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The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Thursday, June 12, 2025

The Senate met at 1:30 p.m., the Speaker in the chair.

Prayers.

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, as a reminder, if senators' papers rub their microphone this creates problematic sounds and poor-quality audio. This impacts the quality of the broadcast of your interventions, and also affects the work of interpreters and other support staff. I would therefore ask that you ensure that your papers do not come near your microphone when you speak.

[English]

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

RADIO IN NEWFOUNDLAND

Hon. Fabian Manning: Honourable senators, today I'm pleased to present Chapter 89 of "Telling Our Story."

As many of you are aware, my home province of Newfoundland and Labrador is unique and special in many ways. Even when it comes to the field of broadcasting, we stand alone in Canada.

The great majority of radio stations throughout Canada are allocated call signs beginning with the letter "C." CB is used specifically for stations of the national broadcaster — the CBC — and then we have CF, CH, CI, CJ and CK for various other independent and commercial networks throughout the country.

But only in Newfoundland and Labrador will you find the unusual call signs that start with the letter "V."

Newfoundland's association with radio goes all the way back to Marconi's experiment in December 1901 when the first-ever transatlantic wireless message was received at Signal Hill in St. John's from Poldhu, Cornwall, England.

The first radio broadcast station in Newfoundland was VOWR, the voice of weekly radio owned and operated by the Wesley United Church of Canada. VOWR first signed on the air on July 20, 1924, just over 100 years ago and it is still going strong today.

Reverend Joseph G. Joyce started this station to provide an avenue for those people unable to attend their Sunday service in person.

The ITV prefix issued to what was then the Dominion of Newfoundland was VO and was changed to VOWR in 1932. The second station in Newfoundland was VOAR — the "Voice of the Adventist Radio" — which went on the air in St. John's in the fall of 1929. It is continuing today as VOAR-FM, airing a Christian radio format and it is owned by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The most well-known "V" station in Newfoundland is probably VOCM, which began broadcasting in 1936. Walter Banks William III and his father began VOCM in their family home at 80 Circular Road in St. John's. Walter was trained at the Radio Training Schools in the United States and then set up a company called the Atlantic Broadcasting Company. On December 22, 1933, the company was issued a licence to operate a station from the second floor of the family home.

The call sign granted for the new radio station was VOCM, chosen to mean the "Voice of the Common Man." The station's antenna was built in the backyard and the station first went on the air on October 19, 1936.

Today, VOCM 590 is a full-service talk and music station and is now owned by the Stingray Group.

I should also mention that immediately following the Second World War, the United States set up bases in Newfoundland that also used VO call signs. The last of these was VOUS in Argentia, which closed down in the late 1960s.

The VO prefix was assigned to the Dominion of Newfoundland before our province joined Confederation and therefore was grandfathered in when Canada joined Newfoundland in 1949, making us the only province in Canada that is licensed to use the radio station call letters VO.

This is just another unique fact about Newfoundland and Labrador. Thank you.

JOHN POMEROY, PHD

Hon. Tracy Muggli: Honourable senators, I rise today to recognize Dr. John Pomeroy, a distinguished professor at the University of Saskatchewan and recipient of the 2025 International Hydrology Prize — the Dooce medal. This prestigious award is presented by UNESCO, the World Meteorological Organization and the International Association of Hydrological Sciences. It is a global recognition of leadership in the science of water.

Dr. Pomeroy's contributions have fundamentally reshaped global understanding of how snow, ice and water systems respond to climate change, especially in cold regions like our Prairies and Rocky Mountains.

For more than four decades, from field work in Saskatchewan to glacier studies in Alberta, Dr. Pomeroy has helped Canada lead the world in hydrological science. Seriously, he is the

world's most cited snow hydrologist and founding director of Global Water Futures, the largest university-led freshwater research program on the planet, run out of Saskatchewan.

He also founded the Coldwater Laboratory in Canmore. Dr. Pomeroy's work blends scientific precision with practical innovation. Like many of us — or probably better than many of us — he has navigated and incorporated technological change into his work over the years.

He began his career using sand-filled garden hoses to measure frozen ground. Today, he uses drones and lasers to monitor climate extremes. The tools have changed, but the purpose remains to understand and protect one of our most precious resources — water. The urgency to do what we can to address water security is well known to all of us.

Dr. Pomeroy reminds us that the most profound innovations often emerge from field stations, community labs and those folks willing to get their boots dirty. He and his colleagues at the University of Saskatchewan and across this country have built a truly Canadian research culture rooted in ingenuity, humility and collaboration.

Honourable colleagues, please join me in congratulating Dr. Pomeroy on this well-deserved honour. His work is a testament to Canadian excellence and the power of science in support of our shared resources. Thank you, *meegwetich*.

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 Michael Babin, President of the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association. He is the guest of the Honourable Senators MacAdam, Woo and Patterson.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

BATTLE OF HONG KONG

Hon. Jane MacAdam: Honourable senators, there is truth to the sentiment that the ravages of war carry on long after the white flag has been raised, the guns laid down and the battlefields fall silent. For countless veterans and their families, the outer war may have ended, but inner struggles carry on.

• (1340)

As we mark the eightieth anniversary of the end of World War II, I would like to acknowledge Victory over Japan Day, or V-J Day. In August 1945, the emperor announced Japan's surrender, effectively ending World War II.

My father, George Palmer, a member of the Royal Rifles of Canada, was among the nearly 2,000 Canadians who fought in the Battle of Hong Kong in December of 1941. There were

290 Canadians who lost their lives, and the remaining soldiers were transferred to prisoner of war camps to endure brutality, hunger and slave labour. Many did not survive. My father was held for over three and a half years in camps in Hong Kong and Japan. He spoke very little of his experiences, convinced that no one would believe him anyway. If he were with us today, I think he would want us to recognize the sacrifice of the families and that the suffering was not his alone, urging us to learn from history in order to build a more peaceful future.

There are no veterans alive today from the Battle of Hong Kong to speak for themselves. I am but one voice. We need more voices to speak in support of our veterans.

One organization doing this important work is the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association. Their mission is to educate Canadians on the role of Canada's soldiers in the Battle of Hong Kong and the effects of internment on the battle's survivors as well as their families. They have acted as a strong support for widows and families of Hong Kong veterans. Also, they have done significant research to raise awareness of the contributions of Indigenous soldiers to the battle. The association's president, Michael Babin, is committed to sharing this history. His father was also a prisoner of war.

The association will be hosting an eightieth anniversary reunion from August 14 to 17 in Ottawa. The occasion will be marked with shared stories and commemorative events at the National War Memorial, the Defence of Hong Kong Memorial Wall and the Canadian War Museum.

Honourable senators, V-J Day is a stark reminder of the detrimental costs of war and the sacrifices that were made on our behalf during the Battle of Hong Kong and, indeed, in all armed conflict. I want to honour all those who serve. Their remarkable courage should never be forgotten. I also want to acknowledge those who support our veterans and their families, working tirelessly to educate Canadians and to preserve their legacy, keeping their sacrifices at the forefront of our minds.

Lest we forget.

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 Her Excellency Maria Andrelita S. Austria, Philippine Ambassador to Canada, and members of the Philippine Embassy. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Osler.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE DAY FILIPINO HERITAGE MONTH

Hon. Flordeliz (Gigi) Osler: Honourable senators, I rise today in celebration of Philippine Independence Day and Filipino Heritage Month. Filipinos make up the largest Southeast Asian population in Canada, with nearly 1 million people calling this country home.

You have seen and heard the many ways the Filipino community contributes to the Canadian economy. But today, I want to speak to something just as important: the power of Filipino community organizing. Across the country, Filipino Canadians are building grassroots organizations, not only to advocate for our needs but also to uplift and serve others. These efforts are quiet and steady and often go unrecognized. But their impact is undeniable. From coast to coast to coast, we are creating spaces of belonging.

This afternoon, the Canada-Philippines Interparliamentary Group raised the Philippine flag on Parliament Hill, symbolizing the strength of the community and the ties between the two nations.

In Ottawa, Filipino-Canadian youth gather each year for a national leadership conference that empowers them to pursue careers where we are under-represented.

Across campuses, student associations are building bridges of mentorship. In Manitoba, I recently had the honour of attending a cultural showcase led by the Manitoba Association of Filipino Teachers Inc., or MAFIT. Through their after-school heritage program offered in 16 schools, they help students stay rooted in the languages, arts and stories of our ancestors. It is a profound act of intergenerational care.

In Toronto, Salaysay, a collective of writers, is preserving and elevating our stories across generations and genres, reminding us that our voices deserve space in the national narrative. Our community not only gathers in celebration, but we also gather in grief and solidarity.

As I shared in this chamber a few weeks ago, tragedy struck during the Lapu-Lapu Day celebrations in Vancouver on April 26. In its aftermath, vigils were held across the country. We came together not just to mourn, but also to hold on to one another. That, too, is the power of community.

The organizations, the gatherings, the people — they are building something larger than themselves.

As we mark Filipino Heritage Month and Philippine Independence Day, let us celebrate, from coast to coast to coast, the Filipino Canadians who are doing that work with compassion and conviction. *Meegwetch*. Thank you. *Maraming salamat po*.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, today I rise not only in celebration but also in remembrance as we mark the fifth annual Filipino Heritage Month in Canada and honour the late Honourable Tobias Enverga Jr., our former colleague and dear friend. Senator Enverga was a trailblazer, the first Filipino Canadian appointed to this chamber and a fierce advocate for the Filipino communities across Canada, like our colleague Senator Osler. The inaugural flag-raising ceremony is part of his legacy, which continues to shape the very moments we are privileged to share today.

June offers us an opportunity to reflect on the journey of Filipino Canadians — a story rooted in courage, resilience and community. The first Filipino immigrants arrived in Canada as early as the late 1800s, finding work in fishing, forestry and mining along the Pacific Coast. In the decades that followed, particularly in the 1930s onward, waves of immigrants — many of them women working as nurses, teachers and caregivers — laid the foundation of what has become one of Canada's most vibrant and dynamic communities.

Today, Filipino Canadians form the third-largest Asian diaspora in our country, contributing to every corner of Canadian society. Their impact is woven into the fabric of our nation, and their presence enriches our cultural and civic landscape in countless ways.

This month also marks a defining moment in the history of the Philippines. Today — June 12 — is the one hundred and twenty-seventh anniversary of independence from Spanish rule. June 12 is a historic day which ignited a movement for sovereignty and democracy that continues to inspire generations of Pinoys. The same spirit that lit the path to freedom in the Philippines continues to live on in Filipino communities around the world, including here in Canada.

Today, the annual flag-raising ceremony took place on Parliament Hill, led by our colleague Senator Osler. It was an important reminder of the enduring friendship between Canada and the Philippines. This event is one of the last events for Ambassador Austria, who successfully concludes her posting in Canada in a few days. Thank you for your leadership and friendship.

Honourable senators, as we celebrate Filipino Heritage Month, let us continue to build a Canada that reflects the strength of our diversity and the beauty of our shared stories. *Mabuhay* Canada. *Mabuhay* Philippines.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[Translation]

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of our former colleague the Honourable Dennis Dawson.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

• (1350)

[English]

NATIONAL BLOOD DONOR WEEK WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY

Hon. John M. McNair: Honourable senators, this is National Blood Donor Week, and June 14 is World Blood Donor Day.

I rise today to pay tribute to James Harrison, who passed away earlier this year on February 17. James was a prolific blood donor who hailed from Australia and donated blood for over 60 years of his life. His blood donation journey began when he was just 14 years old, having to undergo a major surgery, and he depended on the blood of strangers to save his life. After the procedure, he vowed to give back, and when he turned 18, he began donating blood despite having an aversion to needles.

Years later, it was discovered that his plasma contained an important antibody known as anti-D, which was needed to make a medication for mothers whose blood is at risk of attacking their unborn babies.

Known as Rhesus disease, the condition develops when a pregnant woman has Rh-negative blood and the baby in her womb has Rh-positive blood. If the mother has been sensitized to Rh-positive blood, usually during a previous pregnancy with a Rh-positive baby, she may produce RhD antibodies that destroy the baby's foreign blood cells.

In the worst cases, babies die or suffer brain damage. Anti-D prevents women with Rh-negative blood from developing RhD antibodies during pregnancy.

James Harrison was a pioneer of Australia's anti-D program. It is estimated that he helped save the babies of more than 2 million Australian women. He donated blood 1,173 times between the ages of 18 and 81. Because of this, became affectionately known as "the Man With the Golden Arm."

His kindness leaves a remarkable legacy, and he challenged his fellow Australians to beat it. At his last donation, James said, "I hope it's a record that somebody breaks, because it will mean they are dedicated to the cause."

Colleagues, we can all be inspired by James's selfless example of truly paying it forward. As this is National Blood Donor Week, I encourage each of you to consider donating if you can.

When we give blood, we give hope, and together we save lives. Remember that every donation is a lifeline.

Meegwetch, thank you.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Sarah Wiseman, Canada Director of The Shapiro Foundation, as well as Rachelle Anctil of World University Services Canada. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Coyle.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

JUSTICE

CHARTER STATEMENT IN RELATION TO BILL C-4— DOCUMENT TABLED

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Charter Statement prepared by the Minister of Justice in relation to Bill C-4, An Act respecting certain affordability measures for Canadians and another measure, pursuant to the *Department of Justice Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. J-2, sbs. 4.2(1).

CHARTER STATEMENT IN RELATION TO BILL C-5— DOCUMENT TABLED

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Charter Statement prepared by the Minister of Justice in relation to Bill C-5, An Act to enact the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and the Building Canada Act, pursuant to the *Department of Justice Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. J-2, sbs. 4.2(1).

CRIMINAL CODE

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Pamela Wallin introduced Bill S-231, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying).

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

CAN'T BUY SILENCE BILL

FIRST READING

Hon. Marilou McPhedran introduced Bill S-232, An Act respecting non-disclosure agreements.

(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.)

QUESTION PERIOD

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

MEMBERS OF CABINET

Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the government leader. Leader, in his well-known book *The Peter Principle*, Laurence J. Peter observed that in bureaucracies, individuals are often promoted to their level of incompetence. They perform well at one level, only to be elevated into roles they can no longer manage effectively.

In recent weeks, several of Prime Minister Carney's cabinet ministers have made remarks that raise serious doubts about their grasp of their responsibilities. Whether it's the public safety minister's confusion over firearms regulation and need to recuse himself from discussions on two terrorist groups, the housing minister downplaying the need for lower home prices or the culture minister contradicting the Prime Minister on pipelines, these instances point to a troubling misalignment or lack of understanding at the highest level of government.

Senator Gold, is the Prime Minister confident that his ministers possess the competence required for the positions they hold, or are we witnessing the "Peter Principle" in action?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. It is my understanding that the Prime Minister has confidence in the cabinet that he has named and has confidence that they will work together to implement the priorities that he has set for this government.

Senator Housakos: Senator Gold, Canadians deserve ministers who are aligned with the government's directions and capable of delivering on their mandates. Of course, we're all hopeful that Prime Minister Carney is able to succeed with respect to the targets that he has set.

However, when ministers consistently make statements that mislead the public or contradict the Prime Minister on government policy, public confidence, of course, becomes eroded.

Would you not agree that cabinet ministers should understand their portfolios and speak in harmony with the Prime Minister, or is that too much to ask of these ministers?

Senator Gold: Canadians are lucky to have a government and a Prime Minister that believe in cabinet government and that members of the government, as you quite rightly point out, should be pulling in the same direction. That is why this government and the Prime Minister have introduced identical mandate letters with the priorities set out for all of his ministers.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

PARKS CANADA

Hon. Denise Batters: Your Liberal government has made ambitious promises. One that raises serious concerns in Western Canada is the promise to establish at least 10 new national parks under the direction of Minister Guilbeault. I am certainly a strong supporter of our national parks and fully recognize the importance of preserving Canada's natural heritage, but I am concerned that under Minister Guilbeault's leadership, this initiative could be used as a back door to obstructing critical nation-building projects that your own government has promised to deliver.

• (1400)

How can you assure Canadians that the creation of new national parks won't be used as a tool to block energy development projects essential to Canada's energy security and economic sovereignty?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question and for underlining the importance of national parks and projects of national importance.

I think what I would say to your question is that this chamber and Canadians can be assured that this government is focused on the key priorities it has set out in the mandate letters to each minister, including the minister to whom you made reference, to show the Prime Minister how the work within their ministries will contribute to these national priorities. The national priorities, in terms of nation building, also include preserving this great country and its natural beauty for the future of our children and grandchildren. It can all be done together. This government is determined to do so.

Senator Batters: Senator Gold, given Minister Guilbeault's infamous activist past and his repeated efforts to prioritize his ideology over nation building, why does this Carney government continue to trust him with portfolios that have profound implications for national unity? Is this government's purpose in creating new parks truly conservation or is it just pandering to radical activists at the expense of Canada's energy future and economic cohesion?

Senator Gold: Senator Batters, your characterization of Minister Guilbeault I think is unfortunate and one with which this government does not agree. The minister has the full confidence of the Prime Minister. His contributions — past, present and future — will serve the best interests of this country.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION

Hon. Tony Loffreda: Senator Gold, on Tuesday, the Auditor General released her most recent reports. One focuses on the government's commitment to dispose of properties it considers suitable for the development of affordable, accessible, energy-efficient and socially inclusive housing.

We all know it: Canada is in the middle of a housing and affordability crisis, yet the Auditor General found the affordability requirement used by the Federal Lands Initiative to convert office space into affordable housing was not designed to provide housing that would be affordable for the lowest income households.

Senator Gold, what criterion for affordability is the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, or CMHC, using if it is not based on household income?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. It's my understanding that the CMHC defines housing as affordable "if it costs less than 30% of a household's before-tax income." CMHC also notes that affordable housing is:

... a very broad term that can include housing provided by the private, public and non-profit sectors. It also includes all forms of housing tenure: rental, ownership and co-operative ownership, as well as temporary and permanent housing.

All of that said, this government has been very clear — during the election and thereafter — that it remains focused on addressing, in a serious way, the housing crisis that befalls us.

Senator Loffreda: I've been raising this issue of reducing the government's real property portfolio since 2020. Unfortunately, Public Services and Procurement Canada achieved only a slight reduction in office space since 2020 and projects it will not reach its 50% target by 2034. Rather, now it projects a 33% reduction.

How will the government recalibrate its strategy to reach its original target and the projected multi-billion dollars in savings?

Senator Gold: Thank you for the reference to the work of the Auditor General in this regard. The government welcomes and accepts all of the recommendations.

My understanding is the government is working closely with Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat and Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada to implement those recommendations in an open and transparent way and will provide updates on the government's progress towards reducing the federal office footprint in due course.

INDIGENOUS SERVICES

GENDER-BASED DISCRIMINATION

Hon. Kim Pate: Senator Gold, in 2017, I told this chamber that Bill S-3's message that Indigenous women must wait for full removal of sex discrimination in the Indian Act felt reminiscent of 1982 when Canada's Constitution was repatriated, but women — those who are racialized and disabled and others experiencing discrimination — were advised we would have to wait three years for section 15, the equality provisions, to be implemented.

Eight years on, as underscored by this week's Auditor General's report and the 2022 Senate Indigenous Peoples Committee report on the issue, Indigenous women are still waiting for equality. Bill S-2 is only yet another incremental step.

I ask again what I asked then: When will all forms of sex-based discrimination be removed from the Indian Act and when will section 15's protected Charter equality rights be actualized for Indigenous women?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question, Senator Pate, and thank you for acknowledging — as the sponsor of the bill, Senator Audette, did yesterday — that Bill S-2 is an important step in addressing historic discrimination that Indigenous women continue to face. The government remains committed to addressing this historical discrimination, but I don't have a timeline for what the next steps may be.

Senator Pate: Thank you for that. You'll no doubt know that in the 2023 to 2027 Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy, Indigenous Services Canada, or ISC, identified United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 10 — reduced inequalities — as applicable to all its programs, including ensuring equal opportunity and reducing inequalities of outcome by eliminating discriminatory laws and practices.

What specific steps are being taken to ensure that ISC is actually delivering on this commitment to equality?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question. As you note, this is an issue that Indigenous Services Canada has committed to and has identified as an important part of its Departmental Plan. It's my understanding that work is ongoing and is an important part of the government's efforts towards truth and reconciliation, but the government also acknowledges — as we all do — that much more work needs to be done.

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKER PROGRAM

Hon. Robert Black: Senator Gold, Canadian agriculture and agri-food contributed \$150 billion to our GDP in 2023 — that's roughly 7% of GDP — and plays a vital role in the health and prosperity of both rural and urban communities across this country.

But our farmers are facing a worsening labour crisis. Over 28,000 agricultural jobs went unfilled in 2022, even after more than 70,000 temporary foreign workers were brought to Canada to help meet demand. This workforce represents over 20% of the total employment in agriculture, and in some areas, like horticulture, the sector simply cannot function without it. The Royal Bank of Canada also warns that by 2033, 40% of farm operators will retire. It's clear that the labour shortage is only getting worse.

Given this reality, will the government exempt the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, especially for agriculture, from its plan to cap temporary residents at under 5% of Canada's population by 2027?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you, senator, for your question and your continued advocacy for the agricultural industry.

The government understands that the Temporary Foreign Worker Program is essential to our economy and, in particular, to supporting crucial sectors including agriculture as well as others such as fisheries and tourism. The government is committed to ensuring the quick arrival of temporary workers to meet employer needs and fill labour market vacancies.

That said, I cannot speculate as to any potential changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, but I can say that the government remains in close coordination with provincial and territorial counterparts on the path forward to ensure sustainable immigration while also addressing these critical labour needs.

Senator Black: Senator Gold, promises and platitudes will not suffice for much longer in the industry and only continue to threaten our food security.

How does your government plan to ensure Canadians continue to have reliable access to affordable Canadian-grown food when fewer and fewer temporary foreign workers are coming to Canada?

Senator Gold: I should not waste my time deciding how to react to the characterization of my statements as platitudes. The fact remains that Minister Hajdu is reviewing streams within the Temporary Foreign Worker Program to better address current labour needs, and I have every confidence that these issues are being taken into account.

INNOVATION

AI COMPUTE ACCESS FUND

Hon. Katherine Hay: Honourable senators, my question is for the government leader, the Honourable Senator Gold. I echo all the warm and inspiring words and feelings about your impact in the Senate and on the people of Canada. I know this impact will have a ripple effect for generations to come.

• (1410)

My question is this: In the previous government's budget, more than 14 months ago, there was a significant commitment made to invest in artificial intelligence, or AI, by establishing a \$2.4-billion AI fund, with \$2 billion tagged to invest in computing and infrastructure — something Canada is sorely lacking in — and \$400 million to invest in Canadian-developed, -built, -owned and -implemented AI products and start-ups.

Can you share or inquire what the spend or flow of investment has been, and what the plans are to put these funds into the hands of Canadian companies, applied research institutes, not-for-profits and even not-for-profit charities quickly?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question, senator, and for an important intervention — your first intervention — in the chamber.

As you properly noted, this was an issue passed by the previous government, and I can say that this government is committed to allocating the funding in a responsible manner. I will also note — as the Prime Minister said — that this government is focused on becoming more productive by deploying AI at scale, focusing on results over spending and using our scarce tax dollars to catalyze multitudes of private investment.

In a recent interview with Patrice Roy, the Prime Minister also mentioned the link and the importance of AI to our defence and national security, and the building of that infrastructure here in Canada.

HEALTH

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Hon. Katherine Hay: Thank you, Senator Gold. I will have opening remarks at the G7 Canada Brain Economy Summit, with a clear call to action for the leaders of the G7.

Prime Minister Carney eliminated the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, rolling that into Health Canada. The new \$500-million Youth Mental Health Fund, established with a clear mandate to build capacity, is apart and separate from all other health funding. My question is this: When does the Minister of Health plan to activate this fund, particularly when Canada has a mental health crisis embedded in communities coast to coast to coast?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): As I stated, the government is committed to allocating these funds in an appropriate manner, as laid out in the legislation to which you referred. I don't have a timeline for any new proposals, but I have every confidence the work will be done expeditiously.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

CANADIAN COAST GUARD

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): The government claims it will reach the NATO 2% target as early as this year, in part, by integrating the Canadian Coast Guard into our national defence capabilities. Bill C-2 expands its mandate to include security — specifically patrols and intelligence — and allows for its responsibility to be transferred to another minister, potentially the Minister of National Defence.

Is the Canadian Coast Guard being militarized, leader? Will it now be armed, given a real law enforcement role, like the U.S. Coast Guard, and placed under the authority of the Department of National Defence?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. As the government has made clear, it is making historic investments in order to bolster our capacity to protect our sovereignty now and to be a strong partner with our allies.

Part of this work includes expanding the reach, security mandate and abilities of the Canadian Coast Guard and integrating it within the NATO defence capabilities to better secure our sovereignty and to expand maritime surveillance.

The government is committed to growing the existing military capabilities and to introducing emerging military capabilities that will allow Canada to become increasingly self-sufficient. The details of how this will be accomplished will be developed over time, in proper consultation with the Coast Guard and others. More details will be forthcoming.

Senator Martin: The question is whether that will be in the budget. NATO allows for forces like coast guards to be included in defence spending, but only if they are tactically trained, equipped like military forces, capable of operating under military command and of deployment abroad in support of military operations. In other words, meeting those criteria requires significant investment.

Has the government assessed the real cost of such a transformation? How much of the \$9 billion announced will be specifically allocated to the Coast Guard?

Senator Gold: I'm not in a position to answer those questions at this time. The upcoming meetings with NATO allies — to say nothing of the G7 — are going to be critical moments for Canada to engage with its partners and allies in these alliances to coordinate those efforts and obtain a clearer sense of the expectations of our partners going forward. As I said, the government will operationalize its commitments responsibly and expeditiously.

[Translation]

RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT OF MEMBERS

Hon. Claude Carignan: Leader, in the run-up to the NATO summit, the government is rushing to announce new defence spending. However, as usual over the past decade, it is throwing money at problems of its own making.

The Prime Minister spoke briefly about recruitment and retention, promising to increase pay and modernize the process, without offering any details.

However, as Bill Blair acknowledged:

[English]

Over the past three years, more people have left than have entered. That is, frankly, a death spiral . . . We've got to do something differently.

[Translation]

Why hasn't the Prime Minister said what he is going to do differently to solve this fundamental problem?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): This government is committed to ongoing support for our Armed Forces and our capacity to protect ourselves in a way never before seen in Canadian history. To do that, it will adopt measures that address not only recruitment, but also retention of Armed Forces personnel. Among other things, that includes appropriate salaries that will incentivize Canadians to join our Armed Forces or to keep working to protect us. As I explained recently, more measures will be announced in the weeks and months to come.

Senator Carignan: Leader, the Prime Minister can talk all he likes about billions of dollars for defence, but the Canadian Armed Forces are still up to 15,000 short of a fully operational force. Furthermore, almost 50% of their equipment is considered unusable.

How can Canadians trust a government that, back in 2017, promised to increase the size of the Regular Force to 71,500, but is still far from reaching that goal?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question. Time prevents us from reminding senators about the backstory of military spending, not only under the previous government, but also under other governments before it. After dropping to less than 1% of our GDP, military spending has increased over the past 10 years. The government is going to continue making historic and targeted investments to effectively protect us.

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Hon. Mary Coyle: Senator Gold, the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development has released three reports on the government's progress on climate adaptation, species protection and ocean management, highlighting problems of inconsistent planning, insufficient data and lack of concrete actions.

The commissioner's report on adaptation found that the government is not prioritizing different climate change risks in its climate adaptation strategy. It lacks a process to update it, omits some risks related to human health, such as the spread of Lyme disease, and lacks actions to address others, including wildfires.

Blair Feltmate of the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation suggests that the government should consider creating a chief resiliency officer to better lead the adaptation strategy.

Senator Gold, is this something the government will take into serious consideration?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you, senator, for raising these important questions and for underscoring the importance of the need to focus on resilience, because the days of denying climate change are long past us, and it's something we have to manage for our own safety and security.

It's important to note that the government has accepted all of the recommendations that the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development made in the *National Adaptation Strategy* report. As you know — and as I mentioned — the Prime Minister has tasked all of his ministers with identifying how they can contribute to the government's key priorities, and I have every confidence the minister will carefully consider that suggestion.

• (1420)

Senator Coyle: Thank you, Senator Gold. In the ocean management report, the commissioner underscored the need for expert planning of marine environments. Planning important nation-building projects like offshore wind development can only be effective if we have the proper knowledge of the marine environment. Will the government accelerate its efforts to fill the knowledge gaps on marine environments in order to make better decisions when building these projects?

Senator Gold: Thank you for again noting and underlining that the government has, in fact, accepted the commissioner's recommendations in the *Integrated Oceans Management* report. I've been advised that Fisheries and Oceans Canada will continue to collect and analyze data and information, and engage with partners and stakeholders in support of sound regulatory decision making. This foundational work will continue to support future opportunities to advance integrated oceans management.

[Translation]

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

CANADA-CHINA RELATIONS

Hon. Julie Miville-Dechêne: Senator Gold, the well-known prisoner of conscience Jimmy Lai has become a symbol of violated press freedom in Hong Kong. Four years ago, he was forced to shut down his popular pro-democracy daily, *Apple Daily*, which was critical of China. Thrown in prison, Jimmy Lai was subjected to a political trial that violated every rule of law. He is 77 years old, suffers from diabetes and is in declining health.

What efforts is Canada making to secure his release? His life is at stake, according to his lawyers.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. I want to emphasize that Canada has consistently condemned Hong Kong's national security law since it was first imposed five years ago. It infringes on the democratic rights and freedoms guaranteed by Hong Kong's basic law, which is why our government has continued to call on Hong Kong and Beijing to act in accordance with their obligations to respect the protected rights and freedoms and to ensure that the judicial system follows the rule of law. To answer your question more directly, I've been told that the government has conveyed its concerns directly to Hong Kong officials.

Senator Miville-Dechêne: Thank you. In the meantime, Jimmy Lai's son, Sebastien Lai, was in Ottawa on Tuesday with former minister Irwin Cotler, calling on the government to act and to do more.

Would the government be willing to make an important gesture right now by granting honorary Canadian citizenship to Jimmy Lai, who has family and business ties in Canada?

Senator Gold: Thank you for the question. I believe, esteemed colleague, that a motion has been introduced in the other place and adopted. I'm confident that the Government of Canada will examine this issue carefully.

[English]

INDUSTRY

PROCUREMENT PROCESS

Hon. Colin Deacon: My question is for Senator Gold. Government procurement is a persistent barrier to innovation in Canada. It's impossibly slow, onerous and expensive, especially for innovative companies. Innovators can spend years formally proving the value of their technology through Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada's Innovative Solutions Canada program. If the government decides to buy the tech, the company enters the Pathway to Commercialization program, yet it's still a standard procurement process.

Canada's new Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation Evan Solomon recently expressed his commitment to champion our champions — fabulous — supporting homegrown innovation. However, I worry that the entrenched failings of the procurement system will prevent him from achieving his crucial objective.

Senator Gold, what concrete steps is the government taking to become the best customer for high value Canadian innovation, and what key performance indicators will be used to assess the effectiveness of procurement programs for innovation?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. Canadians gave this government a clear mandate to deliver real change, and part of that work will be to spur innovation and investment. I understand that the government is actively listening to partners in industry, working to slash red tape and get a head start on milestone nation-building projects. As I've said now on several occasions, the Prime Minister has already tasked ministers with the responsibility to identify key goals, including Minister Solomon, and to evaluate what measures of success should be identified in those areas. I understand that this work is ongoing.

I will repeat, because I think it's important, that this Prime Minister and this government understand the importance that innovation generally plays our economy and that in particular areas — whether it be quantum computing or the development of AI — this has contributed to our national security and to creating a new and future-oriented economy where Canadians can be world leaders.

Senator C. Deacon: Thank you for the answer, Senator Gold, and for the enthusiasm that I pick up in terms of where things are going.

The Liberal Party platform in 2025 proposed an office of digital transformation to centralize innovation procurement. We've seen how long it can take to create new institutional bodies. What strategies will be taken to quickly form this office, effectively proving that it will be capable of working at the speed of innovation, not at the speed of bureaucracy?

Senator Gold: I don't have information on that particular question. I do note with interest — as I think Canadians do — the recent appointment of Michael Sabia, who has a reputation and experience, both well deserved, for being a serious, focused person who also demands results. I expect that the team will be focused on achieving results in an expeditious way.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

MILITARY PROCUREMENT

Hon. David Richards: Senator Gold, I know you're getting a few questions about defence today, but costs are soaring, and the infrastructure needed to house the F-35s are now three years

behind schedule. The Auditor General states that facilities won't be ready before 2031, and that key elements must be redesigned. There is an ongoing shortage of trained pilots — an issue raised more than six years ago. The government still hasn't ensured even the basic preparations, neither in infrastructure nor in pilot training. Recently, an American General commented that Canadians were in no position to accept these planes. Why shouldn't we be angrily calling this a disgrace?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Forgive me, I didn't catch the actual question, but I understand the issue that you raise and the government is seized with this issue. That is why the government has made no secret of the fact that it feels it is a matter of national importance, national security and urgency to invest significantly more and continue to do so in all aspects of our National Defence needs.

That includes, of course, the infrastructure and the personnel necessary to man the planes we have, the planes we're legally committed to buy, and those that we will acquire after. It also involves thinking creatively about those tools to protect our security, which the 21st century is making more evident and necessary.

Senator Richards: Thank you for that, but monetarily, the F-35 acquisition was based on 2019 data. As a result, costs have ballooned by almost \$9 billion over two years. National Defence admitted that it only had 50% confidence in its own estimate, so it might be higher. Will these new costs enable us to even purchase these planes, which are sorely needed, in a timely fashion?

Senator Gold: There is a review under way with regard to the remaining F-35s that Canada is not yet legally obligated to purchase. Canada will pursue the purchase for which it is legally obligated and is examining all of its options with regard to aircraft, what is necessary to support aircraft, and many other aspects including hardware, software and human resources to ensure that our national security is protected.

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker: Before we continue with the Orders of the Day, could you check to make sure your cellphones have been switched to silent mode? Thank you.

[English]

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: Motion No. 10, followed by Motion No. 9, followed by all remaining items in the order that they appear on the Order Paper.

• (1430)

[Translation]

ONE CANADIAN ECONOMY BILL

MOTION TO RESOLVE INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE TO
CONSIDER SUBJECT MATTER OF BILL C-5 AND
AFFECT ITS PROCEEDINGS ADOPTED

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate), pursuant to notice of June 11, 2025, moved:

That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules, usual practice or previous order:

1. when the Senate sits on June 16, June 17 and June 18, 2025, it resolve itself into Committees of the Whole at the start of each sitting to consider the subject matter of Bill C-5, An Act to enact the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and the Building Canada Act, introduced in the House of Commons on June 6, 2025, in advance of that bill coming before the Senate;
2. each Committee of the Whole last a maximum of four hours, provided that the committee may suspend its meeting as it considers appropriate, with any such suspensions not being counted as part of the total time the committee may sit;
3. on June 16, 2025, the Committee of the Whole receive:
 - (a) the Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P., Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, for a maximum of 65 minutes, who may make introductory remarks of a maximum of 5 minutes, with her appearance focused on Part 1 of the bill, and who may be accompanied by at most three officials; and
 - (b) such other witnesses as may be determined according to the process established in this order;
4. on June 17, 2025, the Committee of the Whole receive:
 - (a) the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, P.C., M.P., President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs and One Canadian Economy, and the Honourable Rebecca Alty, P.C., M.P., Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, for a maximum of 130 minutes, who may make introductory remarks of a maximum of 5 minutes each, with their appearance focused on Part 2 of the bill, with each minister accompanied by at most three officials; and
 - (b) such other witnesses as may be determined according to the process established in this order;
5. on June 18, 2025, the Committee of the Whole receive such witnesses as may be determined according to the process established in this order;
6. the majority of deputy leaders or deputy facilitators be authorized to invite witnesses on behalf of the Committees of the Whole, subject to the terms of this order;
7. if, during any of these Committees of the Whole, a senator does not use the entire period of 10 minutes for debate provided under rule 12-31(3)(d), including the responses of the witnesses, that senator may yield the balance of time to another senator;
8. the provisions of rule 3-3(1) and any provision of the Rules or previous order relating to the ordinary time of adjournment be suspended while these Committees of the Whole are meeting;
9. if a standing vote was deferred to a time that would occur during the meeting of any of these Committees of the Whole, that vote be further deferred so that the bells only begin once the committee has completed its work;
10. for greater certainty, witnesses at any of these Committees of the Whole appear in person;
11. if the Senate receives a message from the House of Commons with Bill C-5, that bill be placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at second reading later that day, as the first item of Government Business if received before that point in the sitting, or, if received after that point in the sitting, as the next item of business, and, in either case, the sitting not adjourn that day before the Senate has begun proceedings on the bill at second reading;
12. except as provided in point 14, once debate on second reading of the bill begins, that debate not be adjourned, with the Senate not adjourning until consideration of the bill at that stage is complete and continuing beyond the ordinary time of adjournment,

if required, and with any standing vote requested in relation to any motion relating to second reading of the bill not being deferred;

13. except as provided in points 14 and 15, if the bill is adopted at second reading, it be placed on the Orders of the Day for third reading at the next sitting of the Senate;
14. except as provided in point 15, at the end of debate at second reading, the Government Liaison be authorized to defer the standing vote on the main motion, if one is requested, to the next sitting of the Senate, at the start of the Orders of the Day, in which case, if the bill is still before the Senate after the vote, it be placed on the Orders of the Day for third reading later that same sitting;
15. during the sitting of June 27, 2025, if the bill is still on the Orders of the Day, for either that sitting or a future sitting:
 - (a) the sitting continue until proceedings on the bill are completed;
 - (b) proceedings on any item related to the bill not be adjourned;
 - (c) if the bill is only adopted at second reading that day, it be taken into consideration at third reading forthwith; and
 - (d) if the Senate has not concluded all proceedings on the bill by 5:15 p.m., the Speaker interrupt any proceedings then before the Senate in order to put all questions necessary to dispose of the bill at third reading without further debate, provided that:
 - (i) if the bill has not yet been moved for either second or third reading at that time, a senator be recognized solely to move second or third reading, as appropriate;
 - (ii) if the bill is on the Orders of the Day for a future sitting, it be brought forward at that time so that all questions can be put;
 - (iii) if any vote relating to the bill had been deferred so that it would normally take place after the time provided for the interruption of proceedings, that vote be brought forward to 5:30 p.m. on June 27, 2025, after a 15-minute bell, with the bells to begin ringing at 5:15 p.m.; and
 - (iv) if the Speaker interrupts proceedings then before the Senate pursuant to this subpoint in order to put all questions necessary to dispose of the bill without further debate, no further debate or amendment be permitted at any stage, and, if a standing vote is requested, the vote not be deferred and the

bells ring once, and for only 15 minutes, without being rung again for subsequent votes necessary to dispose of the bill;

16. if the Senate does not sit on June 27, 2025, any provision in this order referring to that date be read as if referring to the next day thereafter that the Senate does sit;
17. for greater certainty, and except as otherwise provided, if at the time this order provides that something is to happen in relation to the bill, the bells are either ringing for another vote, such a vote is underway, or that time would conflict with the time specified for an event in a message from the Crown, the time provided for in this order be understood as if it were at the end of that other vote or the event;
18. no motion to refer the bill to committee be received; and
19. if this order is adopted after the time at which the Speaker would otherwise be required to interrupt proceedings on June 27, 2025, provisions that would have taken effect at that time be read as if that time were the time that falls immediately after the adoption of this order.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

[English]

MAKING LIFE MORE AFFORDABLE FOR CANADIANS BILL

MOTION TO RESOLVE INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE TO
CONSIDER SUBJECT MATTER OF BILL C-4 ADOPTED

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate), pursuant to notice of June 11, 2025, moved:

That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules, usual practice or previous order:

1. at 7 p.m. on June 17, 2025, the Senate resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole on the subject matter of Bill C-4, An Act respecting certain affordability measures for Canadians and another measure, introduced in the House of Commons on June 5, 2025, in advance of the said bill coming before the Senate;

2. the Committee of the Whole receive the Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, P.C., M.P., Minister of Finance and National Revenue, accompanied by at most three officials;
3. the committee rise no later than 95 minutes after it begins;
4. the minister's introductory remarks be limited to a maximum of five minutes;
5. if, during the Committee of the Whole, a senator does not use the entire period of 10 minutes for debate provided under rule 12-31(3)(d), including the responses of the witnesses, that senator may yield the balance of time to another senator;
6. the provisions of rule 3-3(1) and any provision of the Rules or previous order relating to the ordinary time of adjournment be suspended until the Committee of the Whole has completed meeting that day;
7. if a standing vote was deferred to a time that would occur during the meeting of the Committee of the Whole, that vote be further deferred so that the bells only begin once the committee has completed its work; and
8. for greater certainty, all witnesses appear in person.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

MOTION FOR ADDRESS IN REPLY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Gold, P.C., seconded by the Honourable Senator LaBoucane-Benson:

That the following Address be presented to His Majesty the King:

To His Most Excellent Majesty Charles the Third, by the Grace of God King of Canada and His other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY:

We, Your Majesty's most loyal and dutiful subjects, the Senate of Canada in Parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Majesty for the gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both houses of Parliament.

Hon. Colin Deacon: Honourable senators, my response to the Speech from the Throne focuses on one phrase — "... think big and ... act bigger" — with the goal of building the strongest economy in the G7.

Our King's speech identified five priority areas where progress is critical if we're to become the G7's strongest economy, these being:

First, building an industrial strategy that will make Canada more globally competitive while fighting climate change; second, protecting Canada's sovereignty by rebuilding, rearming and reinvesting in defence; third, positioning Canada as the world's leading hub for science and innovation; fourth, catalyzing new investment to create better jobs and higher incomes; and fifth, deploying technology to improve public sector productivity.

Hearing these commitments caused one sentence from the Prime Minister's mandate letter to cabinet to echo in my mind:

Over the coming weeks, I will look to each of you to identify the key goals and measures of success on which to evaluate the results you will achieve for Canadians . . .

The Prime Minister's promise of action is clear, and enormously inspiring. We desperately need this intensity of focus on creating opportunities, jobs and prosperity for Canada.

However, thinking big and acting bigger is at odds with Ottawa's ingrained risk-averse culture. Progress demands that we break down entrenched barriers and siloed thinking. There's no time to waste. This is our 1939 moment.

So I will focus on actionable ways to better enable ministers, their deputies and their departments "to think big and to act bigger" by modernizing competition policies, the regulatory system, procurement and support to innovators.

Let me begin by focusing on removing anti-competitive policies across the whole of government.

Colleagues, I keep coming back to the topic of competition because it's what drives innovation, business investment and productivity growth, creating the global competitiveness needed to improve our collective prosperity.

Canada's failings were highlighted in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, or OECD, Economic Surveys: Canada 2025. The OECD recommended that Canada pursue a wide range of pro-competitive policy reforms, specifically linking our productivity shortfalls to our weak competition and business dynamism, stating that Canada has "... numerous policy and regulatory barriers to competition."

These barriers exist because, for 40 years, we've mistakenly thought that we needed big national champions to compete with big American and global businesses. However, the resulting oligopolies charged Canadians more, innovated less and invested less than they would have if we had prioritized made-in-Canada competition. This is evidenced, in my opinion, by four decades of steadily declining productivity.

Some of you might think that the substantive amendments to the Competition Act, endorsed by the Senate in the last Parliament, fixed Canada's OECD competition and productivity problem — they did not. Those changes only stopped the problem from getting worse. Put another way, the patient — our economy — has been stabilized but remains bedridden.

Too many anti-competitive, monopoly-entrenching rules remain across government. They must be addressed with urgency. To get healthy, federal departments, agencies and Crown corporations need to ensure that their policies and practices are pro-competitive. The Competition Bureau has been promoting this approach to achieve this end for five years, but there has been no appetite.

Colleagues, businesses will never be regulated into becoming customer-centric or globally competitive. Only robust, contestable markets can achieve those crucial goals. Olympians can attest to that.

Regulations are a reactive measure to market failures but, too often, they further entrench large incumbents who help to shape the rules and dig deeper moats of administrative burden that only the biggest can afford.

Australia's Productivity Commission has been iterating on competition reforms since the 1990s. Their initial work, 30 years ago, delivered a permanent AUS\$52-billion boost to GDP, worth over AUS\$5,000 per household. Australia shows what's possible when a country treats competition policy as an ongoing national economic and social priority. Canada should follow their whole-of-government approach to these policy changes.

My recommendation? Empower the Competition Bureau with the mandate and resources to identify anti-competitive policies across the whole of government. Furthermore, let's reduce the risk of short-term political interference in the bureau's work by making the Commissioner of Competition an officer of Parliament.

Why is this so important? Because there is an inherent conflict of interest between the mandates of the Competition Bureau and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, or ISED. Most former commissioners have spoken about this quite broadly. And the fact that Canada's oligopolies likely invest more money in lawyers and lobbyists than all their competitors combined is a reason as well.

As a law enforcement agency, the Competition Bureau needs to be fully independent, and this is simply not the case when it reports to just ISED rather than all of Parliament.

Strengthening competition across all sectors is critical to achieving Prime Minister Carney's ambition to build the strongest economy in the G7. The Prime Minister knows this. As Governor of the Bank of England, he advocated for financial system reforms that increased competition and championed innovations that spread globally — but not yet in Canada.

This ties into my second area of focus — improving regulatory agility. Regulations are so important. They're intended to protect consumers, the environment and the economy. They define how markets function and, if well done, make markets more efficient.

But regulations fail to protect when they do not evolve with the risks they're designed to manage or when they become so burdensome that innovative new entrants cannot compete because of the resulting costs and complexity. Inefficient and outdated regulatory burden puts sand in the gears of business and our economy. If not addressed proactively, calls for deregulation increase, which is even more damaging.

At a political level, there has been no willingness to pass bills designed to update regulation.

Case in point, Bill S-6 on regulatory modernization. It passed the Senate two years ago and died, lonely and forgotten, when Parliament prorogued in January. The work underlying Bill S-6 began in 2018. When legislative efforts to modernize regulations aren't prioritized by Parliament, it demotivates the public sector from driving initiatives.

Simply, Canada regulates in decades, but technology, climate change and other risks and opportunities change monthly. Our traditional regulatory processes are slow, exclusive, opaque and they reliably trigger lobbying resistance.

At third reading of Bill S-6, I proposed an enhanced tool for our regulatory tool box — one that has been successfully optimized in other jurisdictions, improving the speed and agility of rule making. It's called incorporation by reference.

Incorporation by reference allows regulators to point to voluntary, consensus-based industry standards developed in an inclusive, transparent and agile manner. These are equivalent to regulations. Standards already keep us safe in our homes, cars, airplanes and offices and, unlike regulations, are constantly updated. Yet this approach continues to be resisted by federal regulators, something I experienced again this morning in the briefing on Bill C-5.

• (1440)

One amendment to the Statutory Instruments Act could allow for specific standards to be identified as equivalent to a given regulation without having to amend that regulation. This could be very helpful as we look to overcome interprovincial trade barriers.

In Europe, EU legislators now request standards development organizations, rather than regulators, to update existing standards or to develop new ones to align with the requirements of new legislation. A similar process is already used at Health Canada for medical devices. So why not broaden its use?

Senator Woo and I have worked on this file over the past two years and share a lot of enthusiasm for its potential.

Lastly, we need to actively use regulatory sandboxes. These controlled environments bring regulators and innovators together so that regulators can learn about emerging innovations and ensure that regulations keep up as risks and opportunities change. Regulatory sandboxes play an important role in informing effective rules, especially where there is a complex web of competing regulatory responsibilities.

However, the proper application of tools like standards and sandboxes is still not enough. Bureaucrats must adopt a more risk-based and outcome-focused approach to reduce innovation-killing burdens.

My third area of focus is federal procurement. Federal government procurement expenditures equal about 15% of the GDP. The Canadian economy could be turbocharged by the government's becoming the first and best customer for Canadian innovators. Currently, this is far from being the case.

I'm going to paraphrase from the 2023-24 annual report to Parliament from Canada's Procurement Ombud. He highlighted that creating barriers through excessive rules, overly complicated language or unclear written evaluation criteria all discourage suppliers from bidding, thereby narrowing the pool of prospective bidders and making the process less open and accessible.

With the ongoing trade war and the recently announced boost to defence spending, now is the time to transform federal procurement.

There's a lot of support. Last year's Fall Economic Statement proposed a small business innovation and procurement act with a minimum of 20% of goods and services purchased from small and medium-sized enterprises, or SMEs, and 1% from innovative firms.

A similar recommendation was made by our Banking Committee in June 2023 in a report called *Needed: An Innovation Strategy for the Data-Driven Economy*. The Council of Canadian Innovators has challenged the government to become "the world's best customer for homegrown innovators"

This government has also promised a Digital Transformation Office to centralize innovation procurement. It's intended to "proactively identify, implement, and scale technology solutions and eliminate duplicative and redundant red tape." With private-sector leadership, it might just deliver long-needed digital government progress.

Leveraging defence spending for commercial applications by prioritizing dual-use infrastructure, technology and equipment ensures efficient capital deployment for nation building. Testing

programs like Innovative Solutions Canada have been delivering dual-use technologies, and they should be refined, not cut, as they were a year and a half ago.

However, this program's second phase, called Pathway to Commercialization, does not fulfil its promise to fast-track successful companies to become pre-approved vendors. Instead, it wastes precious time when innovators need to be laser focused on growth.

To have an innovative economy, we need an innovative government. We must find creative ways to bring technology and talent into public service delivery and disrupt systems that favour incumbents.

That leads me to my final area of focus: investing in innovation to catalyze productivity growth.

Last summer, my office studied 134 different innovation programs across the federal government. I don't think we found them all. Almost none of them had key performance indicators; most of them had unclear application criteria; and few of them leveraged arm's-length, private-sector due diligence. Conversely, this cabinet promises to be laser focused on leveraging private-sector due diligence and capital.

I would challenge all public servants in Ottawa to work with proven accelerators and incubators who have, track and report on key performance indicators. Organizations like Creative Destruction Lab, Bioindustrial Innovation Canada, Natural Products Canada, ventureLAB and others are far better suited for investment decision making than the public service. That's my opinion, based on the key performance indicators, or KPIs I've seen — or haven't seen, because the data is not there.

Talent and technology don't wait for governments. Our public service needs to embed private sector know-how instead of providing resistance.

Lastly, remember that the only way we can afford to strengthen Canada's globally competitive research engine is to finally build a transmission that converts our world-leading ideas in intellectual property into Canadian opportunities, Canadian jobs and Canadian prosperity.

Colleagues, in conclusion, I'm thrilled that the priorities outlined in the Speech from the Throne detail a bold vision for economic growth. That's a tall order. To "think big and act bigger" requires that we break free from outdated practices by making our markets more competitive and contestable, modernizing regulatory processes to make regulations more agile, transforming procurement so that Canadian innovators are empowered to drive innovation into government, and ensuring that Canadian ideas aren't just born here, but are also commercialized and scaled globally from here. Colleagues, none of these ideas require any new government spending.

Targeted efforts in these areas will go a long way toward building the strongest economy in the G7. We need to rethink how our programs are designed, how our rules are written and how we measure success.

Let's think big. I believe that will change how we compete, regulate, procure and support innovation. If we do that, it will help us to act bigger. Canadians are counting on us.

Thank you, colleagues.

Hon. Bernadette Clement: Honourable senators, I rise today to respond to the Speech from the Throne — what was said and what wasn't said.

[Translation]

First, I would like to welcome our new colleagues to the Senate. Your maiden speeches, initial questions and early days in this chamber have been very inspiring.

[English]

To my more seasoned colleagues, I was impressed by the reintroduction of all the bills. You show great stamina, perseverance and conviction, and I appreciated that. I appreciated the sponsoring of bills as well, which show so much of the passion that motivates your work.

We had replies to the Speech from the Throne from Senators Petten, White and Boudreau, and now Senator Deacon from Nova Scotia. Those, too, were speeches filled with insight into what motivates you and how you will work in this place with us, for us, for Canadians. I appreciate that.

Four years after my appointment, I'm finally feeling more comfortable in my skin here. Before, I didn't feel comfortable enough to make statements about who I am, what I stand for, what I will be working on. Timing has always been a bit tricky for me. I am a slow burn as opposed to a quick one, but for once, I feel like I'm right on time.

When I was first appointed, my staffer Katie and I received one email after another. It was overwhelming, but it was also very exciting. We could have said yes to everything, and Katie would argue that we actually did. Then we received good advice from Benedicta and David from the office of Senator Deacon, Nova Scotia. They said:

You're going to be overwhelmed, until you find your brand, your identity as a senator. Then, that helps guide what you do, what you say yes to, and what your messaging is.

As an independent senator, I was able to make decisions about what I would take on, who I would be.

[Translation]

I am a Black, francophone woman.

[English]

I have been — and still am — a legal aid lawyer. I was a city councillor in Cornwall. I was the first Black woman mayor in Ontario. Now, among so many other things, I'm a Black senator — a Black senator who is connected to Black communities across Canada.

Now, I have settled a bit more into the space that we as senators are supposed to occupy. I found allies and friends across all Senate groups and in the African Canadian Senate Group. I have been inspired by our collective commitment to independence. I have been honoured to spend time in the communities of Senators Bernard, Simons and Tannas. I have visited ports, farms, community centres, oil sands and prisons.

This year, during prorogation, I visited prisons, with a narrow focus. I wanted to know how incarcerated Canadians experienced federal elections, to understand the barriers they face and to ensure they knew that it was their right to vote.

• (1450)

If you're surprised — as many Canadians are — to learn that incarcerated people have the right to vote, you should know more about an important man named Rick Sauvé. He inspired this work. He took his case all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada to ensure every incarcerated person has the right to vote, no matter the length of their sentence. I want to paint this picture for you: This is a man who was incarcerated and bused from the prison to our nation's highest court to fight for his Charter rights.

Rick Sauvé was driven to do this work because he was so passionate about his own right to vote. It kept him connected to the outside and his continued participation in the Canadian democratic system.

That is where Rick and I really related to one another. Having run for office many times, I too believe in our democratic system. I believe in the power of a single vote. This year, we all saw it — it really can come down to that one single vote.

I'm proud to have published a report about the work that I did with my dedicated team. We found that incarcerated people are engaged in politics but are often unaware of elections and their rights. We found that Correctional Service Canada staff work hard to deliver elections, but there is room for improvement.

I summed up those needed improvements in my report in three categories. The first is improving access to information for incarcerated Canadians. The second is permitting incarcerated Canadians to register to vote using the address of the institution where they live. Incarcerated people must vote 12 days before a general election; therefore, for the third category, I recommended altering the timeline for elections in prisons to ensure incarcerated voters can hear the debates and consult election platforms before they cast their ballot.

[Translation]

My team will send this report to each of your offices, to all federal prisons as well as to the inmate welfare committees, ethnocultural representatives and election liaison officers.

[English]

You just heard me say the word “ethnocultural” in French. It’s 2025, and the language we use matters, but that word is still used by Correctional Service Canada, or CSC. Canada’s Black Justice Strategy recommends that CSC cease using the term “ethnocultural offender” because it:

... generalizes and fails to recognize the distinct challenges faced by Black prisoners. The cessation of this label is the first step toward acknowledging the unique racial and socio-economic experiences of Black prisoners.

I want to pause for a second. You did not hear the words “Canada’s Black Justice Strategy” in the government’s election platform, nor in the Speech from the Throne, nor in the mandate letter. Yet Black Canadians are relying upon this government to implement Canada’s Black Justice Strategy. Written by Zilla Jones and Dr. Akwasi Owusu-Bempah, it weaves in technical expertise but also poetry, reflecting the intricacy of Black life in Canada — the pain and the joy of it.

My work as a Black senator, and as a member of both the African Canadian Senate Group and the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, is now linked to that strategy.

[Translation]

Black Canadians, Black communities and incarcerated Black individuals are counting on me to use this platform to ensure they are not forgotten, to support the changes they need and to move us forward toward a more just and equitable Canada.

[English]

The Speech from the Throne referred to a stronger, united, safer and more secure Canada. The government committed to toughening the Criminal Code. Society has evolved a lot since that code was last reviewed some 50 years ago. In that time, we’ve been reckoning with our history, and we’ve seen so much change. It’s time for another review.

Despite being a member of the Legal Committee for only four years, I’ve seen bill after bill amending the Criminal Code. We’re constantly amending that legislation in a piecemeal way because we want to deliver safety to Canadians. When we talk about changing the Criminal Code, it can make people feel safer, but what does safety mean? It doesn’t mean the same thing to everyone. There are different paths to public safety and law and order.

[Senator Clement]

The different elements required for the public to actually feel and be safe are not just about the Criminal Code; they’re also about mental health supports, rehabilitation programs, gang disaffiliation and reintegration planning. Incarcerated people will serve their sentences and leave prisons, and if we don’t focus on rehabilitation, we will not be releasing people ready to participate and contribute to community in healthier ways. Going forward, I would like to see more focus on strengthening communities and protecting and uplifting the most vulnerable people in Canada. I would like to see all 114 recommendations of Canada’s Black Justice Strategy implemented.

When I asked a young Black man in a federal prison about why it was so important for him to vote and what it meant to him to be connected to the world outside the institution, he paused for a long time. He paused for so long that I wasn’t sure he was going to answer, but then, with conviction, he said, “Can a flower bloom in a dark place?” He answered his own question: “Yes, it can.” If he can be hopeful, I will be too.

Thank you. *Nia:wen*.

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

THE SENATE

MOTION TO APPOINT JULIE WELLINGTON AS LAW CLERK
AND PARLIAMENTARY COUNSEL ADOPTED

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate), pursuant to notice of June 11, 2025, moved:

That Julie Wellington be appointed Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel of the Senate, effective July 17, 2025.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Julie Wellington, Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION ADOPTED

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate), pursuant to notice of June 11, 2025, moved:

That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Monday, June 16, 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.)

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK ON SICKLE CELL DISEASE BILL

SECOND READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Mégie, seconded by the Honourable Senator Petitclerc, for the second reading of Bill S-201, An Act respecting a national framework on sickle cell disease.

Hon. Salma Atallahjan: Honourable senators, I rise today as the friendly critic of Bill S-201, An Act respecting a national framework on sickle cell disease, introduced by Senator Mégie.

Before I speak to the bill's substance, I want to take a moment to recognize Senator Mégie as she prepares to retire this September. Throughout her time in this chamber, she has been a tireless advocate for improved health care access, especially for under-represented communities. Her contributions to parliamentary work, particularly in health, have been meaningful and deeply appreciated. We will certainly miss her thoughtful voice at committee and in this chamber.

I also want to acknowledge the efforts of our now-retired colleague Senator Jane Cordy who advanced awareness of sickle cell disease, or SCD, by successfully sponsoring Bill S-211 in 2017. It designated June 19 as National Sickle Cell Awareness Day in Canada. Thanks to her leadership, this chronic and painful disease has begun to gain the attention it deserves within the broader national health discourse.

As a non-medical person, I leave the description of SCD and all the complications that come with it to our esteemed colleagues with medical backgrounds. I will not repeat the information that they have so eloquently provided in the speeches they delivered in previous sittings. We heard from Senator Mégie and Senator Ravalia. Instead, I would like to speak on this bill as a staunch advocate of human rights: a voice for Canadians living with sickle cell disease, or SCD, whose suffering has long been overlooked.

• (1500)

Growing up in Pakistan, I heard very little discussion about SCD. Even though I grew up in a family of doctors — my grandfather, mother-in-law and many other family members are all doctors — I had never heard about the disease until Senator Mégie talked about it and got me researching. To my surprise, I found out that SCD is not uncommon in Pakistan, and that sickle cell trait is found in 0.9% of the Pakistani population, which translates to over 2 million people. What's even more surprising to me is that it is found in my own province and people in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as well as in Balochistan. This has been particularly educational, and I would like to thank Senator Mégie for getting me into this.

With Bill S-201, we are not simply dealing with a piece of legislation. We are bringing to light a matter of human rights, social justice and human dignity.

Every individual, regardless of race, geography or socio-economic status, has, according to the World Health Organization, "... the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. ..." Yet people living with SCD remain trapped in a cycle of pain, stigma and neglect. A bill that seeks to develop a national framework to support Canadians with SCD is our collective moral and constitutional response to this injustice.

This framework is about justice: for the mother who buries her child before his fifth birthday due to the lack of timely interventions; for the adult whose chronic pain is dismissed as drug-seeking behaviour rather than a result of a lifelong disease; and for those who live in scarcity because their pain prevents them from keeping a job that might help them move up the socio-economic ladder.

Passing a bill such as this is our way of affirming that health is not a privilege but a right.

In Canada, SCD predominantly affects people of African, Caribbean, Middle Eastern and South Asian descent. When racialized communities bear the brunt of a serious chronic condition with limited national response, it signals a deeper neglect of their health and dignity. It reflects a pattern of systemic inequality and of whose suffering we dignify and whose we ignore.

Canada's rich diversity is strengthened by immigration. With the growth in populations of newcomers from regions where SCD is highly prevalent comes an increase in the number of Canadians affected by the disease. Yet our health care system has not kept pace. Without a national framework, we risk failing to provide culturally competent care, early screening and equitable access to treatment for thousands of families. This is clearly a growing public health concern that intersects with matters of immigration, racial equity and health care planning.

Another sad reality is that in Canada, access to treatment for SCD far too often depends on one's postal code or paycheque. While some urban areas offer specialized care and newer therapies, many patients, especially in smaller provinces, rural areas or low-income households, face long wait times, travel burdens and prohibitive out-of-pocket costs for essential medications and pain management. Advanced treatments remain financially out of reach for many. This is clearly a crisis for a public health care system that allows life-saving care to be determined by income or geography.

Establishing a national strategy for SCD is not only a step toward better health outcomes but also a necessary act of justice and inclusion for those our systems have historically failed. It's about stopping a genetic disease from deepening the fault lines of health inequality in our country. It's about showing every Canadian that we value our people equally, unapologetically and without reservation.

From a human rights perspective, a national framework on sickle cell disease is a no-brainer. Yet as critic of the bill, I would be remiss if I didn't talk about a few areas that may benefit from further examination during committee study.

One key area for reflection is how Bill S-201 aligns with other federal initiatives already under way. For instance, the federal government has launched a National Strategy for Drugs for Rare Diseases, announced in March 2023, which includes \$1.5 billion in funding over three years. Although SCD is not named explicitly, it meets the criteria to be included under this umbrella. Provinces like Ontario and British Columbia have already signed bilateral agreements under this strategy. As such, it may be helpful for the committee to explore how this proposed framework would interact with, support or build upon existing efforts to ensure efficiency and cohesion.

Additionally, we might consider whether a disease-specific framework is the most effective path forward or whether integrating SCD into the broader national rare disease strategy would provide a more inclusive and scalable approach. Many rare diseases — including SCD — face common barriers such as delayed diagnosis, insufficient provider education and patchy access to treatment. An integrated model may help prevent the fragmentation of care and allow for more comprehensive investment in shared infrastructure.

Regardless of the path chosen, what remains clear is that the lived experience of people with SCD in Canada demands greater attention. For too long, patients have struggled to navigate a health care system that often fails to recognize their symptoms and delays critical interventions.

In exploring how to strengthen care for individuals living with sickle cell disease, it might be instructive to consider the success of the cystic fibrosis, or CF, community in Canada. CF, like SCD, is a serious genetic disorder that affects a relatively small patient population but requires lifelong, multidisciplinary care. Over time, the CF community has developed a robust national

network of accredited care centres, supported by standardized treatment protocols, comprehensive data collection through the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Registry and active patient advocacy.

These efforts have translated into measurable improvements in life expectancy, quality of care and timely access to new therapies. A similar approach for SCD, anchored by coordinated care centres, a national patient registry and shared clinical guidelines, could help ensure consistent standards across provinces and reduce inequities in diagnosis and treatment. Moreover, the CF model demonstrates the value of federal-provincial collaboration, outcome tracking and strong community engagement elements that could be thoughtfully adapted to meet the specific needs of the SCD population, particularly with attention to cultural competency and health equity.

To date, much of the advocacy and support for individuals living with SCD has been carried out by dedicated community organizations like the Sickle Cell Disease Association of Canada, the Sickle Cell Awareness Group of Ontario, the Association d'anémie falciforme du Québec and the Sickle Cell Foundation of Alberta, as well as community leaders and health care professionals in British Columbia and Nova Scotia. These groups have been the backbone of patient advocacy, operating with tremendous resolve. Any national framework must recognize and integrate their expertise and leadership to ensure that policy solutions reflect lived realities on the ground.

National frameworks, when thoughtfully designed and well supported, can play an important role in shaping priorities and fostering collaboration across jurisdictions. They help create common goals, bring visibility to underserved health issues and provide a structure for aligning federal, provincial and community efforts. Importantly, a national framework on sickle cell disease has the potential to give voice to individuals and families who have long felt overlooked in our health care system. By centring their lived experiences, we can ensure the resulting policies are not only inclusive but also responsive to the real challenges they face every day.

As Bill S-201 moves to committee, I look forward to a careful and thoughtful study of the bill and to hearing from a range of voices, including clinicians, advocates, researchers and — most importantly — people living with sickle cell disease. Their testimony will be essential in guiding how this framework can be shaped to make a meaningful and lasting difference.

• (1510)

Thank you to Senator Mégie for bringing forward this timely and necessary bill, and for helping ensure that sickle cell disease receives the national attention it deserves.

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.)

[Translation]

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

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

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

[English]

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Brazeau, seconded by the Honourable Senator Sorensen, for the second reading of Bill S-202, An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (warning label on alcoholic beverages).

Hon. David Richards: Honourable senators, I'm going to rise and speak to Bill S-202, an Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (warning label on alcoholic beverages).

I rise today to speak as the critic of this bill, and I want to thank Senator Brazeau for his diligent work on this issue and for his efforts to ensure that Canadians have current and accurate health information relating to alcohol consumption.

As indicated in the title, Bill S-202 will amend the Food and Drugs Act to require that a warning label be placed on alcoholic beverages. Let me say at the outset that I support the objective of this legislation completely, which is laid out clearly in the three statements found in the preamble of the bill.

Parliament recognizes there's a direct causal link between alcohol consumption and the development of cancers. On this point, colleagues, there is really no debate. Although public awareness of this fact remains low, it is not a new discovery. It has been 38 years since the International Agency for Research on Cancer identified alcohol as a Group 1 carcinogen in 1987, placing it in the same category as tobacco and asbestos. This classification was based on strong evidence linking alcohol use to several types of cancer, which now include breast, liver, oral cavity, throat and larynx cancers.

In 2000, the U.S. National Toxicology Program listed consumption of alcoholic beverages as a known human carcinogen in the ninth edition of its *Report on Carcinogens*.

In January of this year, the United States Surgeon General released an advisory titled *Alcohol and Cancer Risk*, which noted that alcohol use is “. . . a leading preventable cause of cancer . . .”

The preponderance of the scientific evidence supports the first statement of the bill's preamble, “. . . that a direct causal link exists between alcohol consumption and the development of fatal cancers.”

Public awareness of the health risks associated with alcohol consumption, particularly its link to cancer, remains alarmingly low despite the scientific consensus. This lack of awareness is not unique to Canada. A World Health Organization report found that only 15% of Europeans knew alcohol causes breast cancer, despite breast cancer being one of the most prevalent alcohol-related cancers.

Bill S-202 proposes that the knowledge gap be addressed by mandating specific labelling requirements for alcohol products. At last count, there were at least 47 countries around the world that have already implemented health warning labels on alcohol products. However, only South Korea's labels currently warn of the risk of cancer.

Unlike nutritional labels or tobacco warnings, alcohol products in Canada are not required to display any health warnings, but effectively implementing such a measure is not without its challenges. Cancer Care Ontario noted this in its 2014 publication *Cancer Risk Factors in Ontario*, where it stated the following:

While alcohol is a risk factor for cancer when consumed in any quantity, light to moderate levels of consumption can protect against cardiovascular disease. This poses unique challenges for increasing awareness of the link between alcohol consumption and cancer.

This supposed contradiction in the health outcomes of alcohol consumption makes the discussion much different than the one surrounding the use of tobacco, for instance. This focus is not a prohibition approach but a question of how much alcohol can be safely consumed. Bill S-202 wisely leaves these details up to the Department of Health to determine.

But our awareness of this challenge is important because despite the growing popularity of alcohol warning labels, the evidence on the effectiveness of warning labels has always been mixed. A recent study titled “Alcohol Health Warning Labels: A Rapid Review with Action Recommendations” was published in 2022 in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. What their findings suggest is that simply affixing a label to alcohol containers is not, in itself, an effective strategy. There is a broad range of factors that must be considered when evaluating or designing alcohol warning labels.

Bill S-202 proposes four required components for alcohol warning labels, but there are many other possible inclusions. For example, what about warnings concerning the risks to pregnant women or the dangers of impairment, high blood pressure, liver and heart disease, or even the addictive potential of alcohol itself? Each of these is a valid focus, and all are significant public health concerns.

The evidence shows that labels don't always produce the expected results. For instance, negatively worded messages had the strongest effect on heavier drinkers. Among younger

drinkers, however, prominent warnings could create a boomerang effect, actually enhancing the product's appeal, enabling a person to get intoxicated quickly and cheaply.

This, of course, will always be a danger and a problem with any labelling on any alcoholic product. This challenge was captured in the findings of a 2023 study published in the *Journal of Addictive Diseases* entitled "A systematic review on the impact of alcohol warning labels." The abstract of the article begins with the following admission:

Findings on the effects of alcohol warning labels (AWLs) as a harm reduction tool have been mixed. . . .

But it ends with this statement:

AWLs appear to be a promising approach for supporting more informed alcohol consumption and should be considered as one component in a comprehensive control strategy.

I believe Senator Brazeau's bill represents not just an opportunity to examine the matter carefully but a responsibility for us to do so. For this reason, I support the bill in principle and will be voting in favour of sending it to committee for a thorough examination.

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.)

[Translation]

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

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

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

• (1520)

PROTECTING YOUNG PERSONS FROM EXPOSURE TO PORNOGRAPHY BILL

SECOND READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Miville-Dechêne, seconded by the Honourable Senator Pate, for the second reading of Bill S-209, An Act to restrict young persons' online access to pornographic material.

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

[Senator Richards]

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 Miville-Dechêne, bill referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs.)

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK ON SPORTS BETTING ADVERTISING BILL

SECOND READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Deacon (*Ontario*), seconded by the Honourable Senator Senior, for the second reading of Bill S-211, An Act respecting a national framework on sports betting advertising.

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.)

[English]

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

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

(On motion of Senator Kingston, bill referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications.)

NATIONAL IMMIGRATION MONTH BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Gerba, seconded by the Honourable Senator Harder, P.C., for the second reading of Bill S-215, An Act respecting National Immigration Month.

Hon. Krista Ross: Honourable senators, I rise today to voice my support for Bill S-215, An Act respecting National Immigration Month.

I would like to first recognize Senator Gerba for her continued advocacy on this bill, introducing it again in this new Parliament. I would also like to thank my Senate colleagues who have also shared their thoughts in support of Bill S-215 last week.

Canadian identity has always been and continues to be shaped by the exceptional contributions of immigrants. The Canada we know today would not exist if not for the dedication, resilience and cultural diversity brought by those who came from abroad. We are very fortunate to have such a diverse population and multicultural mosaic in our country. A national immigration month would offer a much-needed opportunity to celebrate their contributions and our diversity, as well as to push back against the growing anti-immigrant attitudes in our country.

From coast to coast to coast, we all benefit from the many contributions of immigrants. In the West, the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway depended on the work of Chinese immigrants, who withstood dangerous working conditions. Here in Ottawa, we pass the Rideau Canal daily, a site that is the culmination of the hard work, in perilous conditions, of Irish immigrants in the early 1800s. On the East Coast, we have Pier 21 in Halifax, where nearly 1 million immigrants landed in Canada over 43 years.

Last week, Senator Gerba told us about the experiences she and her husband had, coming from Cameroon. Senator Mégie spoke of the immigration of Haitians in the 1960s and 1970s and shared her own personal story of coming to Canada. Senator Ravalia mentioned his story, coming from what is now known as Zimbabwe. Colleagues, by sharing their own stories, they have highlighted just how much immigration has impacted and benefited Canada, including right here in our chamber.

Canada was a place of safety and new beginnings for more than 7,000 refugees from Kosovo between 1999 and 2001. Last week, I had the privilege of attending the International Forum on Women, Peace and Security in Kosovo, where I heard some of their powerful stories first-hand. I was deeply touched, not only by what they had been through but by the way in which Canada welcomed them and became their new home. These Canadians cherish our country and are rightfully proud of their journey to Canada.

While I don't have any first-hand experience in immigrating to Canada, I would note that three generations ago my family emigrated from Scotland. Most of us have come from somewhere else at some point in our heritage, and I support newcomers to Canada who want to build their futures here.

Today, immigrants make up a considerable portion of our population. Immigrants accounted for 23% of the population in 2021, which was the largest proportion in over 150 years. Also, Canada has the highest proportion of immigrants among G7 countries, and I think that should be a source of great pride.

In Atlantic Canada alone, the share of recent newcomers settling in our provinces has almost tripled in 15 years, between 2006 and 2021. In my home province of New Brunswick, it rose

from nearly 7,500 in 2015 to nearly 40,000 in 2023. This is an indication of Canada's inclusive and welcoming spirit, one that we have carefully fostered throughout our nation's history. As my colleagues have highlighted in their statements, this welcoming attitude towards immigrants is the result of a long history of advocacy and positive change to protect the rights of immigrants in our country. However, we still have work to do to reinforce our capacity to welcome and retain newcomers in our communities.

In the midst of growing anti-immigrant sentiments, I would like to highlight the ways in which immigrants are critical to the strengthening of our economy. Provincial labour markets have historically relied on newcomers to respond to labour shortages. Again, I will use the example of my home province of New Brunswick, where immigration is critical to the strength and, indeed, to the survival of our economy.

The *New Brunswick Labour Market Outlook 2023-2032* projected that between 2022 and 2032, our province is expected to see a population growth of 11.4%. Labour force and employment are forecasted to grow by 9.1% and 9.6%, respectively. In addition, 98,000 individuals who are expected to retire will need to be replaced, and an additional 35,000 jobs are expected to result from economic growth. These will also need to be filled.

Even with a significant portion of these openings being filled by young New Brunswickers, the projected population growth alone will not be large enough to meet the future demand for labour, as New Brunswick is actually expected to experience negative natural population growth. Young people entering the labour force for the first time will fill only 54% of these forecasted job openings, as projected by the New Brunswick job report.

To bridge the forecasted gap between population growth and labour growth, the remaining 46% will need to be filled through a mix of immigration, workers from other provinces and increased rates of labour force participation. However, as our colleague Senator Ravalia so eloquently stated in his statement last Thursday, newcomers to Canada continue to face significant obstacles in their journeys, obstacles that make it difficult for newcomers to join the workforce and contribute to our shared economy. I believe we must do our part to support immigrants as they overcome these barriers.

I have long been an advocate for newcomers, doing my part to help them navigate and overcome these challenges, in particular in my past life at the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce. For example, at the chamber we prioritized the creation of programs aimed at supporting newcomers. We ran the Business Immigrant Mentorship Program; The Hive, which was an incubator centre for newcomer entrepreneurs; and Succession Connect, which helped build connections between those in our community looking to transfer their businesses and newcomers who were looking to put down roots in the community and buy a business. These programs served as an example for other communities across Canada.

I also volunteered with the Opportunities NB's connector program, helping mentor international students and other newcomers and connecting them to people within my network. These may seem like small contributions, but it is the little things that we can do to make a critical difference to someone who is new to a province or region and needs guidance to navigate a new and unfamiliar environment.

Recently, I was invited to Ignite in Fredericton to speak with their Economic Empowerment Program for Immigrant Women, which is aimed at helping immigrant women learn and build the necessary soft skills to own a business or pursue a rewarding career in Canada. I had the honour of sharing my expertise and advice with women who came from Ukraine, Vietnam, Nigeria, Jordan, Nepal and many other countries. They have made Fredericton and New Brunswick their home. They were intelligent, bright and engaged, and they were focused on building successful futures and homes here in Canada.

By supporting newcomers across the country, we are contributing to the success of all Canadians. We have many success stories in New Brunswick and across the country in all sectors. The proposed national immigration month is a step in the right direction to recognize the benefits that immigration has given our country and to ensure that we continue to help newcomers succeed from coast to coast to coast.

It is easy to see immigrants as data points instead of seeing them as individuals who each have their own potential and ability to contribute to our culture and to our economy. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that we approach immigration in a welcoming way and see immigrants for what they are: friends, neighbours and fellow Canadians.

• (1530)

In my hometown of Fredericton, we have long celebrated an immigration month with events, celebrations and storytelling. Let us extend this tradition across the country so that we can all share in the celebration of the contributions immigrants have made to our country. Let our approach to immigration live up to the core values that we as Canadians hold dear, such as inclusion, diversity and economic prosperity.

By instituting a national immigration month, we reinforce our commitment to these values and send a powerful message to Canadians and the international community that Canada will continue to recognize and protect our immigrant population.

I am proud to support Bill S-215 and hope that my fellow senators share in my support for this important bill and will send it to committee for further study.

Thank you, *wela'lin*.

(On motion of Senator Martin, for Senator Ataullahjan, debate adjourned.)

CONSTITUTION ACT, 1982

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Harder, P.C., seconded by the Honourable Senator Wilson, for the second reading of Bill S-218, An Act to amend the Constitution Act, 1982 (notwithstanding clause).

Hon. Kim Pate: Honourable colleagues, I speak today to Bill S-218 and in support of safeguards against use of the “notwithstanding” clause. Thank you, Senator Harder, for this opportunity to examine what is at stake.

Canadians will recall the proposals offered during this past election period that would, in defiance of rulings by the Supreme Court of Canada, increase parole ineligibility to ensure that some prisoners would only leave prison in a coffin. For good reason, the “notwithstanding” clause has never been used with respect to matters of criminal law, and especially not to excuse cruel and unusual punishment.

Indeed, in keeping with the intention that the “notwithstanding” clause be invoked only in rare and extreme circumstances, it has never been used by the federal government. Despite the ludicrous actions south of our border, in Canada, it hopefully goes without saying that governments should not pass laws that are unconstitutional. The fact that some provinces have used the “notwithstanding” clause to violate the rights of some Canadians is deeply problematic.

I hope we all commit to the principle that this chamber should reject legislation that would use the “notwithstanding” clause to salvage legislation that contravenes our constitutional values.

Both this position and Bill S-218's restrictions on use of the “notwithstanding” clause align with crucial roles of this chamber as representatives of marginalized or minority groups and as reviewers of legislation with particular duties to uphold Charter rights.

My favourite illustration of our responsibilities — as appointed rather than elected representatives in Canada's democratic system — was expressed by our friend and colleague the late former senator Murray Sinclair, when he reminded us that:

“We must abide by the proverb that when two foxes and a chicken are voting on what to have for dinner we will stand up for the chicken.”

Caitlin Salvino is one of countless legal experts to identify that the “notwithstanding” clause magnifies injustice and inequality for those most marginalized. The checks meant to restrain its use by governments systemically exclude and disadvantage those whose rights are at greatest risk.

First, while the designers of the “notwithstanding” clause assumed that its use would generate significant scrutiny — both in legislatures and the broader community — this scrutiny has not always occurred, and even with measures like Bill S-218,

those most marginalized are least likely to have the financial resources to hire lobbyists, organize campaigns, litigate or otherwise make their voices heard.

Second, laws enacted using the “notwithstanding” clause are valid for a maximum of five years, with a view to giving Canadians the opportunity to rethink unjust and unconstitutional practices. In practice, however, thoughtful reconsideration has not taken place. For example, in Quebec, Bill 21 used the “notwithstanding” clause to require people — disproportionately Muslim women — to uncover their faces while receiving public services and to prevent public sector workers from wearing religious symbols, disproportionately excluding Muslim women from working in a variety of public service jobs.

Sadly, Quebec enacted Bill 21 and further inflamed anti-Muslim sentiment only two years after a man killed six people in a horrific mass shooting at the Great Mosque of Quebec, and the same year he was sentenced to an unconstitutional series of consecutive life sentences.

When five years had passed and the time came to re-enact the legislation, the bill passed the Quebec National Assembly with barely any pushback. Law professors Natasha Bakht and Lynda Collins conclude, “Time appears to have blunted our outrage against state-sanctioned discrimination/Islamophobia. . . .”

Instead of galvanizing resistance to injustice and inequality, the five-year period apparently served to normalize it. Since the passage of Bill 21, Muslim women report “. . . increasingly hostile . . . environments, including Islamophobic discrimination and physical threats and aggression.” This is linked to the perception that they “. . . do not belong to Canadian society. . . .”

Professors Bakht and Collins assert that this use of the “notwithstanding” clause further marginalized and oppressed Muslim women, and that the clause cannot be employed as “. . . a bottomless pit where rights and freedoms go to die. . . .” They argue:

Instead, it is a limited exception that must —

— like every other part of the Constitution —

— comport with the overarching structure of Canada’s Constitution, including the unwritten constitutional principles of judicial independence; democracy; federalism; constitutionalism and the rule of law; and respect for minorities. . . .

They continue:

The Supreme Court . . . confirmed in *City of Toronto* that unwritten constitutional principles are not subject to the notwithstanding clause

They continue, saying, “. . . the text of section 33 simply does not permit the undermining of core unwritten constitutional principles.”

In other words, in addition to the moral and political flaws, a legal and constitutional perspective negates the use of the “notwithstanding” clause to exacerbate inequality for marginalized groups.

Though Bill S-218 would apply only to federal legislation, I note that Professors Bakht and Collins are of the view that provinces and territories may be justified in using the “notwithstanding” clause if doing so would comport with constitutional principles. They cite as a potentially valid use, “to promote minority rights,” Quebec’s choice to protect its laws requiring unilingual French commercial signage in the 1980s. I wonder, however, whether a similar outcome could have been achieved without having to resort to the “notwithstanding” clause, through recourse to subsection 15(2) of the Charter, which permits affirmative action.

Constitutional expert Marion Sandilands similarly asks why section 1 of the Charter is not a sufficient response. Under this provision, known as the justification clause, protection of the French language in Quebec has previously been recognized as a “. . . pressing and substantial objective capable of justifying a Charter infringement.”

Guillaume Rousseau and François Côté have attempted to justify, on the basis of Quebec’s distinctiveness, Bill 21 and Bill 96, which contain unprecedented “. . . total and pre-emptive override[s] . . .” not just of the Canadian Charter but also of Quebec’s charter. In response to their arguments, Ms. Sandilands states:

It is important to note that one can accept that Quebec’s distinct language and culture should be protected in law, yet insist that this protection has not, does not, and ought not require the ousting of human rights charters.

The protection of marginalized groups is particularly important in the context of the unconstitutional criminal law measures proposed to Canadian voters last election.

Through this chamber’s work on human rights of prisoners, we heard — and Senator Clement’s work on voting rights this election, as spoken to today, underscored — that prisoners face abuse and oppression due to the lack of transparency and accountability about what is occurring in prisons; prisoners’ lack of access to financial resources and lawyers necessary to defend their rights; and prisoners’ lack of voting clout.

The use of the “notwithstanding” clause to subject people with few political or legal protections to draconian and lifelong sentences with no opportunity for parole would only serve to further dehumanize prisoners in ways that diminish all of our humanity.

Consecutive life sentences with no chance of parole for upward of 50, 100 or 150 years are an American anomaly. Canada’s harsh and potentially unconstitutional mandatory life sentences with parole ineligibility of 10 to 25 years already make us an outlier among comparable countries. Contrary to the rhetoric, all evidence reveals that restricting access to parole does not make us safer.

• (1540)

Research by law professors Debra Parkes, Jane Sprott and Isabel Grant confirms that when people serving life sentences are paroled, the vast majority are successful. In fact, returns to prison generally result from onerous administrative conditions related to the release, not new offences. Furthermore, as the body of evidence summarized by the Supreme Court in the *Nur* decision makes clear, harsh and inflexible minimum sentences do not deter crime.

In the *Bissonnette* decision that struck down consecutive life sentences as unconstitutional, the Supreme Court of Canada recognized that protections against cruel and unusual punishments are a bare minimum protection of our collective humanity. The court noted:

. . . [t]he inability of [people] to repay their full debt to society and to apply for reintegration and forgiveness strikes at the very foundations of our criminal justice system

The court also stated that a consecutive sentence is the following:

. . . degrading in nature in that it presupposes at the time of its imposition that [a person] is beyond redemption and lacks the moral autonomy needed for rehabilitation. . . .

The court noted that these sentences amount to a death sentence by incarceration — something that Canada was supposed to have prohibited decades ago.

The court also made clear that Canada can insist on limits on parole ineligibility as part of a human rights-informed and constitutionally compliant criminal legal system without devaluing the humanity of victims of crime or condoning horrific acts:

[The idea of] denouncing multiple murders more strongly by imposing a sentence that reflects the value of each human life that was lost . . . is based on a retributivist approach However, as [professors] Desrosiers and Bernard put it . . . “in a legal system based on respect for rights and freedoms, the ‘eye for an eye’ principle does not apply” The courts must establish a limit on the state’s power to sanction . . . in keeping with [our Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms].

The court continued:

The horror of the crimes . . . does not negate the basic proposition that all human beings carry within them a capacity for rehabilitation and that, accordingly, punishments which fail to account for this human quality will offend the principles that underlie s. 12 of the *Charter*.

Normalizing consecutive life sentences as a punishment risks “ratcheting up” and encouraging harsher sentencing across the board, increasing acceptance and expectations of cruelty in prisons, in court and in society, thereby eroding the rights that protect all of us.

During this election period, some politicians suggested using the “notwithstanding” clause to encourage sentences that would ensure that people only ever left prisons in a coffin. These measures are ineffective and extremely costly in both human and financial terms. Worse yet, they are disproportionately experienced by Indigenous, Black and poor people, as well as those suffering from disabling mental health issues. In short, they are a Trumpian slap in the face to the Canadian principles of justice.

In fact, The Sentencing Project in the United States has underscored the reality that such approaches are rooted in racist and ableist theories promoting eugenics. As eugenics thinking rose to prominence in Nazi Germany in the early 20th century, U.S. jurisdictions were also enacting so-called habitual offender laws or three-strikes laws providing for permanent incarceration of those characterized as being prone to “criminality,” with the stated goal of separating these individuals from society and preventing them from having children. Similar measures were repealed in Germany following the Second World War. In the United States, with few amendments, these laws remain on the books a century later in 49 states and federally.

This is not the way forward for Canada. It is time to push back on incursions on our collective human rights and Charter rights wherever they occur. We can begin by relegating to a shameful chapter in our history books the attempts to use the “notwithstanding” clause to excuse, condone or celebrate cruelty and inequality.

I hope you join in this fight. *Chi-meegwetch*. Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Denise Batters: Would Senator Pate take a question?

Senator Pate: Yes.

Senator Batters: Regarding the *Bissonnette* case that you referred to, in case people are not familiar, that is the case where Alexandre Bissonnette was convicted of six counts of first-degree murder. He went into a mosque in 2017 — he was 27 years old at the time — and he murdered six Muslim men who were there to pray. The Crown sought for him not to have a 25-year wait for parole eligibility for each of those six lives that he took, but they sought to have the court impose a 50-year wait for parole eligibility. Therefore, he would potentially be 77 years old at the time that he would be released from those years of sentence. But the Supreme Court of Canada overturned that.

In that sort of case, the Supreme Court of Canada then, effectively, found that because consecutive sentences for that situation is unconstitutional, the most that could be given to somebody for a sentence of first-degree murder — no matter how many people they killed during their spree — is a 25-year wait for parole eligibility. Do you think that is sufficient?

Senator Pate: First, we have to correct that: It is not a 25-year sentence; it is a life sentence. In order to actually get out, you have to apply to the Parole Board, and there are many, many hurdles not only to get to the Parole Board but also to get out. I can't tell you how many people I've worked with who are serving life sentences, even where they had defences or wrongful convictions, such as David Milgaard and Donald Marshall Jr. —

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Pate, I'm sorry. Your time for debate has expired. Are you asking for more time to answer the question?

Senator Pate: Yes.

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

The Hon. the Speaker: I have not asked the question, but I see that you can answer the question.

Senator Pate: Thank you. In fact, there are many people serving life sentences who never get out. Those serving multiple life sentences or those who have been convicted of multiple murders are often among those groups.

I cannot think of anybody who has killed more than one, two or three people who is out and whom we don't already know is dangerous. The reality is we're actually doing a disservice to Canadians, in my humble opinion, by saying people are only receiving 25-year sentences. In fact, those are even outliers in many other Western jurisdictions.

In some cases, like Portugal, it is unconstitutional to even give a life sentence. In many European countries, a long sentence is 10 years. Here, we have people serving life sentences. That means they could die in prison. What the Supreme Court of Canada said in the *Bissonnette* case is that there should be some hope of redemption. There should be some hope that people could get out. In fact, when the parole ineligibility was increased from 10 years to 25 years with the abolishment of capital punishment, there was actually a provision put in place. And the last time the Supreme Court of Canada looked at the life sentence alone, they questioned whether it would be constitutional but for the faint hope clause which, as you know, was abolished in 2012. In fact, we are still seen as an outlier with a parole ineligibility period of 25 years and a life sentence.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

• (1550)

[Translation]

NATIONAL CAPITAL ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Rosa Galvez moved second reading of Bill S-229, An Act to amend the National Capital Act (Gatineau Park).

She said: Honourable senators, I'm pleased to introduce Bill S-229, the Gatineau Park Act.

I introduced this bill a few months ago shortly before Parliament was prorogued. I hope that, this time, we senators will have a chance to study the bill and send it to the other place so that Gatineau Park can finally get all the protection a national park deserves.

Today, I'm going to focus on the rationale for the bill, its main points and the minor changes that were made for this second version.

[English]

I would like to remind this chamber that I am presenting this bill to the Senate in very close collaboration with Sophie Chatel, the MP for the riding of Pontiac—Kitigan Zibi, which encompasses a large part of Gatineau Park itself.

I would like to begin by recognizing that Gatineau Park is located on the traditional ancestral lands of the Anishinabek Nation, who have inhabited the land for over 6,000 years before the creation of Canada and who were later displaced. To this day, Anishinaabe communities live in and around Gatineau Park and continue to protect the land. I am pleased to announce that this bill comes with a letter of support from Chief Jean Guy Whiteduck on behalf of the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg Band Council.

Let me begin by reminding you about the larger context and importance of this bill. By now, you are all aware — from speeches and the news — that this year, an early wildfire season has witnessed 1,732 fires in Canada, of which, 72 remain uncontrolled even today. The science is unequivocal: Global warming, biodiversity loss, pollution and ocean acidification have exceeded planetary limits. The planet is warming, and this, in turn, is triggering a series of negative impacts on natural ecosystems. Global biodiversity is rapidly declining, leading many experts to declare that we are witnessing the sixth mass extinction.

In fact, scientists are predicting that more than one million species are currently on track for extinction in the coming decades. How sad. This is a crisis with unimaginable consequences. Humanity depends on biodiversity in countless ways: through the pollination of plants and crops for agriculture, regulation of the quality of the air we breathe, the water and soil quality and our natural resources. The loss of ecological diversity will make our ecosystems less resilient and will worsen our economies and our health.

By now, colleagues, I hope it is clear to you that our society, culture and economy depends on nature, not the other way around. The GDP — the master indicator for financiers and politicians — is based on the economy generated by nature in the form of natural resources, biodiversity and ecological services. Perhaps this is not yet clear to many of you, but it is clear — let me tell you — to most people who live in Quebec.

Hydro Quebec profits are between \$2 billion and \$3 billion per year. They couldn't make those profits without the mighty rivers in which gigantic dams have been built. They represent an ecological service.

No less than 90% of the Canadian production of maple syrup is in Quebec, which accounts for the majority of global international production. It generates a profit of \$1 billion per year.

Quebec's mining sector generates \$11.9 billion in mineral production, making it the second-largest metal mining producer in Canada. Can you imagine the economy of Quebec without all of this?

When we export nonrenewable resources like raw minerals, we know we are taking them from future generations, because these nonrenewable resources will not come back. If they do come back, they will have been transformed and sold to us at a much higher price.

My interventions via international scientific, engineering and parliamentary platforms enable me to say that this is something which is starting to be better understood by the international community in both the Global North, like in Europe, and in the Global South, like in Africa and Latin America.

The world has tried to tackle the issue of nature and biodiversity loss through the Conference of the Parties, or COP, and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

In 2022 Canada hosted COP 15, which was on biodiversity. The 196 countries that attended adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, whose most notable objective was to protect 30% of all lands and 30% of all waters by the year 2030.

In October of last year, the world gathered in Colombia for COP 16, which I attended with my colleague Andrew Cardozo. There, countries continued their negotiations on biodiversity, pushing for more financing to promote nature loss prevention and regeneration. Senator Cardozo and I were part of the Canadian delegation, and we witnessed first-hand the incredible work being done to connect humanity with nature. In fact, I should say reconnect — rather than connect — humanity with nature.

[Translation]

We still have a long way to go to achieve our goals and restore the balance between humanity and nature, but the work has to start right here at home. Canada has committed to achieving the 30x30 goal and is moving too slowly in protecting its lands and waters.

[English]

Can you imagine what we have lost as a result of the wildfires that have occurred so early this spring?

[Translation]

Last year, the government published the latest Canadian environmental sustainability indicators for conserved areas. Although there has been a significant increase in marine

protected areas over the last decade, we're still far from the target, with only 14.7% of marine territory conserved. As for land, Canada has conserved 13.7%. With only five years to go before the 2030 deadline, we have a lot of catching up to do.

In the Outaouais, very close to where we are right now, the conservation picture is not rosy, either. Only 7.6% of the Outaouais region and less than 9% of the Ottawa River watershed are currently protected, despite the fact that the National Capital Region should be an example to the rest of the country.

As I just said, it has to start here. I strongly encourage everyone to visit Gatineau Park. I know that my colleagues who live in Ottawa are very familiar with it. It is so close by. I am thinking of my colleague, Senator Deacon, who encourages us to get outside, go for a walk, get some exercise and some fresh air.

In Canada, there is also an urgent need to more firmly tackle the loss of biodiversity. Across the country, more than 520 species of plants and animals are at risk, according to the public register.

Within its 361 square kilometres, Gatineau Park is the site of more than 50 lakes and numerous wetlands, streams and rivers. Five of the park's ecosystems and two of its habitats are of great ecological importance. The park is home to more than 50 mammal species, 10 or so reptile species, 15 amphibian species, nearly 230 bird species and thousands of invertebrates. There are also around 1,000 species of plants and 50 species of trees.

At a press conference this morning in Gatineau Park, we came across one of these turtles. Everyone watched the lone turtle in awe as though it was something strange. I remember when I came to Canada, 40 years ago, turtles were everywhere.

Although the park's biodiversity is wonderful, it is at risk. Some 90 plants and 60 animal species are endangered, including the eastern red cedar, the peregrine falcon, the paleleaf sunflower, Blanding's turtle and the eastern milksnake.

• (1600)

Gatineau Park is invaluable to the region and we must protect it.

[English]

As I explained in my last speech on the bill, Gatineau Park is not officially a national park. Even this morning, some people believed that it is. It is not enshrined in legislation and does not benefit from any formal legal status granted to other national parks, even though it is the second most visited park in all of Canada, with 2.6 million visits recorded annually.

Dear colleagues, this needs to be rectified. Bill S-229 includes five main actions.

First, it establishes Gatineau Park in federal legislation and dedicates it to all Canadians and to future generations. It is important to preserve the park for decades and centuries to come.

Second, it ensures that ecological integrity is the primary focus of park management. We cannot benefit from the park if its ecosystems collapse.

Third, it establishes the park's boundaries in federal legislation, and it stipulates that these boundaries may only be reduced by legislation, subject to certain exceptions, such as for the development of public health care facilities or public infrastructure.

Fourth, it strengthens ties and cooperation between the National Capital Commission, or NCC, and the Algonquin Anishinabeg Nation in the region, as well as with neighbouring municipalities. We all know we must advance reconciliation.

Fifth, it authorizes the implementation of regulations to control activities in the park and set the fees to be charged, as is the case for all of Canada's national parks.

Of course, these actions have been selected after several consultations with the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg community, regional environmental organizations, the National Capital Commission, residents' associations in the area, neighbouring municipalities and both federal and provincial elected representatives from the region, all done by MP Chatel.

These consultations have continued since the first introduction of the bill and have led to two small changes in the version I reintroduced in the Senate this week.

First, this new bill does not include the previously proposed provision granting the NCC the authority to negotiate rights of first refusal with private landowners. Although the NCC already has that power and has occasionally done so with former residents, the inclusion of this provision was not well received by some residents of the park.

The second change is further clarification on the language related to usage fees set by the NCC. The bill grants the NCC the authority to set fees for certain activities in the park, as is the case for any other national park. However, in order to ensure that access to the park remains affordable for all, this new version includes a clarification that these fees cannot exceed the cost incurred by the NCC for providing these services. As stewards of this public park, it would be reasonable for the NCC to recover costs, but not to make a profit.

[Translation]

I can certainly extol the virtues and highlight the importance of our legislation, but it should be noted that the bill has garnered significant support in the community.

In November 2023, Gatineau city council adopted a resolution calling on the Parliament of Canada to:

... pass legislation to ensure the sustainability and integrity of the boundaries of Gatineau Park to guarantee that current and future generations can continue to enjoy the exceptional natural environment of Gatineau Park.

A majority of elected officials in the National Capital Region also support this initiative, as we saw this morning during the press conference in Gatineau Park.

Since March 2023, several petitions calling for legislation to guarantee the protection of the park have been submitted to the House of Commons; more than 4,550 signatures have already been gathered.

Finally, the Chief of Kitigan Zibi, Jean-Guy Whiteduck, and the Chief of Barrière Lake, Casey Ratt, both made recommendations that were incorporated into the bill. Their support for this bill is important.

[English]

I believe this is a bill that we can collectively support. I keep calling it low-hanging fruit. We are very much behind on our goal of 30 by 30.

In the past few decades, several legislative attempts have been made to protect Gatineau Park. There have been Liberal attempts, Conservative attempts and — before the prorogation — an independent attempt, but none have reached the end of the legislative process to receive Royal Assent. We have to move, push and make this effort here today.

The last attempt before Sophie Chatel and I took on this initiative was a government bill under former prime minister Stephen Harper.

In the past few years at the Senate, we have adopted several bills that created or expanded urban and national parks. I'm very well placed to know this as the Chair of the Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources.

This legislative proposal concerns a park that already exists and that, as I said earlier, is already a protected area in the minds of many. We merely need to formalize this in federal legislation.

Colleagues, in the past few months, we have been talking about nation-building projects — projects that reinforce Canadian and regional identities. What does everybody think and imagine about Canada when I visit foreign countries? The answer is forests, rivers and lakes: nature. This builds our identity. Nature is our identity.

Gatineau Park is a natural gem of the National Capital Region and a key natural element of this region. It is part of what makes the Outaouais an incredible place to live, work and play.

It is also of great historical significance for the entire country, serving as home to several national heritage sites and having hosted the Meech Lake Accord discussions in the late 1980s.

I hope you will join me in this endeavour to ensure Gatineau Park's ecological integrity so that Canadians can enjoy the wonders and beauty of the park for generations to come. I ask you, colleagues, to move this important piece of legislation forward quickly and refer the bill to the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources. Let's give our national capital a true national park of its own.

Thank you, *meegwetch*.

Hon. Andrew Cardozo: Will the senator take a question?

Senator Galvez: Yes.

Senator Cardozo: Thank you very much for your speech and for shepherding this legislation, and thank you also to member of Parliament Sophie Chatel for her work on this.

I live in the National Capital Region and know the park very well. It is very much a part of my family history. Our kids have grown up going there a lot over the years, so I support your bill very strongly.

I'll also say for those of you unfamiliar with the park, you can either go there — it's close to Ottawa — or come visit my office: I've completed a few paintings of Gatineau Park. You'll see the beauty of it, although via my interpretation.

• (1610)

Could you tell us how much this would change the park? For those of us who live in the area, would it change our access to the park?

There are a couple of things that really jump out that you mentioned. One of them is it helps us in our goal for 30 by 30, which is to have 30% of our land protected by 2030. It's a small park in that sense, but I think — because of the numbers you mentioned — it's a very educational park. It's easy to access. I think I may be running out of time, so I'll let you comment.

Senator Galvez: Thank you very much for your question. As I mentioned, this is the most visited park in the whole of Canada, 2.6 million people go and visit. I don't think that naming it a national park is going to reduce that number; I actually think that it's going to increase that number. For that same reason, it needs to be managed as a real national park with the well-established boundaries, facilities and the rights and features of a real national park.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

[Senator Galvez]

NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR SOIL HEALTH BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Robert Black moved second reading of Bill S-230, An Act respecting the development of a national strategy for soil health protection, conservation and enhancement.

He said: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Bill S-230, An Act respecting the development of a national strategy for soil health protection, conservation and enhancement, which seeks to address the recommendations of the 2024 Senate soil health report and establish a national strategy to safeguard Canadian soils now and for generations to come.

First and foremost, I would like to thank the former member of Parliament for Cowichan-Malahat-Langford Alistair MacGregor for tabling Bill C-203, An Act respecting soil conservation and soil health, in the other place last parliamentary session. Although the bill did not make it beyond first reading and we weren't able to study the bill in either chamber, I'm hopeful that Bill S-230 honours his commitment to protecting soil in Canada. Thank you, Alistair, for your dedication to supporting agriculture and rural communities.

Colleagues, as you know, on June 6, 2024, the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry tabled the report entitled *Critical Ground: Why Soil is Essential to Canada's Economic, Environmental, Human, and Social Health* after completing a rigorous 18-month study. The committee consulted 153 witnesses, received 74 briefs and participated in fact-finding missions across the country and internationally to ensure the result would accurately report on the state of Canada's soil health.

I would like to take a moment to recognize the individuals who supported the Agriculture Committee's soil study, including some of those who are in this room today. To all the farmers, scientists and researchers who hosted us and informed us of the critical role soil health plays in the well-being of Canadians. To the individuals and organizations who took the time to write and submit briefs that informed our work and provided us guidance on what angles we should explore. To the witnesses who appeared in front of committee and diligently answered our questions. To each of you, thank you for your contributions, your help and your guidance. This report would not have existed without these individuals.

The committee was faced with a plethora of insightful and inspiring information from across the country, and our main conclusion was clear: Canadian soils and soil around the world are at risk. If we do not act now to preserve and protect the soil, we are risking our food sovereignty, food security and the well-being of the environment as well as the health and wellness of all Canadians.

To help illustrate the severity of this issue, I would like to share with you that in 2021, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations found that 30% of the world's soils were already degraded. The degradation of soil means that the soil has significantly lost its ability to grow food, hold water and support plants and animals. Soil degradation

directly impacts a farmers' ability to grow crops and raise livestock thereby directly impacting food security. Furthermore, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations estimates that 90% of the world's soils will be degraded by 2050 if something is not done. Colleagues, that is 25 years from today. This is something that should keep us all up at night. I know it affects me.

During the committee meetings, we learned about soil pollution and contamination impacting the soil's ability to produce food, lessening the quality and nutritiousness of the food produced and reducing the soil's natural ability to act as a buffer against the spread of pollutants and disease. We had the opportunity to speak to farmers and producers who are using sustainable and regenerative methods to preserve the health of soils on their farmland like grazing management, no-till or low-till farming and diversification of crops. We learned about how these practices mitigate climate change, promote cleaner air and water, enhance biodiversity and improve soil health thereby contributing to food security. All this to say that the committee learned about the critical ground under our feet and how this important resource is perishing, but we also heard about how scientists, researchers and farmers are working to rebuild and renew soil across this country and around the world.

The Agriculture Committee's report made 25 recommendations to the Government of Canada on how to protect and conserve the health of soils. These recommendations highlight the need for action to be taken by the Government of Canada now — and not 25 years from now — and you will note that my bill contains a number of these recommendations.

Bill S-230 calls on the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food to work in collaboration with provinces, territories, Indigenous bodies, various stakeholders and with the ministers of Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change Canada and Indigenous Services Canada to develop a national strategy to support and promote efforts to protect, conserve and enhance the health of soil across Canada. It outlines various measures to be included in a national strategy such as policy and legislative measures that recognize the crucial nature of soil health; knowledge improvement measures that promote the analysis and gathering of data on soil health across Canada; education and information measures that encourage the sharing of information within the agricultural community and to our youth; as well as measures to appoint a national advocate for soil health to promote the preservation of soil across this country. I believe these provisions will ensure a complete and fulsome national strategy that will protect our soils and support the safeguarding of Canada's food sovereignty and food security for generations to come.

Colleagues, I've risen on a number of occasions to highlight the importance of Canada's agriculture sector to the economic prosperity of Canada. It is my opinion that this industry is all too often overlooked and the gap from farm-to-table or from farm-to-fork must be lessened to inform Canadians about how vital our agriculture sector is for the well-being of all Canadians now and into the future.

Colleagues, while the Speech from the Throne mentioned agriculture, it was only in passing, yet all plans outlined in that speech will affect the agriculture industry. I had hoped that the

industry would have received more attention on the importance of their contributions to the well-being and prosperity of our country. Alas, an industry that contributed 7% to Canada's GDP in 2023 — which is more than many other industries contribute — has been left out in the cold.

To quote Kyra Stiles, a nutrient management specialist with the Prince Edward Island Department of Agriculture:

Agriculture and communities are intertwined . . . Healthy soil can lead to better crop growth and higher yields for farmers, and can help contribute to healthier, locally sourced food for Island residents.

We see the truth of this statement through the success of Ms. Styles' project. The P.E.I. Department of Agriculture has been running a soil quality monitoring project since 1998 to measure and monitor soil quality across the province. This project helps producers across P.E.I. to create and maintain strong and healthy soils. The program uses the data they collect to make recommendations to farmers on cropping and fertilizer options that favour long-term soil health. The collection of data also informs the P.E.I. Department of Agriculture for future programming and initiatives that can best support the industry. This collaborative approach benefits every person involved.

• (1620)

The collection of data helps farmers to be more strategic and sustainable in their practices and it informs the work of the Department of Agriculture, all while providing healthy, nutritious and locally grown foods for Islanders.

More programming across this country that achieves the same goals as the P.E.I. Soil Quality Monitoring Project can improve the agriculture sector and the well-being of Canadians across this country. The collection of data on the conditions of soil combined with collaboration between governments and farmers can and will encourage healthier soils and healthier local foods for Canadians.

In fact, some provinces and territories already collect soil health data, but they face difficulties in sharing this data across the country. Thus, there need to be mechanisms and supports in place to improve information sharing across our country so that we can leverage that data that already exists and that will be generated going forward.

This is why the federal government needs to help facilitate further analysis and data collection related to the status of Canada's soils across this country.

The gathering and sharing of this data and monitoring indicators on soil health would help to ensure the scientific data needed to help safeguard our soils is shared across all jurisdictions throughout this country. I believe a national strategy on soil health will work to achieve this need.

Honourable colleagues, soil pollution and contamination are more significant issues than Canadians realize, and it's important that we have the data to track contamination and pollution levels. We heard from Steven Siciliano, professor of soil science at the University of Saskatchewan, who informed us that "There are 20 million contaminated sites across the world." In Canada alone, we heard that there are 250,000 sites that come from abandoned oil and gas wells.

Healthy soil acts as a sponge by holding and filtering water, and thereby directly influencing the quality of water resources, but soil pollution hinders its ability to filter out pollutants thereby impacting our food, our environment and our human health. If we foster soil health, then we inevitably foster nutritious food, balanced ecosystems and human health.

Further, Canada and Canadians need a better understanding and awareness of how our soil is affected by pollution and contamination. The implementation of a national strategy to protect, conserve and enhance the health of soils needs to include measures to educate and inform Canadians on the importance of soil health and the direct impact it has on our lives.

I have had the privilege to travel around our great country speaking at different conferences, meetings and events about the agriculture and forestry soil study. Through these opportunities, organizations, farmers, producers and even youth from all parts of the country have shared their support of the report, the truth of its findings and the importance of our recommendations. The agriculture community knows that our soils are at risk, but it's time for us, as parliamentarians, to further support Canadians by protecting our critical ground.

At the organizational level, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture passed a resolution at their annual general meeting in February with significant support in favour of implementing the recommendations set out in the report. Their resolution states:

There is a strong need to act now to maintain and improve soil health in the interests of Canada's continued sustainable agricultural productivity and competitiveness.

At the municipal level, I had the pleasure of speaking at a recent council meeting of the Township of Amaranth in Dufferin County, Ontario. During that meeting, I spoke about and shared the details of the soil report. After my presentation, and unbeknownst to me when I started, the council members unanimously passed a resolution to "... fully support all of the Recommendations included within Critical Ground ..."

Additionally, the Township of Wellington North in Ontario has also passed a similar resolution aimed to:

... urge the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario to implement all the recommendations contained within the Report and commit to recognizing a sense of urgency and act accordingly in order to protect and conserve soil as per Recommendation 25.

I have even heard support from our youth leaders from across Canada. At this year's 4-H Canada Citizenship Congress, I heard from youth aged 16 to 22 about the importance of protecting farmland and the need to stop developing on these lands in order

to protect the soil. In their mock debate that took place right in this very chamber, they even passed a resolution to protect agricultural lands.

Furthermore, earlier this month, Senator Simons, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and I invited our colleagues to attend and watch a one-woman show by Dale Hamilton entitled *She Won't Come in From the Fields*.

As attendees will remember, Dale included the *Critical Ground* report in her performance, highlighting its significance and the need for more widespread understanding of regenerative and sustainable methods to preserve soil health.

These instances do not discount the countless newspaper articles written by and about farmers, explaining their own personal concerns with the lack of attention soil health receives from the Government of Canada as well as the individuals I have met at conferences, banquets, farm shows and farm meetings that share these similar concerns.

Our soils are precious, and I hope that you have been able to understand this through my speech, but soil degradation as well as soil pollution and contamination are not the only problems facing Canadian soils.

Honourable colleagues, during the parliamentary dissolution period, I heard concerns from the agricultural community regarding the commitments and promises made by the federal parties to build infrastructure and more housing that will inevitably affect the health of our soils. And with the government's plan for a "One Canadian Economy," there were yet again more concerns raised by the industry: Where will this development take place? How will it affect soil health and soil preservation?

Although I understand the government's priority to provide affordable housing for Canadian citizens and to build new infrastructure to make Canada one of the strongest economies in the G7, I am concerned that these plans will be fulfilled by developing on prime agricultural farmland — land being used to feed our country and the world — without even considering this ground being removed from production.

Canada does not have an unlimited supply of farmland. We are privileged to have the land we have now that has healthy arable soils that can be used for farming and food production. Once we remove these lands from production to build housing or infrastructure, the productivity of this land is gone.

According to the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, using data from the 2021 Census of Agriculture, Ontario alone is losing 319 acres of farmland every single day.

Colleagues, this is concerning. We cannot focus on development of rural land without considering the potential loss of the ability to grow food and produce fibre and fuels from biomass produced on farmlands with healthy soil. We must take into account the loss of production that comes with development and the depletion of the health of our soils. It is important that we highlight the importance of considering the ground under our feet before we build over it.

To quote a friend, Mr. Mark Reusser, a director on the board of Ontario Federation of Agriculture representing farmers from Waterloo, Dufferin and Wellington counties, he said at a recent Ontario Institute of Agrologists meeting in April of this year:

I am sure that you are familiar with the term “critical minerals”. They have names like disporium, barite, beryllium, bismuth, cesium, cobalt, gallium and so on. The definition of a critical mineral is a resource deemed essential for the economy, and whose supply maybe vulnerable to disruption, impacting national security, and economic stability. Should soils not be at the top of this list of critical minerals?

Mark continued:

Should we lose this non-renewable natural resource by covering it with asphalt and concrete, it is gone forever. However, if we as a nation conserve our soils, look after them and steward them, they become a perpetual resource that has the capacity to produce food forever.

Colleagues, the agriculture community is well aware of the uncertainties our soils are facing, and a national strategy will work towards establishing soil health as a national priority across all sectors and across this country.

This bill aims to address the concerns of the industry and those laid out in the Agriculture Committee soil health study. It will demonstrate to the agriculture sector and to the world that the Government of Canada recognizes the soils’ contribution to Canada’s prosperity, and will help protect our food sovereignty and food security. The international community will take note and many, if they haven’t already, may follow suit.

Some of our international partners have already acknowledged the importance and potential of soil beyond its agricultural benefits. In April of 2024, the Government of New Zealand released a press release that defines soil as a strategic asset and explains its vital role to New Zealand’s economy.

Quoting Natasha Lewis, Deputy Secretary, Strategy Stewardship and Performance at the Ministry for the Environment, from the press release:

Soil is a strategic asset. A lot of our GDP is in the top 15 cm of the ground we walk on.

• (1630)

During the Agriculture and Forestry Committee study, we had the privilege to hear from Penelope Wensley, the former National Soils Advocate in Australia, to learn about the great policy and legislative work happening in Australia. In 2021, the Government of Australia began taking strides to prioritize the protection of soils in their country by publishing a 20-year strategy entitled *National Soil Strategy*, which outlines how Australia intends to value, manage and improve the quality of their soils for the next 20 years. Their report stressed the importance of soil for the prosperity of Australia. It states:

Australia’s soil is recognised and valued as a key national asset by all stakeholders. It is better understood and sustainably managed, to benefit and secure our environment, economy, food, infrastructure, health, biodiversity, and communities – now and in the future.

To ensure their national strategy’s goals, vision and objectives were achieved, the Government of Australia also developed and published the *National Soil Action Plan 2023 to 2028*, which outlines various programs and activities that prioritize soil health, empower soil innovation and strengthen soil knowledge capability. This action plan also reiterates the importance of soil, stating, “Soil is a non-renewable resource and a national asset.”

As stewards in the protection, conservation and enhancement of the health of soil, Australia has highlighted their recognition of soil as a strategic national asset for their environmental, economic and social prosperity. It is time for Canada to follow suit and develop and implement a national strategy to protect, conserve and enhance the health of soil, and recognize soil as the strategic national asset that it is.

Canada’s agriculture community — indeed, everyone who eats three times a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year — depends upon the critical ground under our feet. While frequently overlooked, it is foundational to growing the food we eat, supplying the feed for our animals and ensuring a balanced ecosystem.

Although soil is frequently looked at from a food-growing lens, healthy soils can also mitigate climate change, as we heard during our study. As I explained earlier, healthy soil has the potential to remove pollutants from our water and ecosystems while also possessing the ability to mitigate climate change. In fact, the Agriculture and Forestry Committee heard about different sustainable practices that farmers, ranchers and producers use to establish healthier soils while also reducing their carbon footprint.

A national strategy that includes measures to support and encourage farmers and other land users to use beneficial management practices that promote soil health, sustainability, the mitigation of climate change and the preservation of soil across the agriculture sector is needed to help protect, conserve and enhance the health of our soils.

Colleagues, the agriculture and agri-food sectors are resilient innovators, but they continue to be confronted with new challenges and more barriers, including increased farming risks caused by climate change and unpredictable weather patterns; threats of tariffs and interprovincial trade barriers, causing increased costs and complex hurdles; as well as unreliable government supports that are riddled with administrative burdens. There is also little recognition of how our agriculture sector already perseveres to overcome these challenges in order to continue putting food on our tables each day.

Agriculture is foundational to our country's well-being, and soil health is at the root of this sector. We all need to eat, and we all need healthy soils so that our farmers, producers and ranchers can continue to grow food to feed our country and the world. If we do not take care of our soils now, we are not taking care of our country. We do not want to wake up one day and realize we do not have the soils or the lands we need in order to feed our nation. At our current pace, I am worried we will be faced with this challenge sooner rather than later.

One of the most important clauses in this bill sets out that the national strategy must include measures to recommend the establishment of soil as a strategic national asset. This was the first recommendation in the soil report. As a food sovereign nation, our country has the privilege of producing more food than we can consume. The agriculture and agri-food sectors contribute 7% percent to Canada's gross domestic product, having generated \$150 billion for our economy in 2023.

However, our status and our ability to feed our country are not permanent. We need to take care of the ground that grows our food now if we want to continue having a strong and resilient agricultural sector into the future. We need to establish soil as a strategic national asset and recognize its role as being as vital to our country as the water we drink and the air we breathe.

A national strategy will not only ensure that Canadians are aware of the importance of soil, but it will also ensure the Government of Canada is making strides to protect, conserve and enhance the health of soils so that we can ensure we have enough healthy soil to continue feeding our country and taking care of our environment.

Colleagues, you may be asking yourself if this bill pertains to federal jurisdiction. As I have said before, healthy soil is required for food security, which is a federal responsibility. It is required for the production of fuels from biomass, which is regulated in federal jurisdiction. Approvals for the growth and expansion of large-scale projects crossing interprovincial borders are also a federal responsibility.

We have an important role to play and must ensure the health of our soil is recognized and protected, in collaboration with stakeholders and all levels of government, as I have previously mentioned.

You may also be asking yourself if this bill is respectful of the Canadian Constitution. I can assure you that while working with the Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel, we discussed this at length to ensure the constitutionality of my bill.

The bill does not contain any appropriation of money. This is not a money bill. It will require departments to work together to gather, collaborate and investigate with all stakeholders, but it does not appropriate federal dollars. In fact, after hearing from 153 witnesses and receiving 74 briefs that I mentioned earlier, and after consulting with the industry after the report was

released and also consulting with my colleagues in this august chamber, with our elected officials in the other place and with municipal councils, I can assure you that consultation surrounding the idea of a national strategy to support and promote efforts across Canada to protect, conserve and enhance the health of soil is widely supported and even encouraged.

Honourable colleagues, you know I am and always will be an "AGvocate." Agriculture will remain my primary focus as long as I serve Canadians in the Red Chamber. Since the tabling of the Agriculture Committee's soil health report, I have realized the need to also be a "soil AGvocate" to raise awareness of the critical nature of this pressing issue and promote the importance of preserving our soils.

Protecting, conserving and enhancing the health of soil requires a long-term strategy, and the results will not be immediate, but if we act now, we can put the mechanisms in place to ensure that future generations of Canadians will have the land they need to feed our nation for many generations to come.

Alternatively, if we do nothing, the degradation of soil will mean we cannot continue to feed Canadians from coast to coast to coast. We won't be able to feed our future generations that will be required to sustain growth. We won't be able to nourish the very people expected to labour, build and expand our country to build the "One Canadian Economy" now and into the future.

I know that sounds grim, but I remind you again that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has clearly reported that 90% of the world's soil could become degraded within 25 years. We must act now. We need a national strategy to protect, conserve and enhance the health of our soils. This is something that only through coordination by the federal government, in collaboration with provincial, territorial and municipal governments, as well as with industry and stakeholders, will lead to national results and ensure our food security and the continued production of fibre and fuels.

Colleagues, I hope you will join me in supporting and swiftly passing Bill S-230, An Act respecting the development of a national strategy for soil health protection, conservation and enhancement, so that we can continue feeding our country for years to come.

Thank you, *meegwetch*.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

• (1640)

[Translation]

**DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT ACT**

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING

Hon. Pierre J. Dalfond moved second reading of Bill C-202, An Act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act (supply management).

He said: Honourable senators, I rise today as sponsor in the Senate of private member's Bill C-202, An Act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act (supply management). This bill was introduced by the leader of the Bloc Québécois on May 29, 2025, and was passed unanimously in the other place on Thursday, June 5.

This bill is identical to Bill C-282, which we debated at the committee report stage last December prior to adjournment, prorogation, dissolution, and ultimately, the general election held on April 28. As such, the objective of Bill C-202 is also to protect a key component of Canada's food security in the context of international trade negotiations, that is, the supply management system for the production of dairy products, chicken, turkey, and eggs.

My presentation is inspired by what we learned from our recently retired colleague, the Honourable Brent Cotter, and will be divided into three parts. First, I will present the three pillars or essential components of the supply management system. Next, I will discuss the arguments that support maintaining supply management in the three aforementioned sectors. Finally, I will explain why the Senate is positioned to proceed swiftly with the adoption of Bill C-202.

[English]

Part 1: What is supply management? Senators, in Canada, our system of supply management was created in the 1970s following a period of price volatility in the dairy, poultry and egg industries. Supply management relies on three pillars.

The first is the control of production by means of allocating quotas designed to prevent production surpluses or shortages, which are both situations that often result in significant price fluctuations for farmers, intermediaries and consumers.

As stated in the Library of Parliament's research publication on Canada's supply management system:

To prevent surpluses and shortages that can cause significant price fluctuations, the national agency representing each industry is responsible for setting the national production level based on provincial demand. The *Farm Products Agencies Act* authorizes each national agency —

— for milk, eggs and poultry —

— to restrict production and set production quotas for each province. Each national agency may also impose penalties for overproduction or underproduction.

The second pillar is guaranteed revenues for farmers. Again, as stated by the Library of Parliament:

. . . supply-managed farmers are guaranteed a minimum price for their products. Through their provincial marketing boards, farmers collectively negotiate minimum farm-gate prices with processors. This minimum price is based on production costs and market conditions, such as consumer demand, inventory available on the market and the price of competing products.

Supply management gives farmers a fair price that reflects production costs while preventing significant price fluctuations for consumers. . . .

Finally, the third pillar is import control, which is key to the supply management system. Without robust limits on imported food staples subject to supply management in Canada, the system is jeopardized by exposing farmers to significant drops in the value of their quotas and major fluctuations in the price they receive for their agricultural output.

The Library of Parliament explains this in the following terms:

In addition to relying heavily on production control and pricing mechanisms, the supply management system also relies on import control to function properly.

In accordance with various trade agreements, Canada restricts imports by setting tariff rate quotas. This means that it grants its trading partners a "minimum level of access" to imports and imposes a high customs tariff on imports beyond a certain amount to prevent foreign products from flooding the Canadian market.

Thus, Bill C-202 seeks to protect this third pillar of the supply management system by preventing additional concessions on the import of dairy products, eggs and poultry.

At the moment, according to a calculation made by the Dairy Farmers of Canada, up to 18% of some dairy products is open to external markets. We also know that there is a huge surplus of milk in the United States. Millions of litres of milk — or gallons, as they call it — have to be destroyed. Wisconsin, in particular, has excess milk production, so it wants to have access to the Canadian market to ship this surplus.

At what point will our dairy supply system be weakened to the point of collapse? That is the question.

According to all the dairy farmers and all the dairy organizations that I met, this 18% — to which I referred before — puts them in the critical zone. If our borders open up even more, the system is finished, according to them.

According to an op-ed published on the National Farmers Union's website, nearly 11% of Canada's chicken is now imported, with most of these imports coming from the United States.

If we look at eggs, the production capacity of a few American industrial producers exceeds the whole Canadian production. According to Statistics Canada, Canadian egg farmers produced 915 million dozen eggs in 2024. That number seems impressive — almost a billion dozen. That's the number for the whole country. By contrast, in the United States, Cal-Maine Foods, the top American egg producer, states on its website that it has nearly 40 million laying hens, and it sells over 1.1 billion dozen eggs annually. That's more eggs from one company than the whole of Canada produces.

[Translation]

In short, no one can claim to support the supply management system while also agreeing to open our borders to the same products from the U.S. or elsewhere. Simply put, the two positions are mutually incompatible.

We must also recognize that every time that we chose to take in imports of these products, we not only reduced our food sovereignty, but we also had to pay billions of dollars in compensation to the dairy industry and other sectors. Our financial resources are limited and they can be put to much better use.

The time has come to draw the line. That is what Bill C-202 proposes by ending import-related concessions that risk destroying the third pillar of our supply management system for dairy products, poultry and eggs.

• (1650)

[English]

Part two: Why should we protect supply management?

Colleagues, let me tell you why I support supply management. I will address four points: first, the importance of supply management to the economies of most provinces and regions in our country; second, the impact of supply management on rural communities across Canada; third, supply management's role in a greener economy; and fourth, supply management as a critical element of our food security.

With regard to my first point, I firmly believe that this bill serves the best interests of all Canadians across all regions and provinces. To illustrate this, I will highlight a few numbers. They are current, as they were published by Statistics Canada last month.

[Senator Dalphond]

According to Statistics Canada, further to an analysis performed at my request by the Library of Parliament, supply management cash receipts, as a share of total farm receipts, is 22.4% in Ontario. That is almost one quarter of the cash income of farmers in Ontario.

In the Atlantic provinces, it's 47.5% for Newfoundland and Labrador, 33% for Nova Scotia, 16.7% for New Brunswick and 15.3% for P.E.I. In British Columbia, the number is 34.9%. Thus, in all these provinces, supply management ensures that a substantial portion of farmers receive fair compensation for their products and are able to continue to produce dairy products, eggs, chicken and turkey, and continue to invest in their farming operations with the knowledge that they can benefit from a stable income, now and in the future.

My second point relates to the impact of supply management on villages and small towns across the country. Supply management is considered vital for sustaining small-scale family farms in the Atlantic provinces. This is also the case for small- and medium-sized farmers producing milk, eggs and poultry in other parts of the country.

These farms not only occupy a substantial part of rural Canada, but also provide a way of life for family-run businesses and keep our villages active and viable. Supply management systems are thus an integral part of our policies aimed at sustaining rural Canada and maintaining a strong presence on the land.

Opening our borders to the importation of eggs, poultry and milk — products often supplied by a handful of large corporate entities capable of dominating the Canadian market — can only result in the closure of multiple farms across Canada.

Let us take the U.S. egg market as an example. Many farms in the U.S. have well over a million egg-laying hens, whereas the typical egg farm in Canada has about 25,000 egg-laying hens. In fact, Cal-Maine Foods — the producer I briefly referred to earlier — is solely responsible for 20% of the U.S. egg supply. Thus, one company controls 20% of the market. Incidentally, those who suggest that supply management drives up consumer prices may be interested to know that Cal-Maine Foods is currently under investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice for alleged price fixing. Our system for pricing is much more transparent than that used in the United States, and it's based on real costs.

It's a similar story with the dairy industry. In Canada, as of 2021, the average size of a dairy herd was 96 cows. In the U.S., as of 2022, it was 337 cows. That's more than three times the size of a Canadian herd. Also, in the U.S., which does not have supply management, the number of dairy farms has dropped by 95% since the 1970s.

As of 2024, over 60% of American milk production was on farms with more than 2,500 cows. That's 25 times the size of the average Canadian farm. That is a lot of cows. I am not sure their cows are much larger than ours, but they certainly have produced a lot of milk.

Moving to my third point, it must be noted that supply management aligns with the ecological imperatives of our time by fostering shorter supply chains. The fresh milk sold in Nova Scotia is not hauled from places like Wisconsin.

In fact, according to the Dairy Farmers of Canada, Canadian dairy producers are among the lowest emitters of carbon per litre of milk in the world: 0.94 kilograms per litre, compared to that of the U.S. of about 2 kilograms per litre — twice as much.

My fourth point is my belief that it's legitimate for a country — indeed, even a duty for every country — to adopt measures that protect, as far as possible, its ability to produce food locally for its citizens instead of becoming increasingly reliant on foreign sources that may well prove unreliable from time to time, as we have seen in the past and more recently.

As we saw during the pandemic, it is undesirable to depend upon foreign imports for vital products. Indeed, a few weeks ago, the National Farmers Union emphasized the importance of building resiliency and food sovereignty, highlighting food supply and agricultural production challenges caused by recent tariffs imposed by someone close to us on the other side of the border.

They said:

Canadians must have secure access to the food we need by developing our capacity here at home. Farmers must be confident that their operations will be protected from economic uncertainty.

By refusing to open further access to our market for dairy products, eggs, chicken and turkey, Canada protects its ability to produce high-quality sources of protein at home to feed Canadians, instead of relying on foreign supply.

We also saw recently that when one of these major foreign suppliers suffers from avian illness, they are forced to destroy millions of eggs, and a single egg increases to a price much higher than that of a dozen eggs in Canada.

By permitting additional imports, we would not only threaten supply management, but also erode our capacity for food sovereignty.

For all these reasons, it is unsurprising that Canadians strongly support supply management for dairy products, eggs and poultry. According to an Abacus poll conducted in November 2023, 94% of Canadians consider it a good thing that dairy products, eggs and poultry are produced by farmers within Canada's supply management system because that guarantees a reliable supply of good products. Simply put, supply management is a widely supported Canadian approach to ensuring food sovereignty, maintaining quality and promoting a greener economy.

That is why all other parties represented in the House of Commons joined with the Bloc's 22 elected MPs in fast-tracking Bill C-202.

I must also add, for the record, that Bloc Québécois members were not the first to introduce bills protecting supply management. In fact, the first attempt dates back to November 4, 2004, during the Thirty-eighth Parliament, with the introduction of Bill C-264, entitled *An Act for the recognition and promotion of agricultural supply management*. It was introduced by the Liberal MP for Kitchener—Conestoga Lynn Myers.

This same bill was reintroduced in 2006, during the Thirty-ninth Parliament, by the Honourable Wayne Easter, a Liberal MP from Prince Edward Island, who is well known, I'm sure, by my colleague on the National Finance Committee.

• (1700)

Of course, the policy proposed by Bill C-202 doesn't mean that there shouldn't be improvements to the way the supply management system works within our borders. As I said in December, I was shocked to see huge quantities of Canadian milk being thrown away every year. Incidentally, this is also the case in Wisconsin, where there's no supply management for dairy products.

I am also concerned by restrictions that prevent innovation. But these issues — as important as they are — must be dealt with in the framework we have put in place via improvements to the supply management system within our borders, not by destroying that system. Further opening our borders to foreign products is not the solution to addressing these concerns. It is a way, however, to jeopardize our food sovereignty.

[Translation]

For my final point of part two, I would like to draw attention to Quebec's perspective on this issue, because it is very important to me as a senator from *La Belle Province*.

As I've shown in my previous comments, Bill C-202 does not address a matter of interest to Quebec alone. However, the fact remains that supply management is an important policy in Quebec, one that I cannot ignore.

Bill C-202 and its predecessor, Bill C-282, were both introduced by the Bloc Québécois, which is a good indication of supply management's importance to Quebec's rural economy and our way of life.

As I've mentioned before, I grew up surrounded by dairy farms. I baled hay. I transported thousands of chicks from hatcheries to poultry barns. I even worked in a poultry slaughterhouse. I also delivered animal feed to so many hundreds of farms that I lost count.

I was the first boy in a family of four children, and at the time, my father delivered feed to all the farms around Joliette. When he took my mother and me along in the truck, I would find myself snugly wrapped between my parents as we made our deliveries. As a result, all the farmers in the area knew me well before I started school. In fact, my first grade teacher, who knew my father well, recognized me right away and welcomed me by saying that she remembered how dark my eyes were when I was one year old.

In Quebec, cash receipts from supply management represent 36% of total farm receipts, according to the most recent Statistics Canada data I mentioned earlier. That's more than in Ontario, about the same as in British Columbia and much less than in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Last week, Martin Caron, President of the Union des producteurs agricoles, or UPA, Quebec's largest group of agricultural producers, congratulated MPs in the other place on their unanimous support for protecting supply management and called on the Senate to study Bill C-202 swiftly.

This view is shared by various representatives of processors that purchase supply-managed products. They told me they appreciate the reliable, high-quality products and the price predictability that supply management provides.

Furthermore, as I said last December, Quebec's National Assembly has adopted six resolutions in favour of protecting supply management in international trade negotiations. The latest was adopted on March 10, 2021, after CUSMA was signed. It reads as follows:

THAT the National Assembly recall that the agricultural sector plays a key role in Québec's economy and regional development;

THAT it reaffirm its support for the protection of the supply management system for egg, milk and poultry producers;

THAT it ask the Government of Canada to fully protect the supply management model under future international agreements.

I also note that successive Quebec governments have all emphasized the need to shield supply management from outside pressures, particularly during trade negotiations, in order to protect the agricultural economy and the vitality of Quebec's rural regions.

Last February, the Premier of Quebec, the Honourable François Legault, said that Quebec was prepared to compromise on a lot of things but not on supply management. He said the following:

We are prepared to make many compromises However, supply management, as well as the protection of French and culture in international agreements, are non-negotiable.

This position reflects a broad consensus in Quebec. The Abacus Data poll which I referred to earlier showed that 92% of Quebecers feel that local farm production under supply management is either a very good thing or a good thing.

[English]

However — and I want to emphasize this point — while my role in representing Quebec informs my support for Bill C-202, it was not what motivated me to sponsor this bill in this chamber. That decision was driven by my firm belief that Bill C-202 is in the national interest, benefiting a substantial portion of family-run farms across the country and being an important part of the food security of this country.

[Senator Dalphond]

The third and final part regards why the Senate should move quickly. Colleagues, up to this point, I have focused on the policy merits of Bill C-202, and I hope that has been persuasive. But if you remain unconvinced by the benefits of supply management and are of the view that it does not deserve the protection proposed in this bill, I respect your position and your right to express it, in this chamber or elsewhere. However, I believe that we must act expeditiously with the current bill. I also believe that the Senate is in a rare position to move promptly with Bill C-202.

[Translation]

As you know, Bill C-202 is exactly the same as Bill C-282, which was passed by the House of Commons in June 2023. It received the support of all leaders and a strong majority of members of all parties.

In the Senate, it was introduced and read a first time on June 21, 2023. It passed second reading in April 2024 and was then carefully examined in committee. When the Senate adjourned for the end-of-year recess in December 2024, we were debating the committee's report. The dissolution of Parliament and subsequent election brought the debates to an end.

During the election campaign, all party leaders spoke out in favour of protecting supply management, particularly during the debate broadcast in French.

[English]

During the recent election campaign, Prime Minister Carney — then a candidate — made it clear that supply management will never be up for negotiation. He said, "Supply management will never be on the table"

Moreover, page 14 of the Liberal platform stated that a Liberal-led government would:

Keep Canada's supply management off the table in any negotiations with the U.S. We will protect Canada's commitment to supply management and supply-managed sectors, including dairy, poultry, and eggs. This will protect Canadian jobs, insulate these segments of our food supply from fluctuations in production costs, and guarantee Canadian farmers a minimum price for their products.

[Translation]

In March 2025, during his visit to the beautiful region of Montmagny on Quebec City's south shore, the leader of the Conservative Party, Pierre Poilievre, promised to defend the supply management system. In April 2025, *Le Droit* reported that the NDP team also intended to fight to uphold supply management.

In the Speech from the Throne read by King Charles III in this chamber, the government reiterated its commitment in these terms:

The Government is determined to protect . . . the people who give us access to fresh, healthy, and quality food: agricultural producers. And it will protect supply management.

• (1710)

On May 29, in the House of Commons, Prime Minister Carney stated, and I quote:

Supply management will never be on the table in negotiations with the Americans. We will protect supply management. There will be a direct response. We will protect the French language and Canadian culture in its entirety in any discussion or trade negotiation with any country around the world, including the U.S.

We will carefully consider the Bloc Québécois bill that was introduced this morning.

Last Thursday, after studying the bill, the House of Commons passed Bill C-202 by adopting the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of the House, Bill C-202, An Act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act (supply management), be deemed read a second time and referred to a committee of the whole, deemed considered in committee of the whole, deemed reported without amendment, deemed concurred in at report stage, and deemed read a third time and passed.

Thus, it took less than four minutes to complete the three readings and the committee report stage.

The adoption of this motion therefore aligns with the position taken by all the leaders and their parties during the campaign, the Speech from the Throne, and the Prime Minister's reply.

[English]

By adopting the motion on Bill C-202 last week, the Prime Minister, the cabinet and the leaders of the opposition parties wanted to send a clear message to our American neighbours. In other words, they spoke with one voice. In this context, I urge the Senate to adopt Bill C-202 in a timely way, as the matter has some urgency.

In December, the new Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Senator Housakos — who just left — said:

On a number of opportunities, the Americans have been trying to chisel down supply management. It's been a point of contention for them in a bunch of negotiations.

The review of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, or CUSMA, is right around the corner. . . . if we show the Americans that we're ready to bend before we even start the negotiations, and if we show that we're ready to open up that crack because Parliament isn't homogeneously and

unanimously behind a strong defence of our agricultural sector at the start of the negotiations, then we're dead before we get to the table. You always negotiate from a position of strength, not from a position of weakness.

I'm not as good a speaker as he is, but I tried to translate these words through my own voice, because I fully share these words, and I fully agree with his analysis.

In this context, we as senators have a responsibility to support the unity of the House of Commons on this matter and to add our support for Bill C-202. In doing so, we lend strength to the position of our government and, indeed, the collective stance of Canada's elected representatives.

To delay passing Bill C-202 will send a contrary message and will weaken our position during the tough negotiations currently under way with our neighbours. With Bill C-202, and irrespective of our individual policy views on which reasonable opinions may differ, we as senators have an opportunity to reaffirm our relationship of democratic deference to the other place and our united support to Canadians.

To do otherwise would convey a message of division to the American administration and also suggest to Canadians that the personal views of unelected senators should prevail under any circumstances, regardless of the cost to the country.

For all these reasons, colleagues, I ask for your support for Bill C-202, as well as a pacing of our deliberations that reflects the priority accorded to this subject by our elected colleagues in the other place, by the government and by a majority of Canadians.

[Translation]

Thank you very much for your attention. I'm ready to answer any questions you might have. *Meegwetch.*

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 and bill read second time, on division.)

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

(On motion of Senator Dalphond, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for third reading at the next sitting of the Senate.)

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE**The Hon. the Speaker:** Is leave granted, honourable senators?**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, I move:**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

That the Senate do now adjourn.

(At 5:18 p.m., the Senate was continued until Monday, June 16, 2025, at 2 p.m.)

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