, 2023, the rapporteur admitted before a House committee that he didn't even have access to the intelligence that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, or CSIS, provided in a briefing to former Conservative leader Erin O'Toole. The rapporteur said, "The evidence we had before us . . . was what was available to us at that time."

Later that same day, in a CBC interview with David Cochrane, he said, "the amount of information available was an ocean and we saw a very large lake." Yet, after all that, the rapporteur exclaimed, "Nothing to see here, folks! Carry on. Canada is a picture of national security."

My colleague Senator Plett asked Senator Gold in Question Period the day after that CBC interview, ". . . who chose the CSIS information that the rapporteur based his report on?" No answer was given, but we all know the answer. We know where the information came from. What an unmitigated disaster and waste of time and taxpayer money, and what a sham. Canadians deserve better.

The bottom line is that Justin Trudeau is the one person holding the power to come clean with Canadians about foreign interference, whether it be in our elections or our Parliament, through security information he's gathered. The various institutions that we know are porous are being infiltrated by regimes that do not respect democracy, freedom, the rule of law and human rights. He talks about the importance of Canadians having confidence in our ability to defend our democratic institutions. He uses that as an excuse to not disclose the names of parliamentarians implicated in the NSICOP report. In fact, his lack of transparency and lack of forthrightness is having the opposite effect, colleagues. When a cloud of suspicion is left hanging over the head of every parliamentarian, how can Canadians have any faith in us or in our institutions?

I understand the consequences that must be considered when disclosing these names, both when considering the sources who provided information to our intelligence agencies and regarding the principles of due process. Where was that concern for protection of sources and due process when the Prime Minister stood up in the House of Commons last year and, out of nowhere and without offering any evidence, accused the government of India of being involved in the killing of a British Columbia man last June? All he gave Canadians was, "Trust me. I have seen it, and I believe it."

As for the work of NSICOP, this committee of parliamentarians has provided three reports to the Prime Minister outlining concerns about foreign interference. Similarly, CSIS has provided several reports regarding foreign interference with recommendations to safeguard against similar meddling. Those briefings and reports from NSICOP go back to 2018. That's six years ago, and only now are we getting around to legislation that deals with it. Like everything else with this government, they do it fast and they do it hastily — because they only had nine years to think about it. That's not something of which we should be proud, Senator Gold. This is not a valuable use of the skill sets and the goodwill that parliamentarians, and especially senators, have. In the case of this government, that doesn't sound like someone eager to lead the fight against foreign interference.

Despite Justin Trudeau's revisionist history — as recently as this weekend, he told the media that he did things the Harper government fought against — the truth is that the first thing this current government did when they took office was to repeal a previous government's foreign interference legislation, Bill C-51. It was the first step. Red flags were raised in 2013 and 2014. Bill C-51 was that first step in 2015 to start strengthening our national security laws, and it was a precursor of what would eventually become the foreign registry.

I'll tell you what happened, colleagues. The first thing the government did when they came into power was to repeal the bill. They revamped it, repealed it and took the teeth out of it in a bill called Bill C-59. Go read it for yourself. Go read Bill C-51, and then go read the revamped Bill C-59. Senator Gold was the sponsor of that bill. That was the first thing the government did. Then they spent the next nine years doing everything they could to further fight Conservative attempts to combat foreign interference and transnational repression, including lobbing accusations of racism and bigotry against us and Liberal MPs even taking part gleefully in disinformation and conspiracy theories online.

The only reason we're here today with this legislation before us is due to the government exhausting every avenue available to avoid getting to this point. They ragged the puck in ways that we have never seen before, basically trying to prevent the foreign registry from coming into place. Now, of course, I'm not even sure we'll get this foreign registry into place, because the truth of the matter is that I don't share Senator Dean's enthusiasm. I'm somewhat skeptical of the bureaucracy being capable enough in 12 months to have it in place before the next election. That is the concern of most parliamentarians who will face the Canadian public in the next general election — those of us who want to have a fair election and an election that isn't tampered with by foreign entities. I hope, somehow, there's goodwill on the part of the government and the bureaucrats to have it in place.

I will support this legislation, colleagues, even though it has been put into place hastily and has been facing delay after delay. We all know, at the end of the day, that the government rushed to put this out after Justice Hogue had a scathing preliminary report about the foot dragging of this government when it dealt with foreign interference. Like everything else they do, they rushed quickly to get this out the door to make it look like they've done something and put something in place before the next election.

It's still better than the alternative. I still believe this piece of legislation is just the first step. I'm confident the next government that will come into place will take national security and foreign interference seriously and will add all the subsequent measures this bill requires, including giving tools and resources to the RCMP and to CSIS to make sure there can be cross-communication between our police agencies in this country in order to combat the serious threat to our democracy and, more importantly, the serious threat to the Canadian people.

I became interested in foreign interference many years ago for one simple reason. Canadians of Cuban descent came to my office. I had Hong Kongers and Canadians of Chinese and Persian descent. They came into my office one after another, giving me horrid stories of intimidation and threats from foreign governments toward Canadian citizens. This is what foreign interference is all about: It's about regimes — like China, Iran, Cuba, Russia and Türkiye — that believe they can intimidate people in their homelands and, unfortunately, they can, and there are limited things we can do. However, when these nations come onto our soil and go after Canadians just because they happen to originate from those countries and intimidate them and their families to the benefit of these rogue dictatorships, then there's a serious problem.

I don't care who the Prime Minister is or who the government is. This is not about politics. This is about the essence of our Canadian citizenship and what has brought us all to this country. I've said this a thousand times: We're all immigrants to Canada, and we all come here for freedom, democracy and rule of law. That's what we hear: It's for fundamental human rights. We as parliamentarians should fight for that above all else at all costs.

Thank you colleagues. I support this bill, and let's make it pass as soon as possible.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

• (2040)

Hon. Marilou McPhedran: I wonder if Senator Housakos would take a question.

Senator Housakos: Absolutely.

Senator McPhedran: Senator Housakos, I am feeling a little confused at this moment, and I'm hoping you can help me understand this better. We had an impressive analysis of all the things that are wrong with this bill, but, at the end of your speech, you indicated that you support its rapid passage. Would that include clause-by-clause consideration potentially occurring tomorrow and then a return to the chamber for a vote almost instantly? Is that what you're conveying here?

Senator Housakos: Senator McPhedran, I don't know where in the world you thought there are a lot of elements wrong with this bill. This bill is a giant step forward from what we have right now, which is absolutely no bill and no mechanism to combat foreign interference. We've had two successive elections now. We've heard about this from various reports and various intelligence sources. Unfortunately, they report it to the Prime Minister because, when it comes to national security, all roads — because of the flaws in our reporting mechanisms in this Parliament — about national security measures stop in the Prime Minister's Office.

We're on the verge of heading into an election in 12 months from now, and we need — in the most credible way — to give some tools to Elections Canada, the RCMP, CSIS and all the agencies. Above all else, this bill is a deterrence because we're finally amending the Criminal Code to no foreign actors. Let's face it: We know what foreign interference is; we all do. If you come to Canada and try to engage and interfere in our democracies and our institutions, there's a price to pay.

Are there elements of the bill that I'd like to see strengthened? Yes, and in due course and in due time, we will do that. Would I have preferred that this bill had been debated two years ago when I tabled my bill? If you look at Bill S-237, it is similar to this bill with a few exceptions. Elements of my bill are stronger than this bill; some elements are weaker. Would I have preferred for the government to have shown interest two years and four months ago, and to have jumped on the bill and amended it, debated it and strengthened it to everybody's satisfaction in this place so that we're not rushed — at five minutes to midnight before we adjourn — to pass it? Absolutely, I would. You can take that up with the government leader. You can take that up with individuals and colleagues in this institution who never wanted to discuss this before last week or five minutes ago.

This is an important issue for our democracy and for all the people who have been crying for help over the last decade — Canadians who have been feeling interference from both Beijing and Tehran — in order to show that there's a seriousness on the part of this legislation to address it. That's why I believe this bill is perfect in terms of a first step. For all the imperfections that we need to strengthen, we can strengthen them over time. Delaying it, however, would send a terrible message to all the terrible actors that are trying and have infiltrated our Canadian democracy.

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

(On motion of Senator Dean, bill referred to the Standing Senate Committee on National Security, Defence and Veterans Affairs.)

CANADA LABOUR CODE
CANADA INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS BOARD REGULATIONS, 2012

BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING

Hon. Frances Lankin moved third reading of Bill C-58, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Canada Industrial Relations Board Regulations, 2012.

She said: Honourable senators, I'm honoured and humbled to be the Senate sponsor of this bill. It's an historic moment, and I'm happy to be involved with this, to move third reading and to begin third reading debate.

This debate is on Bill C-58, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Canada Industrial Relations Board Regulations, 2012. This bill is brought forward in order to bring about a regime of balance with respect to banning replacement workers during federally regulated industry strikes or lockouts, and to put in place a provision that governs the timing and steps with respect to determining maintenance of activities agreements or decisions of the Canada Industrial Relations Board, which would affect what work continues to be done during a strike.

At second reading, I had an opportunity to explain further, but I'll remind you to whom this bill refers. It refers to those federal private sector organizations contained in Parts I, II, III and IV of the Canada Labour Code. There are more extensive examples than this, but some that will help ground you in terms of who we're talking about include the following: air transportation, banks, port services, railways, radio and television broadcasting, road transportation services, telecommunication systems, some First Nations governance bodies and a number of sectors, all of which are federally regulated. The distinction to be made is that workplaces regulated by the provinces and governed by things like the Employment Standards Act and/or the Labour Code regulations — at the provincial level — are federally regulated sectors. It does not include those federal workplaces governed by different legislation — legislation separate from the Canada Labour Code. The federal public service or Parliament is a good example of what is not covered.

In regard to the debates on this bill in the House of Commons — and I reported on this at second reading as well — second reading, the committee study and third reading all passed unanimously. A couple of amendments were made in the House of Commons, but, at the end of the day, the committee passed it unanimously, as did the House of Commons. Here, in the Senate, the bill passed our second reading and it passed through committee, again, with no amendments. We are here for third reading debate at this point in time.

During our committee hearings, we heard — either through direct testimony or through written submissions — from employers, employer associations, individual unions and labour bodies like the Canadian Labour Congress. We heard from academics, from the Canada Industrial Relations Board and from organizations — directly impacted but related organizations. In a minute, I'll talk about the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and the concerns that they raised.

I want to highlight some of the concerns that employers raised. Again, if you remember my second reading speech, I talked a lot about how this is very polarized. There's not a lot of room in the advocacy communities for agreement, except people think that the provisions have been put in place to set out the process for the determination of the maintenance of activities agreements, or for determination through negotiation by the parties in agreement, or by referral of the issue to the Canada Industrial Relations Board and their investigation, adjudication and declaration. That is not so much in contention, but it is the basic issue of whether or not there should be a ban on replacement workers.

Colleagues, this is an issue of balance. It comes down to no more than that. It is clear that the parties have different views of what a balanced regime is, and, for the most part, employers feel that the current balance it struck in the Canada Labour Code is an appropriate balance, whereas unions have said for years that it is an unfair regime and that it places restrictions on workers and undermines the effective right to strike. There's really no bringing those two points of view together.

I'd like to highlight a couple of the concerns brought to the committee's attention. I want people to know that their voices have been heard, and that there was consideration of the issues brought forward. I will speak about one observation that the committee appended to its report, but, at the end of the day, this bill passed through committee without amendments.

• (2050)

Let me talk just a little bit about some of the employer concerns. One of the things we heard very directly is that the employers were concerned about the Canada Industrial Relations Board, or CIRB, being able to implement this legislation in the 12 months post-Royal Assent, when it would then be called into force. The original bill had an 18-month time frame, which was amended in the House of Commons to 12 months, and the employer community thinks that this is a problem. It relies on the minister's own statements when the bill was introduced in his defence of the 18 months — that this is how long it would take to get the systems up and running at the CIRB to handle any complaints, referrals, adjudications and declaration decisions.

In committee in the House of Commons, the Bloc Québécois brought forward amendments to shorten this period, and there was, I believe, a different understanding of the history of the bill in that province due to the fact that they've had similar legislation since 1977. The thought that there's a challenge in terms of implementing that was not given as much weight, and there was a belief that it could be shorter. The unions also called for it to be much shorter. They were calling for it to come into force upon Royal Assent.

The minister went back to the CIRB with these different points of view and talked with them about whether a shorter time frame was possible. I know from the discussions we had in testimony at committee that the CIRB clearly said they can do it, but only if they get more resources. They need to hire more staff, chairs and vice-chairs. They need to do the training and implement this with the systems they already have for the maintenance of activities agreements, which is part of the current regime.

This, however, puts different timelines on it and imposes different frameworks. It is expected that in the first rounds of bargaining with various bargaining units and employers, there may be some testing of the legislation, so there may be increased volume. Currently, there is also a backlog facing the CIRB. The CIRB said, "These are the resources that we need." The minister publicly committed to that, agreeing to support the amendment going through committee in the House of Commons to reduce the time frame to 12 months.

While there are some concerns about whether those resources will be forthcoming, I want to note that the government has included resources for the implementation of Bill C-58 in both this year's budget and last year's budget. So, there has been some forward planning on this, and I'm told that discussions are going on between the departments and the CIRB as we speak with regard to the exact shape of the forthcoming resources.

The employers also believe that there should be a review of this legislation. They think that the current system is balanced, that this will be an unbalancing of that, and they want to see a review. I won't speak for my other committee members — although no amendment came forward on that — but the challenge I had with that argument is that in collective bargaining, contracts are not normally 12 months or two years. They're often longer than that, and they come up at different points in time. So, you'll need a period of time to gather any useful data or evidence to do an analysis of the impact of the legislation, and employers were calling for a five-year review.

In my point of view, that's not sufficient time for this legislation to be tested and to amass an understanding of what — if any — impact it will have. I'll say in a moment what we heard from academics — that they expect very little impact from this — but I think that we would all support a review happening at an appropriate time. Dare I say with tongue in cheek that putting it into legislation doesn't ensure that it's going to happen in a timely fashion under any government of any political stripe. That's just the way parliamentary business unfolds.

The question we had to ask ourselves was this: Is the balance being proposed in this legislation — the new rebalancing or bringing into effect of what the trade union movement would say is a basic matter of fairness — the right balance?

We heard from the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, for example, and I thought that their presentation was very heartfelt and important. They talked about the protections, provisions and exemptions for bulk grain transports, but there are other matters of produce that are not exempted. I think they believe, writ large, that it should be exempted although it never has been, but this legislation doesn't bring that about.

Their concern is with the shipment of their goods, and many Canadian manufacturers' associations — Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters brought this up — are worried about transport. Railways, for example, which are a key mode of transporting agricultural produce, will be subject to this legislation. I ask you to look back at the negotiations that have gone on with these parties — the rail lines and their unions over the years.

Federally, we have a very mature system of labour relations. It has been around for a long time. We have a very effective and successful mediation/conciliation process. The vast majority of disputes are settled at the bargaining table, where they should be. Of those that move on to a further stage in dispute and engage mediation/conciliation services, 94% reach a resolution. We're talking about a small number. I would point out to you that, in general, governments pay attention when sectors of the workforce come forward and make a case on either side — either through CIRB or an appeal to government — that there's a problem here and that the government needs to step in.

Those of you who have been here for a few years will know — I've only been here for eight years, but I've participated in two debates on back-to-work legislation: one affecting the Port of Montreal and the other affecting Canada Post — that it is the hammer that governments have. There is a provision or test that they have to meet to ensure that this back-to-work legislation is constitutional, and many of us have different opinions about whether in those two cases they met that test or not, but the government has that ability. As I've seen over the years, both chambers of Parliament tend to bow to the government when it comes to back-to-work legislation. So, the hammer is there.

It's not that the concerns raised are unreasonable concerns — they are, and that's why I want to put them on the record — but there are mechanisms both in the existing system and law with respect to the maintenance of activities agreement and in the government's ultimate ability when they believe conditions have been met that warrant it to use back-to-work legislation.

We also heard from a major telecommunications company in a submission in which they indicated that in order to maintain critical telecommunications services, they wanted the legislation to include an exemption or remove a prohibition in the exemptions, giving them the ability to transfer non-bargaining-unit employees from one location to another. The arguments that we received in a submission from the union involved in that case after our committee work had been done — it only arrived in the last couple of days — made an effective case refuting that argument.

I don't need to go into detail about what they said. Instead, I want to return to a quote that I read to you in second-reading debate from the Supreme Court of Canada. In 2015, the Supreme Court of Canada affirmed that freedom of association provisions in our Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protect the right to strike. Within the text of the Supreme Court decision, Justice Abella, who rendered the decision, writes:

> The conclusion that the right to strike is an essential part of a meaningful collective bargaining process in our system of labour relations is supported by history, by jurisprudence, and by Canada's international obligations. . . .

• (2100)

She then went on to quote Otto Kahn-Freund and Bob Hepple, and they had this to say:

> The power to withdraw their labour is for the workers what for management is its power to shut down production, to switch it to different purposes, to transfer it to different places.

I want you to remember those words. That's within the current operating powers of the employer. What the union has to say about that is that effectively, if it is used by moving managers or replacement workers during the strike, it undermines the right to strike.

This quote goes on to say:

> A legal system which suppresses the freedom to strike puts the workers at the mercy of their employers. This — in all its simplicity — is the essence of the matter.

To allow an employer to simply, on their own accord, move employees from one work location to another location — and I know most of us will be thinking within Canada, and that's the first place we should think of — fundamentally undermines the right to strike, which is guaranteed by our Charter in section 15 and the section on freedom of association. We should give life to that and you can't, by amendment to legislation, undermine that right.

Now, I mentioned that our minds we are probably thinking of Canada. I am aware of a situation where, prior to a lockout, an employer moved a lot of the work to a call centre overseas, completely undermining the right to strike and in a situation where replacement workers were also used domestically.

There are these cases that are egregious, and I would not paint all employers with the same brush at all, and particularly what I said is a mature industrial relations setting of the federally regulated sectors that we talked about. But the use of replacement workers undermines the right to strike, and this legislation is focused on the rebalancing that I mentioned, but bringing about fairness, finally.

I want to talk a little bit about a couple of other examples that we currently see right now in the federally regulated sector which illustrate why this legislation is so important. So let's, for a moment, talk about the Port of Québec. Again, ports are a federally regulated sector, and those workers have been out for 20 months: that's a long time. Think of the individuals, the families, their neighbours, their communities, where the purchasing power has been restrained and where people are struggling to continue to support their families and having to make decisions about whether to leave long-standing employment opportunities in that situation. Replacement workers are keeping that port open. That's an example of why this legislation is needed.

Let me talk about the Vidéotron workers. For seven months they have been — not on strike, colleagues — locked out by their employer at this point in time. I was able to meet some of the Vidéotron workers who came to observe the committee's handling of this. I don't remember all their names, but I remember one woman in particular — France — because we share the same name. She has worked there for decades and decades. She is locked out by the employer. The employer has used replacement workers and is fully operational. She is six months away from retirement, so she may never get back to that job — all of which is impacted in terms of her current security to support her and her family, but her future as well. My heart breaks.

I've said this before: The last thing workers want to do is to go on strike. In this case, they are not on strike: they were locked out. There was purposeful planning to bump resources in other areas prior to this lockout in order for the employer to, I can only assume, break the union in this situation. I don't have evidence of that and don't mean to cast aspersions, but that's what it looks like and feels like. When it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it's likely a duck. From my background in labour relations, that is what it appears to me to be. This legislation is important.

I want to, just for a moment, turn to the committee report and the fact that the committee appended one observation to the report, and this was with respect to the issue of the resources required for the Canada Industrial Relations Board, or CIRB, to fulfill the requirements of the legislation and to do so in a timely fashion in the 12 months post-Royal Assent that has been given before this will be brought into force.

This is the observation to the twenty-fourth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology on Bill C-58:

> Your committee received testimony regarding proposed expanded responsibilities for the Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB), such as the requirement for the prompt resolution of complaints related to the prohibited use of replacement workers. Your committee heard that, as a result, the CIRB will need additional resources (in the form of staff, vice-chairs and funding) to be able to effectively address the increased workload created by the bill, especially as some of its provisions stipulate specified time limits within which matters must be decided. Witnesses expressed concerns that without adequate funding and timely access to additional human resources, the CIRB may face backlogs, potentially leading to prolonged service disruptions in critical sectors.
>
> Your committee, therefore, recommends that the Government of Canada ensure adequate and consistent funding for the CIRB so that it can meet its expanded responsibilities effectively and ensure the timely resolution of labour disputes. Your committee also recommends that the Government of Canada evaluate and adjust funding amounts on a regular basis to take into account the CIRB's workload.

As I indicated, we heard directly from the CIRB, and they agreed, without hesitation, on the record, that they can do this in 12 months if they get the resources. I would have noted that money and resources for the implementation of this bill have been included in the last two budgets, thus the reason for the committee to bring forward this observation. Again, the observation was supported around the table. Senators of all recognized groups were supportive of that, so that has been included.

I also want to briefly mention that we had a number of academics present before us as well. Without going into all of the types of research that are out there, I think all of us will be familiar with organizations that bring forward advocacy research, and I say that with respect. I have been an advocacy researcher in my past. This is research that is conducted with a premise to be supported or not by the findings — not rigorous academic research, which is a whole different ball of wax.

We heard in particular from one academic who, I believe, is at the Université de Montréal and collaborated with someone from the University of Toronto, or U of T. That research spanned 40 years. It looked in depth at pre-1992 and post-1992, and examined a whole range of labour policies. This was not just

replacement workers — although that's one of the things on the table — but a whole range of labour policies and attempted to determine, again, on an evidentiary basis, what the impact of these various labour policies is. It is extensively researched, peer-reviewed and published in the *Industrial Relations* journal out of Berkeley, which is one of the most renowned labour relations research journals, so this has credibility.

The bottom line is that they could not find statistically relevant evidence that any of these policies in and of themselves had an impact on the frequency or duration of work stoppages. Those are the two things that people are most concerned about: Will we have more strikes? Will those strikes be longer as a result of this legislation?

The academic work that has been done, even in some of the advocacy pieces, is nebulous about what argument can be made, and it's a bit cherry-picking. Some of it is provincial. A lot of it is prior to COVID-19. We know things have changed so much since then. For me, as a member of the committee, it did not carry the weight that this piece published in an academic journal did. It makes sense that any shift in policy — again, in a country with a very mature industrial relations framework — would have a huge impact in and of itself.

• (2110)

The frequency of strikes is much more closely related to the elements in the economy that we're facing. As inflation grows, the value of workers' paycheques shrinks, and you see attempts to influence that and increase wages at the negotiation table, as well as more disputes, during these periods. That's not the only example; however, there are many external factors which come into play and determine both frequency and duration.

Colleagues, that was intended to give you a little of the flavour of what happened at committee so you can understand the arguments being made. This is historic. Tonight, you are able to participate in a vote regarding a very historic, evolutionary development in the world of labour relations in the federally regulated industrial sector.

Trade unions made the case over and over again that they have been arguing for this legislation since before Canada was Canada. Think about that for a moment. I could provide all sorts of historical descriptions of strikes or lockouts that happened back in the days when employers hired Pinkerton to enforce the employer's point of view with physical violence. Again, I don't broad-brush all employers with that.

However, the trade union movement has seen — and their members, workforces, families and communities have felt — the effect of this imbalance in the labour relations situation for many years. They have fought for this for many years. It is with a sense of pride that I am here and a part of this. As I said before, I'm very honoured and humbled. I hope you feel the weight of the history of the vote we are about to take, and what it means for working women and men, families and the future of labour relations in this country. This is big. It's important, and I urge you all to join with your committee that passed it out without amendments, our second reading vote, as well as the House of Commons, which passed it unanimously at second and third reading. Your support will be much appreciated by many across this country. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Marty Deacon: Would my colleague take a question? I know you are finished and really excited about that, but I also think this is a bit of a tribute. A few weeks ago, you talked about your experience in this lane. You are very passionate and proud of it, and you referred to 1992. That was a part of your conversation.

As you went through this extraordinary process, I listened before when you spoke and was concerned about the diversity of unions appearing as witnesses in committee; you talked about that. I was also watching the balance between employee and employer and seeing how that worked out.

Stepping back from this moment and looking at the most significant improvements or changes, could you choose and share the top one or two?

Senator Lankin: I'm not sure I understand the question. The top one or two of what?

Senator M. Deacon: Looking over time, from when you started this investment in your own world in 1992 until now, when we are sitting here with this bill of significance in front of us, what do you see as those top two from-the-balcony improvements?

Senator Lankin: That's a very interesting question — and one I would have loved a heads-up on so I could have thought about it. First, it is not since 1992. That's when I got to bring in legislation to create the right to strike for Ontario Public Service workers. My involvement in the trade union movement goes back to the late 1970s, as I described, when I worked and became involved in my union.

Over the years, there were so many things, but I think one is with respect to compulsory dues check-off. If you are in a workplace that becomes unionized and you benefit from the collective agreements and whatever the courts and others have agreed on, the Rand Formula, compulsory dues check-off, is necessary.

Over the years, some of the adjustments to the process by which workplaces become unionized — regarding the votes, the supervision of the votes, structures of the votes and the laws stopping and prohibiting employers from intervening and intimidating workers into not signing union cards — have been critical. Expansion of the right to strike in the public sector has been critical.

That is off the top of my head. There are so many pieces of legislative policy development over the years that have been hard fought for and hard won. I mentioned at second reading that in Ontario, when I was in cabinet, not my portfolio but the labour portfolio brought forward a ban on replacement worker legislation, colloquially referred to as "anti-scab legislation." That was passed, and it was a moment of celebration, much like I feel this moment is in doing this. It was, however, unfortunately

repealed by the successor government, the Mike Harris Conservative government in Ontario. That was one of the first acts of the new government.

Other provinces already had it in place, like Quebec. Since then, B.C. has put it in place and Manitoba is currently considering it. Other jurisdictions around the world have developed this, but there is s lot of work to be done. We still live just north of a border where states have right-to-work laws, which sounds really good, but it refers to the right to banish unions and keep them out of workplaces.

There is a lot of work to do in solidarity with working people in this country and around the world. I am grateful to the government of the day — though I may disagree with them on many things at different times — and for the supply and confidence agreement that they signed with the New Democrats. That is not because that agreement makes this happen — it is Parliament that makes this happen. It is also not because both those parties didn't include that in their platforms when they were campaigning — so people knew that this was coming. However, the collaborative work done to negotiate the provisions of the bill and bring it forward in a way that takes into account the sensibilities on both the employer and union sides of the table has produced a bill with the extraordinary result of unanimity in the House of Commons, with zero votes against. It seems as if it is approaching the same answer here in the Senate, and I am proud and happy to see us do that. Thank you.

Hon. Hassan Yussuff: Thank you, colleagues. It is an honour to be standing in this place this evening to add my voice to this piece of legislation. There is an old saying: If you live long enough, you might be wrong about everything. I have been around for a little bit. I never thought I would be in the Senate, much less participating in a debate on a piece of legislation that has also been a part of my life. It is an honour to be here.

Let me start by thanking my colleague, Senator Frances Lankin, for the sponsorship and the hard work she did. Over the decades, many activists have been advocating for legislation both at the national and provincial levels across the country.

I will share a bit of history here. Over the past 25 years, there have been many attempts in Parliament — when I was the president of the Canadian Labour Congress — and every one of them has failed at different stages. The closest was a second reading vote; and then, by the time it reached third reading, the bill didn't make it through.

• (2120)

Since 2002, 19 private members' bills to ban replacement workers have been introduced in the other place. To a large extent, this speaks to a minority Parliament and to the collaboration of the government and the NDP; however, in the last election, a majority of the parties had — in their platforms — a call for a ban on replacement workers.

What is the legislation about? You have heard much from Senator Lankin about what is in the bill. When listening to some, you would think that what this bill is about to do is dramatic. As a matter of fact, there is nothing dramatic about it. The vast majority of negotiations in the country, including at the federal level, are resolved and we never hear about the negotiations. Parties come to a collective agreement and they continue on with their relationships.

This bill will bring back balance and fairness to the federal system, which has been missing for a long time. It will give respect to workers and recognize the fundamental right to strike which — in 1982, when the Constitution was patriated to our country — was not envisioned as being part of the Constitution. This took some effort, of course. I will touch on that in a moment.

To a large extent, workers don't wake up in the morning when their collective agreement expires and want to go on strike. They generally want their union to negotiate to reach a fair agreement and, more importantly, ensure that they have a place to go to work, as they have done, in many cases, for decades. They want their employer to succeed, and they are part of that success when they reach a collective agreement.

This legislation is important in a number of areas. It is about maintaining the harmony that exists between employers and their workers. Workers want to ensure that, when there is a negotiation, they are able to reach a fair agreement. However, should there be a disruption, employers don't want that to harm the relationship that exists with their fellow workers. What tends to happen, the majority of the time, when replacement workers are used is that the relationship among workers is destroyed when someone crosses the picket line. This leads to animosity and it might take a long time, if ever, to restore the relationship. Also, an employer who experiences a protracted strike by using replacement workers is sometimes, for the longest time, not able to return the business to the way it should be because of the harm that's been done.

What we have seen in the history of replacement workers — this legislation has been enacted in Quebec for almost five decades, despite the fact that there have been many changes of government — is that not a single one of those governments has said, "We need to repeal this legislation and replace it with something else." There has been a similar experience in British Columbia. Despite changes in government, the legislation still exists in that province.

It is critical to recognize the importance of collective bargaining. I always say that collective bargaining is the one occasion where the parties can sit down and be equal and mature in the relationship. They get to look at the collective agreement. Usually, both sides have issues that they want to deal with, and 99% of the time — or even more than that, in some cases — they will reach an agreement without much disruption in their relationship. However, once in a while, there are disputes. Workers will go on strike. More often than not, where the relationship is mature and they use the services that the government provides — in terms of mediation services or, in some cases, the Canada Industrial Relations Board — they are able to come to a resolution and find a way to return to work in order to do the things they want to do, which is to ensure the enterprise continues to operate and fulfill its obligation.

I believe this legislation will bring stability to the federal jurisdiction. Equally, I believe it will show other jurisdictions that they need to enact similar legislation. This legislation has

been debated in the other place. In Manitoba, the government has now committed that they will bring in a ban on replacement workers in the province.

It is important for us to put this in context, since the Supreme Court ruled that the right to strike is a fundamental right protected by the Constitution. Maybe I have a naive understanding of the interpretation, but I believe it is a fundamental right. We cannot take away or undermine that right. It is like the right to free speech. You cannot pass a piece of legislation that restricts free speech because everyone will say, "How is that free speech?" If workers have the right to strike — and this is recognized as a fundamental right under the Constitution — I believe that when legislators intervene to take away that right, they are undermining the most fundamental basis of our Constitution: the rule of law.

In the past, this chamber and the other place have passed back-to-work legislation. In my previous life, I have opposed every single bit of it because I believe, fundamentally, that the parties need to negotiate. Many times, I have been at the bargaining table where there have been disputes. I recognize one fundamental importance: Eventually, both sides will come to a place where they can reach a collective agreement. It may not be what the union wants, and it may not be everything that the employer desires, but, at some point, they need to recognize the importance of free collective bargaining, where the parties can sit down and negotiate without somebody threatening them by saying, "If you don't do this, we will take away your fundamental right."

This country has built a broad middle-class society. Unions have contributed to that in large part by raising the standard of living for working people, and by raising the context of how we work. Health and safety laws have emerged because, on many occasions, where workers didn't have their rights recognized in legislation, they have had to fight with their employer to establish these rights within their collective agreement. Later on, of course, there was recognition by the government that we need to put this in legislation. If workers can have these rights in their collective agreements, everyone should be sharing in that at the end of the day.

We don't necessarily have an eight-hour day — well, in the Senate, on some days we do — but the right to an eight-hour day came about because workers recognized that it was a fundamental principle, and they bargained for this in their collective agreement. Eventually, the law recognized that the right to an eight-hour day should be enjoyed by everyone in society.

The right to workers' compensation didn't come about because the government woke up one day and said, "This will be good." Sometimes workers had to strike and bargain with their employer to achieve protection when they became injured on the job. Eventually, of course, the laws were changed to ensure that these things are recognized as a broader concept.

I believe that changing the Canada Labour Code to bring in a ban on replacement workers at the federal level is the right decision by the government. Of course, this view is shared by all members of Parliament, because it passed unanimously in the other place.

I want to quote part of the Supreme Court ruling that was read earlier regarding the 2015 decision of Justice Abella and others in *Saskatchewan Federation of Labour v. Saskatchewan*:

> The right to strike is not merely derivative of collective bargaining, it is an indispensable component of that right. . . .

The ruling continued:

> It seems to me to be the time to give this conclusion constitutional benediction.

This was written by Justice Abella. Passing this legislation tonight will give benediction to the Canada Labour Code that federal workers deserve in this country. Thank you so much.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Krista Ross: Senator Yussuff, I have a question, if you will accept it.

I'm very concerned about the overall impact to the economy that this type of legislation could have. According to a report I read from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, strikes at the ports in Montreal and in B.C. had huge economic impacts and massive costs for small businesses. I know these aren't the same areas that this bill would cover, but it gives us an idea of what the impact could be. A shutdown of the Port of Montreal could cost the Canadian economy $40 million to $100 million a week, and I think a lot about the small and medium-sized enterprises that were impacted greatly by such things as the supply chain. It wouldn't be their business that would be striking, but it would really impact their ability to provide services to their clients and keep their own employees employed.

• (2130)

I am also concerned about Canadian companies being forced into a situation and making deals that they can't afford to make to avoid further work stoppage and maybe considering contracting out or outsourcing. I'm interested in your comments on those points.

Senator Yussuff: Thank you for the question.

It's hard to respond to a question about what the cost will be. Fundamentally, when there is a dispute and workers have to exercise the right to strike, there is a cost. When the workers are on strike, they don't get their regular pay, so they themselves are paying a cost of having to exercise that right. Yes, it might be a cost to the economy — I don't know what that would be — but ultimately, of course, we have a mature system at the federal level where we have the Canada labour board there to mediate among the parties when certain issues are referred to them. In other cases, conciliation and mediation services are always available to the parties, and the parties themselves, by negotiating, recognize they want to reach an agreement that represents their collective interests: costs of running the business, but at the same time recognizing the issues the workers are raising and how to address that in a meaningful way to give some recognition to the workers' concerns in the first place.

In my entire 45 years of being in collective bargaining before I got here, I had never seen an employer sign a settlement that was beyond their ability to maintain the business at the end of the day. If they weren't able to maintain their business because they were going to sign a settlement, they wouldn't sign it in the first place.

In regard to your question, I understand there might be some consequences and some costs, but it's hard for me to answer that. I don't know whether I would accept the numbers that were produced by some of the parties. There obviously are costs when certain parts of the economy are shut down, but ultimately what we want to ensure is that when there is a dispute, all of the necessary services that the government can provide to bring the parties to solve that dispute should happen as quickly as possible. It is important to recognize and to put this in the same context. If workers have a fundamental right to go on strike, we should think of the consequence of taking away that right, because a fundamental right is a fundamental right. It's nothing else but a fundamental right. For far too long in this country we have treated a fundamental right of workers like an abstract concept, as if it's not worthy of the consideration because it's getting in the way of the efficiency of the economy.

I recognize the need for us to have a functioning economy, but I also recognize that good labour relations are about the parties sitting down and working out an agreement that represents their interests and taking into consideration the country's interests if they can have an impact on the national economy.

Hon. Colin Deacon: Honourable senators, I'm going to build off of the question my colleague Senator Ross just asked. You've already heard a lot about Bill C-58. Simply, it prevents the use of replacement workers in federally regulated workplaces, not including the federal public service, during a contract dispute or strike.

I want to acknowledge the lifetime of work of our two colleagues: Senator Lankin and Senator Yussuff. My work experience is quite different, and that's what makes this workplace so special. I'm honoured to serve with all of you in this workplace.

Colleagues, protecting workers' rights is crucial. The labour movement has done much to ensure a fair relationship between employers and workers. However, I'm concerned about the unintended consequences of this bill, particularly as it relates to small businesses, which employ more than two thirds of Canada's private sector labour force. This will be the focus of my comments.

Our small businesses continue to struggle in our post-COVID economy. First, they struggled with the damage and debt accumulated during the depths of the COVID pandemic. This was followed by Russia's evil invasion of Ukraine, the Suez Canal blockage and a whole new round of global supply chain disruptions that resulted in inflation that we've all been struggling with. Then came labour shortages.

These challenges continue to reverberate in far too many of the small businesses, which employ over 8 million Canadians, supporting families in virtually every community across our country. Each of those jobs relies on successful management of the entrepreneur, and we need far more entrepreneurs — far more — in Canada. The Business Development Bank of Canada, the BDC, found that we've lost 100,000 entrepreneurs in the last 20 years while our population grew by 10 million people. Our small businesses remain fragile.

In considering the effects of Bill C-58, I worry about the domino of damage that could very likely result from an extended labour disruption at one of our extensive number of federally regulated workplaces along our various supply chains. It has been found that introducing laws banning replacement workers can lead to an increased length of strikes. Long supply chain strikes cannot be afforded by our small businesses. I've always said that I'm entirely supportive of any union that has productivity growth as a primary concern. Why is that? Because that's the best way to secure an employer's future and increase the wages of workers. The more value that is delivered for every hour worked, the more that will be available to reward all those whose efforts create that value.

In a country that has strong workers' rights, I believe this is an important priority — crucial, in fact. However, this does not happen in too many federally regulated workplaces. Consider Canada Post. In late autumn 2018, in my first few months in the Senate, we debated and voted on back-to-work legislation during an extensive labour disruption at Canada Post. The harms being caused during those few weeks of rotating strikes were felt most profoundly by small businesses, particularly in rural communities, where few other delivery options exist. The damage was exacerbated because these rotating strikes occurred at the busiest time of the year, and the strategic choice of facilities caused the volumes of undelivered mail and parcels to pile up at breakneck speed and at a time when the survival of many small businesses rested on their successfully delivering the majority of their sales leading up to Christmas.

Now, despite years of declining letter mail and growing private sector competition, Canada Post has still not adjusted to mark realities. The union and corporation have failed to find ways to improve productivity, and the consequence is that we now have $3 billion in losses in the years that followed that strike. It's unsustainable, and at some point a highly disruptive change will have to happen at Canada Post.

I worry that having back-to-work legislation as the only option of resolving labour disputes will not be an effective use of legislative institutions or their time. I doubt that it will result in either the union or the employer side prioritizing productivity as a way to secure jobs and improve wages. I also worry about the effects that this legislation will have on business investment.

According to the Montreal Economic Institute:

> The adoption of Bill C-58 will also have repercussions in terms of investment. It has been observed in Canada that frequent work stoppages and the regulatory framework that facilitates them put downward pressure on foreign direct investment in the affected sectors. According to one study, a province equipped with a law against replacement workers has an investment rate 25% lower than all other provinces. . . .

This bill could have a significant consequence in the context of our low private non-residential investment per worker in Canada. We're far below the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, or OECD, average, and it is diminishing our wages on average across the country.

Colleagues, protecting workers' rights is crucial. Strengthening union power through anti-replacement-work legislation can enhance worker protections, but it may come with unintended costs of business continuity and economic resilience. According to the Bank of Canada, we are in the midst of a break-the-glass emergency because they believe that our declining productivity rates are now putting our standard of living at risk. I agree, and we will not fix this problem unless every workplace begins to prioritize productivity so that our livelihoods can begin to improve again.

• (2140)

I'm not convinced that this bill will achieve that all in part and end. Thank you, colleagues.

Hon. Rodger Cuzner: Will the senator take a question?

Senator C. Deacon: Certainly.

Senator Cuzner: Thank you. Let me start by echoing your comments about the contributions that Senators Lankin and Yussuff have made to organized labour in this country. I think we can agree that organized labour has helped build the middle class in this country.

I've been on both sides of strikes; on the picket line and I've had to cross picket lines as a manager. Neither side is any fun, but it's one of the few tools that labour has when it comes down to it. I think we see more and more the downward pressure on wages in the country for various factors, but the right to strike is one.

In the federal sector, we always want to see a deal cut at the table. That's why we support mediation, arbitration and then finally back-to-work legislation. I voted to support back-to-work legislation in that Canada Post strike that you made reference to. Strikes are tough. They destroy families, communities and relationships between the business and the owner.

Are there a couple of examples that you can share with us where back-to-work legislation has really worked out well for the boss who said, "We're going to bring in scabs, we're going to bring in replacement workers"? Has it really worked out well for them?

Senator C. Deacon: Thank you for the question, Senator Cuzner. For me, it's about small business not being negatively impacted by strikes. Supply chain strikes can have a huge effect on farmers and small businesses across the country. For me, I just want to see those strikes resolved. I don't believe that the best way to do it every time is simply to have back-to-work legislation pass through this Parliament.

Every time we've had a debate, it takes a lot of time to get there — and the Conservatives are always ready to comment and I agree with them — it takes too long to get to the point of getting a resolution in place. This has got a daily penalty for those who break the law of $100,000 a day, but the cost to small business is everything, and there's no union protecting those small business people. There's no backstop there.

That's where my focus is entirely. No, I can't give you any examples. The power imbalance felt by small business people is where my heart lands every time, and nobody seems to have their back.

Hon. Jim Quinn: Would the senator take a question?

Senator C. Deacon: Certainly.

Senator Quinn: Thank you, colleagues, for the questions and the debate. It's phenomenally interesting and real.

My question deals with the transportation system. When ports, for example, experience strikes — 90% of the products we see every day at one point or another hit a port — and if those products don't move, it affects business.

My question is: Are the unintended consequences you may be referring to as an example, would that include cargo that gets deviated from Canadian ports? You have to fight so hard to get it back. That impacts jobs not only at the small business level, but at the port level, would you agree with that?

Senator C. Deacon: Thank you Senator Quinn, and absolutely I would. I saw that during the Suez crisis where a business in Windsor, Nova Scotia had a whole lot of cargo that was diverted and delayed. As a result, they couldn't deliver on orders, so they then lost competitors. They purchased all the inventory and owned all the inventory, but they couldn't get to the point of completing the sale so they lost a transaction. That had a devastating effect and ended up with some workers having to be laid off in a non-unionized workplace.

It's that sort of roll-on effect that I feel has to be discussed in this debate and respected in this debate because it is very real for those small business owners and workers.

Senator Lankin: Will the senator take a question?

Senator C. Deacon: Certainly, Senator Lankin, with great respect to you.

Senator Lankin: And great respect back. We have great conversations about some of these things. I'm listening to the interventions, questions and some of the answers, and I don't think anyone would dispute that a disruption in a workplace is going to have an impact directly on the workplace but also on partners in the community and/or the economy.

I listen to this go on. Senator Quinn asked a question slightly different than what you answered. I think he's talking about where a Canadian port finds that businesses redirect, for example, to a U.S. port and they can't get the business back afterwards. Comments around the supply chain, small business and concerns that the impact there will cost jobs there, first of all, belies the existence of what we've seen in terms of the existing legislation, and the attempts that governments, when there is a

dispute, which is not frequently — there have been two since I've been here where we had back-to-work legislation — belies the fact that governments do move. You say not quickly enough.

The only thing I can conclude from those comments is that the only thing that would resolve it is no right to strike and no strikes. Please help me understand how you see it any differently, and let's remember the constitutional guarantee that workers have for the fundamental right of the right to strike.

Senator C. Deacon: Thank you, Senator Lankin. I look at it very simply. The evidence suggests very strongly that an inability to bring in any replacement workers extends the length of strikes. For me, that's the key issue. We don't want longer strikes. I want to make sure the voice of Canadian small business is at this table. Harm is done very rapidly to small business. The example I gave was of disruption of something that didn't come into a Canadian port, but it's the same as a Canadian port being blocked. When your supply chains are disrupted, the cost to business can add up so quickly, and if that is not understood in this debate, I think it's a problem. For me, that's the consideration. I just want to make sure that's firmly on the table.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Claude Carignan: My speech will only last a few minutes. I don't want to delay history.

Honourable senators, I rise today at the third reading of Bill C-58, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Canada Industrial Relations Board Regulations, 2012.

Allow me to briefly point out that the main purpose of this bill is to prohibit the use of replacement workers in the event of a strike or lockout at federally regulated workplaces, and to amend the process for maintaining certain workplace activities.

In my speech at second reading, I emphasized the importance of the Senate taking its role of sober second thought seriously, even though this bill was passed unanimously in the other place on May 27. The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, to which this bill was referred, performed its work diligently, as is our duty and our responsibility.

Several witnesses gave evidence in committee and in the other place. Broadly speaking, two important positions emerged from this evidence.

On the one hand, those in favour of the bill argue that prohibiting the use of replacement workers in the event of a strike or lockout protects workers' right to strike and restores the balance of power between management and labour when negotiating collective agreements.

On the other side are those who disagree with the bill, arguing, among other things, that banning the use of replacement workers would increase the number of strikes, because the union would no longer be incentivized to remain at the bargaining table. Furthermore, this would have repercussions not only on the parties to the labour dispute, but also on other sectors of the economy, and indeed on all Canadians.

• (2150)

As an aside, I'd like to point out that all of the witnesses earnestly shared their opinions and carefully answered the committee's questions. I'd like to thank them for the insight they provided through their very instructive comments. They helped us to fulfill our duty of sober second thought. So ends my aside.

After hearing the testimony, the committee tabled its report, without amendment, but with some observations. I will give you a brief summary of that report. First, the committee's observations stem from the fact that, during the testimony, it was brought to the committee's attention that the Canada Industrial Relations Board will have expanded responsibilities once Bill C-58 is passed.

The board will need access to additional resources in the form of staff, vice-chairs and funding since the bill will increase its workload. The board will have to rule on certain issues within specific time frames, and without these resources, the board may face delays that could have harmful impacts. That is why the committee recommended the following in its report, and I quote:

> . . . that the Government of Canada ensure adequate and consistent funding for the CIRB so that it can meet its expanded responsibilities effectively and ensure the timely resolution of labour disputes.

The committee also recommended the following:

> . . . that the Government of Canada evaluate and adjust funding amounts on a regular basis to take into account the CIRB's workload.

When I gave my speech at second reading of Bill C-58, I also raised a number of questions, like whether this bill struck the proper balance between the rights and obligations of employers and unions or if, on the contrary, it created a new imbalance.

After studying Bill C-58, I believe that it achieves balance in more than one way, since it contains enough safeguards to mitigate the concerns raised.

First of all, the evidence given by Ginette Brazeau, Chairperson of the Canada Industrial Relations Board, provided a better understanding of the board's responsibilities and work. More importantly, however, it explained the bill's impact on the board.

Examples include providing the additional resources needed to carry out its new responsibilities, or the requirement to respect the new time frames set out in Bill C-58 and the time needed to set up this kind of structure.

However, Ms. Brazeau is convinced that a year is enough time to complete this work before the act comes into force. I also believe that this is sufficient time for the board to get ready to begin exercising its new responsibilities as soon as the legislation comes into force.

Next, I'd like to mention that clause 6 of the bill amends the Canada Labour Code with respect to maintaining required activities in the workplace. Measures are taken to ensure that the employer and the union agree on the terms and conditions governing those activities in the event of a strike or lockout. In my opinion, this measure will assure the employer and all Canadians that there won't be a serious impact on essential services, for example, in the event of a strike or lockout. It is reassuring to see that the process of negotiating and putting essential positions in place will happen before the right to strike or lockout is used.

For all the reasons I mentioned earlier, I believe that the balance between management and the unions representing many employees in federally regulated workplaces has been achieved. I also believe that Canadians will not be the collateral victims of labour disputes as a result of these changes.

Now I'd like to mention a fact that's certainly not insignificant in my eyes, one that's important to mention. In fact, it was emphasized by a few witnesses. Two provinces in Canada already have legislation with provisions that are similar to Bill C-58. Quebec and British Columbia have already adopted similar provisions. These measures came into effect in Quebec in 1977 in the labour code and, several years later, in 1993, British Columbia adopted similar legislation, the Labour Relations Code.

The fact that these provisions have been in effect in these two provinces for several decades and no major issue has come up, including with respect to the increased number of strikes, is another argument that assures me that the provisions of Bill C-58 are well-founded.

The employers, unions, their respective legal counsel and labour relations advisers are very familiar with the dynamic of enforcing this type of legislation. We're not in unknown territory.

That said, after studying the bill and analyzing the briefs and testimony heard in the other place and by the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, as well as their report and recommendations, I fully support Bill C-58, and I urge you, colleagues, to vote in favour of the bill.

I'd like to add a final point. A company that produces equipment, that manufactures products, needs material resources, financial resources and human resources. Obviously, when negotiating with suppliers of material services, there's no exclusivity. If disagreements come up, the company can change suppliers. When we negotiate with our bank regarding financial resources, there's no exclusivity. We can always take our business to another bank.

However, when a company is negotiating with its employees, it is dealing with people who have committed exclusively to the employer, which puts those individuals in a precarious situation, unlike other providers of material or financial resources. That is why it's extremely important that the precariousness of people who commit themselves for decades exclusively to a single employer is protected.

Ultimately, Bill C-58 does just that. It ensures that this exclusivity is reciprocated on the employer's side, and also that the employer does not violate the correlative exclusivity that the employee has been given. I see this as a matter of respect, and that is why I support this bill.

Thank you.

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.)

• (2200)

[*English*]

CANADIAN SUSTAINABLE JOBS BILL

THIRD READING—VOTE DEFERRED

Hon. Hassan Yussuff moved third reading of Bill C-50, An Act respecting accountability, transparency and engagement to support the creation of sustainable jobs for workers and economic growth in a net-zero economy.

He said: Honourable senators, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-50, the Canadian sustainable jobs act. Today, I want to discuss the main aspects of the bill and how it will create a framework to not only mitigate the negative consequences of net zero to workers and communities but better prepare them to capitalize on the opportunities that it presents.

The framework includes guiding principles, governance structures and reporting requirements. It is a bill based on the principles of dialogue and consensus, representation, engagement, sustainability, transparency and accountability. It creates a straightforward process that gives workers, industry and Indigenous communities a seat at the table to provide input for their future, and it creates accountability and transparency measures through a designated minister and a five-year action plan that must be made public.

Colleagues, this is a very straightforward bill. At its core, it is about putting workers and the communities they live in at the centre of the government policies that affect them the most by committing to a process of social dialogue in determining how we can all succeed in a net-zero future.

Colleagues, I will admit that I am more than a little biased towards this bill because it has been something workers and I, as a labour leader, have been demanding for a long time. I am also a very passionate supporter of this bill because of my participation on the Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities, which I co-chaired. I think perhaps

that it is one of the best things I have done for my country, and I would like to share a story on that work and how it relates to this bill.

The impetus for the task force can be attributed to the fact that Canada had committed in 2016 to the phasing out of coal generation of electricity by 2030. In the context of doing that, the government created a task force to look at what the effects would be on workers and communities as they transition from their economic dependency on coal. The task force was made up of workers, businesses, environmentalists and communities.

The work of the task force led us to visit 15 affected communities in Alberta, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia to hear the issues of workers and communities who relied on coal for their very survival. Hearing directly from businesses, workers and community leaders enlightened my understanding of what was needed to truly have a just transition for these workers and communities. It also gave me the recognition of the hopefulness of Canadians in general — Canadian workers and Canadian communities — about the future. It also gave me a better understanding of the policy tools we need to devise to help us get to a place where we can have workers and communities most affected by net-zero policies be able to give direct input on the government policies that will affect them most as the world, including Canada, decarbonizes its economies.

The task force's final report in 2018 made 10 policy recommendations, and one of them called for legislation that Bill C-50 embodies.

I experienced first-hand after going to communities like Coronach in southern Saskatchewan and Leduc County in Alberta that workers and communities must be heard first and foremost to understand the issues through their eyes. We cannot minimize the real anxieties and suspicions that decarbonization policies are having on communities and workers, including Indigenous communities, who rely on energy development projects — whether it be coal or oil and gas — for their economic sustainability.

One way to address the anxieties of workers and communities is to ensure their perspectives are heard and solutions to help them transition are developed from the bottom up, not from the top down. This bill does exactly that. It gives workers and communities that opportunity through the partnership council and through the required engagement the council must have with affected workers and communities.

Senators, humankind's history is one of transition. From the Industrial Revolution to the information and computing revolution, workers, communities and societies have had to go through some very difficult transitions. Each transition creates adversity as well as opportunity for workers. The goal for government should be to minimize the negative effects and maximize the positive opportunities that transition provides. That is the intent of this legislation.

In Canada over the last 75 years, workers have had to deal with several major transitions, including the effects of automation and trade policies like the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA. In his second reading speech, Senator Wells spoke to the effects of a major transition that Atlantic seafood workers and communities went through in the early 1990s when the groundfishery was shut down, causing tens of thousands of workers to lose their jobs. Unfortunately, for most of these transitions, workers and communities who were most impacted never had the benefit of any proactive plan that had their interests at its core because, for most, they were never given a voice.

What I would argue is different about how this government is attempting to handle this transition compared to others in the past is that it is actually trying to be proactive in creating a plan and putting the interests and views of workers and communities at the centre of the policy-making process to deal with the good and bad of this transition.

I would like to return to Senator Wells' example of the collapse of the groundfishery in Atlantic Canada in the early 1990s. I would agree with him that, for the most part, the federal government's reaction in terms of its policies and programs were wholly inadequate for the workers and communities hardest hit by the closure of the groundfishery. Where we differ is that I believe those workers and communities would have been better served if legislation like Bill C-50 had been in place before the fishery crisis hit our shores.

Senators, imagine if the government of the day had not buried their head in the sand about the ensuing fishery crisis but instead had been proactive in addressing the economic and social realities workers and communities were about to face. Imagine if the government had a tripartite council similar to the partnership council created by Bill C-50 that would have required the government to get input directly from fishers, plant workers, businesses and communities. Imagine if the government had been required to create a plan that respected the realities these groups were experiencing, not the perceived realities of the bureaucracy in Ottawa — that policies would have been built from the bottom up, not from the top down.

Colleagues, I think we can imagine that reality and would agree that workers, businesses and communities dependent on the groundfishery in Atlantic Canada back then would have been better, not worse off, if a bill like Bill C-50 had been in place.

Colleagues, this bill is quite simple and straightforward in its purpose and design. It aims to create a framework to how the government will manage a just transition to a net-zero future in terms of the processes and principles it must follow. It does not detail what the specific policies and programs will be. That will come in the sustainable jobs action plan that this bill requires the government to develop and make public every five years, starting next year.

Let me take a few moments to explain the bill in more detail. First, the bill would create a sustainable jobs partnership council. As outlined clearly in the legislation and a product of careful study and consultation, the council's membership employs a tripartite plus approach, ensuring a balance between representatives of Indigenous groups, labour and industry. The council would be required to conduct meaningful and regular engagements with Canadians.

• (2210)

They will combine what they hear with data, research and their own expertise to advise the federal government on the best pathways for further policies and actions.

Second, this legislation would require the government to publish a transparent sustainable jobs action plan by 2025 and then every five years after that, including reporting on progress to date as well as committing to future actions. To ensure further transparency and accountability, progress reports on each action plan will be required 2.5 years after its publication.

Third, the legislation would require that the government identify a lead minister for implementing this act. This minister would be supported by other ministers with specific responsibilities under the legislation. This reflects the reality that this initiative requires involvement from the ministers responsible for both economic development and social policy, working together to foster economic growth and support workers and communities. They will collaborate with other ministers as required to ensure all facets of this issue are considered. This requirement flows from one of the recommendations in the report of the Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities, based on the rationale that if you do not have someone who is responsible, you don't have accountability.

Finally, the act also requires the creation of a sustainable jobs secretariat to support the act's implementation across federal entities, including providing support for the action plans and the partnership council, engaging with provinces and territories and acting as a source of information for workers and employers with regard to federal programs, funding and services.

Taken together, these fundamental components of Bill C-50 will support workers in having a seat at the table alongside industry, Indigenous voices and sectoral exports.

The transformative changes in the nature of work as a result of not only climate change but AI and other technological advancements will have a profound effect on workers. Having a process that places workers at its centre to develop a plan that first recognizes the challenges workers and communities face and then develops realistic policies to help both mitigate the negative effects and, just as important, capitalize on the opportunities that the new realities of work will bring, is common sense. This is what the sustainable jobs act is really about.

That, colleagues, is a good thing for workers and the communities they live in — and why this bill should be passed.

Colleagues, once you see past the politics of this bill, you understand that the critical stakeholders, from business and labour groups to Indigenous and environmental organizations, support this legislation because it is necessary if workers and industry are to succeed in a net-zero future.

Bea Bruske, the President of the Canadian Labour Congress, which represents more than 3 million workers, said:

> Workers need action now, we needed it yesterday, and we need to make sure that we get this legislation passed so all parties – labour, business, and government can sit down at a table . . .

Patrick Campbell, Canadian Director of the International Union of Operating Engineers, which has more than 50,000 members, said:

> The Canadian Sustainable Jobs Act is a step toward a future that puts the interests of energy workers at the forefront of a low-carbon economy. . . .

In addition to leading national voices, regional organizations have also been quite supportive, including the President of the Alberta Federation of Labour, who asked people to look past the rhetoric of the detractors and read the bill. He said:

> What the Conservatives are saying . . . is that this Bill is a blueprint for the phase-out of oil and gas . . . but nothing could be farther from the truth . . . .

He lives in Alberta. He continued, saying:

> Bill C-50 is about creating a framework for discussion on diversifying our economy so that we're prepared for a lower carbon future. That's good for workers, that's good for business, that's good for the country.

This is similar to what the President of the Business Council of Alberta said:

> The Sustainable Jobs Act represents an important opportunity for Canada: to shape our future and create jobs by providing the resources that the world needs—including energy, food, and minerals. . . .

Environmental advocates are also on board with this legislation. The Executive Director of the Pembina Institute said that:

> By bringing workers, businesses, Indigenous Peoples, and environmental groups together with governments behind coordinated action, we'll show the world that Canada is ready. Passing the Sustainable Jobs Act and getting the new Sustainable Jobs Partnership Council working will deliver the message, loud and clear: Canada is a great place to invest, with workers who are second to none and ready to get the job done.

Before I close, colleagues, I would like to underline that this bill is not only about mitigating the negative effects of transitioning to a net-zero future, but also seizing the economic opportunities that this future will bring.

To get a project built or keep an industry competitive in a changing world, we must ensure that investment, technology, regulation and, yes, skilled labour are all well coordinated and prepared to act. If any one of these factors is insufficiently available, it will arbitrarily constrain Canada's ability to grow and become a leader as we move into the middle of the 21st century.

In conclusion, senators, this legislation is rooted in the work of the Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities and has been informed by over two years of thorough discussions with workers and industry, extensive cooperation across many government ministries as well as in-depth engagements with industry, provinces and territories, Indigenous organizations, civil society and environmental and labour experts.

Undoubtedly, the decarbonizing policies that governments around the world are enacting to meet the Paris Agreement will have an effect on some resource development workers.

This bill is not about restricting energy development or dictating emissions reduction as some critics may want you to believe. Although this bill is related to net-zero policies that affect emissions, it is not one of them, but instead a consequence of them. In other words, it is the opposite side of the same coin. It is meant to help communities and workers not only mitigate the negative effects of net zero but capitalize on the opportunities it presents.

It is an approach and a bill that I am proud to sponsor today because it fundamentally seeks to help workers gain a seat at the table as we chart our collective future, which requires decarbonizing our economies if we are to survive.

That is why I ask you, colleagues, to support this legislation, Canadian workers, the communities they live in and the next generation in building a more sustainable and prosperous country. Thank you so much.

Hon. Andrew Cardozo: Will Senator Yussuff take a question?

Senator Yussuff: I will.

Senator Cardozo: Thank you. There has been opposition to the bill, as you mentioned, from people who fear that this bill is designed to phase out oil and gas. From your experience with the Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities and the coal industry, do you feel that the jobs that people will transition to will be commensurate with the jobs they currently have? The experience is often shared that people who are laid off must go to jobs that are not commensurate — that they earn much less or are in completely different fields. Do you see a transferability of skills from oil and gas to other areas over time?

Senator Yussuff: Thank you for the question. My experience with regard to the coal transition is that it is still in progress. It's not yet completed. Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick are still in the process of getting there. In certain parts of Alberta that have phased out coal-generated electricity, some workers took retirement because they were eligible for it. Some of those facilities converted from coal to natural gas as a first phase in the process of decarbonizing.

The skills of these workers are, of course, highly valued. If they are transferable, they can move to another industry. Some may need to update their skills as they move from one place to another. I'll cite the testimony of one of the witnesses who testified on the bill, from Leduc County. They lost a number of coal generation plants and, of course, the coal mine had to close. They lost about 400 or so workers during that period with the coal plants and the mine closing. However, they put their minds together and the three communities came together, created 2,000 jobs and attracted new industries for the men and women who were affected by the transition. They are building an even brighter future and embracing the decarbonization of their communities.

• (2220)

Of course, workers are ambivalent when they have to change their job. I'm a product of that reality. I used to work in the auto industry. At one time, we used to have to physically weld every piece of metal to assemble a car. Today, there are no humans welding the cars anymore; it is all done by robotics. It took away the dirty and more dangerous part of the job because it wasn't good for your health. But the workers were able to update their skills to do other things in car plants and continue to make cars today. We are enjoying the automobile industry. It is still very vibrant.

Yes, there will be some changes that will affect workers in fundamental ways. If we help workers understand the changes that are coming, prepare them in terms of what they can look forward to in the future and how they might be able to adapt their skills and what jobs will be available, I think we can achieve an objective that will help build an economy and give confidence to the workers in their communities to have a brighter future.

It will not be the same job in all cases. It might be a different job. It might be a better or a higher-paying job. It requires effort to understand what is coming and how we start planning for that.

I think many of the skills within the industry are going to go through a transition. These workers are highly skilled. More importantly, they have a vision of a better future, but they want their employers, their union and the government to be part of that.

Many of these workers want to remain in their own community. They do not want to pack up and leave. They recognize the importance of building that community to ensure the tax base remains there, creating new jobs that can bring new

industries to their community. What Leduc County in Alberta is doing is one example. There could be other examples that are similar.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Diane Bellemare: Honourable senators, before I deliver my speech, I want to say that we are on the unceded ancestral lands of the Algonquin Anishinaabe people.

The transition to a net-zero economy is urgent for the planet, but it is also urgent if we wish to protect the standard of living in our country and reverse the downward trend in our per capita standard of living. Making the shift to net-zero is the path to prosperity.

[*English*]

The purpose of this bill, however, is very comprehensive and commendable. Let me quote clause 3 of the bill, which comes after a long preamble:

> The purpose of this Act is to facilitate and promote economic growth, the creation of sustainable jobs and support for workers and communities in Canada in the shift to a net-zero economy through a framework to ensure transparency, accountability, engagement and action by relevant federal entities, including those focused – at the national and regional level – on matters such as skills development, the labour market, rights at work, economic development and emissions reduction.

When I read the first version of this bill in 2022, I thought it was a big sectorial committee, the purpose of which was upskilling and reskilling of oil and gas employees in the Western provinces. Now I have changed my view. I think of it as a more comprehensive, ambitious and multi-sectorial federal initiative to reshape many aspects of the Canadian economy.

[*Translation*]

I feel that Senator Yussuff rightly pointed out that this is much more than a sectoral committee; it is an initiative to reshape Canada's economy.

Looking beyond the principles and generous objectives described in the preamble to this bill, here is how I would describe, in concrete terms, the issue or issues that Bill C-50 addresses.

The issue is first and foremost to help all Canadians — whether they are Indigenous, racialized, living with a disability or are part of the 2SLGBTQI+ community — who will have to move to a different job that is consistent with the net-zero objectives that Canada has agreed to internationally, and to do so while upholding a set of principles.

[*English*]

This bill is mainly about helping Canadians transition from a high-carbon-emitting job to a sustainable one. This bill is about upskilling, reskilling and creating sustainable jobs. It is not only about training; it is also about creating jobs. It is much more comprehensive than the main purpose of Employment Insurance, which is to sustain income and reintegrate unemployed participants back into gainful employment.

[*Translation*]

The Bill C-50 issue goes beyond the professional integration of vulnerable groups and the unemployed. Moreover, while this bill focuses on job transitions linked to climate change, it won't be able to ignore job transitions caused by technological change, demographic change and international political crises. In my opinion, the federal and provincial governments cannot work on these issues in silos.

[*English*]

Indeed, let me briefly describe the tasks to be undertaken. First, to achieve the purpose of Bill C-50, Canadians must be willing and available for training. Employers must encourage their employees to train, then training providers must be ready to offer proper training on the job, in institutions or elsewhere, and to certify these new skills. Suitable replacement income while training also needs to be offered to maintain the standard of living of those who get the training. Enterprises need to invest in green sectors and create new jobs in agriculture, manufacturing, mining or elsewhere in the service economy. They must get the financing and all the permits and authorizations needed to start greener projects. All of these are done at the local, municipal or provincial level.

On June 5, at a meeting of the Social Affairs Committee, Rick Smith from Leduc County in Alberta, which Senator Yussuff just spoke about, explained how his community proceeded to transition its local economy from coal to agriculture and manufacturing. He explained how this success story relied on collective actions at the local level with the participation of the province, which had to adapt regulations to deliver permits within the proper timing to create new jobs.

[*Translation*]

In short, the transition to net-zero jobs requires the participation of many local and regional stakeholders, who will have to work together by promoting social dialogue. The witnesses who appeared before the committee made that quite clear.

I will be voting in favour of this bill because it is fundamental and must be done, but we can also raise concerns. Can we really believe that the objectives that the government is trying to achieve will be met in the context of shared federal-provincial responsibilities? What challenges will the sustainable jobs partnership council and the sustainable jobs secretariat have to face? That's what I'm going to talk about.

In my opinion, there are many challenges associated with Bill C-50. In the next few minutes, I will focus on two major challenges. First, the federal government doesn't currently have control over the institutional mechanism needed for the effective implementation of a transition plan. Second, the current sources of funding for implementing the plan are insufficient.

• (2230)

Implementing a transition plan is clearly dependent on local and provincial institutions. It is dependent on partnerships that must first be built between the company and its workforce, then with local training institutions and with provincial and federal economic development agencies. The federal government doesn't have the appropriate local institutional arrangements to achieve its objectives unless it has solid partnerships with the provinces. This is often the challenge with federations.

The transition's success can't be based on an action plan developed with granular data produced by federal civil servants — no matter how competent they may be. The action plan can't come from the top. It must be drawn up by the stakeholders or partners concerned, and they must also be the ones to implement it. This principle is especially important in free and democratic societies.

In a past life, when I was the CEO of the Société québécoise de développement de la main-d'œuvre, or SQDM, the Quebec workforce development corporation, we developed regional action plans to get unemployed persons back into the workforce. Quebec's unemployment rates were very high at the time. These plans targeted the local and regional levels. Employees of local and regional offices and partners on regional tables knew the workforce, the companies in the region and their future plans. Making plans was helpful. Think global, act local, that was our motto and it worked. We had no choice, everything was happening on the ground.

The Quebec Commission des partenaires du marché du travail, or labour market partners commission, set out the broad parameters, but interventions were negotiated locally with companies and service providers. Partnerships were also established with local and regional economic development agencies.

In my opinion, the federal government can't monitor the transition of people who work in companies in the regions and in the municipalities based on statistical information that is outdated as soon as it is published and can't take into account the companies' future intentions and plans. In fact, the Governor of the Bank of Canada made a similar observation, stating that he couldn't conduct his monetary policy using model-based statistics, as they reflect the past, whereas the future is increasingly uncertain and ever-changing.

It is through labour market agreements with the provinces that the federal government can promote transitions in the labour market regardless of whether they are technology-, climate- or demographics-based. We can hope that the system put in place in the bill is used in establishing renewed labour market agreements. I think that is key and that the partnership council and the secretariat won't be able to overlook labour market agreements.

That's why I suggested at second reading stage that the EI commissioners be invited to participate at the very least as observers, because they are the ones who control the labour market agreements. It is truly a responsibility to follow the funding of local agreements with each of the provinces.

I'd now like to talk about the financial challenges. Transitioning the Canadian economy poses a major financial challenge. It is no small thing. One has to wonder, where will the money to fund Bill C-50 come from? A small amount of about $99 million was provided for in the finance minister's budget, but that certainly won't cover the cost of the transition. We need to make sure that we have a proper budget for this.

What the government is telling those who ask how it plans to fund the transition is that Bill C-50 will be funded under Part II of the Employment Insurance Act and under the general revenue targeted for vulnerable groups. All of that will be used to make a major transition. The problem, and I will come back to this, is that EI recipients, regardless of whether they are receiving benefits under Part I or Part II of the act, are generally people who paid into the system and who lost their job. They aren't people who work in sectors with high greenhouse gas emissions and who are at risk of losing their job. Employment insurance helps employed people only in exceptional circumstances. Furthermore, the maximum replacement income of $668 per week in 2024 — the average is generally half of that — is far less than the wages paid in greenhouse gas-emitting industries. These industries need to transition. There are a lot of issues to address and employment insurance reform is going to become urgent, if we want to transition to a greener economy.

A number of participants at the fifth jobs and skills round table convened by the EI commissioners on June 3, argued for the need to reform employment insurance so that this important program better reflects the challenges of the day associated with professional transitions, be they climatic, technological or demographic crises.

Right now, the training and workforce integration measures used to do all the work is funded under Part II of the Employment Insurance Act, implemented in 1994. The Employment Insurance Act, colleagues, provides that job transition funding can amount to a maximum 0.8% of payroll in the GDP, but this has never been reached. EI funds have increased very little since 1994. They rose slightly in 2017, when the federal government added $625 million under a six-year agreement, again through EI, that it no longer wants to renew. Funding provided for EI currently amounts to $2.3 billion, minus the $625 million that will be pulled out. Other amounts, roughly $600 million, are also available from general revenues. All of that pales in comparison to the challenges we face, as outlined by the OECD.

For example, in 2019 and 2020, my office conducted a survey, carried out by Nanos, in order to see how Canadians perceive their training needs and their future. This survey obtained similar

results before and after the pandemic, and these results, which intersect with the OECD results, were published prior to the pandemic for all industrialized countries and for Canada.

In the survey we sent to Canadians in December 2023, 20% of employed respondents thought it was likely or somewhat likely that technological advances and climate change would threaten their jobs. A total of 20% of Canadians thought that climate change, technological advances or other changes pose a threat to their jobs. That represents four million Canadians, and these figures are comparable to the slightly lower OECD figures, which are closer to 17%. Thirty-seven per cent of employed Canadians who responded to the survey think it is likely or somewhat likely that technological and climate change will affect their work tasks and that they will require training. That amounts to eight million Canadians. An even higher percentage of young people gave that same answer, and they're fresh out of school.

• (2240)

The need for training in Canada is fundamental, and this is especially true for industries that emit a lot of greenhouse gases to help with their transition. A major training effort is needed.

These programs are funded by the labour agreements currently signed between the federal government and the provinces. They are for a fixed term and differ from province to province, but generally involve labour market partners.

In short, EI needs to be reformed to better fund labour market transitions and training for those at risk of losing their jobs. This practice must become the norm, not the exception, as is currently the case.

We need to pass Bill C-50. It is a major target and a big task to achieve, but we need to be cognizant of the fact that this bill doesn't answer all the questions and that the agreements with the provinces will be essential to getting this right.

Before concluding, I'd like to add a few comments about First Nations. The Social Affairs Committee heard from First Nations chiefs who don't want their communities to be considered as one of the target groups and vulnerable groups. On that, Chief Freddie Huppé Campbell couldn't have been any clearer.

Colleagues, let's not forget that First Nations people have been living on the land since time immemorial and we owe them our respect. The climate crisis is having an impact on the economic and social development created for First Nations, by First Nations. Their presence at the sustainable jobs partnership council is certainly invaluable. However, the federal government should consider concluding friendly agreements with them for the delegation of authority with results-based objectives and targets developed with them in bilateral agreements.

In conclusion, the bill's intentions are both laudable and necessary if we want the planet and Canada to survive. I believe in those objectives and will be voting in favour of the bill. However, implementing Bill C-50 could cause friction with certain provinces, even if the government plans to act in its own areas of jurisdiction and respect provincial jurisdictions. The problem is that it cannot take a silo approach. If it really wants to make economic prosperity and the well-being of all Canadians a priority, the federal government must, in my opinion, focus on cooperation and social dialogue with the economic players, as proposed in Bill C-50, and it mustn't forget the provinces. This is in Canada's best interest.

Thank you. *Meegwetch*.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

Hon. Denise Batters: Senator Bellemare, I think I heard you say in your speech — but it was through translation, so I'm not positive — that your Senate office did a public opinion survey about some aspects of this, about training or something like that?

Could you please give us some more details about that? If it was paid out of your Senate office budget, could you please tell us how much it was?

[*Translation*]

Senator Bellemare: Thank you for your question, Senator Batters.

[*English*]

This survey was done in December 2023, and it reproduced almost the same questions as the survey we did in December 2019. They were not about this bill. They were not about any bill. They were about the perceptions Canadians had about their jobs, the impact of all the changes and whether they will have an impact on their jobs and whether they fear losing their jobs. That was the main purpose of this survey.

In this survey, we tried to capture if they were willing to train and if they thought they needed training. The results were spectacular — yes. You know, all the people think Canadians don't want to get training. That's false because 50% of Canadians feel they need training, and there are much bigger numbers — 66% for numerical skills and occupational skills. These are the things we tried to capture by province, age and sex. We tried to have some details, but some details are not conclusive. In the first survey, we tried to see if Canadians would be willing to participate financially in a program for training, and those results were also interesting.

If you want to know more, it's on my website, and I could also provide you all the details. But it was not about a specific bill.

Senator Batters: I would like to follow up about both the poll from December 2019 — it sounded like you did a poll from your Senate office — and the one from December 2023. What was the cost for both of those polls?

Senator Bellemare: It was approved by the Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration, and I think you asked personally to see the first survey and all the questions. It was done by Nanos, and I think it was around $10,000.

[*Translation*]

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Senator Gignac, do you have a question?

Hon. Clément Gignac: As you know, jurisdictions are a ticklish subject for Quebec. Workforce training clearly falls under provincial jurisdiction. Quebec has one of the smallest carbon footprints. Do you think the federal government should be more open to provisions allowing provinces to opt out with full compensation? The Quebec government seems to be a little annoyed with this bill, given the jurisdictional overlap.

Senator Bellemare: Thank you for your question, Senator Gignac. First, as Senator Yussuff so clearly explained, this bill is currently a framework. It's not a bill that sets out specific programs. It seeks to establish a social dialogue to try to understand how to make the transition locally.

As part of this bill, partnerships are being established with Statistics Canada and others to get the granular data and validate it at the local level. Then we will see. Action plans will likely be implemented.

Here's the problem I have with that: The implementation of these action plans could create friction with some of the provinces. This can't be done in a silo. Service providers fall under provincial jurisdiction.

Perhaps there are smaller provinces that the federal government can negotiate with easily, but that will not be the case with all of the provinces. That's why it will be very important to also engage in social dialogue with the provinces under this bill.

We have to start somewhere. The beauty of it is that canvassing will be done at the local level and there will likely be conversations with the provinces.

However, the transition is a necessary exercise. It's unavoidable, and it has to start somewhere. Perhaps this will give good results. However, we need to keep an open mind and also recognize that there are provinces.

Thank you.

• (2250)

[*English*]

Hon. Rosa Galvez: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak at third reading of Bill C-50, the Canadian sustainable jobs act. This is a long-awaited bill that will ensure that Canada has a framework. We are at the level of the framework. We are not yet at the level of creating jobs in the details of the negotiations with the provinces. This is a framework in place to prepare the workforce for the jobs of a net-zero economy. The transition is already here, whether we want it or not.

The bill establishes a sustainable jobs partnership council responsible for engaging workers, industry and other governments. It will require the publication of a sustainable jobs action plan every five years. It also creates a sustainable jobs secretariat to support the implementation of the act. This is simply a framework to provide government accountability as we help workers transition to the sustainable jobs of today and tomorrow.

This is an urgent matter, especially for Canada, because we are behind. As a natural resource economy, we have enormous economic potential to help advance the net-zero economy through the mining of critical minerals and the production of renewable energy in a sustainable circular economy. Yet, at this moment, we continue to increase our already disproportionate investment in fossil fuels, which contributes to the climate crisis that brings destructive extreme weather events.

A few years ago, we adopted the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act to reach our climate targets, but, to this day, we are still missing a plan to help workers thrive in this new economy that we are building. This bill starts us on this path.

It is not just a question of reaching the climate targets we set. This bill is essential to ensure our continued prosperity as a country. Some critics of the bill have been vocal about their concern that this bill is a ploy to eliminate the fossil fuel industry in Canada. This couldn't be further from the truth. It's not a given government that is doing this — even less, this specific government that bought a pipeline for us and keeps giving billions of dollars in subsidies every year to the oil and gas sector, which is reporting record profits today. In fact, it is the change in technology, the disruption of the business-as-usual markets and the increase of these climate and nature-related costs — because of these extreme weather events — that are driving this transition. We are behind — behind our peers and our commercial partners. We must catch up.

Let me explain: In comparison to renewable energy technologies, an energy system based on fossil fuels is highly inefficient. When we produce and deliver energy systems by resource extraction — and it's not refined here in Canada; it's refined elsewhere in North America — valued product transport, as well as electricity production, transmission and delivery, along the way we waste almost two thirds of the initial potential energy. Indeed, renewable energy is two to three times more efficient at generating electricity, one and a half times better in delivering electricity, three to four times better at heating, and two to four times more efficient than combustion engine vehicles. At this point, dear colleagues, it must be evident to you that an economy based on fossil fuels causes inflation at each step of the supply chain.

We have seen previous industrial revolutions. We need to embrace more efficient, cleaner, cheaper and safer technologies. We have done it in the past. Resisting is not a smart choice. Colleagues, must I say the obvious? Civilization did not abandon the Stone Age because of the lack of stones. We did it because we had a greater gain in efficiency. Canada is behind our peers in both productivity and competitiveness. It's not from the

defenders of past polluting technologies whom we will hear the solution to this problem. We must listen to the experts. We must listen to scientists.

The International Energy Agency recently published its annual report on oil and gas. It predicted that the world will see an unprecedented level of surplus global supply capacity, outpacing demand growth by 8 million barrels per day by 2030. Global oil demand is expected to plateau by 2030, even in China, and will lead to an era of lower prices. According to the Canadian Energy Research Institute, Canada's fossil fuel sector does not fare well in a low-price market scenario — and I challenge you to remember the last time a barrel of oil was $100 — leading to decreases in employment and employee compensation, profitability and government tax revenues.

[*Translation*]

Colleagues, whether we like it or not, our fossil fuel sector is not going to carry our economy into the coming decades. If we actively try to keep Canada in the economy of the past and prevent the country from moving on to renewable energy, we will be remembered as the generation of parliamentarians who closed the door on the tremendous economic opportunities that the global energy transition will offer.

We need a legislative framework so we can build a workforce capable of making Canada a global clean energy leader. That being said, the government's bill is a first step in helping workers make the transition.

[*English*]

Parenthetically, as a civil engineer specialized in the environmental field, I've been teaching engineers for the last 20 years that we were in the transition period. But we weren't. What happened to all those incredible engineers who we formed for the transition? They went elsewhere. I heard my colleague talk about training technicians and engineers. We've been doing that, but, unfortunately, sustainable jobs were not available, so they left.

[*Translation*]

During the study in committee in the other place, the MPs made important changes to the bill. For example, they included a definition of the term "sustainable job," an important addition for ensuring that these jobs will indeed contribute to the energy transition.

The MPs also clarified the composition of the Sustainable Jobs Partnership Council to ensure that trade unions, industry, an environmental organization and Indigenous peoples would be represented. The council will also be tasked with advising the minister responsible on areas of cooperation with the governments of the provinces and territories and other governments in Canada. These are important additions for recognizing the role of the provinces and territories in the labour field. I completely agree with my colleague, Senator Bellemare, that this grand plan will come to nothing without provincial intervention, especially at the municipal level. However, other challenges will also have to be addressed.

During our own study on the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources, we heard serious concerns and we made a number of observations. First of all, every level of government needs to listen carefully to transition-affected communities, especially those affected first and worst by the transition, to tailor their programs and investments in ways that respond to these communities' priorities, whether for education and skills development or for other needs.

• (2300)

In this time of transition, it's important that we help all communities thrive and prosper. In particular, the committee encourages the future partnership council to focus its work on supporting Indigenous peoples, as well as rural and remote communities, so that they can benefit from the transition to clean energy.

It's also important to note that several committee members raised the importance of engaging with non-unionized workers, which the bill doesn't explicitly address. In 2019, Statistics Canada confirmed that over 70% of Canadian employees are non-unionized.

It would be unconscionable to ignore the needs of such a large portion of Canada's workforce.

[*English*]

Colleagues, Bill C-50 has received widespread support from workers across the country, including from regions heavily invested in fossil fuels. Ultimately, workers want good, sustainable jobs that can support them and their families. The world energy market is changing along with the jobs in the energy sector. We need to recognize that and deliver a plan to mobilize Canada's extremely skilled workforce towards those jobs that will carry us through 2050 and beyond.

I would like to end on this point: Bill C-50 is only one piece, although a much-needed one, in the transition to a net-zero economy. As we know, we need a whole suite of actions if we are to succeed in this global competitive race. Economists advocate for a price on pollution. Implementing the right to a healthy environment is what the vast majority of Canadians expect. But there are still significant gaps in Canada's climate action plan. We need the finance sector to scale up and materialize the needed changes.

Although providing training for a skilled workforce is essential, we must also facilitate investment in the clean and renewable energy sector if we want to create a solid sector that will provide workers with good-paying, stable jobs. We need a taxonomy to help inform investors on desired projects, something that over 40 countries and regions already have — we are again behind — including the European Union, China, Mexico, Russia and the ASEAN countries. We also critically need stronger guidelines for the financial sector, something that I have

proposed but many nations and experts around the world are also raising. It is only when the financial sector is aligned with our climate commitments that the other sectors — energy, construction, building, transport, infrastructure, health — will then create the sustainable jobs that are referred to here in Bill C-50.

It is only when all these different parts are integrated into a comprehensive net-zero path and work together towards this common goal that we will achieve our climate targets and prosper at the same time.

Dear colleagues, I urge you to support Bill C-50 to better position Canada's workforce for us and for generations to come. Thank you, *meegwetch*.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Paula Simons: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Bill C-50, An Act respecting accountability, transparency and engagement to support the creation of sustainable jobs for workers and economic growth in a net-zero economy. And I speak to you tonight as an Albertan. Alberta is home to 97% of all of Canada's oil stores. Over 20% of our province's gross domestic product is tied to our oil and gas industry, and our energy sector employs more than 150,000 workers.

It will not be easy, and it will not be painless to transition away from that economic base. But most Albertans know and understand that such a transition will be necessary nonetheless — for environmental, economic and social reasons. And younger Albertans, in particular, know that the energy industry that employed their parents and grandparents is going to look very different by 2050.

Albertans have already made hard and courageous choices to reshape our energy economy, which employs so many and pays them so well. Let me point to the bold, brave and difficult way Alberta has transitioned from coal electricity generation to a cleaner, greener grid.

At the start of this century, a full 80% of electricity in Alberta was produced by burning coal. Alberta coal was cheap and plentiful and had a reputation for being cleaner than other coal, less acidic and less damaging to the environment.

But in 2015, when Rachel Notley became premier, she made a visionary — some said quixotic — choice to accelerate Alberta's shift to alternate electricity generation. It was not easy. Many people who worked in the coal industry lost their jobs. And, one might argue, the policy was in no small way responsible for Rachel Notley losing her job as premier, too.

No one should minimize the sacrifice made by Alberta working families, nor the political cost to the one-term NDP government. But just look at the results: When 2024 began, just 6% of Alberta's electricity came from burning coal — down from 80% in 2001. And I am pleased and proud to say that last night, Sunday, at 10:57 Mountain Daylight Time, Alberta's last coal-generating plant — Genesee 2 — came offline. As of today, there is no electricity generated by coal in Alberta.

Let me put the focus on those last two coal plants, Genesee 1 and 2, in perspective. They are run by Capital Power, and the shift from coal to natural gas will deliver more than 1,350 megawatts of reliable baseload electricity, while at the same time reducing CO_2 emissions by 3.4 million tonnes relative to 2019. That represents a 60% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and, at the same time, a 40% increase in installed capacity. As an added bonus, according to Capital Power, the high efficiency of the new units will mean an extra 1 million tonnes of emission reductions. And all that has happened six and a half years ahead of schedule.

So let no one doubt that Alberta and Albertans can make these transitions when we try. We know we have more work to do, especially in renewable power, which now makes up 30% of Alberta's electrical grid.

According to the Canadian Renewable Energy Association, in 2022, Western Canada accounted for 98% of Canada's total growth in wind and solar power, with Alberta adding almost 1,400 megawatts of installed capacity in one year. Last year alone, Alberta's renewable energy sector accounted for more than 92% of Canada's overall growth in renewable energy and storage capacity. According to the Pembina Institute, that included 118 renewable projects in Alberta, representing $33 billion in investment. That meant there were green energy projects representing, according to the Pembina, 24,000 job-years at some stage of development.

Now, I'll admit the absurdly draconian restrictions that Danielle Smith's government has recently imposed on wind and solar investments in Alberta are a problem, but notwithstanding, the capital market is telling us that wind and solar have a huge role to play in Alberta's and Canada's energy future, and that means not just sustainable power but sustainable jobs.

But the big new power play in Alberta — I don't mean the Oilers, although their power play is very good — is hydrogen. And it isn't a fantasy. There are already projects in Alberta in development to transition diesel buses and trains and heavy equipment to hydrogen, to convert natural gas power plants to hydrogen, to heat new subdivisions with hydrogen, to use hydrogen in all sorts of industrial processes. There is huge economic and employment potential in a serious shift to green and blue hydrogen — and huge environmental gains to be made as well.

Nor are sustainable energy jobs the only kinds of sustainable employment that Alberta has. Alberta and Saskatchewan are perfectly positioned to become powerhouses in agri-food production so that we're not just exporting our mustard, lentils and durum wheat, but turning them into value-added products; so that we're creating new domestic and international processed food markets for crops as diverse as haskap berries or lupins.

Then there's the exciting prospect of repurposing Alberta's oil sands. Instead of burning that bitumen for fuel, suppose we used it to create strong and lightweight carbon fibre and to use that carbon fibre to build everything from airplanes to auto parts to sports gear to protective clothing. With the right mix of public and private investment, we could be able to turn our bitumen reserves into a manufacturing sector, an entirely new kind of sustainable economic engine.

There are sustainable jobs to be found too in the transportation transition. Alberta is actively exploring plans to create a rail system that links Calgary to Banff and an even more ambitious plan for high-speed rail linking Edmonton to Calgary.

• (2310)

These have been pipe dream projects for years, but as our population grows — and as the social and market pressure to move away from carbon-intensive transportation increases — it may finally be time to start taking steps to make those dreams reality, creating rail construction jobs on a scale we haven't seen since the Last Spike and creating infrastructure for low-carbon transportation that could radically reduce the number of cars on Alberta highways and the number of planes flying between Edmonton and Calgary.

So a transition to a less carbon-intensive economy with well-paid sustainable jobs for all kinds of workers is far from impossible. It's certainly no more impossible than an 8-1 victory over the Florida Panthers.

This is the future that Alberta and Canada need to embrace, and I believe Albertans have the courage and drive to make that transition, but it is hard for me to see how Bill C-50 helps.

Bill C-50 doesn't invest more money in research and development. It doesn't set aside a penny for job retraining or for post-secondary education. It doesn't invest in clean tech, agri-food or transportation infrastructure. It doesn't do anything to encourage investment nor offer capital markets any tangible assurance that we are really serious this time, at long last, about meeting our climate change goals. And it doesn't do anything to pull Canadians together with common purpose to fight for our future.

Instead, it establishes a framework to strike a council to have a social dialogue to enable a secretariat to create an action plan, all subject to a 10-year review. Will Bill C-50 create jobs? Well, it will certainly create jobs for the 15 members of the Sustainable Jobs Partnership Council, and who knows how many more jobs for the members of the Sustainable Jobs Secretariat.

I fear that this is an example of the most cynicism-inducing kind of government legislation. At a time when we desperately need to fight greenhouse gases, Bill C-50 is little more than hot air. As we might say in Alberta, "Where's the beef?"

This legislation won't do anything to reassure Western Canadians who are legitimately worried about their economic future. It won't do anything to make them feel included, to make them feel that their voices and concerns are being heard or that their hopes and dreams are being supported. Instead, I greatly fear it will be seen as a provocation if not an insult. It will be a gift to those reactionary, soft-separatist voices in my province who are all too pleased to rage farm by turning Albertans against their fellow Canadians.

My friends, it is long past time for frameworks, councils, action plans and 10-year status reports. It is time to be up and doing. If we want an economic transition that doesn't leave workers behind, we need to invest in R&D now, not a decade from now. Now.

If we want an economic transition that doesn't leave workers behind, we need to tell capital markets that we are serious, that investing in Canada and Alberta is safe and smart, that we're not going to pull the rug out from under them by suddenly changing policy and leaving them stranded. We need to invest in our colleges, technical institutes and universities so workers are ready for the jobs of the future. We need to invest in green infrastructure, from hydrogen plants to passenger rail lines. We need tax incentives and tax policies that reward innovation and green entrepreneurship. Most of all, we need federal and provincial governments to work together and not at cross-purposes for the good of all Canadians.

Thank you. *Hiy hiy*.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. David M. Wells: Honourable senators, I rise today at third reading as critic of Bill C-50, An Act respecting accountability, transparency and engagement to support the creation of sustainable jobs for workers and economic growth in a net-zero economy. The short title is the "Canadian Sustainable Jobs Act," but many of our Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Committee witnesses, in particular from the environmental movement, have referred to the bill as the "Just Transition Act." In fact, the bill's sponsor, Senator Yussuff, referred to it four times in his speech just a short while ago. It's what the bill used to be called until there was public outcry and the government changed the title — not the content, colleagues, just the title. Remember, this bill is not sponsored by the Minister of Labour. It is sponsored by the Minister of Natural Resources.

First, I would like to thank my colleagues on the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources and the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology for their study of the bill.

At the Energy Committee two weeks ago, we heard from the Honourable Seamus O'Regan, Minister of Labour. During the minister's testimony, he tried to avoid talking about what is actually contained in the legislation. More specifically, I asked him about training and the retraining elements contained in Bill C-50. The minister cut me off several times until our colleague Senator McCallum intervened to remind him of the importance of decorum in Senate committees. The chair agreed

and instructed the witness accordingly, and I want to thank both Senator McCallum and Senator Verner, who was in the chair, for that reset.

After a few attempts to ask my question regarding training and retraining, which is the essence of the bill, the minister denied that there was any mention of training in the bill. Minister O'Regan said:

> I am looking at Bill C-50. There is no mention of training talking about a table where workers can have a say. There's no mention of training.

Colleagues, the word "training" appears 6 times in the bill and 78 times in the briefing note for the minister written by the department officials at Natural Resources Canada.

An Hon. Senator: He doesn't read either.

Senator Wells: No matter what they've renamed it, the essence of the bill remains. However, the Minister of Labour representing Newfoundland and Labrador avoided discussing the purpose of the bill, the only reason he was invited to appear at committee.

What the bill actually seeks to do is to set up a program to train and retrain oil and gas workers away from existing sustainable and well-paying jobs. Further, colleagues, he was contradicted by his colleague the Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, the Minister of Natural Resources, who appeared at the Social Affairs, Science and Technology committee and openly talked about the purpose of the bill, stating that it is about training and retraining workers in the oil and gas sector during the transition to lower greenhouse gas-emitting energy sectors.

The Natural Resources Canada officials themselves then contradicted Minister O'Regan's claim that Bill C-50 is not about training, and I quote again:

> I hate to contradict a minister but there is mention of training in this bill. I will take you to the purpose statement of the bill. That the purpose is threefold. It's to promote low carbon economic development, to promote development of workers and to support communities and workers who are affected by the transition.

The fact we have the Minister of Natural Resources and an official from Natural Resources Canada contradicting the Minister of Labour raises questions and uncertainty for me, but equally confirms the concerns expressed by various witnesses we heard at the committees.

Both the Indigenous Resources Network and Electricity Canada provided other concerning testimony during the Energy Committee's June 4 meeting. Representing the Indigenous Resources Network, John Desjarlais' opening statement is clear, and again I quote:

> We have been watching the government's just transition or sustainable jobs initiatives since they were first announced. If I'm honest, there has been suspicion and anxiety from our members. There has been a sense that the federal government is not on the same side as those who work in oil and gas especially. Indigenous oil and gas workers and businesses often feel vilified, even though they're providing an important service and product that everyone depends on at the end of the day.

Colleagues, there are a lot of takeaways from Mr. Desjarlais' statement. The fact that any Canadian worker in the country feels anxious and apprehensive of the government's action is concerning. In fact, it should not happen. No Canadian should wake up to go to work and anxiously wonder whether their job will be there tomorrow, next month or next year, especially if it is an organized and sustained policy of their government to do so. Canadians need to know that all orders of government support their industry, support their work and stop misrepresenting a trade and an industry that literally fuels our economy.

Mr. Desjarlais also touched on the parity, or near parity, of Indigenous workers thanks to partnering with the oil and gas industry. The wage gap has closed due to numerous partnerships, empowering Indigenous communities, businesses and workers. In fact, Indigenous upstream oil and gas workers made 2.2% more in average weekly wages than the average Canadian oil and gas worker in 2021. According to Statistics Canada, the oil and gas sector offers the highest wages in Canada for Indigenous workers — three times more than the average — at $140,000 annually. This is what fuels their communities, growth and — not incidentally — meaningful reconciliation.

• (2320)

But no sooner had that parity been reached than the government set into play plans to take it away, which is a real concern for Indigenous communities, as described by Mr. Desjarlais:

> There is a growing fear and a sentiment about being asked to transition after you're just starting to get wage parity and business participation, where you would have to transition all over again or go through that whole process all over again. In a lot of the businesses that are succeeding in the industry, there is a lot of effort that went into it. A lot of them are asking why they have to do this again to position and pivot their businesses when they're doing well and providing that livelihood. Our communities are greatly involved in the industry, so there is a lot of head-scratching going on.

Colleagues, these are serious concerns that must be addressed.

Mr. Francis Bradley, President and CEO of Electricity Canada, also touched on a potential consequence of the just transition: the increased cost of electricity.

While trying to put a price tag on Bill C-50 is difficult, Mr. Bradley's testimony is a reminder of who will pay for the just transition. Colleagues, it's all of us.

As with the carbon tax, every daily activity of Canadians will be impacted and made more expensive. As Mr. Bradley highlighted in committee, Canada will need to double the size of its electricity grid to keep up with electrification and decarbonization across all sectors. That comes with costs, and with a growing Canadian population, moving to electricity for transportation and comfort will not be cheap.

The Energy Committee also heard concerns about the impact the bill will have on competitiveness. This will have a negative impact on attracting investments to Canada that would in turn create sustainable jobs. I agree with Senator Galvez's statement at committee that jobs must be created first. For those jobs to be created, we need private sector investment. Unfortunately, Bill C-50 lacks a competitiveness aspect. Shannon Joseph, Chair of Energy for a Secure Future, said in her opening remarks:

> To achieve the goals expressed in the bill, companies must first decide to spend their money in Canada upgrading facilities, investing in innovation. They will only do this if they can successfully answer the following questions: Will I be able to make back the money I spent and more? How long will it take me to do this?
>
> This legislation, therefore, needs to prioritize increased investment attraction to Canada, because this is where sustainable jobs come from.
>
> Are our regulations efficient? Is energy affordable in Canada? How will this change over time so that Canada remains home to natural resource development, manufacturing, agriculture and other sectors?

You heard me say the same thing during my second reading speech. The government says it wants to capitalize on job opportunities in the net-zero transition by 2050. However, it is imperative that we know the specific job opportunities we are looking at and where they will be.

We must have available jobs waiting on the other side of the training of workers, at the same time and in the same community. With many of our oil and gas sector workers located outside major urban centres, it could very well signal a migration of Canadians away from our rural communities in Atlantic Canada and Western Canada.

You may remember, colleagues, the accelerated coal phase-out imposed by the government. In November 2016, the federal government announced its intention to accelerate the phase-out of traditional coal-fired electricity in Canada by 2030. It would affect workers and communities in four provinces: Alberta, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. It was — and still is — an attempt to force a just transition for coal workers. It started with a set of recommendations proposed by a task force, in which our colleague and sponsor of Bill C-50, Senator Yussuff, played a role and provided insight.

According to the Auditor General, the government has failed Canadian workers and communities who are to transition away from the coal industry. As the report says on page 4:

> Although the government had identified Natural Resources Canada as the lead department to deliver just-transition legislation in 2019, the department took little action until 2021. It did not establish a governance structure that would set out the related federal roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities, and it did not have an implementation plan to address a transition that involves a variety of workers, geographies, and federal and other stakeholders. . . .

The investigation found there was no federal implementation plan, no formal governance structure and no measuring and monitoring system. The report found that the federal programs and benefits fell short of a just transition for coal workers. It was business-as-usual support for coal workers, with Employment and Social Development Canada, or ESDC, using regular programs to support coal workers and supports for communities that were not designed for their just transition. Moreover, not all task force recommendations were addressed, and there was insufficient results measurement, monitoring and reporting.

I'm concerned, colleagues, and you should be too, because the just transition for coal workers could very well be the blueprint for this government's current bill. We must have a comprehensive discussion to avoid the pitfalls of these past initiatives. We're not there yet.

Colleagues, I bring these things to your attention because if we take a closer look and deeper dive, we can do better for Canadians than the model used for the Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities.

When it comes to natural resource extraction, the oil and gas sector, lowering our GHG emissions, job creation and private sector investments in this country, Canadians deserve a government that is serious in its approach. Again, we're not there yet — certainly not with this legislation.

Again, Mr. Desjarlais from the Indigenous Resource Network said it best during his appearance at the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources:

> I have no problem with legislation that tries to train people for green jobs or create new economic opportunities in our territories. In fact, many of the skills are the same, whether it be mining uranium for nuclear power and copper for electrification or building pipelines for carbon capture or hydrogen.
>
> But we have very good reason to expect that jobs in installing solar panels or windmills will not pay the same as jobs in oil and gas. IRN members do not want to be transitioned out of those jobs so long as there is demand for that product.

I agree with Mr. Desjarlais, and his fears are justified. According to the Auditor General's report on the just transition for coal, ESDC failed to protect the wages of coal workers by not implementing the Employment Insurance Training Support Benefit as recommended and mandated. Instead, they relied on the outdated EI benefits, which were insufficient. Further, colleagues, the government could not demonstrate how they protected the pensions of affected workers.

Therefore, as long as there is a demand for that product, the government should not impose a transition on those workers if there is a supply and a market, and there is. If it is responsibly regulated — and it is — it should be market-led, not government-led. The government should not be using measures to take away well-paying jobs — the highest paying for Indigenous workers — in an effort to reduce our 1.5% of global CO_2 emissions. Of course, you've heard me say it numerous times: It will have zero impact on global emissions.

The government should instead support the oil and gas sector, where the industry has invested billions in Indigenous businesses and communities through numerous partnerships. Also, Indigenous communities have invested in themselves, and proudly so. Public dollars will never go as far when it comes to training and retraining workers and supporting communities. Ms. Joseph summed it up perfectly at the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources when she said:

> This is why competitiveness is such an important priority for this legislation. It is not emphasized in the skill set for the council or the approach of the plan, but Canada has had experiences with industries shutting down suddenly, like the fisheries in Newfoundland, like coal-mining communities in Alberta when they switched rapidly to natural-gas-fired electricity. If we're doing this across the whole economy very quickly, we shouldn't have an exaggerated sense of the government's own fiscal capacity to just fill gaps all over the place. . . .

Colleagues, there are other and better ways to reduce global emissions while also supplying energy for Canadians and the world. We have liquefied natural gas, or LNG, projects at the ready and partners around the world asking for Canadian LNG. According to the Shell LNG Outlook 2024, global LNG demand is projected to rise by more than 50% by 2040 as China and South Asian countries switch from coal to gas. By exporting LNG to European and Asian markets, Canada is in the position to reduce global CO_2 emissions, by helping other countries lower their own emissions — much of it fuelled by coal — while also creating well-paid and sustainable jobs in Canada.

• (2330)

Honourable senators, I opened my second reading speech by quoting Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at the World Economic Forum in Davos, where he contrasted himself with the Right Honourable Stephen Harper wanting Canada to be known for its resources by stating he wanted Canada to be known for its resourcefulness. Colleagues, I believe we'll always be known for our resources.

I want Canada to be smart and strategic with our resource development and to be known to support our allies and friends by supplying them with responsibly produced energy and world-leading innovation and technology. In doing this, we also support our own citizens.

I will always stand up for our oil and gas sector to continue providing high wages for Canadians and supporting Indigenous workers, businesses and communities. That comes with a caveat: as long as it's done responsibly for labour, the environment, resource management and safety.

I continue to believe that Canada can offer better. I don't believe that cancelling sustainable and well-paying employment, collapsing Indigenous opportunity and kneecapping mature and well-regulated industries, all with massive taxpayer-funded cost is the way to go. Colleagues, many of those taxpayers are yet to be born.

The Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Committee is currently conducting a study on the oil and gas sector. At committee, I asked officials from Environment and Climate Change Canada what the cost of our climate change program was. The answer shocked me, and it should shock you too: It's $2 trillion, just for Canada. Who pays for this? Canadians pay. What's the effect on global CO_2 emissions? None.

I concluded my second reading speech by challenging the government to show how this ideology makes any sense at any level. With the very little time we've had to study this just transition project, nothing in this bill has reassured me; rather, it has strengthened my resolve to see that our country doesn't go down the path to a lower standard of living for Canadians, less opportunity for Indigenous communities, higher global emissions and taxpayer servitude for generations to come.

I've spoken in the past about this disastrous retraining program that followed the collapse of the northern cod stock off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador in 1993. I worked in that fishery, and I saw firsthand the devastation of our people, our communities and our culture. The fact that this is now a $2-trillion government policy with no effect on global emissions is beyond comprehension.

In closing, I will, of course, be voting against this legislation, not because I'm the critic and not because I'm a member of the official opposition and not because I'm a Conservative. I'm voting against it because it's not a good plan for our workers, our communities, our businesses or for our allies. It's not good for Canada on any level. Colleagues, I urge you to join me. 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: No.

Some Hon. Senators: Yea.

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 two senators rising. Do you have an agreement on a bell?

Senator Seidman: We will defer the vote to the next sitting of the Senate.

The Hon. the Speaker: A deferred vote is requested and, pursuant to rule 9-10 (2), the vote is deferred to 5:30 on the next day the Senate sits, with the bells to ring at 5:15 p.m.

[*Translation*]

FALL ECONOMIC STATEMENT IMPLEMENTATION BILL, 2023

THIRD READING—DEBATE

Hon. Lucie Moncion moved third 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.

She said: Honourable senators, given the late hour, and since I don't want to stand in the way of senators' rest, I move the following:

That the Senate do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Agreed.

An Hon. Senator: On division.

(Motion agreed to, on division.)

(*At 11:35 p.m., pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate earlier this day, the Senate adjourned until 2 p.m., tomorrow*.)

CONTENTS

Monday, June 17, 2024

PAGE

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

QUESTION PERIOD

CONTENTS

Monday, June 17, 2024