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Thursday, May 29, 2025

The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Thursday, May 29, 2025

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

• (1410)

Prayers.

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, there have been consultations, and there is an agreement to allow a photographer in the Senate Chamber to photograph the introduction of new senators.

Is it agreed, honourable senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

NEW SENATORS

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I have the honour to inform the Senate that the Clerk of the Senate has received certificates from the Registrar General of Canada showing that the following persons, respectively, have been summoned to the Senate:

Nancy Uququjuq Karetak-Lindell

Todd Verne Lewis

INTRODUCTION

The Hon. the Speaker having informed the Senate that there were senators without waiting to be introduced:

The following honourable senators were introduced; presented His Majesty's writ of summons; took the oath prescribed by law, which was administered by the Clerk of the Senate; and were seated.

Hon. Nancy Karetak-Lindell, of Arviat, Nunavut, introduced between Hon. Marc Gold, P.C., and Hon. Margo Greenwood.

Hon. Todd Lewis, of Lajord no. 128, Saskatchewan, introduced between Hon. Marc Gold, P.C., and Hon. Mary Robinson.

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that each of the honourable senators named above had made and subscribed the declaration of qualification required by the Constitution Act, 1867, in the presence of the Clerk of the Senate, the Commissioner appointed to receive and witness the said declaration.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Karl Victor Ukkuk Lindell and Keenan James Taralik Lindell, Senator Karetak-Lindell's sons; as well as Victoria, Cooper and Molly, her grandchildren. They are accompanied by other guests of Senator Karetak-Lindell.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Theresa Lewis, Senator Lewis' spouse; Kimberly, their daughter; as well as John and Rodney, Senator Lewis' brothers. They are accompanied by the Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, P.C., former federal minister, and other guests of Senator Lewis.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

NEW SENATORS

CONGRATULATIONS ON APPOINTMENTS

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I'm pleased to rise today on behalf of the Government Representative Office to welcome our two new colleagues to this chamber.

[*English*]

Senator Karetak-Lindell, you're no stranger to Parliament Hill. As the first Member of Parliament for Nunavut and the first female Member of Parliament for the Eastern Arctic, along with your experience as a parliamentary secretary, you will no doubt find yourself very much at home in the chamber in no time at all. You have dedicated your very impressive career to being a strong advocate from the North, in particular for Nunavut. We all look forward to you continuing your advocacy on behalf of the citizens of Nunavut here in the Senate and in all that you do for Canadians.

Senator Lewis, you've been a long-time advocate for change and progress in the agricultural industry, having held numerous roles, including that of President of the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan. I understand you're a fourth-generation farmer with over 40 years of experience. As a deeply committed volunteer, your roots in your community run deep.

Again, I have no doubt that you will bring that same passion for your community, your province and your industry to this chamber.

As I've shared with your other colleagues earlier this week, as new senators, there is a relatively steep learning curve for all of us, and for all of you who have just arrived, and the work ahead will not always be so easy. However, every one of us here in this chamber has been in your place before, and I know I speak for all of us when I say please do not hesitate to reach out to seek advice or support whenever you feel you may need it.

• (1420)

[Translation]

I am looking forward to working with all of you in the weeks to come. Once again, on behalf of the Government Representative Office, I welcome my esteemed colleagues to the Senate of Canada.

[English]

Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, it is once again a true honour on behalf of the Conservative caucus here in the Senate to welcome two outstanding new senators to this chamber, Senator Nancy Karetak-Lindell and Senator Todd Lewis.

Although they come from very different regions and backgrounds, both bring with them a deep and tested commitment to public service and to the people and communities they have represented for decades.

Senator Karetak-Lindell, you have long been a powerful voice for the North, from the community of Arviat to the international stage. As the first Member of Parliament for Nunavut and the first woman elected to represent the Eastern Arctic, you helped shape the foundations of self-governance for your region and advocated for Inuit perspectives in national policy. Your fluency in both Inuktitut and English, your parliamentary leadership and your years of grassroots service have made you a bridge between communities, cultures and generations. We're honoured to have your wisdom and experience in this chamber. Welcome, senator.

Senator Lewis, you bring to this chamber the voice of Western Canadian agriculture, rooted in the soil of Saskatchewan and cultivated over four generations on your family farm at Gray. You have earned the respect of producers and policy-makers alike through decades of leadership in agricultural associations and rural governance. Whether advocating for fair transportation systems, sustainable policy, a water policy or strong rural communities, you have shown that steady, local leadership can have a national impact. The perspectives you bring from the Prairies, both economic and civic, will serve us well.

We would like to also open the door to our caucus group even though we already have a powerful voice from Saskatchewan. You can never have enough Roughriders.

Senators, your presence strengthens this institution. You remind us that Canada's diversity is not only cultural but regional, economic and generational. You bring with you unique

insights and lived experiences that will strengthen senators' work and the Senate's work and shape the laws and debates that affect Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

We are proud to welcome you to the Senate of Canada, and we are looking forward to working with you. Thank you.

[Translation]

Hon. Raymonde Saint-Germain: Your Honour, esteemed colleagues and distinguished guests, I too am pleased to welcome two colleagues today on behalf of the Independent Senators Group.

[English]

Senator Karetak-Lindell, at last, the Inuit community of Nunavut, which makes up around 85% of the territory's population, has a Native voice in the Senate of Canada. Senator Karetak-Lindell, this voice is yours, and it is a powerful one. Thank you for speaking so beautifully minutes ago in Inuktitut in the chamber — a beautiful language. As a Native, a resident and a former elected representative of Nunavut in the House of Commons, no one else is as qualified as you are to raise in this upper chamber the issues as well as the preoccupations of your people and the ones of all the Nunavummiut. As a former parliamentarian for 11 years, you emerged as a pioneer who puts emphasis on the importance of action and respect in matters concerning Aboriginal affairs and northern development. I'm thrilled that you will be one of those colleagues who will guide us and inform us so aptly on these crucial issues.

Senator Lewis, your lifelong experience is deeply rooted in rural Saskatchewan and in the agricultural community. So deeply rooted, in fact, that since 1904, your family's farm has been a staple of the Hamlet of Gray, a small town just outside of Regina. Even more remarkable, you are now the fourth generation taking care of the family farm.

Your appointment to this chamber brings the additional ability in matters of agri-food and agriculture. You are joining the ranks of other proud advocates for this sector. You are known as someone who always tries to be substantiated in your advocacy with the best interests of the Canadian agricultural sector in mind as well as consumers and the public interest. A hard defender of your ideas, doing so respectfully, Senator Lewis, you will fit right in — and fight, rightly so — to the modern, independent Senate.

All members of the Independent Senators Group, join me in wishing both Senator Karetak-Lindell and Senator Lewis a warm welcome to the Senate of Canada. We look forward to working alongside you. Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

Hon. Rebecca Patterson: Honourable senators, I welcome our two new outstanding senators sworn in today, Senator Karetak-Lindell and Senator Lewis.

Senator Karetak-Lindell is a household name and well-known in the North for her leadership and dedication to the development of Nunavut. While you are no stranger to Parliament Hill, you may have noticed that the Senate and the House of Commons aren't quite where you left them last time you were here.

As a former member of Parliament, an elections officer, a businessperson, an instructor and a guest speaker, you will bring much richness and substance to our debates from a perspective that is too often overlooked and ignored by the South, and this must change. We are looking to you, Senator Karetak-Lindell, to help guide and lead us as the North's importance becomes clearer and our focus is finally in the right place. I am reminded that all of us here in this chamber will need to attentively listen to all of our territorial colleagues about the importance of Northern Canada and the Arctic. Senator Karetak-Lindell, we welcome you to the Senate.

I also want to welcome my colleague Senator Lewis from the Hamlet of Gray, Saskatchewan, another great national agricultural leader — of which we may have three — and a very familiar face among Saskatchewan's growers and producers. A farmer for over 40 years, it may be cliché to say it, but his family roots run very deep in the Hamlet of Gray and in Saskatchewan.

On top of his expertise as a practitioner in the agri-food industry, Senator Lewis brings a special background and skill not commonly seen in the Senate — he was a firefighter. Any person willing to put on a firefighter's helmet and uniform to help people in danger is a true hero in my books. Your courage and dedication to your community are most welcome here.

Therefore, by the powers vested in me as acting leader of the Canadian Senators Group today, I hereby deem Senator Lewis as our official Senate firefighter, responsible for putting out political fires that we never see here.

Welcome to the Senate. On behalf of all my colleagues within the Canadian Senators Group, to our two new colleagues, welcome to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Brian Francis: Honourable senators, I'm beginning to feel a bit of déjà vu, but it remains an honour to rise on behalf of the Progressive Senate Group to join the other leaders in welcoming more newly sworn-in senators.

Senator Nancy Karetak-Lindell is no stranger to Parliament Hill, so I'm certain she's already noticed the differences between the two chambers. Nunavut has been lacking a representative in the Senate for far too long, but it is often said that good things come to those who wait. I have no doubt that Senator Karetak-Lindell will be an excellent advocate for the North, and I look forward to having another strong female Inuk voice in the Senate. Welcome, Senator Karetak-Lindell.

Senator Todd Lewis is also no stranger to Parliament Hill, having appeared as a committee witness both here and in the other place. His advocacy for the agricultural industry, his province of Saskatchewan and western agriculture in general is, as we have heard, commendable. He has shown himself to be a fierce defender of producers, inviting the former Prime Minister to his farm to speak directly to him about his opposition to carbon pricing. That kind of tenacity and commitment to dialogue is important, and I look forward to your contributions in our chamber. Welcome, Senator Lewis.

On behalf of the Progressive Senate Group, it is my pleasure to officially welcome you both to the Senate. We look forward to working with you. *Wela'lin*. Thank you.

• (1430)

VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Esther Tumama Cowley-Malcolm, from Aotearoa (New Zealand). She is the guest of the Honourable Senator Pate.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

OTTAWA CHARGE

CONGRATULATIONS ON SEASON

Hon. Kim Pate: Honourable senators, I should be speaking about Esther, but I won't. Today it is the Ottawa Charge, a dream come true.

From Gracie Mae — Senator Colin Deacon's 3-year-old granddaughter — to the countless PWHL fans everywhere, the Ottawa Charge have become heroes in the eyes and hearts of many.

Not only do we have Senator Greenwood's — and many other — grandkids and the wonderful community of Ottawa fans cheering from the sidelines, but we also have folks like Katelin from Senator Simons's office, who says the Charge games are more thrilling than any Sens game she's seen. She's so fired up about the team that she's made a vow: From now on, she's only dating guys who are Charge fans.

It's not just Katelin. Many are raving about how the Charge have brought hope, excitement and pride to Ottawa and Canada, from young hockey players — especially girls — to their proud parents and grandparents and generations who dreamed of this league for decades.

The Charge of the PWHL are more than just a team: they're a movement.

At the close of season two, with phenomenal, record-breaking attendance at every home game, the Charge are not only playing on the ice; they're in the community. From visiting starry-eyed young players, to cheering up sick kids, to attending flag raisings and spending time with seniors like us, the Charge are part of the fabric of this city.

None of this would be possible without their inspiring coach, Carla, whose blend of fierce tenacity and unwavering grace has taught all of us that you play best when you play hard together. That's how Ottawa defied the odds to become the first Canadian team to make it to the Walter Cup finals.

The road to the finals wasn't easy. In an unforgettable semifinal, the Charge came from behind and overtook the Montreal Victoire — sorry, my friends! But the real edge-of-seat drama came when they faced the reigning champs, the Minnesota Frost.

Each game was a heart-pounding thriller, ending with a nail-biting 2-1 score. In the third game, they went into a gruelling three overtime periods. Our Senator McBean put it perfectly: Ottawa gave us more than just hockey. With 10 overtime periods and countless moments of brilliance, these women gave us a roller coaster ride of energy, passion and breathtaking skill.

Then, in an unforgettable moment of PWHL unity, when rookie goaltender Gwyneth "Fortress" Philips was awarded the Ilana Kloss Playoff Most Valuable Player Award, both the Charge and Frost teams stayed on the ice and the entire stadium cheered, an incredible show of respect and admiration for this remarkable group of athletes. When Gwyneth accepted the award, humbly attributing her success to her teammates, who wasn't moved to tears? Talk about integrity and teamwork.

As we look ahead, we can't wait for next season, when we'll welcome Vancouver and Seattle into the PWHL fold. One thing's for sure: We'll keep cheering and believing.

Go, Charge, go!

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I rise today to recognize and celebrate Asian Heritage Month.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Martin: It is a time to honour the rich and diverse cultures, traditions and contributions of Asian communities across Canada, from serving in the military to building railways and communities and making Canada a stronger nation.

This year's theme — Unity in Diversity — encourages us to reflect not only on the past, but also on how Asian Canadians continue to shape our country's future with respect to education, the arts, business, public service and so much more.

Each year, Canadians from all backgrounds and cultures come together during the month of May to participate in Asian Heritage Month events. This is a long-standing tradition which started here in the Senate of Canada.

In 2001, our former colleague and godmother of Asian Heritage Month, the Honourable Vivienne Poy, was the visionary leader behind the initiative which led to the passage of a unanimous Senate motion in this chamber to recognize May as Asian Heritage Month each year.

This May, I had the pleasure of hosting an annual event — the Voices in Action breakfast on the Hill — for students from several schools in the Ottawa-Carleton school district, as well as participating in an Asian Heritage Month virtual event along with several Senate colleagues, coordinated by SENgage, which brought together hundreds of students from schools across Canada.

As a proud Canadian of Korean descent, Asian Heritage Month holds a special significance for me.

The Korean-Canadian community, which has grown steadily since the 1960s, has become a vibrant part of Canada's multicultural fabric. The Korean diaspora has spread across the globe, and Canada is home to a sizable and dynamic Korean-Canadian population. The community has prospered and thrived over the decades, driving innovation and growth in nearly every sector of the Canadian economy.

From small businesses and startups to large corporations, Korean-Canadian entrepreneurs have made their mark creating jobs, stimulating economic growth and contributing to Canada's prosperity. They have also added to our society with their rich traditions, cuisine, arts and culture. Who doesn't like K-pop, K-food and K-drama?

As we look ahead, let us continue to build a Canada that is inclusive of and respectful to all cultures, where every story is heard and every contribution valued.

Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Sean Krausert, Mayor of the Town of Canmore, as well as councillors for the Town of Canmore and the Town of Banff. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Sorensen.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

PROGRESSIVE SENATE GROUP LEADERSHIP ELECTIONS

Hon. Andrew Cardozo: Honourable senators, in keeping with my colleagues, I rise today to talk about the new leadership group of the Progressive Senate Group, or PSG.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Cardozo: First, I want to congratulate Senator Brian Francis on his election as leader of the PSG. Throughout his career, he has held senior management roles in the federal government and Indigenous government, culminating in his role as Chief of the Abegweit First Nation on Prince Edward Island.

Colleagues, this election is historic. Senator Brian Francis becomes the first Indigenous person to lead a group or party in either house of the Parliament of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Cardozo: Your Honour, I hope I get 30 extra seconds for that standing ovation.

Also new in our leadership is Senator Tracy Muggli from Saskatchewan, who is the new caucus chair and deputy liaison. She has been an effective leader as Executive Director of St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon and the Director of Mental Health and Addiction Services for the Saskatoon Health Region.

Continuing in the leadership group is Senator Judy White, a representative from Newfoundland and Labrador and senior executive in Indigenous government by experience. She will continue to serve us as deputy leader.

Does anyone wish to clap?

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Cardozo: Senator Amina Gerba from Rigaud, Quebec, will shift from caucus chair to liaison. A successful business person before coming to the Senate, she will use her keen organizational skills to do her best to keep us organized — a tall order.

• (1440)

I want to take this opportunity to thank Senator Pierre Dalphond for his years of dedication to the Progressive Senate Group, first as deputy leader and then as leader. His understanding of the *Rules of the Senate* and his ability to negotiate is rivalled by few.

[Translation]

Pierre, Mr. Justice, professor, friend, thank you for your service and for your past advice. I'm thrilled that we can continue to count on your wise counsel in the years to come.

I would also like to thank Senator Michèle Audette for her contributions as liaison. Her ongoing advice will be invaluable.

[English]

To all these senators, I say a sincere and public thank you for taking on these leadership roles as we all work to serve Canadians.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Dan Kutcher, Mayor of the City of Summerside, Prince Edward Island, and son of Senator Stan Kutcher, alongside members of the city council of Summerside, P.E.I.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Hon. Flordeliz (Gigi) Osler: Honourable senators, even though we are at the end of May, along with my colleague Senator Martin, I also rise today to wish you all a happy Asian Heritage Month.

At the start of the month, the Filipino-Canadian community was grieving, and I want to take a moment to honour those who were injured and those who lost their lives in the Lapu-Lapu Day tragedy in Vancouver on April 26.

As you heard from Senator Martin, this year's Asian Heritage Month theme is "Unity in Diversity: The Impact of Asian Communities in Shaping Canadian Identity." Unity in diversity reminds us that we can be diverse without being divided and we can be united without being uniform. The theme is a celebration of our shared values and varied stories.

In my home province of Manitoba, these stories surround us. The stories are found in the Chinese families who settled in Winnipeg as early as the 1870s, building businesses and creating community.

They are found in my East Indian father and my Filipino mother, both of whom came separately to Canada as part of the early waves of Asian health care professionals recruited to work in our health care system.

This year also marks 50 years since the end of the Vietnam War — a time to remember how conflict can change lives around the world.

It is a time to remember when Canada opened its arms to more than 210,000 refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos who fled war and sought safety and a fresh start. Many arrived with nothing, but they brought resilience, strength and dreams. They became our neighbours, our teachers, our doctors and our friends.

Each wave of migration has contributed something essential to Canada — to our economy, our culture and our spirit. These are stories of resilience, healing, hope and contribution — stories of rebuilding and giving back.

As a senator of Asian heritage, I reflect on how we carry this work forward, not only in our communities but also through our work here in the Senate. Through parliamentary associations and friendship groups, we can build relationships with our counterparts in Asia and deepen ties between nations.

As this month draws to a close, I encourage us all to learn from and celebrate the diverse communities around us. In that spirit, I invite everyone to join the Canada-Philippines friendship group on June 12 at 12 p.m. for a special flag-raising ceremony on Parliament Hill in honour of Filipino Heritage Month. I hope to see you there.

Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

ONTARIO ICE STORM

Hon. Gwen Boniface: Your Honour, I would like to take a brief moment of my time to thank you, as well as our Clerk, staff and particularly the Usher of the Black Rod, for doing our chamber proud on the occasion of the King's visit.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Boniface: Honourable senators, on March 29, parts of Ontario experienced a catastrophic ice storm, leaving 1 million homes and businesses without power.

My home community of Orillia was hit hardest by the storm, along with the cities of Barrie, Kawartha Lakes, Peterborough and Kingston.

Orillians had already endured a difficult winter with record snowfall and a devastating fire that destroyed historical buildings, both commercial and residential, in our beautiful downtown.

The ice storm was accompanied by very windy conditions and severe temperatures, which resulted in devastating damage to homes, parks and infrastructure. Many roads became impassable for days, delaying emergency response. Power was knocked out for almost the entire city of 34,000. Orillia and the neighbouring townships of Ramara, Severn and Oro-Medonte and the County of Simcoe declared states of emergency.

A week after the storm, Hydro One reported more than 2,300 broken poles, which added to the complexity of the work. While many of our residents had their power restored after 5 days, some waited as long as 11 days. Shortages of essentials made the situation even more difficult, but community members once again demonstrated their resilience by supporting their neighbours with offers of showers, meals and a place to lay their head.

The massive recovery effort led by Hydro One workers was fortified by partner crews from Manitoba, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick. There were 4,800 crew members who worked around the clock to restore power to hundreds of thousands of customers. The severe temperatures and the high winds created challenging and dangerous conditions for the hydro workers.

In Orillia, the emergency response team and road crews worked tirelessly to clear the way for the hydro workers just to be able to perform their duties. Local restaurants fed not only the hydro crews but also provided much-needed food and support to our city's shelters.

Residents are now in the recovery stage as they assess and repair the damage to their homes and properties. The city alone has estimated \$5 million in damage to infrastructure.

Along with recently re-elected member of Parliament Adam Chambers, I send our deep gratitude to the Hydro One workers, the road crews and the emergency workers, including the Ontario Provincial Police, for their incredible efforts. We and the citizens of our region are grateful for their incredible response.

Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

ENGAGEMENT WITH BLACK COMMUNITIES

Hon. Rosemary Moodie: Honourable senators, I rise today to share reflections from a recent visit to Edmonton and Calgary, Alberta, where I had the honour of engaging with members of the Black community, particularly dynamic young people who are helping to shape a brighter, more inclusive future for all Canadians.

There are no senators of African descent from Western Canada, so I was excited to connect with these communities to bring their voice back to Ottawa. My African Canadian Senate Group colleague Senator Senior and I met with Alberta MLAs David Shepherd, Rhiannon Hoyle and Sharif Haji to discuss key priorities for Black Albertans. Our conversation focused on economic issues, representation in politics and the potential of Canada's Black Justice Strategy to address systemic barriers and improve outcomes for Black communities.

Later that day, Senator Simons, Senator Senior and I went to visit the Africa Centre, the largest pan-African non-profit in Western Canada. Since 2006, this centre has served as a vital hub for Albertans of African descent, delivering culturally appropriate programs that foster access, inclusion and full participation in society. Its work, grounded in integrity, cultural pride and collective empowerment, is truly commendable.

At the Africa Centre, we also had the pleasure of meeting with members of the newly formed Black Future Lawyers chapter at the University of Alberta and the Black Student Alliance. These driven young leaders are forging pathways in legal education and careers through mentorship, academic support and community building.

• (1450)

The next day I had the privilege of being the keynote speaker at the national Black Child and Youth Wellbeing Conference hosted by the University of Calgary. This event brought together

120 researchers, students and community partners from across Canada and is part of a national initiative to improve the lives of Black children and youth through research policy and community engagement. It is a powerful space of learning, collaboration and vision for systemic change.

Colleagues, the passion and leadership I witnessed were deeply inspiring. These conversations reminded me that Black communities across the country are thriving and are innovative and engaged.

I encourage all of us to engage persistently with Black communities in all regions because by understanding their experiences and amplifying their voices, we can better serve all Canadians.

Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INDIAN ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate) introduced Bill S-2, An Act to amend the Indian Act (new registration entitlements).

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

VOTE 16 BILL

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Marilou McPhedran introduced Bill S-222, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and the Regulation Adapting the Canada Elections Act for the Purposes of a Referendum.

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO CALL ON GOVERNMENT TO INVESTIGATE THE CREATION OF A SOVEREIGN, DOMESTIC VERIFIED TRAVELLERS PROGRAM

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

That the Senate call on the Government of Canada to investigate the creation of a sovereign, domestic Verified Travellers Program for Canadians.

THE EMERGING PROBLEM OF SATELLITE DEBRIS FALLS

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Paula Simons: Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to the emerging problem of satellite debris falls in Canada and to the challenges of satellite congestion, pollution and liability.

GORE MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY

PRIVATE BILL—PETITION TABLED

Hon. Tony Loffreda: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table a petition from the Gore Mutual Insurance Company, having its principal place of business in the City of Cambridge, in the Province of Ontario, Canada; praying for the passage of a private Act to authorize it to apply to be continued as a body corporate under the laws of the Province of Quebec.

QUESTION PERIOD

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the government leader. Senator Gold, three days before the last general election, while Prime Minister Carney was in Alberta, he made a commitment to build pipelines across Canada to ensure that Canada is no longer reliant on foreign oil.

On May 13, on CTV News, he was asked a specific question about whether he is in favour of building pipelines, and he answered yes. Of course, we all recognize the challenge right now to our sovereignty and the challenge to our economy. It is important for us to act on this. However, in the Speech from the Throne, there was hardly any mention of energy, oil and gas.

Last week, which is even more concerning, Minister Guilbeault, the political minister for Quebec, said there is no need for pipelines. The question is this: Did Minister Guilbeault just not receive the memo from the Prime Minister, or is the Prime Minister's commitment to building pipelines and unleashing our economic potential not as enthusiastic as he let on during the election?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. This government and the Prime Minister have been very clear, both in the Speech from the Throne and elsewhere, that one of the strategic goals for this country and one of the great opportunities for Canada is to become an energy superpower, both in conventional and in clean energy.

In that regard, pipelines, along with energy corridors and other major projects of national importance and impact, are on the table, are being developed and are being considered and brought forward by provinces, territories and other stakeholders. This government remains committed — where appropriate and when there is the appropriate support from the provinces and Indigenous leaders — to moving ahead rapidly for those projects that we in Canada need to provide us with greater economic security and prosperity for the future.

Senator Housakos: Senator Gold, I always like to take you at face value, but the truth of the matter is that when we look at the Speech from the Throne, there was very little that was said about energy, oil and gas. Again, it is concerning when a political minister from Quebec — the top minister in Quebec — says that there is no need for more pipelines. We need more details about how committed this government is and when they will get this done. Is Minister Guilbeault speaking on behalf of the Government of Canada, or is it the Prime Minister who will ultimately trump the position taken by Minister Guilbeault?

Senator Gold: Senator Housakos, the more things change, the more they stay the same in terms of our interactions here in Question Period.

The Prime Minister has been clear, so has the minister responsible for energy, who is out West. There is a meeting being held this weekend and beyond in Saskatoon, and when the parties come to an agreement on the projects, which may include pipelines and will no doubt include other matters, this government will be judged by its actions.

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Hon. Claude Carignan: Senator Gold, we'll try to put the time we have left to good use. According to the Constitution, we still have a month left.

Last week, we learned from the RCMP ministerial briefing binder that the RCMP had foiled six terrorist plots in 2024 in Edmonton, Ottawa and Toronto. Between April 2023 and March 2024, 83 terrorism-related charges were laid against

25 individuals, representing a 488% increase compared to the previous year. Importantly, these figures include a number of young people, demonstrating a disturbing degree of radicalization among Canadian teens.

The report also highlighted that available resources are falling short of the mark despite a skyrocketing number of charges.

How did we get here? Can the government explain why, despite the fact that the threat is growing dramatically, RCMP resources and operational capabilities aren't keeping pace?

• (1500)

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question, senator, and thank you for highlighting the importance of this serious issue here in Canada. During the election and especially since then, the government has been very clear that it will do more to keep Canadians safe, not only at our borders, but also in our communities. The measures announced, which will be implemented in the weeks and months to come, also include an increase in RCMP personnel, greater use of police forces in Canada and increased cooperation among them.

Senator Carignan: Thank you, Senator Gold. Here's something even more disturbing. On May 12, a Toronto-based ISIS supporter admitted to using crowdfunding campaigns under the guise of supporting humanitarian aid in Gaza to send more than \$35,000 to ISIS fighters, including for emergency COVID-19 assistance.

How does the Liberal government explain that it's still so easy to send money to terrorist groups from Canada, and what is your plan to stop this immediately?

Senator Gold: The Government of Canada has full confidence in its security agencies, which are gathering information, and it is working closely with police forces.

Unfortunately, terrorist financing is not only a problem in Canada, but also around the world. The government will continue to work to end this form of support for harmful acts.

[English]

CRIME PREVENTION

Hon. Kim Pate: Senator Gold, this month, the ongoing culture of harassment and abuse by those with authority in prisons caused a prison guard in Joyceville to take his life. If this is what staff experience, we can only imagine what prisoners experience.

Freedom of information requests have also revealed billing fraud by government contractors that cost the Communications Security Establishment and, ultimately, Canadians over \$325,000.

The Speech from the Throne referenced the government's intention to get tougher on those who have committed multiple crimes. These bail and other proposed measures too often lead not to meaningful accountability but to the scooping up of poor, racialized — particularly Indigenous and Black — and mentally

ill folks. Will the government lead by example and investigate and hold to account such repeated and unaddressed situations of assaults, harassment and fraud involving the government and those with whom they do business?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question, for your continued work on this subject and for raising this deeply troubling and distressing case.

This government is committed to addressing issues of fraud, waste and harassment in the workplace and elsewhere. In that regard, I have every confidence that the government will take the appropriate steps to address these issues.

Senator Pate: Thank you, Senator Gold. What concrete steps is the government taking to ensure any proposed criminal law measures are effective and evidence-based, and will the government commit to sharing its findings with the public?

Senator Gold: This government has announced a series of measures to improve the criminal law in certain areas, such as addressing the terrible issue of home invasions and the impact that has on families, a renewed focus on car theft and measures in the Criminal Code to make bail harder to get for repeat offenders charged with committing those crimes, along with crimes of human trafficking and drug smuggling. I have every confidence this government will continue to base its decisions in these matters upon evidence, including the use of disaggregated data.

[Translation]

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Suze Youance: Honourable senators, my question is for the Government Representative in the Senate.

Development and poverty reduction help maintain global stability and security. During the April 16 French debate on Radio-Canada, the party leaders were asked whether international aid should be cut. By way of illustration, a table compared international aid spending on Ukraine — \$2.1 billion — and Haiti — \$172.3 million.

I was in Dayton last week for the meeting of NATO countries, where discussions about boosting military spending eclipsed those about humanitarian aid and development.

Canada is being asked to increase its military spending, yet we know that we must rebuild what was destroyed. Shouldn't our spending on development aid be on par with our military spending?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. Canada is and will remain committed to fulfilling its role on the international stage in terms of both military spending and foreign aid. We need to strike a balance between these two important issues. As His Majesty said in the Speech from the Throne, Canada has continued to set an example in its conduct and its values as a force for good.

Senator Youance: Thank you, Senator Gold.

I'm also going to quote an excerpt from the Speech from the Throne, which points out the following:

Canada is ready to build a coalition of like-minded countries that share its values, that believe in international co-operation

As an important G7 meeting draws near, what financial objective will Canada pursue in terms of international cooperation and government-funded development assistance?

Senator Gold: Thank you for the question. As the senator correctly pointed out, this is one of the government's priorities and we'll soon have more to say on the matter.

[English]

HEALTH

MENTAL HEALTH

Hon. Sharon Burey: My question is for the representative of the government in the Senate, Senator Gold.

Building a stronger, more secure and productive Canada depends on ensuring the well-being of all Canadians, physically, mentally and economically. The Speech from the Throne outlines the government's ambition to build the strongest economy in the G7. Recent analysis from the Boston Consulting Group places the economic impact of mental health issues at over \$220 billion each year. Despite this, Canada only allocates 6.3% of its total health expenditures to mental health, far behind G7 countries or comparators such as France, at 15%, and Germany, at 11%.

Given this disparity and the link between productivity, mental health and mental well-being, how does the government plan to address this underinvestment in mental health, substance use and addiction care and align Canada's investment with that of other G7 countries?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question and for underlining the important link between health generally — mental health in particular — and the well-being and stability of our society and our economy.

This government invests heavily in health, as you know, notwithstanding it being exclusively provincial jurisdiction. In that regard, the investments in mental health that are made to which you refer must also be viewed in light of the funds that the provinces dedicate through their own resources, as well as specific bilateral arrangements that the federal government and the provinces enter into. The Minister of Health and the Minister of Finance at the federal level are in regular discussions with their counterparts in the provinces and territories, and I have every confidence that the Minister of Health will be bringing forward additional ideas and receiving them from the provinces, whose responsibility it is to their citizens in the matters of health and mental health.

Senator Burey: Thank you for that response, Senator Gold. Having noted yesterday, as well, that we still don't have a dedicated minister for mental health and addictions and understanding that mental health parity means valuing mental health on par with physical health, I ask: Will the government show leadership and adopt a lifespan, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to achieving mental health parity, just as we do with gender parity and GBA Plus analysis and perspectives?

• (1510)

Senator Gold: Thank you for the question. Colleague, I'm not aware of any plans of the government per se to implement that approach. But as all ministers have been tasked with identifying within their responsibilities the actions that need to be taken to address the overarching priorities of this government and how their ministries can contribute to that, I think this is an important question. I will certainly bring it to the minister's attention at my first opportunity.

[Translation]

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

CANADA-AFRICA RELATIONS

Hon. Amina Gerba: Senator Gold, in the Speech from the Throne, the King noted the historic challenges facing our country, comparing them to those of the post-war period, as well as the unique opportunity to profoundly transform our economy with reliable partners. Africa is home to 1.4 billion potential consumers and yet accounted for only 0.76% of Canadian exports in 2023. Does the government intend to consider Africa as a strategic partner to diversify our economy?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. As the Prime Minister has said many times, Canada is ready to build a coalition with countries that share our values and believe in international cooperation and the free and open exchange of goods, services and ideas. The African market certainly represents a source of potential opportunities for Canada.

The government will definitely consider all partners and allies to achieve that. Once again, thank you for your advocacy in that regard, and I will continue to discuss it with the minister.

Senator Gerba: Thank you, Senator Gold. In March, the previous government launched Canada's first-ever Africa Strategy. Does the new government intend to continue implementing it and fully integrate it into its priorities?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question. The Prime Minister has tasked ministers with identifying how each of them can contribute to the priorities set by the Prime Minister, and I understand that this work is ongoing. I will be sure to bring it to the minister's attention as soon as I have the opportunity.

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

BAIL REFORM

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Leader, on April 15, a young tourist was randomly and violently attacked while walking along the seawall in Coal Harbour, Vancouver. She heard her alleged attacker had already been released on bail on April 14 after assaulting a peace officer in Surrey. He was then arrested for a second assault and once again released on bail April 23. He is currently under house arrest in the heart of Vancouver.

This is not an isolated case. Since the adoption of Bill C-75 and Bill C-5, violent crime has surged by 50%, and in 2022, 256 people were killed by individuals who were out on bail or under some other form of release. These are direct consequences of the Liberal government's bail policies.

My question is: Will the government apologize to this young woman and to all other victims for allowing such dangerous offenders to be released immediately after committing violent crimes?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. What a tragedy you've described. Our hearts go out to the family and friends of all victims of crime under all circumstances.

This government has made it clear that it will be introducing changes to the Criminal Code in a very targeted, evidence-based manner. It takes the need to protect Canadians seriously, and this new government will continue to work in that direction taking advice and input from citizens and from law enforcement as well.

Senator Martin: Why does the government refuse to acknowledge its responsibility despite having ignored the letter from the provincial premiers in January of 2023 calling for a tougher bail system? Instead, the government tabled a mere 6-page bill that was grossly insufficient.

Can the government admit that its soft-on-crime policy has failed? More importantly, how many more victims will it take before the government repeals its permissive legislation and finally undertakes the real reform of the bail system?

Senator Gold: It's the position of this government that the measures that they have announced and that it will be introducing are the appropriate measures to address the issues you raised. The government will continue to work and help make Canadians safe and feel safer.

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

SECRETARIES OF STATE

Hon. Denise Batters: Senator Gold, Prime Minister Carney recently appointed 10 so-called Secretaries of State in addition to 28 full cabinet ministers. The Prime Minister's Office website plainly states these Secretaries of State are "... not members of Cabinet" What are these Secretaries of State? Do they have their own departments and departmental budgets? What is their salary? What is their office budget? Do they get a car and driver? If your response is that Secretary of State is the same as a minister of State, why is your Carney-Liberal government using the much more American-sounding title Secretary of State? That's not very "elbows up" of you.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. This particular government has put in place talented Canadians from across the country representing our great diversity, not only regionally, but in terms of talent and competency. The Prime Minister has chosen to name a cabinet that will focus on the seven priorities that have been identified. These are the priorities that address issues Canadians demand and on which this government has committed to deliver.

Senator Batters: Not even close to an answer. Senator Gold, under this Carney government, Saskatchewan is the only province in Canada without a full cabinet minister. We have one, lone Secretary of State Buckley Belanger, and he does not sit at the cabinet table. His portfolio, Rural Development, used to be a full ministry but has been downgraded to a Secretary of State. The previous rural development minister, Gudie Hutchings, said that if Canadians wanted anything from the Liberal government, they'd have to elect more Liberals. Is that why this Liberal government is leaving Saskatchewan out in the cold?

Senator Gold: No. Let me simply say that the government is very pleased with the election of the member from Saskatchewan and looking forward to the contribution that he can make on behalf of the citizens and residents of Saskatchewan to the work of the government. Whether ministers or others — and that includes us — we all have a role to play, and this government is confident that he and others will play the roles in the best interests of Canadians and the provinces and regions they represent.

[Translation]

SENATE APPOINTMENTS

Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie: Honourable senators, I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome all of the new colleagues joining us. I wish them all the best. Senator Gold, given that we are both retiring soon and that there has been a vacant seat in Manitoba for over a month, are you aware of whether the new Prime Minister intends to keep the appointment process open for these Senate seats?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question and for pointing out that my retirement is approaching. I had forgotten.

The independent appointment process remains in place, and the Government Representative Office will continue to advance and promote Senate modernization.

Senator Mégie: Senator Gold, can we expect these appointments to be made as swiftly as the last round of appointments?

Senator Gold: Esteemed colleague, I will not mention your retirement because you and I were sworn in on the same day. As we all know, there is an independent process that receives and analyzes the applications of those wishing to become members of this place. I have full confidence in this process that is reflected in the talent, diversity and dedication of all our colleagues in this chamber.

• (1520)

[English]

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Paula Simons: My question is for the Government Representative. In 2000, the Parliament of Canada passed An Act to give effect to the requirement for clarity as set out in the opinion of the Supreme Court of Canada in the Quebec Secession Reference — otherwise known as the Clarity Act. The first sentence of the preamble also specifically names Quebec.

In light of increasingly strident separatist rhetoric in Alberta and also in Saskatchewan, would you clarify with clarity whether the government believes that the Clarity Act applies to provinces other than Quebec?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. It's not really a matter of belief, honourable colleague, it's a matter of law. The Clarity Act applies to all provinces.

Senator Simons: Can you state then, for the record, what hurdles a province would have to clear before it could separate?

Senator Gold: Well, senator, thank you for the question. Were I in a classroom, perhaps, in a law school or otherwise, that would be a question I would welcome. But in the brief time, let us simply say that this government is working hard to keep this country strong and united and will continue to do so.

CROWN-INDIGENOUS RELATIONS

RECONCILIATION WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Hon. Paul (PJ) Prosper: My question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Senator Gold, the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia have been working on a section 35 self-government agreement on income assistance, including implementation of the new Indigenous Services Canada, or ISC, disability income support payments. While I recognize that this is technically a

new government with a new leader, the commitment made by the Prime Minister to reconciliation has been made on the campaign trail, in his mandate letter and in the Speech from the Throne.

My question is this: Can you confirm that the government will commit to flow the disability income support funding held by ISC so that Ta'n Etli-tpi'tmk can ensure disabled income assistance clients living on reserve receive this benefit, which is two months overdue?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. As you mentioned, the previous government committed \$927.3 million in investments for the on-reserve income assistance program over five years starting in 2024-25 and \$169 million ongoing to provide income support on reserve and to expand programming to meet demand, and this will address the urgent and essential needs of income assistance clients who are living in poverty on reserve and continue case management and pre-employment supports.

With regard to the new disability supports on reserve in Nova Scotia, I've been informed that Indigenous Services Canada is currently working to flow the funding to communities in the manner they prefer whether through Ta'n Etli-tpi'tmk, the organization wherein Mi'kmaq control the management of income assistance, or directly to the nations.

Senator Prosper: Senator Gold, His Majesty stated:

... it is my great hope that in each of your communities, and collectively as a country, a path is found toward truth and reconciliation, in both word and deed.

Will your government uphold the honour of the Crown by meeting its commitments and restarting good faith negotiations with Ta'n Etli-tpi'tmk by sharing information to complete the sectoral self-government agreement and fiscal agreement on Mi'kmaq income assistance?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question — it's an important one — and I will certainly raise this with the minister at my earliest opportunity.

NATURAL RESOURCES

WILDFIRE MANAGEMENT

Hon. Marilou McPhedran: Wildfires engulf northern Manitoba, having burned almost half a million acres of forests, forcing the evacuation of more than 17,000 people. The Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre reports more than 150 wildfires rage across Canada, and over 83 are classified as out of control. In 2023, Canada experienced its worst wildfire season with more than 42 million acres burned — more than double the previous record — and with record-breaking air pollution.

My question: With the government's Speech from the Throne commitment to develop industry and increase militarization in Canada, are climate crisis mitigation strategies included?

[Senator Prosper]

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question, and thank you for underlining the ravages that are taking place across this country and the impact on communities, many of whom are in your province and had to be evacuated under very difficult circumstances, especially in the north.

Permit me to not necessarily subscribe to some of the characterizations in the question, but the important part of the question is that this government remains committed to address the issues of climate change in an effective manner. The Prime Minister has a distinguished career in analyzing certain aspects of the matter. The Minister of Environment in place is committed to making her ministry an effective one. I have every confidence in this government and the pursuit of all of its objectives will always take the well-being of our country, our nature, our planet and our future generations into account.

Senator McPhedran: It is good to read the Prime Minister's assurance to Manitoba's Premier Wab Kinew of full support. Wildfire devastation is Canada's new normal. What is your government doing beyond case-by-case support to plan this for now and our future?

Senator Gold: I'm not in the possession of a grand plan to address such a vast and important series of initiatives that not only the federal government but provincial and territorial governments and local communities will have to take. As and when the need and crisis arises, the federal government will be there, as it is for Manitoba which asked for federal assistance in its airlift evacuation support and the government responded.

In the longer term, the government will work with its partners, provinces, territories, Indigenous communities and other stakeholders to address the critical issues of the day and will continue to do so on behalf of all Canadians.

[Translation]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 2-4(2), the leaders and facilitators of the parties and groups have been consulted regarding the process for the election of the Speaker pro tempore.

I therefore wish to inform you that, as of today, and until noon (EST) on Monday, June 2, senators wishing to serve in this capacity may indicate their interest in being a candidate by communicating with the Clerk of the Senate. Senators may do this by providing a signed letter to that effect or by sending an email from their Senate email account.

If there is more than one candidate, they will be invited to address the Senate on Tuesday, June 3, during the period set aside for senators' statements, for a maximum of three minutes each. The order of speakers will be determined by drawing lots. If there are more than six candidates, their statements will continue beyond the time normally allowed, while if there are fewer than six candidates, any remaining time may be used for further statements. If there is only one candidate, that senator will be elected by acclamation, and I will make the announcement on Tuesday, June 3.

Voting will begin one hour after the candidates have finished speaking and will continue until one hour after the Senate adjourns for the day. Voting will resume on Wednesday, June 4, at 11 a.m. (EST) and will end one hour after the adjournment of the Senate, provided that all senators who were in line at that time will be able to vote. The vote will be supervised by one of the table officers and will take place at one of the senators' workstations adjacent to the reading room. As provided for in rule 2-4(1), if there are more than two candidates, a ranked ballot will be used. Senators will therefore be asked to number the candidates in order of preference on the ballot.

The votes will be counted immediately after the close of voting by the Clerk of the Senate, who may be assisted by a table officer. They will keep all details of the results confidential. I will announce the results at a Senate sitting at the earliest opportunity after the votes have been counted.

Senators will receive more detailed instructions for those who wish to be candidates from the Clerk of the Senate. Reminders will also be sent by email periodically from the Chamber Operations and Procedure Office during the voting period.

If adjustments to the above process are necessary, senators will be informed as soon as possible by a new announcement during a sitting, if possible, or by email.

• (1530)

[English]

ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR SENATORS

MOTION TO AFFECT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND PROCEEDINGS ADOPTED

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate), pursuant to notice of May 28, 2025, moved:

That, notwithstanding rules 12-3(2)(f) and 12-26(1) and subsections 35(2), (4), (5) and (8) of the Ethics and Conflict of Interest Code for Senators, the Honourable Senators Boniface, Busson, Carignan, P.C., Harder, P.C., Seidman and Smith be appointed to serve on the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators, until such time as a motion pursuant to rule 12-26(1) is adopted by the Senate or the Senate otherwise replaces the membership of the committee;

That, notwithstanding rule 12-26(2) and subsection 35(2) of the Ethics and Conflict of Interest Code for Senators, the quorum of the committee be four members;

That, notwithstanding the provisions of the previous two paragraphs, following the retirement of the Honourable Senator Seidman, she not be replaced as a member of the committee, which from that time have five members, of whom three constitute the quorum;

That, notwithstanding rule 12-26(1), for the duration of the membership of the committee pursuant to this order, when a vacancy occurs in the membership of the committee, the replacement member be appointed by order of the Senate;

That the committee be authorized to meet even though the Senate may then be sitting, and that rule 12-18(1) be suspended in relation thereto; and

That the committee be authorized to hold hybrid meetings or meetings entirely by videoconference, with the following provisions applying in relation to such meetings:

1. all members of the committee participating count towards quorum;
2. such meetings be considered to be occurring in the parliamentary precinct, irrespective of where participants may be located, subject to point 4(a);
3. the committee be directed to approach in camera meetings with the utmost caution and all necessary precautions, taking account of the risks to the confidentiality of in camera proceedings inherent in such technologies;
4. subject to variations that may be required by the circumstances, to participate in a meeting of the committee by videoconference senators must:
 - (a) participate from a designated office or designated residence within Canada;
 - (b) use a device and a headset with integrated microphone provided by the Senate and authorized for videoconferences with interpretation;
 - (c) be the only people visible during the videoconference;
 - (d) have their video on and broadcasting their image at all times, unless the meeting is suspended; and
 - (e) leave the videoconference if they leave their seat, unless the meeting is suspended; and

5. if the committee holds a hybrid or videoconference meeting in public, the provisions of rule 14-7(2) be applied so as to allow recording or broadcasting through facilities arranged by the Clerk of the Senate, and, if such a meeting cannot be broadcast live, the committee be considered to have fulfilled any obligations under the Rules relating to public meetings by making any available recording publicly available as soon as possible thereafter.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

THE ESTIMATES, 2025-26

NATIONAL FINANCE COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO STUDY MAIN ESTIMATES WITH THE EXCEPTION OF VOTE 1 TO BE STUDIED BY JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate), pursuant to notice of May 28, 2025, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance be authorized to examine and report upon the expenditures set out in the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026, with the exception of Library of Parliament Vote 1, when and if the committee is formed;

That, for the purpose of this study, the committee have the power to meet, even though the Senate may then be sitting or adjourned, and that rules 12-18(1) and 12-18(2) be suspended in relation thereto;

That the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament be authorized to examine and report upon the expenditures set out in Library of Parliament Vote 1 of the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026, when and if the committee is formed; and

That, in relation to the expenditures set out in Library of Parliament Vote 1, a message be sent to the House of Commons to acquaint that house accordingly.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

[Translation]

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION ADOPTED

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate), pursuant to notice of May 28, 2025, moved:

That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, June 3, 2025, at 2 p.m.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

[English]

THE SENATE

MOTION THAT ALL COMMITTEES CONSIDER THE INFLUENCES AND IMPACTS OF TECHNOLOGY IN ANY STUDIES FOR THE REMAINDER OF CURRENT SESSION—DEBATE CONTINUED

Hon. Colin Deacon, pursuant to notice of May 28, 2025, moved:

That, for the remainder of the current session, all committees consider the influences and impacts of technology in any study, including the consideration of bills, the subject matter of bills, estimates and special studies, authorized by the Senate, including any such work already authorized but not yet completed.

He said: Honourable senators, I'm glad to get on the scoreboard in the Forty-fifth Parliament.

In 2018, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg appeared before a U.S. Senate committee for a hearing that was meant to address serious concerns about data privacy and digital accountability. One exchange quickly went viral. A senator asked Zuckerberg, if a version of Facebook will always be free, “. . . how do you sustain a business model in which users don't pay for your service?” Zuckerberg responded, “Senator, we run ads.” That response drew both laughter and scrutiny from around the world.

That hearing revealed a generational and institutional disconnect between lawmakers and the technologies that are disrupting our societies and economies. A light was shone upon the gap between the pace of technological change and the capacity of legislators to meaningfully understand and use technology, let alone manage its risks and capture its opportunities.

That kind of disconnect is not just an American phenomenon; it can just as easily happen here, and in some ways it already has. Legislatively, we are not keeping up with our peers. We may not be able to fully close the generational gap, but we can and must address our institutional readiness to legislate in an age of rapid technological change.

That's why I am introducing this motion. It asks that, for the remainder of this session, every Senate committee consider the influences and impacts of technology in any study it undertakes. Colleagues, I'm not suggesting that we all learn how to code — mainly because we don't have to; ChatGPT can now write code on demand on our behalf. My focus is on the fact that, regardless of the policy area, our committees need to be equipped to think critically and responsibly about the effects of technology as it relates to the issues we study and how legislation will shape Canada's integration and use of technology.

Technology is no longer a sector that can be put in a silo or a niche area of expertise. It's a disruptive, cross-cutting force that shapes every corner of society and our economy. Tens of millions of Canadians use the internet or apps countless times per hour of each day, each month, each year.

Along with the benefits of these services come growing concerns about the security of our digital systems and the data they contain.

Technology is fuelling market-creating innovations that can generate or erode wealth and environmental progress. I've celebrated some of these innovations in this chamber and online, from fintechs helping Canadians build their credit scores to carbon-dioxide-removal innovators leading the green revolution.

Technology is also reshaping how we work, from automation and AI to gig platforms, raising new questions about labour rights and protections, and the future of work. Long-standing business models are being completely disrupted and replaced by new businesses that are growing faster than anyone could have ever imagined, a process called creative destruction.

In our democracy, technology is influencing public discourse in new ways. The spread of disinformation and AI-generated content challenges the integrity of our democratic processes. Simply put, technology is disrupting the traditional policy-making process and how we consider solutions that are best for Canadians.

I think it is fair to say the pace of digital transformation will continue to accelerate, so I think it is also fair to expect an increase in the legislative load in the upcoming Parliament, especially when compared to the previous Parliament. In the Forty-fourth Parliament, three pieces of government legislation that affected the digital economy in substantial ways achieved Royal Assent. These were Bill C-11, the Online Streaming Act; Bill C-18, the Online News Act; and Bill C-69, the Digital Services Tax Act, which was within Budget Implementation Act, 2024.

Five more pieces of legislation were tabled that did not make it through to Royal Assent: Bill S-6, An Act respecting regulatory modernization; Bill C-26, the bill relating to critical cyber systems protection; Bill C-27, the digital charter implementation

act, 2022; Bill C-63, the online harms act; and Bill C-65, the electoral participation act. These bills touched upon just some of the complex, fast-moving issues where our legislation and regulations are struggling to keep up. Much more needs to be done, especially if we are to catch up with the digital ambition of becoming a leading innovative economy.

If we want to be a chamber of sober second thought that is prepared for today's world, we must recognize that technology is no longer an optional context for our work; it is the context for our work.

We all know that the Senate's strength lies in its committee work, where we investigate, review and improve policies that matter to Canadians. However, today, only the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology has a direct reference to technology in its mandate. That's not to say that other committees have not focused on technology, but there is no consistent or formal requirement or role.

However, I don't think that we should silo technology into one or even a few committee responsibilities; instead, it should be a core consideration in every committee's work.

• (1540)

This brings me back to the proposed motion at hand. It asks all committees, for the duration of this session, to consider the influences and impacts of technology in their work, both in reviewing legislation and in special studies. As you know, the Rules Committee, rather than a single senator, is formally responsible for recommending changes to committee mandates. However, despite several attempts to identify ways to raise the profile of technology in committees — including suggestions of merging science and technology with other existing committees — the Rules Committee has been unable to come to a unanimous agreement on this issue.

Colleagues, we know the Senate has countless advocates for this issue. That's why I thought it important to propose a substep that might help us to move forward while the Rules Committee continues its important work. So, if passed, how would this proposed motion work in practice? I'll offer two suggestions.

First, we can build on our existing institutional resources, such as the expertise of the Library of Parliament. Library analysts already provide senators with expert, non-partisan support in different aspects of their work, most notably in committees. This motion will enable analysts to consider how a given policy interacts with technology and flag relevant technological trends or risks in committee briefing notes. Library analysts can also support committees by identifying sector-specific or general tech experts as go-to witnesses who can advise committees on technological issues.

Just as we hear from economists, legal scholars and subject-matter experts, we should normalize hearing from technologists, innovators and digital policy experts in committee deliberations. Doing so will increase our capacity to assess potential risks, opportunities and unintended consequences of technology or legislation that might otherwise go unnoticed. These suggestions can help senators build confidence and the muscle to apply a tech lens to their scrutiny of policy issues in committee and more broadly. More importantly, doing so would not require any additional Senate resources, as they would be incorporated into the analysts' existing responsibilities.

I was thrilled to hear from our new Parliamentary Librarian, Christine Ivory, that they are already implementing plans to ensure that the Library of Parliament can provide better support to all committees in the Senate and House when it comes to technology and innovation issues. I fully support her efforts, and I hope that the Library of Parliament continues to receive the necessary resources and support to equip their staff in meeting parliamentarians' needs in this critical area.

Second, we can champion the development of a technological assessment policy tool, similar to Gender-based Analysis Plus, or GBA Plus. Just as GBA Plus, language and regional considerations are employed across the board in assessing public policy, we could also champion a technology impact assessment tool that could help us scrutinize how policies intersect with technology. This tool could encourage us to think of pertinent questions, such as: How does this policy interact with emerging technologies? Does the legislation risk unnecessarily restricting the adoption of new technologies? Who will benefit or be left behind by technology-driven disruption? What regulatory gaps exist, and what safeguards — if any — are needed? How will these technologies shape this issue now or in the next 5 or 10 years? How do we ensure that legislation allows for regulatory agility that will accommodate ongoing technological change?

There are examples of impactful policy and assessment tools that we can draw from to achieve this. I already mentioned GBA Plus. Another great example is the Competition Bureau's Competition Policy Assessment Toolkit, which evaluates whether a policy is pro- or anti-competitive. There is also the Treasury Board's Algorithmic Impact Assessment, an AI risk assessment tool that can be adapted for public policy objectives. As legislators, championing a similar tool for technology would be a crucial step toward enabling forward-looking, consistent technological perspectives across our important work.

Honourable senators, this motion is not about legislating specific technologies or platforms. It's about building our capacity in the Senate to steadily strengthen our ability to scrutinize legislation and policies in this technological era. This motion challenges us to make a simple but meaningful change to one of the most important areas of our work as senators: our committees. By systematically applying a technological lens to our scrutiny of legislation and studies in committee, we can expand our skill sets to effectively legislate, investigate and advise on this ubiquitous, disruptive force.

The stakes are high. If we don't effectively understand the dynamics of technology in our public policy, we risk creating outdated and ineffective laws; missing opportunities for innovation and economic growth; and harbouring blind spots in ethics, privacy, equity and public trust. So, the choice before us is simple: react to technology's impacts or start to shape them. I hope we choose the latter.

Thank you, colleagues.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

(On motion of Senator Patterson, debate adjourned.)

(At 3:46 p.m., the Senate was continued until Tuesday, June 3, 2025, at 2 p.m.)

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