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The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Thursday, June 19, 2025

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

Prayers.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

TRIBUTES

THE HONOURABLE JUDITH G. SEIDMAN

Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, the recruitment for the opposition caucus is going so well that some thought we should start paying tribute to senators who are retiring three months from now.

In all seriousness, the Senate is about to receive a major blow. This September, we'll be losing a very valuable element in this chamber, one that is respected by all.

Senator Seidman, who was appointed in August 2009, just a few months after me — we have gone through this long walk, sometimes through the desert, sometimes through the forest — retires September 1, 2025. She was an epidemiologist, an age-related health care researcher and social service adviser, and prior to her appointment to the Senate, she was an active health care research professional at McGill University network in Quebec. She holds a number of degrees, and I won't necessarily list all of them because I don't have enough time.

She served on a number boards: the McGill Society of Montreal, the Education Task Force of the McGill Centre for Studies in Aging and the Evaluation Committee for Community Health Research Program of Montreal. The list of all her successes and accolades before coming to this place goes on and on.

Honourable colleagues, she came here and for almost two decades has greatly distinguished herself. She has served on a number of committees. That list is also too long to review. She has served on almost every committee in this chamber. She distinguished herself in how she conducted herself as Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators, or CONF. We all know how sensitive it is to uphold the integrity of this institution, and she has done that as she has done everything else: with the highest degree of integrity for this institution and for every senator.

She also distinguished herself particularly — looking back, I was always torn on this issue, but whenever there were tough issues, she never ran away — in the debate on physician-assisted dying, which was a heart-wrenching and tough debate. It wasn't political; it was about humans and life, and that's where I thought you really shone. You took on that issue, spoke from the heart and really identified the problem in many ways.

She is an ardent defender of minority language rights for the English community in Quebec and for the French community outside of Quebec, which she holds true to her heart. She has also always done that with a great degree of integrity. Regardless of government or political stripes, she has always been consistent: that is who the Honourable Senator Judith Seidman is.

She also published a book along with former senator Serge Joyal. It was the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Senate, and the book was entitled, *Reflecting on Our Past and Embracing Our Future*. I invite you all to obtain a copy. It was a great work about the institution.

More importantly, to me, Senator Seidman is far more than just an accomplished public figure, great senator and colleague. She has been a friend, confidante and adviser to me. When I use the term "friend," I highlight it in bold, because we all know that in political and public life, there are peaks and valleys, high moments and low moments. I can tell you who Judith Seidman is: When you're down and out, the first call you receive will be from her. The phone will ring, and she will say, "How are you doing, and what can I do for you?" That's how I remember Senator Seidman, and there are many stories like that throughout this institution.

Above all else, she deeply loves her family. I know they are up in the gallery. Jessica and, of course, Zac: your mom talks about you all the time and she shines.

Yes, Steve, she talks about you a little bit as well.

But the truth of the matter is that, Jessica, you are the peach of her eyes, and, Zac, you are her life.

Congratulations, Judith. We're going to miss you deeply. The whole institution will miss you. We wish you the best in all your future endeavours.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, it's a great pleasure — but a poignant one — to rise today on behalf of the Government Representative Office to pay tribute to Senator Judith Seidman, a fellow Montrealer who is a dear friend to so many of us in this chamber, including me personally and my wife Nancy.

Judith, before you joined the Senate — as Leo pointed out — you dedicated yourself to bettering the lives of Montrealers and Canadians in your professional capacity as an epidemiologist, as a researcher focused on age-related health issues and as an adviser in the area of social services.

Here — again as Leo mentioned — you continued your work, strongly advocating on behalf of social and health issues. I have always admired your foresight and expertise. I remember — and I have mentioned it more recently — your important work on the risks of vaping. It has been invaluable in informing the work of the Senate and Canadians generally.

Again, it is worth underlining your important work on the Special Joint Committee on Physician-Assisted Dying, which laid the groundwork for the development of the framework for medical assistance in dying.

• (1340)

I won't try to list all the work you've done on committees, but your work on the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators is exceptionally important. With great honour and integrity, you discharged your role there, and I can't think of anybody more suited for that role than you.

I also can't conclude this without highlighting your devotion to our hometown of Montreal and our province of Quebec. It was evident from the very first time you spoke in this chamber when you paid tribute to the 14 women who were killed at École Polytechnique. You focused efforts and you focused our attention on how to prevent such tragic events in the future, and I know you will continue to give back to your community.

On a personal note, you were one of the first people I met during my first week as a senator at the Château Laurier across the street with our former colleague Nancy Greene Raine. You, Nancy and I became close friends early on, and we shared more than one drink at the Château Laurier. We have remained friends, and that has been really important. You have been somebody whom I have relied upon when I needed to vent a little bit. I hope that I've been and will continue to be there for you even as we both leave this place.

Once again, on behalf of the Government Representative Office, happy retirement. Enjoy your time with your family, friends, loved ones and all who love and respect you. Thank you, Judith.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Hon. Raymonde Saint-Germain: Honourable senators, today, we are paying tribute to the Honourable Senator Judith Seidman, one of our most distinguished colleagues, renowned for her expertise, her qualities and her dedication. Judith has served in the Senate for 16 years, during which time she has been an active and influential member of this chamber. Her achievements are many.

Her expertise is impressive, because of the depth of her knowledge in fields such as social sciences, health, ethics and professional conduct, and because of her extensive experience as an academic and researcher. Her work made a mark and is still quoted by many scientists, both here and abroad, including at our Senate committee meetings.

Her considerable expertise made our colleague Judith the go-to authority for the Senate and its committees. When examining several complex, not to mention controversial, bills, senators eagerly awaited and listened to Senator Seidman's opinions. When examining such legislation, we want to hear informed, diligent and empathetic voices, enlightening voices that rise above the fray and shun disinformation. We also want to hear

courageous voices, because sometimes they share opinions that others may not necessarily want to hear. For almost 16 years now, our colleague Judith's voice has been one of the strongest.

[English]

For several years now, I've had the privilege of working with Senator Seidman on the Subcommittee on Human Resources — which is a subcommittee of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration — where I'm the chair and she was the deputy chair. As everyone would expect, Judith devoted herself to this task with the rigour, concern for fairness, strict respect for confidentiality and good judgment that characterize her. I'll make a confession: She had such mastery of her files that I often had to read and reread the documentation. I wouldn't want to be caught out for not seeing a trap or an inconsistency that she would have easily identified.

For me — and I believe for all members of the subcommittee — she is a source of emulation, so much so that I've always considered her to be the subcommittee's co-chair.

Judith, I thank you also on behalf of the other members of the subcommittee. Co-chair, I'm going to miss you. Your credibility is such that you had our collective confidence to serve on the Senate Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators. We knew we could count on your understanding of the institution, the role of senators and our code of ethics. More importantly, we knew you would never violate the obligations of reserve and confidentiality that are the basis of our trust in the members of this committee.

Senator Seidman, dear Judith, our time in this chamber is limited. You have made yours count.

[Translation]

Dear Judith, as you return to Montreal, the city that you are so proud to live in, I want to say thank you and congratulations. On behalf of all members of the Independent Senators Group, I also want to express our admiration and appreciation for you and to wish you all the best.

[English]

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Scott Tannas: Honourable senators, as we move closer and closer toward summer adjournment, the remaining sitting days for our colleague Senator Judith Seidman can now be counted on just one hand. It is bittersweet that we will be forced to wave goodbye to her as soon as she departs this chamber, and the Senate will not be the same without her.

She arrived in the Senate in 2009, along with eight other senators who — and those who were around then would likely agree — projected an extraordinarily strong affinity for one political party. Within this cohort was Senator Seidman, who valued careful study, insisted on objective and quantitative data and worked for bipartisan cooperation.

If you want proof of her ability to reach out across the floor, you can look at the aforementioned book that she edited with Senator Joyal entitled *Reflecting on Our Past and Embracing Our Future: A Senate Initiative for Canada*. Imagine that: A Liberal and a Conservative working together on a common project. It truly is something beautiful.

For those interested, by the way, the book is now on sale for 30% off on Amazon.

Senator Housakos: With the Senate discount.

Senator Tannas: Yes, with the Senate discount.

Another example is when Senator Seidman participated with me and a few others in the now-famous Greene-Massicotte meetings on Senate reform and modernization. I remember well those meetings where our attendance was categorized as sedition in some corners. Nonetheless, Judith was there as an active participant to seek improvements and change for the betterment of this institution.

In Senator Seidman, the Senate received a tireless proponent and warrior for access to health care, controls on tobacco and vaping and equality for minority-language services in her province.

When she was appointed, *The Canadian Jewish News* said that she was “[l]ittle-known outside the party and her professional engagements” That has certainly changed. Today, everyone who knows anything about the Senate also knows about Senator Judith Seidman. From the very beginning, she brought to this chamber her unique blend of academic rigour, compassion and common sense. When she spoke, we stopped and listened because we knew that she would contribute sage wisdom and vigour in our debates. She was never afraid to ask difficult questions or to stand firmly on principle.

We also recognize her work on both the Social Affairs Committee and the Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators Committee. I think it is a sign of the utmost respect that we have for you, Judith, as we trusted you with the chairmanship as well as your colleagues on the committee in whom we put all of our trust and our collective reputation. Thank you for the work that you did on that committee. In all your committee work, many, many studies had to undergo the “Seidman test” for sound conclusions, good data and logical arguments and recommendations.

You leave behind a legacy that reflects intelligence, integrity and an unwavering commitment to public health and democratic values.

On behalf of your colleagues in the Canadian Senators Group, you will be missed, and we wish you a wonderful retirement.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Brian Francis: Honourable senators, it is my pleasure to rise on behalf of the Progressive Senate Group, or PSG, to pay tribute to the Honourable Judith Seidman.

Nearing the end of a very busy and productive week, it's nice to have an opportunity to pause for a moment to celebrate and reflect on the busy and productive Senate career that our colleague has had.

Having served in this place for over 15 years now, Senator Seidman has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to public service.

• (1350)

Through initiatives like Science Meets Parliament and Women in House; sponsoring legislation like Vanessa's Law; her dedication to important issues like our long-term care system and aging in place; raising concerns about regulations around vaping; and her work on the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology for most of her time in the Senate, Senator Seidman has been a devoted advocate for health and social issues.

Through her service throughout the years on the Standing Senate Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration and in her current role as Chair of the Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators, she has equally demonstrated a commitment to the administrative functioning of this institution and helping us ensure that we are always seeking to achieve the highest levels of integrity and accountability in both our work and our operations.

I would also like to highlight her important contributions to one of the most ethically complex issues of our time, medical assistance in dying. In 2016, Senator Seidman served as one of the Senate members on the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying. This experience certainly helped shape her participation in the debates on both Bill C-14 and Bill C-7. Although I was only here for Bill C-7, it was certainly helpful to hear the contributions of those who had worked so hard on Bill C-14. During these times of profound reflection and legal transformation, she brought clarity, compassion and focus to this complex and personal topic.

Senator Seidman, you leave behind a legacy of thoughtful engagement and a deep respect for the responsibilities entrusted to us as senators.

On behalf of the Progressive Senate Group, thank you for your service and your many contributions. We wish you the very best in the years to come.

Wela'lin, thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Jessica Ripley, the daughter of Senator Seidman; her son-in-law, Steve Soifer; and her grandson, Zac Ripley Soifer.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

THE HONOURABLE JUDITH G. SEIDMAN

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

Hon. Judith G. Seidman: Honourable senators, thank you.

Senator Housakos — Leo, Senator Gold — Marc, Senator Saint-Germain — Raymonde, Senator Tannas — Scott and Senator Francis — Brian, thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

Your Honour, it seems appropriate to look at you before I begin, as we usually do when you recognize us to speak. Thank you.

On September 15, 2009, the first day of the Senate after the summer recess period, I sat in Centre Block just outside the Senate Chamber, in a small but magnificent room called the Salon de la Francophonie, with eight other soon-to-be colleagues. I pinched myself. This must be what is meant by “an out-of-body experience.”

We were all seated at a large boardroom table, each quietly and nervously waiting for our name to be called next before walking into the Red Chamber. As each person’s name was called and they left the room, supposedly for procession into the chamber, someone said, “What if we just disappear into ‘nowhereness’ like in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*?” Well, some would say that there are days on the Hill that feel much like Alice going down the rabbit hole.

It was a huge honour and privilege to be nominated by the Right Honourable Stephen Harper, then prime minister, and I also saw it as a great responsibility. I thank him for the trust and confidence he placed in me.

Over these 16 years, I have grown to fully understand the duty that was entrusted to me as a senator from Quebec — a duty to give voice to those who have no voice, especially minorities in Quebec.

Frankly, I had never even dreamt that I would find myself in this august chamber. It is true that while my friends were hanging posters of rock stars in their rooms in high school and university, I was hanging posters of political candidates. Politics became my passion and hobby over the years. For as long as I can remember, I have believed that we are so fortunate to live in our country, Canada, and that we must not take our democracy for granted. Therefore, it is our responsibility to ensure the freedoms and opportunities we enjoy as Canadians are never in jeopardy. The best way to do that, I believed, was to get involved in the public sphere in some way and give back something to our communities in return for our good fortunes.

While I have been fortunate to have had good teachers and good friends over the years, there is no doubt in my mind that the strongest influence on me has been the caring, determined man I

knew first in my life: my father. He instructed me, the eldest of three daughters, on values, principles, courage, strength, loyalty and commitment. He showed me a fine example of public service commitment over his lifetime, primarily and most importantly in his work with youth as an innovator on local, provincial, national and international levels.

Honourable colleagues, I must admit that at this most critical juncture, the end of one of the most meaningful periods of my life — these last 16 years as part of our Senate family — I have spent some time doing a sort of mental review. The first thing that comes to mind is how fortunate we are to have the gift of time in our work here, to be able to think big picture and to act on big issues confronting our country.

As you’ve heard today and as many of you know, most of my work in this place over the years has been focused on health care and social policy. Both have jurisdictional limitations, but for both, there is an important place and need for national leadership. You have heard me speak on government legislation and ask questions of ministers or the Leader of the Government.

The pieces of health-specific government legislation that we have passed here in this place — sometimes with amendments but always with sober second thought — such as the cannabis and vaping legislation, the pharmacare and dental care bills, the Accessible Canada Act, the Canada Disability Benefit and the medical assistance in dying legislation, have been important in their own rights, yet we must confront even larger questions.

Among the most demanding issues in the health field that confront us now, I believe, are how we will deliver effective front-line primary health care and social services to an aging population who want to age in place in their homes and communities; how we will address great shortages in health human resources and grave systemic weaknesses in our health systems; and how we will provide the infrastructure to meet the urgent need for robust, standardized national health data, especially for support during crises like the pandemic we have just emerged from.

• (1400)

Another big question, colleagues — right here, at the heart of the *raison d’être* of our chamber — is this: Will we conduct our legislative reviews of important pieces of legislation, especially those that require ongoing scientific review and evaluation to update changes in health policies, that could actually result in unintended consequences?

The Special Joint Committee on Physician-Assisted Dying, originally formed in December 2015 as a result of the *Carter v. Canada (Attorney General)* Supreme Court decision, was meant to advise the government on a federal framework for the necessary legislation to remedy what was found to be a contravention of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It was a privilege to be a member of this committee with four of my Senate colleagues — the Honourable James Cowan, Serge Joyal, Nancy Ruth and Kelvin Ogilvie — all of whom are now retired, along with 11 members of Parliament. We worked throughout a two-month period and our recommendations resulted in the very first piece of Canadian legislation on medical assistance in dying.

I would say that I look back on that study as one of the most intellectually and emotionally challenging that I have faced as a parliamentarian.

Understanding the Senate's very foundational role in safeguarding minority interests required my particular attention to consistently advocate for the English-speaking minority communities in Quebec. I truly hope that I fulfilled my responsibility in that regard.

Colleagues, I have worked closely with so many of you on committees as well as on particular projects and issues over these years. Overall, our committees have completed some outstanding studies that I believe should not be relegated to sit on the shelves and collect dust. You will know that I have often referenced relevant findings or recommendations from our Senate committee studies throughout the work we do here in our chamber in the hopes that we can build upon them.

I have also served as the opposition critic to the government sponsor on many pieces of legislation. The cooperation to truly bring a better bill to Canadians is what we have aspired to together. I thank you, honourable senators; it has been both an inspiration and an education working on matters in service to Canadians together.

As for our work on the Senate Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators these last five years, it has been a privilege to have been entrusted by all of you with the many highly sensitive questions around our code that are sent to our committee. I assure you that we have always fully recognized that our primary objective is to oversee the code for senators and to preserve the integrity of the Senate.

I will give a special thank you to my colleagues on our committee. It has been an honour serving this institution with you.

What these last words upon retirement must be about is the big supportive family — all of you who are our ongoing source of strength, those around us who enable our work from so many vantages. I think of it as a large circle that begins with our Clerk of the Senate, Shaila Anwar, who brings an indefatigable commitment to creating the highest quality work environment for everyone. I have learned so much working with you, Shaila. Thank you.

I want to thank our Usher of the Black Rod and the Senate pages, who bring us daily smiles along with water and other necessities while we are at our desks in the chamber.

I thank our Chamber Operations and Procedures Directorate, the table officers and staff working behind the scenes who really keep this chamber and all of us in order.

I want to thank the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel who have been invaluable to our work on our Ethics and Conflict of Interest Committee and who draft so many of our Senate public bills.

I thank the Senate protective services, now the Parliamentary Protective Services, who truly care about our safety. We see that in their actions every day.

I thank our dedicated teams from the administration directorates: human resources, finance, our IT and telecommunication teams, corporate security, building services, communications, broadcasting, publications and committees. They are always ready to find solutions to our many challenges.

Finally, I want to give a special mention of our minibus drivers who have driven us that extra little distance in the dark and cold winter nights after late sittings.

To all of you, I say, "A million roses; a million thank yous."

I extend my thanks and gratitude for my Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators Committee clerks over these years who brought such professionalism, support, advice and commitment: Marie-Eve Belzile and Joëlle Nadeau, and for a brief interlude during our time of need both Shaila Anwar and Gérald Lafrenière.

To my caucus leadership team and our small but mighty caucus, thank you, above all, for your supportiveness and friendship over these years. I leave knowing that our leader, Senator Housakos, will pilot you between the rocky shores with great skill.

Thank you to my Whip Office Advisor, Karma Macgregor, who has served four whips over the years with dedication and most effectively. Frankly, my term as the Opposition Whip coincided with the COVID pandemic, and my roll just naturally evolved to being "the COVID Whip." Thus, I could focus on the health and safety of all my Senate colleagues, which came quite naturally from my epidemiology training in my previous life. The traditional so-called whip "enforcer" is just not my calling.

As for the staff on our leadership team on the third floor, what would we ever do without you? You were always ever-willing hands on those long days and late nights.

In my senator's office, thank you to Valérie Wolfe, who, at the very beginning, was with me to learn processes and procedures and everything to do with the Senate; Gabrielle Bérard, who was a skilled adviser on health legislation; and Valerie Michailovich, who endured the isolation of COVID work yet always jumped in enthusiastically with brightness to tackle whatever research. When she moved on to a Masters in Public Health, I was so proud. I also thank Sylvie Clément, the person I introduce as the one who keeps my life in this place running smoothly, daily, in all of its aspects. We have been through a lot together over these years. You have managed our office team, and I always valued your advice, judgment and calm organizational ability to keep everything stable even in the most intense periods that we all experience in this place.

To my wonderful family: my late parents, Riva and David; my late husband John; my late husband Olli; my sisters and brothers-in-law, Iris, Stephen, Bonnie and Renaud; my very cherished daughter, Jessica Ripley; son-in-law, Steve Soifer; and my one-of-a-kind grandson, Zac, I love you all dearly. Thank you for your patience, supportiveness and unconditional love all these years when I have likely not given you the attention you so deserve. But that time is coming.

Jessica, if I might — generation to generation — you, too, have chosen the pathway to give back to your community and country in your work and national leadership in the field of youth justice. You are an inspiration to me.

Colleagues, I am so grateful and I feel so fortunate to have been graced by these 16 years of the privilege of public service for Montrealers, Quebecers and Canadians.

Finally, it seems appropriate to end with a quote of my dearest grandson, Zachary Ripley Soifer, offered when he was but 10 years old. He said, “Gram, do not follow your shadow; look to the future.” I shall try to take his youthful advice.

Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

• (1410)

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Mitch Monette, Director of the Parliamentary Protective Service, and other members of the Parliamentary Protective Service.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable colleagues,

Ten years ago, a new era of security and protection took shape in the Parliament of Canada.

On 23 June 2015, the Parliamentary Protective Service, the PPS, was officially established by Royal Assent, marking the beginning of a new service and a shared commitment to safeguarding our democracy.

As we commemorate this anniversary, we would like to celebrate all those who work as part of this great team in the service of Parliament.

Dear members of the Parliamentary Protective Service:

Thank you to each and every one of you for safeguarding our democratic institutions by remaining true to your mission, to our parliamentary traditions, and to the operational legacy passed down through generations of security services who have protected Parliament Hill over time.

Your professionalism, sense of duty, and pursuit of excellence are deeply valued.

[Senator Seidman]

Since its establishment in 2015, following the tragic events of October 22, 2014, the PPS has watched over the security of Parliament Hill and its institutions day and night.

In a context of growing threats and global challenges, your outstanding commitment remains unwavering. You are always there: steadfast, courageous, and dedicated.

Dear members of the PPS, you are often the first faces we meet, the last ones we see, and your reassuring presence embodies the stability and resilience of our democracy.

In all circumstances, both in public and behind the scenes, you combine vigilance, respect and professionalism.

On behalf of all the honourable senators, and on behalf of all the employees of the Senate and Parliament of Canada, thank you to the people who make up the Parliamentary Protection Service.

Thank you for always watching over our democratic institutions, every day, every night.

Happy tenth anniversary!

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[*English*]

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 Donald Neil Plett.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

KOREAN WAR

SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Senator Seidman, we all absolutely respect and cherish you. I will miss you beyond words.

Honourable senators, I rise today to commemorate a profoundly significant milestone in our shared history: the seventy-fifth anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War, which began on June 25, 1950, when the communist North Korean forces launched a full-scale invasion of South Korea. This act of aggression ignited a war that continues to shape the geopolitical landscape of the Korean Peninsula and the world to this day.

The armistice was signed three years later on July 27, 1953, bringing an end to the hostilities, splitting the country along the 38th parallel and separating countless families on either side of the divide, including my own, as the war has yet to end.

The Korean War stands as one of Canada's most significant overseas military engagements of the 20th century. Nearly 27,000 brave Canadians answered the United Nations' call to defend peace and international order, serving with distinction in the Royal Canadian Navy, the Canadian Army and the Royal Canadian Air Force. Following the armistice signed on July 27, 1953, more than 7,000 additional Canadians served in peacekeeping duties, continuing to support stability in the region.

This seventy-fifth anniversary compels us to reflect above all on the immense courage, sacrifice and resilience of our Canadian veterans. In the face of extreme conditions and a determined adversary, they stood firm and resolute. Their sacrifices were not made for recognition nor reward, but out of duty, honour and a profound commitment to peace and freedom. Their bravery is etched into the soul of our nation, and their example continues to inspire generations. We owe them more than words. We owe them remembrance, respect and the promise that their legacy will never be forgotten. Canada and the people of Korean descent around the world are forever in their debt.

We honour our Korean War veterans not only for what they did on the battlefield but for what their service helped to build: a free and democratic South Korea and a proud Canadian tradition of peacekeeping and global leadership.

Honourable senators, let us mark this historic anniversary with reverence, pride and — above all — gratitude. Let us ensure that future generations will remember the sacrifices made on distant shores in defence of freedom. Let us ensure that their courage will never be forgotten, their stories will always be told and their sacrifice will be honoured — today and always.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

THE LATE DENIS GRATTON

Hon. Lucie Moncion: Senator Seidman, you have been graceful to the end.

[Translation]

Honourable senators, I rise today in tribute to an outstanding journalist and committed Franco-Ontarian, Denis Gratton, who passed away on December 7. In his last column, published in *Le Droit* on March 24, 2023, Denis Gratton wrote about his battle with lung cancer, a battle that would turn out to be long and difficult. He wrote:

Man! This isn't going to be an easy fight. My enemy is fierce, merciless, intractable. It won't be a fair fight, but I'm going to fight anyway. A little scrapper from Vanier would never back down from a fight. I'll be in my corner, gloves on. I have no choice, even though I know I'll be David squaring up to Goliath.

Even before this, Denis Gratton was no stranger to a fight. He was always on hand to report on the battles being fought by our community, from the 1997 S.O.S. Montfort campaign to the 2018 Franco-Ontarian Black Thursday. Alongside his aunt, Gisèle Lalonde, who undoubtedly inspired him to be an activist, he spread the word about S.O.S. Montfort to rally activists and win over public opinion to the cause. His role in this battle is undeniable.

Just like when David went up against Goliath, the Franco-Ontarian community emerged victorious against the government of the day, thanks in large part to the efforts of Mr. Gratton and his brother Michel.

• (1420)

With his sharp pen and quick wit, he always tackled the most politically charged issues with tact, sensitivity and, very often, plenty of humour. Over more than 30 years, he became an icon at *Le Droit*, chronicling the victories, failures, challenges and successes of French Ontario. He put his talent at the service of his community, never missing an opportunity to defend it, even at the risk of provoking strong reactions.

As if he knew he was leaving, Denis published what he thought might be his column and took the opportunity to bid farewell to his loyal readers. He concluded by saying, "You know how much I love you, don't you, my friends? I want you to know that I always will."

Denis, the entire Franco-Ontarian community will continue to love you and cherish every one of your columns. I offer my deepest condolences to your family, your friends and all those who were moved by your writing over your 32-year career.

You devoted your career to defending our rights, promoting our culture and heritage, and, above all, documenting our struggles and preserving our collective memory. Denis, thank you for everything. You will forever remain an emblem of journalism and an unforgettable figure of Franco-Ontarian activism. Rest in peace.

[English]

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of members of the Indigenous Leadership Opportunity Year (ILOY) squadron from the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston. They are the guests of the Honourable Senators Boyer and Patterson.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

AIR INDIA FLIGHT 182

Hon. Peter Harder: Honourable senators, it was approximately 12:14 a.m. on June 23, 1985, when a timer on a bomb aboard a flight — from Mirabel to its stopover at Heathrow — detonated.

There were 329 passengers who lost their lives in this odious act. This was every passenger, including 82 children, six babies and 29 entire families. This act of terrorism created grieving parents, widows, only children and children only.

I can only imagine the fear, the confusion, the panic and the prayers that then took place during the subsequent seconds. I can only imagine the sadness of the families and friends who were left behind.

At that point — and up until 9/11 — this was the worst act of terrorism against the travelling public in world history. This was Air India Flight 182.

This Monday, it will be 40 years since this Canadian tragedy. It took two decades for Air India Flight 182 to be seen as a terrorist act against Canadians, with the Honourable Bob Rae's *Lessons to be Learned* report of 2005. In this report, Mr. Rae writes:

Let it be said clearly: the bombing of the Air India flight was the result of a conspiracy conceived, planned, and executed in Canada. Most of its victims were Canadians. This is a Canadian catastrophe, whose dimension and meaning must be understood by all Canadians.

This report led to the Commission of Inquiry into the Investigation of the Bombing of Air India Flight 182, conducted by Justice John C. Major. I thank them both for their work on such a vital yet sensitive subject.

Should the terrorists have had it their way, another flight would have been ripped apart by a bomb as well. A bag off-loaded by a Canadian Pacific Air flight from Vancouver — en route to Air India Flight 302 to Bangkok — exploded in the transit area at Tokyo's Narita Airport on June 22, 1985. This killed two baggage handlers. We must not forget this atrocity either.

While I have the floor, I would like to also send my condolences to the lives lost in Air India Flight 171 last week, which included two Canadians — an Ontarian and a permanent resident from Saskatchewan.

Senators, I follow in the footsteps of our former colleague Ratna Omidvar, and I hope that this reminder goes some way to ensuring that the dimension and meaning of this catastrophe are understood and remembered by all Canadians.

In order to better understand and remember this horrific tragedy, I encourage us all to watch the recently released CBC documentary entitled *Two Suitcases: Anatomy of the Air India Bombing*. Thank you.

THE LATE BRUCE UVILUQ

Hon. Paul (PJ) Prosper: Honourable senators, June 21 marks National Indigenous Peoples Day. Many celebrate. Many remember. It's unfortunate, but many among us either personally struggle or have someone close who struggles with demons. It's tragic that we lose too many people far too young.

One such person is Bruce Uviluq, the recently departed son of our former colleague, the Honourable Dennis Patterson. Here is an excerpt from Dennis's eulogy:

About 48 years ago, in the beautiful Arctic spring, Bruce Qasigiaq Uviluq was born at the local hospital, to his mother Marie Uviluq.

The earth stopped spinning for me the moment that beautiful boy came into this world.

That boy grew up to love the outdoors and especially the glorious Arctic spring and excelled at biking, wrestling and snowmobiling.

He loved his first job patrolling in the wilderness for Parks Canada, where he rescued a senior military officer in Auyuittuq who was swept away in a raging mountain creek and lost his pack. Bruce pulled him from the raging water and saved his life.

He later devotedly worked for Nunavut Tunngavik where he negotiated agreements for parks, conservation areas, heritage rivers, impact and benefit agreements and recently implementation, and became a lifelong strong advocate for Inuit rights and benefits.

Bruce has two beloved sons, Miles and Hunter, and was devoted in teaching them the land and hunting skills he excelled at in the great outdoors he loved.

Colleagues, let us honour this beautiful, kind and selfless man, and may his spirit caress you in times of struggle like a gentle breeze.

Rest in peace, Bruce.

[Translation]

NATIONAL SICKLE CELL AWARENESS DAY

Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie: Honourable senators, it was truly an honour to see so many of you at this morning's sickle cell awareness breakfast.

I am sincerely grateful to all of the senators and staffers who attended. I also thank the Minister of Health for attending.

This morning, we heard moving testimony from people living with sickle cell disease about how it affects them and their family members and allies. Thank you, Ulysse and Josh.

We did some networking, raised awareness among various stakeholders and encouraged constructive conversations about concrete things individuals can do, such as donate blood, to help people better manage sickle cell disease.

Something that really caught my attention was the 2024 Canadian Blood Services report on risk-based decision making.

We have known for a long time that anyone who has spent time in a place where malaria is endemic or who has contracted malaria will never be allowed to donate blood in Canada. That means fewer blood donors and less banked blood for the population, including people with sickle cell disease. According to the report, France, the United States and the United Kingdom have all eased their restrictions around this.

• (1430)

My hope is that everyone will become aware of sickle cell disease and that care will improve in every way, including prevention, diagnosis, treatment — with blood transfusions — and support. Happy National Sickle Cell Awareness Day.

THE SENATE

TRIBUTES TO PAGES

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, three more pages are leaving us this year.

[English]

Grace Zhang: Grace is honoured to have had the opportunity to be a part of the Senate Page Program and to have represented the Chinese Canadian community within it. This fall, she will be entering her last year of undergraduate studies at the University of Ottawa, with the hope of studying law afterward. She would like to thank the Usher of the Black Rod's office and her fellow pages for all their support during the year and she is excited to see where the future takes her.

Samantha Mann: Having had the privilege of serving as deputy chief page, Samantha concludes her three years in the Senate Page Program as she graduates from the University of Ottawa.

[Translation]

Last week, she received a bachelor's degree in political science with a minor in history in the French immersion stream. This fall, she will be starting an MA in International Affairs at Carleton University.

[English]

Samantha is forever grateful for her time in the Upper Chamber and would like to thank Mr. Peters, John, Kean and Manon from the Usher of the Black Rod's Office, as well as Jesse and her fellow pages for all their support and for the many memories they created together in the Senate.

Jesse Johnson: As chief page, Jesse is eternally grateful for the last three years that he has served in the Senate Page Program. Having just completed his bachelor's degree from Carleton University, Jesse will be pursuing a master's degree in Earth Observation and Geoinformation Management at the University of Edinburgh.

[Translation]

Jesse wants to thank Mr. Peters, John, Sam, Kean and Manon, from the Office of the Usher of the Black Rod, for their unwavering support throughout his term as a page. He would also like to thank each senator and member of the administration for their advice and guidance. Jesse is honoured to have represented his home province of Quebec in the Senate of Canada.

[English]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

ONE CANADIAN ECONOMY BILL

ENERGYNL—DOCUMENT TABLED

Hon. Iris G. Petten: Honourable senators, pursuant to the order adopted on June 17, 2025, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, a document regarding Bill C-5, An Act to enact the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and the Building Canada Act, from EnergyNL.

ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS—DOCUMENT TABLED

Hon. Judy A. White: Honourable senators, pursuant to the order adopted on June 17, 2025, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, a document regarding Bill C-5, An Act to enact the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and the Building Canada Act, from the Assembly of First Nations.

COMPETITION BUREAU CANADA—DOCUMENT TABLED

Hon. Colin Deacon: Honourable senators, pursuant to the order adopted on June 17, 2025, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, a document regarding Bill C-5, An Act to enact the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and the Building Canada Act, from Competition Bureau Canada.

[Translation]

[English]

CANADA-EUROPE PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

QUESTION PERIOD

ANNUAL SESSION OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY,
JUNE 29-JULY 3, 2024—REVISED REPORT TABLED

PUBLIC SAFETY

FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

Hon. Peter M. Boehm: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association concerning the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly's 31st Annual Session, held in Bucharest, Romania, from June 29 to July 3, 2024.

Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition): Government leader, as the Islamic Republic of Iran verges on collapse, Canadian security experts are sounding the alarm that regime officials, including members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, may soon attempt to flee and embed themselves in Canada, as others have done before.

AUTUMN MEETING OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND
CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY,
OCTOBER 2-4, 2024—REVISED REPORT TABLED

Despite a 2022 ban on senior Iranian officials entering the country, at least 20 have been identified as living here, and only one has been deported. Legal experts and Iranian Canadian activists warn that our communities have become a haven for these actors, many of whom exploit asylum claims to remain here.

Hon. Peter M. Boehm: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association concerning the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly's 22nd Autumn Meeting, held in Dublin, Ireland, from October 2 to 4, 2024.

With still no foreign agent registry in place, government leader, how can Canadians trust that your government is prepared to prevent foreign regime insiders from finding a haven and safe harbour here in Canada?

ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR
SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE PARLIAMENTARY
ASSEMBLY, NOVEMBER 2-5, 2024—REPORT TABLED

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question, senator. This government, working with its allies — as most recently reflected in the meeting of the G7 — is very focused on strengthening and enhancing our security in all respects, and that also includes those who seek to arrive in Canada through different means.

Hon. Peter M. Boehm: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association concerning the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly's Election Observation Mission, held in Washington, D.C. and other regions, from November 2 to 5, 2024.

Senator Housakos: Senator Gold, tomorrow marks one year since Bill C-70 received Royal Assent. Yet the foreign agent registry still does not exist; it's not in place.

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK ON
SICKLE CELL DISEASE BILL

This initiative was first introduced by former MP Kenny Chiu in 2021 and reintroduced here in the Senate after he lost his seat to foreign interference by yours truly. Since then, the government has made repeated promises but delivered no results. Tell us frankly: Does the government truly take this threat seriously, or was Bill C-70 merely a public relations exercise? We still have a serious problem.

PETITION TABLED

Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table a petition from the residents of Ontario and Quebec expressing their support of Bill S-201, An Act respecting a national framework on sickle cell disease.

Senator Gold: The government does take the threats to our security seriously, and I will certainly raise these concerns with the minister if I have the opportunity, but my office certainly will follow up.

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

CANADA-RUSSIA RELATIONS

Hon. Denise Batters: Senator Gold, Canada's ambassador to Russia Dr. Sarah Taylor recently tweeted a commemoration of the establishment of diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R.,

Stalin's repressive totalitarian regime responsible for the deaths of millions in gulags and the mass starvation known as the Holodomor.

Among others, human rights activist Marcus Kolga objected to the Canadian ambassador's tweet, saying:

. . . my grandfather was among thousands of Estonians imprisoned in the Soviet GULAG — targeted for who they were and what they believed. Hundreds of thousands of others — Ukrainians, Poles, Latvians, Lithuanians — were swept up too. Many never came home.

Senator Gold, Russia's current murderous dictator, Putin, has sustained his brutal invasion of Ukraine for three years. The killing and crushing misery continue daily. Putin has stated his intention to reclaim Ukraine and other now-sovereign territories and absorb them into a new, unified U.S.S.R. Why on earth is Canada's ambassador celebrating this?

• (1440)

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): This government and previous governments have been strong and unwavering in their support for Ukraine in the face of Russia's unjustified war of aggression.

The government demonstrated that support clearly through its invitation to Prime Minister Zelenskyy to the G7 and equally — if not more importantly — with the strong sanctions that it has introduced against over 3,000 individuals and entities, including Mr. Putin himself, his inner circle, Russian banks and members of the Russian Security Council and nuclear sector.

Senator Batters: Exactly. This chamber has also passed motions decrying Putin's Russian invasion. Senators have given impassioned speeches supporting Ukraine and its fight for freedom. If freedom and democracy are truly integral to Canadian foreign policy, our taxpayer-funded ambassador should not signal support for a regime that has killed millions of people. Given Putin's bloodthirsty tyranny, it is increasingly difficult to justify even having our ambassador in Russia.

Could she at least refrain from implying that Canada might support this Russian madman's imperial ambitions?

Senator Gold: There is no question about where Canada stands with respect to the current government and its actions in Russia. There is no equivocation from this government in its ongoing support for Ukraine and those suffering under actual aggression or threats of it from Russia.

INDIGENOUS SERVICES

NON-INSURED HEALTH BENEFITS

Hon. Nancy Karetak-Lindell: Senator Gold, I want to highlight the chronic underfunding of the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program, or NIHB, under Indigenous Services Canada. This federal program provides vital services to Inuit, including dental and vision care, medical supplies, prescription drugs, mental health counselling and medical travel.

Nunavut, made up of 25 fly-in-only communities, faces some of the highest health care costs in the country, averaging \$27,000 per person. This is three times the national average. We also face elevated health risks due to systemic inequities, including a housing crisis and food insecurity.

Over the past 11 years, the Government of Nunavut has subsidized over \$419 million in Non-Insured Health Benefits and medical costs due to insufficient medical support. Nunavut's Minister of Health has emphasized that Nunavut cannot continue to do so. What concrete steps is the Government of Canada taking to close this —

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Karetak-Lindell, thank you.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. Thank you for underlining this, one among too many gaps in services provided to Nunavut citizens, residents and, indeed, the North.

Thank you also for joining us in the Senate. Your voice and experience as a parliamentarian representing your communities, especially and uniquely the smaller communities outside of Iqaluit, will be a very important addition to our learning and understanding.

I will certainly raise this, as I know you will — I encourage you to do so — with the relevant minister at every opportunity.

Senator Karetak-Lindell: Thank you. Building on that, the Inuit Child First Initiative, or ICFI, supports access to healthy foods and other services that improve our health outcomes. Given that the ICFI has an end date, how is the Government of Canada ensuring that its approach to Non-Insured Health Benefits does not further contribute to the already magnified social inequities faced by our community?

Senator Gold: I'm not in a position to comment on plans beyond the timeline to which you refer, but I will certainly add that to my remarks and interventions with the minister.

CROWN-INDIGENOUS RELATIONS

INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

Hon. Margo Greenwood: My question is for Senator Gold.

June 21, 2025, marks National Indigenous Peoples Day. It is a time when we recognize and celebrate the traditions, cultures, contributions and rights of Inuit, First Nations and Métis peoples.

Recent events are overshadowing this important day. Rights holders are speaking out on Bill C-5. Such an unprecedented bill, which gives cabinet extraordinary powers, is being expedited through Parliament. Lack of consultation is putting the honour of the Crown at stake. Rights holders shared with parliamentarians that Bill C-5 has the potential to trample their rights and is inconsistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples.

While the previous administration was far from perfect, the nation-to-nation relationship was moving forward. Many are worried that we have witnessed the high water mark of reconciliation and that those waters are now receding.

Senator Gold, will reconciliation withstand the consequence —

The Hon. the Speaker: Thank you, senator.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. Let us be clear, senators. I understand the concerns that have been raised. I've heard them directly, as we all have. As a matter of constitutional law, the recognized, affirmed, historic treaty rights of Indigenous peoples are protected by the Constitution and are not affected by Bill C-5.

The government acknowledges that consultations and partnership with Indigenous leadership and rights holders are indeed integral. The Prime Minister has just said that the government's intent in Bill C-5 is to totally embrace the notion and concept of free and informed consent. That obligation of the Government of Canada is acknowledged within the bill but exists independently of the bill. No government can — and this government will not — deviate from that important and historic obligation.

Senator Greenwood: Thank you for your response. Will the government accept amendments that will protect the rights of Indigenous peoples?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question. It is breaking news, so many senators may not realize that a series of amendments were passed recently by the House, so the bill that we expect to receive will contain many such amendments. Some of these address the issues raised by First Nations.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

MILITARY PROCUREMENT

Hon. Rebecca Patterson: Senator Gold, the replacement of Canada's submarine fleet is under way. These submarines will bolster Canada's ability to deter an assertive China, protect Arctic sovereignty and support NATO maritime defence. The projected cost of procuring up to 12 submarines with advanced capabilities, including stealth, lethality and Arctic deployability, will be around \$60 billion over their life cycles. Production timelines are incredibly long for these "inner space craft" before Canada will see a submarine come into service. Never forget that an assertive and aggressive nation has a vote in our timeline.

Senator Gold, are you able to provide an update on the status of the submarine procurement process? If not, could you please ask the minister for a written response?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. I'm not in a position to provide a timeline, but I will certainly make inquiries. It does give me the opportunity to remind those watching us — and, of course, those in the chamber — of the historic investment that this government is making in our national defence. It will be an ongoing, continuing commitment to ensure that we have the

resources, whether material — such as submarines and other technologies — or human, to ensure that we and our sovereignty are protected for the benefit of all citizens for generations to come.

Senator Patterson: Thank you, Senator Gold. I look forward to the written response.

Any procurement of this cost and duration must be able to last over successive government cycles. There has been talk regarding the Defence Industrial Strategy, and I will continue to bring this question up. Can you please inquire about when we can expect this strategy hit the streets?

Senator Gold: Thank you. As I said in response, I shall certainly make inquiries with regard to your first question, and I will certainly add that further matter to the inquiries I make of the minister.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

ADVERTISING BUDGET

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

News Media Canada is calling for the federal government to spend at least 25% of its advertising budget on traditional Canadian media.

• (1450)

It appears that of the \$86 million spent by the government in advertising last year, only 1% was spent on Canadian newspapers. There are at least three reasons to spend more in Canada. First, buy Canadian. Build a strong Canadian news media sector and build a strong Canadian economy. Second, support Canadian media rather than the American-owned media. Third, support avenues for less disinformation coming from abroad. This is one way to financially support strengthening news media in Canada without an increased cost to the treasury.

My question is: Could the government review its advertising program and make sure we spend the majority, that is over 50% — News Media Canada is suggesting 25%, I'm suggesting the majority — of its advertising dollars in Canada on Canadian news media?

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

I certainly will communicate your recommendations to the government as well as those to which you made reference.

This government is focusing and will continue to focus on serving Canadians, and that includes making sure that Canadians have access, in all respects, to credible and a variety of sources of information. I certainly will communicate your questions and your concerns to the government.

Senator Cardozo: Thank you for that, Senator Gold. A lot of the precise information on spending is hard to get a hold of. Could you please ask the minister responsible for the Advertising Services Directorate, who is the Minister of Public Services and Procurement Canada, to provide figures and detail about how much has been spent in recent years and how much is planned for this year and next year, and with a breakdown on Canadian and foreign media for print, broadcast and online media?

Senator Gold: I will certainly add that to my inquiry.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

IMMIGRATION LEVELS

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Leader, in 2024, according to estimates, Canada issued roughly 88,000 temporary permits per month. But so far in 2025 that number has almost doubled, surging to over 171,000 monthly.

Between January and April alone, Canada recorded 817,000 new arrivals, including 491,400 work permits and 194,000 study permits. These are staggering numbers by any standard, and they raise serious questions about oversight and planning.

Leader, how did your government lose control of immigration so badly in just one year? And is this yet another example of saying one thing publicly while allowing the system to accelerate unchecked behind the scenes?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Senator, thank you for your question. This government is focused on finding the right balance between the needs to Canada of attracting the human resources we need for our economy and for the growth of our society with ensuring that we have the ability to integrate and to support those who choose to come here for the benefit of us collectively, and it will continue to do so.

The government, in the past, has taken steps to readjust levels of immigration while, at the same time — as we've heard in this chamber, even recently — make sure that Canada tracks the immigrants it needs for its economic growth and prosperity.

Senator Martin: Yes, the Speech from the Throne promised balance, yet temporary immigration is accelerating and further straining housing and social services. With over 800,000 newcomers in four months, how can Canadians trust this government to enforce its promised cap? Will we see a real, enforceable plan this year or is this just another case of words without action?

Senator Gold: I think Canadians have demonstrated their trust in this government both in terms of the actual results of the election and in terms of the results of polls that had given this current Prime Minister an extraordinary high level of popular support.

And here I'm echoing the words of the Prime Minister: this government will be judged by its results. Canadians should have confidence that it will work hard to deserve that trust.

PUBLIC SAFETY

SUPERVISED CONSUMPTION SITES

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Continuing on, in Toronto, a mother of two young children was killed by a stray bullet during a shootout between drug dealers near a supervised injection site. An employee of that centre then helped one of the suspects escape by concealing evidence and arranging his departure. She pleaded guilty yet she will not spend a single day in prison. Can the Liberal government tell us if this is now the norm in Canada, that someone who knowingly helped the killer of a mother of two children will avoid justice and not spend even one day in prison?

Senator Housakos: Shame.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): This is a tragic story that we all read with great alarm, the tragedy of the deaths. Senator, I'm going to content myself with saying and reminding us, and asking us not to instrumentalize a tragedy such as this in disregard of the actual facts and constitutional responsibilities that are shared and the roles that are shared by police, by prosecutors and by our judiciary.

This is a tragic story. I don't know and we don't know the circumstances in that moment of crisis of what motivated the woman to whom you referred.

We join together in mourning the tragedy of the loss of life.

Senator Martin: It is a tragic example, but it is shocking because, leader, this offender will be allowed to go to work daily at GoodLife Fitness while two children are left without their mother for the rest of their lives.

Will the Liberal government apologize to the victim's family for enabling a justice system that seems more concerned with the comfort of criminals than with the memory of victims and public safety?

Senator Gold: Senator, the government is not going to apologize for a tragedy that it has no responsibility for, but it grieves — along with all of us — for the loss of life in this tragedy.

Again, I implore us to stay focused on our responsibilities to be factual and constitutionally appropriate where we attribute responsibility.

JUSTICE

DISPROPORTIONALITY OF INDIGENOUS
WOMEN IN INCARCERATION

Hon. Kim Pate: Senator Gold, as we celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day this weekend, few of the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, or TRC, and the Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, or MMIWG, have been realized. The government has committed to act and implement each of these calls.

The MMIWG National Inquiry recognized that the same issues that give rise to Indigenous women being disproportionately victimized, disappeared, murdered and on the streets are the same issues that result in them being the fastest growing prison population such that they are now one in two of the women in the federal penitentiaries.

What is the government's plan to decarcerate the over 300 Indigenous women currently in federal penitentiaries in order to meet its commitment to TRC Call to Action 30 to eliminate the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in prison by the end of this year?

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

The overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the criminal justice system, and women in particular, is a serious and complex issue and is rooted in systemic racism and our unfortunate legacy. That is why the government has introduced the Indigenous Justice Strategy, which lays out a vision and priority areas in Canada for working with Indigenous peoples, with the provinces and with the territories to ensure positive and lasting change in our Canadian justice system.

I cannot commit to a timetable, but this government remains committed to that important work going forward.

Senator Pate: Thank you for that, Senator Gold. But since the inception of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act in 1992, and reinforced by subsequent reports, commissions of inquiry, investigations, advisory committees and correctional investigator reports — all of which have been mentioned previously and have existed for more than 33 years — there still has not been action.

• (1500)

What concrete steps are being taken beyond that strategy to ensure immediate rollout and proper funding of the community-based, Indigenous-led initiatives that must be fully in place this year?

Senator Gold: The steps that the government is taking include continuing to work with Indigenous peoples, communities and other stakeholders in the system to make progress on this very important and pressing social matter.

HEALTH

MEDICAL LICENSURE

Hon. Flordeliz (Gigi) Osler: Senator Gold, there is growing momentum across Canada to remove interprovincial barriers to labour mobility, most recently through the one Canadian economy legislation, which proposes mutual recognition of provincial and territorial certifications to enable workers to move between jurisdictions more easily.

Yet today, physicians still face different licensing requirements across provinces and territories, limiting their ability to go to work in response to areas of urgent need, especially in rural, remote and underserved communities.

Given that the federal government is advancing labour mobility and removing regulatory obstacles, when will the government commit to implementing a framework for pan-Canadian licensure for physicians?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. It is important that our health care system change to better serve Canadians. That means all levels of government and health care partners must work together to do what is needed.

We know — as you know and have mentioned — that the licensing of physicians falls under provincial jurisdiction. The Government of Canada remains committed to working with provinces and territories to reduce as many barriers as possible. Some provinces have already taken action amongst themselves to reduce these types of barriers.

We heard yesterday from former minister Lisa Raitt and others, if I recall, that in some sense the federal government is taking the lead from the provinces in some of these areas. And I applaud the work that the provinces are doing in those areas of jurisdiction.

Senator Osler: Thank you, Senator Gold. This is an area that Senator Seidman has spoken about. Federal leadership would be extremely helpful.

As we work to improve labour mobility within Canada, we have to address the systemic barriers facing the internationally trained physicians and nurses who want to work in our health care system. Improving labour mobility should include efficient access for those with international credentials who are already in Canada.

What concrete steps will the government take to reduce these barriers and support internationally trained physicians and nurses to get their credentials recognized?

Senator Gold: The government is aware of this challenge; we all are, as citizens. The government has invested, I believe, in the order of \$200 billion in discrete relationships and direct health funding to provinces in order to help the provinces transform their health care systems. Each of those arrangements has specifics tailored to the needs of the provinces and the priorities of the government, and we're hoping that this will help the provinces accelerate their processes.

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

RATE OF UNEMPLOYMENT

Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition): Government leader, the recent Labour Force Survey has come out in Canada, and we're in the grips of an unemployment crisis. The national unemployment rate has gone above 7% — the highest since 2016, with the exception of COVID. That is the third consecutive monthly increase.

Particularly alarming is the spike in youth unemployment. Over one in five returning students are jobless — the highest rate since 1999, outside of the pandemic.

The crisis is real, and it's touching young people. We can't afford to say to them, "We're looking into it," or try to attach this to some veiled legislation that is disconnected from reality. We have to realize that struggling students and young workers who face these rising costs and vanishing opportunities need the government to act now.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): This government is acting now. We heard it in the Committee of the Whole. This government is very aware of the impact of the current economic circumstances on our economy. Part of it is — to be blunt, and we know this — due to the unjustified, illegal tariffs and the disruption to the world economy caused by a change of direction to the most powerful economy and most powerful country in the world.

That's why this government is seizing the moment. That's why we will soon be seized with Bill C-5. That's why people like former minister Lisa Raitt, former premier Brian Gallant and others have encouraged us — and all Canadians — to take the bold steps forward so that we can build the prosperity and the resilience we need not only in the short term. But it is, indeed, immediately necessary to provide relief.

However, what is equally and more important is that we build for the future of these young people who are facing these challenging times.

Senator Housakos: Senator Gold, food prices have now outpaced inflation in three straight months. Essentials like milk, eggs and bread are still up nearly 4% from last year. At the same time, food banks have hit record levels, even among working families and students. Over 8 million Canadians, including 2.1 million children, face food insecurity.

Senator Gold, you now refer to Bill C-4, Bill C-5 and other initiatives that I have stood on this floor asking the government to implement for almost a decade, yet now all of a sudden they're being implemented but they are going to take a year to come into force.

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question. And thank you for your advocacy and for reminding this chamber of privileged senators — not that we need reminding — of the difficult challenges that our fellow citizens are facing.

This government is acting with unprecedented speed to address the affordability issues and the economic issues that we need in Canada to prosper.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

PROCUREMENT PROCESS

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Leader, for two years in a row now, the Auditor General of Canada has released scathing reports that detail rampant non-compliance with procurement rules and repeated failures to demonstrate value for money. Yet the government has astonishingly increased its professional services budget this year by over \$7 billion, or 37%, according to this year's Main Estimates.

How does the government justify such a dramatic surge in spending on external consultants while procurement oversight remains demonstrably broken?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): The government is not only seized with but also accepts the recommendations of the Auditor General in the criticism that she levelled against the procurement policies. Each minister has been focused by the Prime Minister — through the mandate letter delivered to each minister — to provide feedback to the government as to how those ministries, including procurement, will deliver on the promises.

Minister Solomon and all other ministers are going to be focused on using the tools available to us — technologically, human resources and the like — to make the much-needed improvements in our procurement process.

If we don't do that, then the investments that we make, whether in defence or in our economy, will be for naught. This government is going to focus on the results it needs, and it is determined to get it right.

Senator Martin: Leader, it's a lot of money: \$7 billion of taxpayer money, which is the increase.

What specific actions is the government taking to reduce its dependency on consultants, and when will Canadians see those actions reflected in actual reductions in spending?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question. I do not have the specific answer, except to remind us that there is an almost obvious mathematical relationship between the number of employees in the public service and those outside resources that may be needed to address specific issues.

This government and the Prime Minister are focused on economic growth and on efficiency in government, and they are determined to deliver on those promises.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

INDIAN ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Audette, seconded by the Honourable Senator Francis, for the second reading of Bill S-2, An Act to amend the Indian Act (new registration entitlements).

Hon. Paul (PJ) Prosper: Honourable senators, the Indian Act is the most blatantly racist and colonial act of Parliament that is still actively used and referenced to this day. It governs where we can live, what kind of health care we are entitled to, what we can do with our own lands and how we can make money. It even dictates who amongst our family can be legally called an “Indian.”

• (1510)

It is mind-boggling to me that in 2025 we are only just bringing forward a bill to address language like “mentally incompetent Indian,” as section 51 is labelled, and that we continue to tinker with who has a right to citizenship within our communities and nations.

I can appreciate that sometimes, with the crush of legislation before us, we can lose sight of the humanity behind the words, but I would urge you not to do that with this bill. This bill isn’t just about who gets to be a 6(1) or a 6(2) Indian. It’s not about more people looking for handouts and tax exemptions. This bill is about family members who were born into community, are a part of community and are claimed by community, but are not able to access the opportunities enjoyed by their siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles.

Due to the idiosyncrasies of the act, a family could have one sibling who has 6(1) status. All their children would have access to programming and Non-Insured Health Benefits. Another sibling, however, might be born after 1986 to the same parents and in the same circumstances. Yet, because of their birth year alone, they would be relegated to 6(2) status. Therefore, their children would have no status and no access to any of the opportunities enjoyed by their cousins merely because the government decided that this must be the way.

How did we get into this mess?

The history is long and complicated, so I will try to condense it for you, colleagues, and for any Canadians who may be listening to or reading this transcript in the future.

Through a series of discriminatory policies and laws, many ways for losing status were invented. The aim was to solve the “Indian problem” — as we have so often been referred to — by finding a way to lessen the number of Indians.

For example, a father could make a choice to own property or fight in a war, and the entire family would lose their status. Another way to lose status was for an Indigenous woman to marry a non-Indigenous man. Yes, we have punished love in this country, and we continue to do so.

One woman who lost her status this way was a former senator with whom I have had the pleasure and privilege to spend time: the Honourable Sandra Lovelace Nicholas. The *Lovelace* case was argued at the United Nations Human Rights Commission. It was filed on December 29, 1977, and the decision was rendered on July 30, 1981. The decision found that parts of the Indian Act were, indeed, discriminatory. Four years later, and after the passage of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Canada brought forward Bill C-31.

Bill C-31 did many things, such as creating the ability for those who lost status through enfranchisement to apply for reinstatement. It also enabled some bands to take control of their band membership under section 10, although I should point out that those membership codes first require the approval of the federal minister.

Most notably, however, the creation of an even bigger problem occurred. As explained on the Crown-Indigenous Relations website:

The federal government retained control over Indian registration and categories of registered Indians were established through sections 6(1) and 6(2) of the *Indian Act* (Bill C-31) as an attempt to address the concerns raised by First Nations during parliamentary debates around Bill C-31. The concerns of First Nations leaders focused on resource pressures resulting from an expected population increase in First Nations communities, and the fear of ethno-cultural erosion within First Nations due to the large number of individuals with no apparent community or cultural ties that would become entitled to registration. Through the introduction of these registration categories a second-generation cut-off was created when two successive generations of mixed parenting between a person entitled to registration and a person not so entitled (Indian and non-Indian) results in the third generation of children losing entitlement to registration.

Now, senators, is the term “second-generation cut-off” familiar to you? It may be, because a bill was introduced in the last Parliament, Bill C-71, now resurrected as Bill C-3, which sought to restore citizenship to “Lost Canadians” or Canadians who lost or never acquired citizenship due to certain outdated provisions of former citizenship legislation. The remedy to this “second-generation cut-off” is tied to the Canadian parent born abroad having the ability to demonstrate a “substantial connection to Canada” or — as proposed in the bill — of having spent a cumulative period of 1,095 days, or 3 years, physically present in Canada before the birth or adoption of the child.

Yet, for a Mi'kmaw child, who can spend their entire life living in community, that same ability to claim citizenship in the Mi'kmaq nation is not recognized. This is because, in the eyes of the government, we are wards of the state who can be dictated to, as opposed to strong, independent nations.

Experts such as Stewart Clatworthy, a demographer who has studied the demographic implications of amendments to Indian registration since the 1985 amendments, have spoken about the issue of the “second generation cut-off rule.” He has projected that, based on current legislation, in about 100 years no new child will be entitled to have their name added to the Indian Register.

As the years passed, incremental changes to the Indian Act were undertaken as a result of further appeals. *McIvor v. Canada* was filed in 1987, claiming that registration provisions were a breach of the Charter. In 2010, the Indian Act was once again amended through Bill C-3, ensuring the status of grandchildren of women who lost their status due to the “double-mother rule,” an enactment from 1951 that removed the status from grandchildren at age 21 in situations where the mother and paternal grandmother both acquired status through marriage to an Indian.

• (1520)

On August 3, 2015, the Honourable Chantal Masse of the Quebec Superior Court ruled on the *Descheneaux* case and found that, despite efforts in 1985 and 2010 to address it, “Sex discrimination, though more subtle than before, persists.” Justice Masse stated in her ruling that:

If there are more people registered under 6(1), this evolution will be slightly slower, but because of the nature of the mechanism in subsection 6(1), there will eventually be no more children born with an entitlement to be entered in the Register.

In that decision, the court ruled that paragraphs 6(1)(a), (c) and (f) as well as subsection 6(2) of the Indian Act infringe upon the Charter of Rights and Freedoms section that pertains to equality, equal protection and benefit under the law. It suspended its decision until February 3, 2017, giving Parliament time to address the issues affecting grandchildren and cousins under the act.

She was also clear in her message to parliamentarians as they began the work of bringing forward legislative amendments to the Indian Act to bring it into line with her ruling. She clearly stated:

Parliament should not interpret this judgment as strictly as it did the BCCA's —

— the British Columbia Court of Appeal's —

— judgment in *McIvor*. If it wishes to fully play its role instead of giving free reign to legal disputes, it must act differently this time, while also quickly making sufficiently significant corrections to remedy the discrimination identified in this case. One approach does not exclude the other.

That additional point was well taken by colleagues in this chamber as they considered the infamous Bill S-3 in the Forty-second Parliament.

I want to acknowledge Senator Marilou McPhedran, who brought forward the “6(1)(a) all the way” amendment, supported by the likes of Senator Pate and former senator Dan Christmas. I also want to acknowledge that former senators Lillian Dyck and Sandra Lovelace Nicholas spoke loudly in support of Indigenous women, and that the bill's critic, former senator Dennis Patterson, spoke up in support of the amendment, as well.

Finally, I want to recognize that the bill, as amended, passed through this chamber when both it and the Senate committee were dominated by members of the Conservative caucus. I believe in lifting up allies, and by voting to pass that amendment, you were, indeed, allies.

The support from the community was clear. In an open letter to Prime Minister Trudeau in 2017, a consortium made up of the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association, the Newfoundland Native Women's Association, the Indigenous Women's Association of the Maliseet and Mi'kmaq Territories, the Eastern Door Indigenous Women's Association and the Aboriginal Women's Association of PEI wrote:

We know that the *Indian Act* is paternalistic and outdated legislation rooted in colonization and the goal of assimilating Indians. . . . However, we also recognize that for every day that the *Indian Act* continues, it is absolutely imperative that all remnants of gender-based discrimination be eliminated.

Prime Minister Trudeau, if you are truly a feminist Prime Minister, who sincerely means that there is no relationship more important than the one with Indigenous peoples; and you want the path forward to be based on Nation-to-Nation relations, then you must ensure that Indigenous women and our descendants are included in our Nations.

We urge you to remind your Cabinet members that the days of consulting on gender equality are over. All federal laws must be *Charter* compliant — and that includes *Bill S-3*. We urge you to support the “6(1)(a) all the way” amendment to *Bill S-3*.

Despite that appeal and the good work of this chamber, the other place saw fit to remove the Senate amendments and move forward without the “6(1)(a) all the way” approach. Instead, they proposed friendly amendments to the message in order to avoid an ugly fight in this chamber that would see them undertake a review of the remaining gender-specific discrimination in Indian registration and report back within three years of the bill receiving Royal Assent.

The offer was accepted and, according to the Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs website:

The list of issues for consultation was further enhanced during the co-design of the collaborative process with input from First Nations and Indigenous organizations.

It continues, saying, “The comprehensive consultations under the collaborative process were launched on June 12, 2018.”

That enhanced list of issues included non-sex-based inequities in registration such as enfranchisement — which Bill S-2 deals with — scrip and second-generation cut-off.

The 2019 report on Bill S-3 boasts engagement with representatives from 395 First Nation communities and organizations, 10,403 participants through 419 community and regional organizations sessions funded by the department and \$2.2 million in funding to Indigenous organizations to participate in the collaborative process.

While the process I’ve just described did result in the removal of the so-called 1951 cut-off — seeing the reinstatement of grandchildren born before September 4, 1951, of women who were removed from their First Nation’s band list or who lost status because they married a non-Indian man — it still did not address broader issues, such as the second-generation cut-off.

The briefing deck we received on Bill S-2 states on page 7 that:

The Collaborative Process on the Second-Generation Cut-off and Section 10 Voting Thresholds was launched in November 2023, and the consultation phase and call-out for solutions was launched in December 2024.

• (1530)

More holding our breath while our children are ostracized for being “lesser” Indians. More waiting while communities try to stretch their limited own-source revenues to provide health care, schooling and programming opportunities for our children that they cannot access due to this construction called “status” simply because we believe that no child should be left behind.

In principle, senators, I believe in anything that restores identity and dignity to our people. However, I cannot support this continued piecemeal approach to Indian registration. I would support moving this bill to committee simply so that we can hear from the women directly about how they want to move forward. It is my hope that when the time comes, this chamber will once again find the courage to stand with them.

Wela’liog.

[Translation]

Hon. Michèle Audette: Would Senator Prosper take a question?

Senator Prosper: Yes.

Senator Audette: Thank you very much for your remarks. We know that you are also a former regional chief for the First Nations in your area.

My first question is, what are we going to say to the federal government if its answer is that it needs to consult with the chiefs before resolving the 6(1)(a) issue?

[Senator Prosper]

My second question is, why is the government cutting corners on consultations for certain national bills, but when these bills have to do with women, it delays the process and hides behind the chiefs to resolve the issue?

Could you answer that for me, please?

[English]

Senator Prosper: Thank you so much for that wonderful question, Senator Audette.

With respect to the first part regarding consultation, there has been extensive consultation. This issue has been studied significantly and there was an opportunity here in this chamber from the motion put forward by Senator McPhedran of “6(1)(a) all the way,” and it was reached here in this chamber until it went to the other place. We don’t need further research.

We can, certainly, go to committee with this bill and we can hear from witnesses again. However, it’s linked to your second question about why certain bills are being expedited at the speed of light through the parliamentary process when you have existing inequities within our communities that have long needed to be addressed on the merits by which they stand. Thank you.

Hon. Marilou McPhedran: Senator Prosper, would you take a question?

Senator Prosper: Yes.

Senator McPhedran: Thank you. Many of us were in the briefing provided by the government recently, and we heard that a consultation process that is maybe about to begin or has maybe started — it’s not quite clear — throughout the country with chiefs and that the government has decided that it will not take an initiative on cleaning up this bill until that consultation reaches a consensus among the chiefs.

Senator Prosper, you are a former chief. Could you give us the sense of the chance such unanimity would come about as a result of this consultation?

Senator Prosper: Thank you for the question, senator. You’re correct. Being a former chief of my community of Paqtnekek Mi’kmaw Nation and a regional chief, the realities in our community are quite inequitable for our members because leadership doesn’t view community members in terms of status or non-status because they are all community members. We’re all related.

They try their very best to provide, from own-source revenues, comparable programming and benefits from within their respective communities. We are all too familiar with the demographic trends as mentioned by people like Stewart Clatworthy where from a certain date, there will no longer be any status children being born within certain communities. This idea of continued consultation over a long-standing issue needs to be called out, and we need to force the government to address this issue on the merits by which it needs to be addressed.

Senator McPhedran: It was one of the hardest days of my life as a senator when my friend of more than 30 years, who was the minister, came into committee in the House of Commons and said, “We are not supporting the McPhedran amendment.” Reflection on what happened leading up to that prompts this question now.

Do you think that if we accelerated this bill to committee and we brought in experts who have studied this and advocated for this issue for years and years, do you think we could fix this bill in committee?

Senator Prosper: Thank you for the question. I believe we can. I was going to say “I can only hope,” but honourable senators, we’re quite familiar with the issue here. We’re quite familiar with the blatant inequalities that exist within our community that have been long outstanding.

It’s going to be quite gripping when you hear the testimony and see the realities that exist within communities and the challenges that leadership is faced with. I believe that this chamber will do the right thing for not only Indigenous women but for all our communities and for generations to come. Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

[Translation]

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. Rosa Galvez: Honourable senators, I address you with the same motivation that brought me to this chamber nine years ago, when I gave my first speech in honour of Earth Day and shared my belief that, without nature, we have no city, no society and no nation. When His Majesty King Charles III opened the Forty-fifth Parliament, he reminded us once again of our

responsibility to be good stewards of the earth, to protect its inhabitants and to guide our country through times of uncertainty and times of opportunity, such as this historic moment.

In 2017, I said that our country was on the cusp of a renaissance that would enable Canada to become a leader, not through conquest or domination, but through wisdom, fairness and harmony with nature. This renaissance is no longer a distant vision. It is now an urgent necessity.

• (1540)

The King’s speech acknowledged the strength of our diversity and our institutions, as well as the major challenges that lie ahead. Still, I have to ask you this: Are our ambitions equal to the planetary crises we face, including global warming, ocean acidification, environmental degradation and the collapse of biodiversity, at a time when citizens are losing confidence in democracy? Let’s use the King’s speech as an opportunity to reflect honestly on the situation.

[English]

Despite decades of scientific warnings, the ecological emergency has only intensified. Record wildfires are now raging, scarring our forests. Our cities have suffocated under smoke and heat domes. In 2021, 619 people died during the B.C. extreme heat dome.

The phenomenon of overwintering fires is becoming an increasingly common occurrence. These are existing wildfires that “. . . move underground and slumber throughout the winter months . . .” before resurfacing in the following spring. The 2016 Fort McMurray wildfire and the 2024 Jasper wildfire exceeded \$6 billion and \$1 billion in insured losses, respectively. Last year, insured losses caused by extreme weather events were calculated at over \$9 billion. This year, we have already exceeded the \$5-billion mark.

In our Prairie provinces and territories, rivers run dry and ice roads have shorter service time. Our oceans are transforming from cradles of life to acidifying vaults of carbon. Each of these changes is measurable, predictable, preventable and profoundly unjust. They result from a broken system of the unsustainable extraction of natural resources, industrial pollution and an outdated linear economy that treats nature as a limitless warehouse and dumping site rather than as our living sacred space.

I stand here before you to say that there is another way. It is one that does not sacrifice our children’s future for quarterly profits. It is one that recognizes that our greatest source of wealth does not involve selling our natural resources, but instead the various kinds of knowledge our society possesses, the care we feel and give to fellow citizens and the love of, and admiration for, the land itself.

The Speech from the Throne alluded to economic transformation, calling for the largest economic shift since the Second World War. I wholeheartedly welcome this framing. This ambition must be matched with clear vision. This transformation

must go beyond GDP growth or global competitiveness. We need a new economy, grounded in the following five interwoven pillars:

the care economy, in which caregiving and health are not viewed as expenses but as foundational investments in human and societal resilience;

the circular economy, in which waste becomes a resource and materials are reused, remanufactured and repurposed;

the knowledge economy, in which education, research, science and the arts are central to innovation and social progress, and in which artificial intelligence is used to increase quality of life for all and not as a tool to manipulate society;

the restoration economy, in which past harms and ecological debt are actively repaired, creating jobs and healing communities; and

the regenerative economy, in which we do not merely sustain ecosystems but enhance them, restoring soils, rewilding lands and reviving oceans.

These new economic models offer a break from the colonial extractive economy and open the door to true partnerships, benefitting the whole of society as they uplift Indigenous knowledge, science and lived experience, restore ecosystems and heal communities thereby advancing both reconciliation and planetary sustainability.

A true transformation requires not only deep decarbonization but also a dismantling of systemic environmental injustice. We must reject economic models that extract wealth from people and nature to concentrate it in the hands of the very few. As seen in the past, inequality is rising as wealth and power become concentrated among the elite, leaving many behind. This fuels frustration, erodes trust in our institutions and deepens social divisions. These conditions breed civil unrest and weaken democracy by undermining participation, legitimacy and social cohesion.

The Throne Speech reaffirmed the government's commitment to reconciliation. But let us remember this: Reconciliation is not a project to be administered; it is a relationship to be restored.

I commend the increase of the Indigenous Loan Guarantee Program, and I urge that it be paired with long-term investments in governance capacity, language revitalization, land return and cultural healing.

Let us listen to Indigenous peoples who have stewarded these lands for millennia. Their knowledge systems offer not only insight but wisdom about wildfires, water management, biodiversity and balance. We cannot hope to solve the ecological crisis without Indigenous leadership at the centre. Free, prior and informed consent must not be reduced to a check box. It must guide every major infrastructure decision and must be embedded in law, policy and economic planning.

[Senator Galvez]

[Translation]

Senators, this is no time to be timid. As authoritarian regimes gain traction and political instability spreads, including the very real threat posed by Donald Trump's United States, we must defend democratic principles. Totalitarianism thrives on fear, disinformation and the influence of the inflationary finite resource sectors. It denies climate science, undermines international cooperation and leverages hatred and mistrust to divide societies. It is a threat not only to environmental protection, but to peace itself.

Canada must not follow; it must lead by example. We must be the beacon of an inclusive and pluralist democracy governed by evidence-based policies and guided by fairness.

The Speech from the Throne includes pledges to speed up major project approvals, reduce barriers and create national housing strategies. While these goals are laudable and necessary, we must take care not to sacrifice ecosystems or the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous peoples on the altar of haste. "One project, one review" makes good sense, but the review must be exhaustive, public, scientific and genuinely participatory.

Let's not forget the painful lessons of Lac-Mégantic, Grassy Narrows and the tar sands tailings pond spills, all instances of haste, poor preparation and lack of transparency leading to devastating and irreparable damage.

If we want to build thousands of housing units and become an energy superpower, we'll need to make sure that those housing units are built to last and that they are climate resilient, affordable, energy efficient and, most importantly, designed with nature in mind.

When the Senate adopted the amended Impact Assessment Act and the National Strategy Respecting Environmental Racism and Environmental Justice Act, we recognized the importance of impact assessments, the need to conduct regional assessments linking cause and effect, and the duty to meaningfully consult Indigenous populations.

• (1550)

[English]

When I arrived in Canada over four decades ago — I feel old — I brought with me a tenacious hope for science, for fairness and for progress. That hope still remains very much alive inside me. But in this age of disinformation and short-term thinking, we must renew our commitment to education — not only technical but also civic, environmental and mainly ethical.

The scientific method is our compass through uncertainty. It teaches us to ask hard questions, test assumptions, revise our way of thinking and change our path in light of new evidence. We need that spirit now more than ever. We must empower youth with knowledge. We must support researchers and public interest science. And we must create shrewd policy that is not reactive but proactive — that is based on foresight, not just hindsight.

To this end, Canada would be wise to adopt science-based recommendations as the next steps of our national climate action plan: strengthening Canada's methane emissions regulations; granting rights to nature to ensure our ecosystems and rivers benefit from the same legal protections as corporations; increasing funding for science and research to promote innovation in Canada to foster resilience; and promoting sustainable finance because without aligning capital flows with crises solutions, we won't progress but keep regressing. Canada is not keeping pace with our peers. If we want to strengthen our ties with Europe, the Commonwealth and even Asia, sustainable finance is an imperative.

Honourable colleagues, I am an engineer, and I work with constraints. I know what it means to build under pressure, but I also know this: If we design wisely, we can build structures that endure the passage of time. Together, let us design and build a Canada that is innovative while regenerative, not only extractive; a Canada that does not fear the end of pollutant energy but embraces the rise of a biosphere economy; a Canada that does not see nature as a backdrop but as a partner; and a Canada that reconciles with its past by securing a just and livable future for all.

Let us not lead with platitudes but with purpose. Let us show the world that democracy, decency and determination can overcome crisis and fear. Let us move from resilience to regeneration and from rhetoric to concrete results. For the sake of all life that breathes under this northern sky, let us act now with courage, clarity and care. Thank you. *Meegwetch*.

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

[Translation]

THE SENATE

MOTION TO AFFECT SITTINGS ON JUNE 25 TO 27, 2025, AND
AUTHORIZE COMMITTEES TO MEET DURING SITTINGS
FOR THE PURPOSES OF HOLDING THEIR ORGANIZATION
MEETINGS ADOPTED

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate), pursuant to notice of June 18, 2025, moved:

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

1. if the Senate sits on Wednesday, June 25, 2025, the sitting continue beyond 4 p.m. until the time provided for adjournment in the Rules or the end of Government Business, whichever comes first, but without affecting any continuation of the sitting that may be permitted under the provisions in the order of June 12, 2025, concerning proceedings on Bill C-5;
2. if the Senate sits on Thursday, June 26, 2025:
 - (a) the sitting start at 9 a.m.; and

(b) it adjourn at the time provided for adjournment in the Rules or the end of Government Business, whichever comes first;

3. if the Senate sits on Friday, June 27, 2025, it only deal with Government Business once it reaches the Orders of the Day;
4. notwithstanding the provisions of points 1 to 3, if an order for the consideration of a report of the Committee of Selection appears on the Orders of the Day for any of those days as an item of Other Business, that order be treated as if it were an item of Government Business, but only for the purposes of determining the time of adjournment or business to be considered that day under the terms of this order, as the case may be;
5. on Wednesday, June 25, Thursday, June 26, and Friday, June 27, 2025, committees be authorized to meet for the purposes of holding their organization meeting, subject to normal approval processes and the availability of necessary resources, even if the Senate is then sitting, without, for greater certainty, affecting any authority separately granted to a committee to meet while the Senate is sitting; and
6. if, on Thursday, June 26, or Friday, June 27, 2025, either the Government Representative or the Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative advises the Senate that Royal Assent, whether by traditional ceremony or written declaration, is anticipated, the provisions of rule 16-1(8) then apply, with the sitting being suspended if it reaches the end of Government Business, rather than the end of business for the day, before Royal Assent.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

[English]

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION ADOPTED

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate), pursuant to notice of June 18, 2025, moved:

That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Wednesday, June 25, 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 BIRD OF CANADA BILL

SECOND READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Ataullahjan, seconded by the Honourable Senator Batters, for the second reading of Bill S-221, An Act to provide for the recognition of the Canada jay as the national bird of Canada.

Hon. Michael L. MacDonald: Honourable senators, I do not have a prepared speech, but I do have a few notes on this bill that I want to share with you. Bill S-221 is the bill proposing to make the Canada jay the national bird of Canada, and I guess it's only appropriate that I speak today since I find myself in my summer plumage.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

An Hon. Senator: That explains a lot.

Senator MacDonald: In 2017, the Royal Canadian Geographical Society, or RCGS, asked Canadians to vote on their choice for Canada's national bird. Well, I'm a fellow of the RCGS, and I voted. They gave us five choices: the Canada goose, the common loon, the Canada jay, the black-capped chickadee and the snowy owl.

They are all fine options, and I will speak to these in a few moments, but I was pleased that the Canada jay won because I voted for the Canada jay.

They are all great options, but many other birds were not considered for various reasons. I want to touch upon that for a few seconds. For example, the gyrfalcon, which I think is a magnificent hunting bird, covers practically the entire breadth and depth of Canada. It doesn't go much below the southern border. The gyrfalcon is the largest falcon in the world. It's a magnificent hunter, and it's been the bird of royalty for centuries. It's a very intelligent animal and easy to train.

I remember that in 2018, I took my son to Carnoustie, Scotland, for the British Open. Everything took place along the water. Over the five days, about 150,000 people went through the turnstiles for the golf tournament. There were gulls everywhere, but they didn't light; they didn't show up. There was lots of garbage, but the gulls didn't show up because there were two falconers going around with these falcons. The gulls were smart enough not to fool with these falcons. They are a beautiful bird.

The gyrfalcon is the national bird of Iceland and also the official bird of the Northwest Territories. It is also the official mascot of the U.S. Air Force Academy. None of them will want to give up this particular bird, and we want something that's distinctive.

Another magnificent choice is the osprey or, as we call it in Atlantic Canada, the fish hawk. I've witnessed fish hawks my entire life. Growing up, my house in Louisbourg was a couple of hundred yards from the harbour, and they were always hovering above the harbour, up about 400 or 500 feet high. You would see them hovering, and then they would go still and drop like a stone. They would rarely come up without a fish in their claws. They are magnificent hunters, but they're also the official bird of Nova Scotia, and we're not giving that up. We're keeping that.

There are some birds that weren't even considered, like the Arctic tern. What a unique bird that is. In our summers, it lives on the northern extremities of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut; then it winters in the southern extremities of the globe down in Antarctica. It has the greatest migration in the world. It travels about 50,000 miles a year.

There are so many unique birds in this country that could be considered, but the tern, of course, is somewhat obscure — out of sight, out of mind.

• (1600)

Some would argue that we should choose a bird that no longer exists in order to commemorate it. We've seen the commemoration of animals that no longer exist. The flag of California features the California bear, which has been extinct for a long time. There is an argument for that.

We have had three great extinctions in Canada that no one talks about. One we shared with the Americans was the extinction of the passenger pigeon, a wild pigeon which was at one time the most abundant animal in the world. There were 3 to 5 billion of these pigeons in the early 19th century. They were slaughtered for food.

In 1866, there was a recorded observation of these birds migrating to the southeastern U.S. in the early fall. This migration, they estimated, involved over 1 billion birds in a flock. This was in southwestern Ontario. The flock took 14.5 hours to pass overhead. It blocked out the sun for the entire day. They estimated it was about 150 to 175 miles long and about 3 miles wide. Imagine what a sight that must have been. It's a sight we'll never see again on the Earth.

The destruction of animals is something I abhor, and that's quite an example of destruction.

There were two other great destructions in this country that we should reflect upon. One is on the East Coast, which was the great auk, or garefowl, which was the original penguin, the only flightless bird in the northern hemisphere. It was a beautiful colony animal which spent most of the year in the water and only came out to nest and breed.

It spanned all across the North Atlantic to Greenland, the Scandinavian countries and the Mediterranean, but it bred on small islands off the north coast of Great Britain, as well as in Iceland, Greenland, Newfoundland and the Maritimes.

It was slaughtered in the 18th and 19th centuries. Its beautiful feathers were used for the down in feather pillows. They were great eating birds; their eggs were a delicacy. By 1840, they had all been slaughtered. The penguins of the south are not related to this bird, but these were the original penguins. The name was taken from the north and adapted to the birds in the south. This was the original penguin, and we killed it — we destroyed it.

The other one was destroyed in our lifetime. We don't reflect on this much. It was the Eskimo curlew. It was a short bird, like a sandpiper, which existed in the millions and summered in the northwest extremity of the Northwest Territories and the northern coast of Alaska. It had a magnificent migration, all the way to the Pampas in Australia. The way it migrated is interesting. In the late summer, it flew straight across Canada until it got to Labrador, then down through the Americas and all the way to Argentina and the southern Pampas where it wintered.

In 1492, when Columbus was sailing the ocean blue and about to discover America, he knew he was getting close to land when he saw an enormous flock of birds going south over the ocean. You can rest assured that the birds he witnessed were Eskimo curlews. The last time it was photographed was in the 1960s, in Galveston, Texas. There were some sightings again in the 1980s. It hasn't been determined to be extinct, but it probably is.

There are a lot of reasons to commemorate certain birds.

I return to the five options that the Royal Canadian Geographical Society, or RCGS, proposed. The Canada goose was in trouble in the 1960s. Its numbers were greatly depleted, but great efforts were made to revive it. These geese adapt very well to urban environments, and I think we gave 20 or 30 mating pairs to the King and Queen back in the 1960s. Now it is an enormous pest in Britain because they adapt so well to urban environments.

Even though it's a great bird, it's considered a real pest. I don't want people to kill it anymore, but maybe we should avoid making it the national bird.

Who doesn't recognize the sound of the common loon? I don't think there is as Canadian a sound as the sound of the loon over the water. But the loon, of course, is the official bird of Ontario. They're not going to give it up.

The snowy owl was proposed. It is a beautiful bird, widely distributed in Canada, as are the great horned owl and the great grey owl. However, they are, respectively, the official birds of Quebec, Alberta and Manitoba, so they are out of the running.

The black-capped chickadee is also widely distributed. Like the grey jay, it does not migrate, but its overall range is less northern. It is also the official bird of New Brunswick, so that's out of the question.

This takes us to the Canada jay. The Canada jay is ubiquitous. It's everywhere in the woods of this country. It's not a backyard or garden-variety bird. It's a bird of the boreal forest, and we have one of the largest boreal forests in the world. The Canada jay loves spruce trees, and we have no shortage of those in Canada. They love black spruce and white spruce trees.

No bird in Canada has required such a variety of nicknames and monikers: the Canada jay, the grey jay, the camp robber, the moosebird and the whisky jack. I've also heard it called whisky-john. I think the French name roughly translates to "the chickadee jay" or "the chick jay."

Of course, in Cape Breton, and in places in this country where Scottish Gaelic used to be spoken, it was called the gorby, which means, appropriately, "the glutton," because this bird never stops eating. It's continually eating and storing food because it stays here all winter. It even lays its eggs in the winter, when it's minus 25 or minus 30 degrees Celsius.

It has a uniquely Canadian distribution. It doesn't migrate, and it nests in the winter. They're very gregarious and social. You have to enter the woods to see them. Once you do, they're everywhere.

I would love to get this bill to committee, which is why I wanted to speak to this today, in case we come back next week and only deal with government business.

I encourage everyone to support this and to get it to committee. I think it's time Canada had a national bird. Thank you.

Hon. David M. Wells: Will Senator MacDonald take a question?

Senator MacDonald: Yes.

Senator D. M. Wells: Were you aware that Newfoundland and Labrador has two official birds?

Senator MacDonald: I didn't know it had two official birds, but I do know that Labrador duck was another bird that is now extinct. It had much smaller numbers. It lived from the top of Labrador all the way to the Carolinas. It was around in the mid-1800s, but it disappeared unfortunately. I didn't know that Labrador had two official birds.

Senator D. M. Wells: Would you take another question, which would include the answer?

Senator MacDonald: Yes.

Senator D. M. Wells: Were you aware that Newfoundland's official bird is the puffin, but we also have an official game bird, which is the ptarmigan?

Senator MacDonald: No, but I know the ptarmigan is the official bird of, I believe, Nunavut.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and bill read second time.)

• (1610)

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

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

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

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Mary Jane McCallum moved second reading of Bill S-224, An Act to amend the Director of Public Prosecutions Act.

She said: Honourable senators, I am pleased to rise today to speak at second reading of Bill S-224, An Act to amend the Director of Public Prosecutions Act. I again wish to acknowledge the tremendous amount of work, dedication and perseverance demonstrated by the Manitoba Keewatinow Okimakanak, or MKO, in close collaboration with the Lands Advisory Board, or LAB, on both this bill and its sister legislation Bill S-223.

I had the privilege of collaborating with MKO and LAB on the creation of these bills and bringing them to the Senate floor on their behalf.

Colleagues, Bill S-224 will amend the Director of Public Prosecutions Act to include the following definitions of First Nation law:

- (a) a bylaw made under the *Indian Act*;
- (b) a *First Nation law* as defined in subsection 2(1) of the *Framework Agreement on First Nation Land Management Act*; or
- (c) a law enacted by a council, government or other entity that is authorized to act on behalf of a First Nation under a self-government agreement implemented by an Act of Parliament. . . .

Bill S-224 is important legislation that is necessary to clarify and conclusively confirm that the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, or PPSC, has the jurisdiction and mandate to initiate and conduct prosecutions of summary conviction offences under First Nation laws, as well as any appeal or other proceeding related to such a prosecution, on behalf of the First Nation that made or enacted the First Nation law.

As I stated in my previous speech on Bill C-223, Parliament intended to create new and enhanced law-making authorities to support the self-determination of First Nations through former Bill C-49, the First Nations Land Management Act in 1999, and former Bill C-428, the Indian Act Amendment and Replacement Act in 2014.

One published official summary of Bill C-49 says:

Bill C-49 would expand the range of powers that First Nations could exercise and no longer leave them at the discretion of the Governor in Council or Minister.

A departmental summary states that Bill C-428:

. . . eliminates the Minister's oversight in regards to the submission, coming into force and disallowance of by-laws and gives First Nations the autonomy and responsibility over the development, enactment and coming into force of by-laws. . . .

Despite the intent of Parliament to enhance the self-determining law-making powers of First Nations through the passage of Bill C-49 and Bill C-428, in practice these bills have created what have been called "stranded regimes" of First Nation laws that are not enforced by the RCMP and have not been subject to prosecution by the Public Prosecution Service of Canada. These refusals go against the goal and intent of Bill C-49 and C-428.

Honourable senators, in the June 2021 report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, or INAN, entitled *Collaborative Approaches to Enforcement of Laws in Indigenous Communities*, the committee heard that since amendments to the Indian Act removed the minister's power to disallow a bylaw in 2014, there is no mandatory departmental review of bylaws.

While the PPSC of Canada only prosecutes bylaws that have been reviewed by Indigenous Services Canada, or ISC, ISC now reviews draft bylaws for comment only. Why was this not addressed immediately in 2014? Why didn't the Attorney General, PPSC and ISC raise this with the federal government back in 2014?

In the testimony to the INAN Committee on May 6, 2021, Jeff Richstone, Director General and Senior General Counsel of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, stated:

There has existed for many years a gap with respect to the prosecution of Indigenous Community laws. Those laws are enacted by communities under a number of law-making authorities, but the common theme is the nation-to-nation relationship that Indigenous Communities share with Canada.

The prosecution of these laws is not part of PPSC's mandate. . . .

Mr. Jeff Richstone, along with Mr. Stephen Harapiak, Legal Counsel, Legal Services, Department of Justice, explained:

We've been reviewing some of the draft bylaws at the request of first nations, to provide them some guidance and to assist. Those would be the bylaws that are being enforced. Without the power of disapproval —

— by ISC —

— some of the problems that can come up are whether a bylaw is within the scope of the authority of the Indian Act, or whether it is charter-compliant, as required since 2011.

Honourable senators, my question is this: Why was the power of disapproval by ISC removed without a process put in its place to ensure the effective recognition, respect, enforcement and prosecution of First Nations laws?

More importantly, why has the government placed First Nations in a position that won't allow them to do the work they need to do to protect their people and lessen the violence in their communities?

Why did a federal action of removing disapproval then become, in itself, a barrier to self-determination and self-governance?

Jeff Richstone explained that:

Despite our limited statutory role, PPSC is committed to working with partners to explore options and develop long-term solutions. To that end, prior to the pandemic, PPSC was in the early stages of initiating discussions with other stakeholders to see how to bring this issue to the forefront, in the hope of identifying solutions to fit the needs of Indigenous Communities.

The INAN Committee report states:

PPSC has entered into protocol agreements with some First Nations to prosecute *Indian Act* by-laws made to address the COVID-19 pandemic. The committee was told that only by-laws that have been reviewed for compliance with the *Indian Act* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* can be prosecuted, understanding that not all sections of the *Indian Act* itself are compliant with the Charter.

Colleagues, is that not a paradox? Did they identify what sections of the Indian Act are not compliant with the Charter? And what would take precedence? The Charter or the Indian Act? The limitation of review is, again, a major barrier. How did PPSC pick the protocol agreements they would agree to support?

• (1620)

The INAN Committee report states:

Self-governing First Nations can make laws in relation to the law-making authority that is set out in their self-government agreement or their modern treaty. In addition, First Nations that have adopted a land code pursuant to the Framework Agreement on First Nation Land Management (brought into

force by the First Nations Land Management Act) can make laws in relation to their lands, including development, protection and possession. These laws enable First Nations to opt out of the relevant Indian Act land management provisions.

The Framework Agreement includes provisions relating to enforcement of land codes and First Nations laws. However, this does not mean that laws made under land codes are enforced.

As the Lands Advisory Board explains in its brief:

Unfortunately, there has been chronic under-enforcement of Indian Act by-laws. Much of the difficulty in building effective enforcement of First Nation laws under the Framework Agreement can be traced back to difficulties in overcoming the legacy of failure under the Indian Act.

As part of the Senate's consideration of Bill C-32 in December 2022, Grand Chief Garrison Settee of Manitoba Keewatinowik Okimakanak provided our Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples and our Standing Senate Committee on National Finance with a clear written explanation of why Part 4, Division C of Bill C-32 should have been amended to ensure clarity on the enforcement and prosecution of First Nations laws enacted pursuant to the Framework Agreement on First Nation Land Management.

Although MKO was not invited to appear before either of the committees regarding Bill C-32, several honourable senators rose in the chamber and joined me in expressing support for MKO's request to appear before the National Finance Committee.

I also rose in this chamber to support and draw attention to the importance of the amendments that were then being proposed by MKO. In addition, Senator Loffreda posed a question in committee to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, saying:

... MKO made a submission to our Indigenous Peoples Committee, voicing some concerns with this section of the bill and calling for consequential amendments to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act and the Director of Public Prosecutions Act.

I would appreciate your comments and opinion on these claims and concerns.

The Minister of Finance's response to Senator Loffreda was:

That is a very broad set of issues that you have raised. It is beyond the few minutes that Senator Mockler is going to give us for me to address all of them. Let me just say: duly noted.

I am confident that reconciliation and a nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous people in Canada really are one of the most important issues for our government. That sort of permeates the work across all departments. It is an issue we take seriously. The comments that you make are duly noted by me and by Mr. Jovanovic.

The MKO submission on Bill C-32 also referenced the statement made on May 25, 2021, by Lands Advisory Board Chairman Robert Louie to the INAN Committee:

Many land code First Nations have faced refusal from police forces when they ask for help, with police forces expressing concerns regarding the validity of land code laws, concerns about potential liability of police officers, and uncertainty regarding who will prosecute laws if charges are laid. It has been difficult to this point to reach agreement with either federal or provincial prosecutors to tackle First Nation laws under the Framework Agreement.

On November 22, 2022, Lands Advisory Board Chairman Robert Louie advised our Indigenous Peoples Committee during its consideration of Bill C-32:

We have come to find out over the last 20-plus years that Canada and the RCMP are not readily backing and enforcing the First Nation laws that First Nations have passed.

It was 26 years.

It's an issue that is bubbling. It's something that we didn't quite expect at the outset, but we're working now with Canada and with provinces and with Attorneys General both at the Canadian and provincial levels to deal with this issue.

RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki's letter dated February 17, 2020, addressed to MKO Grand Chief Settee, provides an earlier confirmation of Lands Advisory Board Chairman Robert Louie's statements that land code First Nations faced a "... refusal from police forces ..." and that "... the RCMP are not readily backing and enforcing the First Nation laws that First Nations have passed."

The commissioner advised Grand Chief Settee:

The RCMP recognizes First Nations' authority under the FNLMA. However, there are concerns as to whether the FNLMA Land Codes provide the legal authority to enact COVID-19 related laws. Pending further direction, the RCMP will continue to follow the processes in place with respect to the enforcement of COVID-related bylaws passed under the Indian Act, as well as enforcing applicable provincial laws.

On March 15, 2021, Dr. Kelley Blanchette, Assistant Deputy Minister, Lands and Economic Development of Indigenous Services Canada, wrote to LAB Chairman Robert Louie:

I appreciate the frustration felt by First Nations who have taken on such fundamental aspects of their governance through the enactment of a Land Code, only to be forced to rely on Indian Act authorities to address the current COVID-19 pandemic.

While more analysis will need to be done, I have instructed my team to collaborate with you on options to expand and clarify authorities through the next amendments to the Framework Agreement.

However, honourable senators will recall that amendments to address effective enforcement and prosecution of land code laws were not part of Bill C-32.

On May 31, 2023, Mr. Michael Foote, Chief Federal Prosecutor for Manitoba, speaking to MKO leadership and representatives, stated:

I have been a prosecutor for 25 years at the federal level and another three years at the provincial level. And know in all of that time we have not done any prosecutions. So, it certainly predates my tenure as even the most junior prosecutor. I think Michael Anderson referred us back to a case from 1996 where it was the Department of Justice that was responsible for doing it at the time that prosecute a case, and it's never been done since, as I alluded to in my presentation.

When responding on June 1, 2023, to a question from Chief Hubert Watt of the God's Lake First Nation on the second day of the symposium, the Chief Federal Prosecutor for Manitoba also said:

With respect to your question, with respect to specifically the issue of the Indian Act bylaws, it's always been the position of the Federal Prosecution Service that we don't prosecute those bylaws. So, I take it that the RCMP, once they get that message from us, they take the position that if the Crown's not going to prosecute, we're [the RCMP] not going to lay charges.

• (1630)

However, RCMP Inspector Jeff Preston, Officer in Charge of the Campbell River, British Columbia, detachment told the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs in the other place on May 11, 2021:

Generally speaking, band bylaws are treated as federal laws that are enforceable by the RCMP, the police of jurisdiction or the band bylaw enforcement officers. . . .

In a May 11, 2021, statement to the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs in the other place, RCMP Staff Sergeant Ryan Howe of the Meadow Lake Detachment, RCMP F Division, Saskatchewan, told the committee that enforcement of First Nations laws by RCMP in northern Saskatchewan had stopped after 2014.

As part of an exchange of communications between Michael Anderson, MKO's Policing and Public Safety Adviser, following up on Staff Sergeant Howe's statement to the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Staff Sergeant Howe wrote on May 6, 2021, and advised MKO:

After the changes to legislation made in December 2014, the direction and guidance to RCMP serving First Nations in Northern Saskatchewan was that without prosecution, the police would no longer arrest or lay a charge.

Honourable senators, as you can see, there are conflicting statements made by the RCMP from different areas. We are requesting information from the RCMP in B.C. to see the following: When they enforced the bylaws, were they then prosecutable? We're still waiting for the response.

On May 27, 2021, MKO filed a formal access to information request for a copy of this guidance to the RCMP to cease enforcement of First Nations laws after December 2014 without prosecution. More than two years later, MKO continues to pursue a response from the RCMP regarding MKO's request for this RCMP guidance. At a request from my office in the Senate for this response, which included consent granted from MKO, my office was informed that it would take a further 1.5 years to get the information, and I have been told by a privacy lawyer that this is deemed a refusal.

Honourable senators, First Nations from coast to coast to coast are experiencing a crisis in public safety and well-being, largely driven by virtually uncontrolled drug dealing and bootlegging. And the complex community harms are the consequences. The failure and refusal of the RCMP to enforce and the Public Prosecution Service to prosecute First Nations laws, including intoxicants, prohibitions, trespass and curfew laws, is directly contributing to this national crisis of violence that First Nations communities are facing.

In the article entitled "Solving the Indian Act by-law enforcement issue: Prosecution of Indian Act by-laws" by Olthuis Kleer Townshend LLP, the author states:

First Nations by-laws are ignored by many police forces across the country because those police forces know that in most cases, there is no effective way to prosecute or convict those who violate these by-laws. While section 81 of the *Indian Act* allows bands to make on-reserve by-laws in areas including traffic control, residency, public health, and intoxicants, and while some of these by-laws can include penalties such as fines and/or imprisonment, the *Indian Act* does not specify whether the provinces/territories, federal government, or First Nations themselves are responsible for prosecuting by-law infractions. Lack of federal and provincial/territorial coordination or leadership on this issue has led to a situation where oftentimes neither federal nor provincial/territorial levels of government are choosing to prosecute these laws.

The author continues:

Many police forces view *Indian Act* by-laws as not having the same legitimacy as federal, provincial/territorial or municipal law, and as not being worth the liability risk and resource expense required to enforce them.

The author concludes:

The fact that the *Indian Act* doesn't specify whether the provinces/territories, federal government, or bands themselves are responsible for prosecuting by-law infractions leads to both the provincial government and the federal government claiming that it's not their problem, with First Nations stuck with the resulting lawlessness and insecurity.

Remember, this has gone on for 26 years now.

The federal and provincial governments need to step up, take the security and well-being of First Nations communities seriously and ensure these bylaws are being enforced and prosecuted, particularly for Indigenous citizens with whom the government has a fiduciary relationship.

Honourable senators, Chief Robert Louie of the Westbank First Nation, acting in his capacity as Chairman of the Lands Advisory Board, wrote to MKO Grand Chief Settee on April 5, 2023, to endorse the type of amendments to the Director of Public Prosecutions Act that were pursued in MKO's submission on Bill C-32. These amendments now appear in the bill before us — Bill S-224 — with the endorsement of the Lands Advisory Board.

Acting in his capacity as Chief of the Westbank First Nation, Chief Louie also wrote to MKO Grand Chief Settee with a request:

I would like to see any change to federal law encompass Indian Act by-laws, the Framework Agreement and other self-government agreements such as the Westbank Self-Government Agreement.

Colleagues, therefore, in addition to addressing the currently "stranded regimes" of Indian Act bylaws and land code laws, the enactment of Bill S-224 into law is intended to address and clarify with conclusive certainty that the Public Prosecution Service of Canada has a duty to prosecute offences under:

... a law enacted by a council, government or other entity that is authorized to act on behalf of a First Nation under a self-government agreement implemented by an Act of Parliament.

Bill S-224 also provides that the Public Prosecution Service of Canada will not initiate or pursue a prosecution:

... if the First Nation that made or enacted the First Nation law has appointed or retained a prosecutor or entered into an agreement with a provincial or territorial government for the prosecution of summary conviction offences created by its First Nation laws.

The enactment of Bill S-224 into law will clarify with conclusive certainty that it is the will of Parliament that offences pursuant to all duly enacted First Nations laws are to be effectively prosecuted by the Public Prosecution Service of Canada on behalf of the Attorney General of Canada, unless a First Nation has expressly made other arrangements to pursue prosecution.

• (1640)

MKO has also recently engaged in a legislative co-development exercise with Manitoba's Minister of Justice to secure the introduction, consideration and passage, on May 30, 2023, of amendments to Manitoba's Provincial Offences Act, which will — for the first time in Manitoba — create a ticketing regime for First Nations law.

Similar provincial laws to create a ticketing regime for First Nations laws were pursued by First Nations and were passed into law by Alberta on December 9, 2020, and by Saskatchewan on May 11, 2023.

Together with the enactment of the amendments to this bill and Bill S-223, these ticketing regimes for First Nations law will significantly enhance the ability of the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, or PPSC, to potentially prosecute offences under First Nations law in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

I mentioned yesterday there was a two-year pilot project where the Director of Public Prosecutions was working with Manitoba for the enforcement and prosecution of Indian Act bylaws beyond those related to the COVID-19 pandemic. This kind of pilot would not be a permanent solution but rather a joint opportunity to expand on the work done to date beyond the crisis posed by the pandemic.

In addition, it would be an opportunity to gather evidence and experience that can inform the development of solutions to better serve the communities in the long-term. The two-year pilot is unique in Canada and applies to 23 lawmaking MKO First Nations that have elected to participate.

Honourable senators, First Nations have fought to change the story that Canada has proclaimed for them and forced upon them. The deleterious effect of removing self-determination and the horrible consequences that flow from that are a story of an environment that made them vulnerable. It is not the First Nations that were broken.

Colleagues, in the early 1980s, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms had a section providing constitutional protection for treaty and Aboriginal rights.

In November 1983, the House of Commons Special Committee on Indian Self-Government presented its findings and urged expanded powers for First Nations governments, which, in some instances, would go beyond the traditional municipal model. In the 1990s, Indian Affairs announced a policy on the inherent right of self-government. In 2023, we had the First Nations Land Management Act.

It is time to end the 247 years of formal Indian administration which is still grappling with an Indian question that they created and supported, which was a racist act and has left First Nations with stranded regimes.

Honourable senators, as I stated at the beginning, I am deeply honoured to have had the privilege of collaborating with representatives from MKO and the First Nations Lands Advisory Board, or LAB, who played a major role in developing the version of this bill. This represents a concrete example of co-development in action of proposed legislation affecting First Nations.

Such legislative co-development reflects and is consistent with articles 19 and 38 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. And, therefore, with the federal government's United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, I call upon all honourable senators to fully support the self-determination and enhanced law-making powers of all First Nations in Canada that were intended by Parliament through the former Bill C-428 and for those First Nations that choose to exercise the law-making authority intended by the former Bill C-49.

I call upon my honourable colleagues to fully support, endorse and pass Bill S-224, which will enact amendments to the Director of Public Prosecutions Act that will clarify and confirm, with conclusive certainty, the jurisdiction of the PPSC to potentially prosecute offences under First Nations law on behalf of the Attorney General of Canada.

Sending these sister bills, Bill S-223 and Bill S-224, to the committee as quickly as possible will allow us to investigate this quagmire that continues to increase uncertainty in First Nations lives. This would then be a step towards restoring what should never have been taken away.

Kinanâskomitinawow. Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Patterson, debate adjourned.)

NATIONAL THANADELTHUR DAY BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Mary Jane McCallum moved second reading of Bill S-225, An Act to establish National Thanadelthur Day.

She said: Thank you. And I want to thank the senators who are here for supporting me.

Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to the second reading of Bill S-225, An Act to establish National Thanadelthur Day. As many colleagues will remember, this was formerly Bill S-274, which I had introduced in the Senate in September 2023 and which passed its second reading vote unanimously in November 2024.

There were two committee meetings scheduled for the end of January 2025, but prorogation precluded those meetings from taking place as planned. I am introducing it today in the hopes we can return it swiftly to committee so it can receive its study, as previously planned.

Colleagues, I want to once again share with you my experience with oral history among the Denesuline in Brochet and Lac Brochet. The Dene signed their Treaty 10 agreement in 1906, and the Cree moved in in the early 1920s. My father was one of the Cree that moved there.

They lived together in Brochet, Manitoba, where they intermarried and raised families. But the Cree committed violence towards the Dene. Due to the increasing violence, the Dene decided to move from their traditional lands in Brochet to Lac Brochet in 1974. Young children who were Dene and Cree from Brochet were sent to Guy Hill Residential School where, as students, we did indeed become family.

Because we were in residential school, many of us didn't see the violence that was happening at home. We would go home and hear about it.

With this closeness, I was privileged to hear the story of Thanadelthur 20 years ago from Ms. Lucy Antsanen, a Dene citizen of Brochet and Lac Brochet, who experienced intergenerational residential school trauma. Historically, in their years of oral history, the young Dene have heard, and continue to hear, about this remarkable young woman named Thanadelthur through stories passed down from their grandparents and parents.

• (1650)

At the outset, colleagues, I want to inform you that the word "Chipewyan" is only used as a historical reference; it is a derogatory term, whereas the correct is term "Denesuline," which means "original peoples."

Honourable senators, over 20 years ago, Ms. Antsanen, a young Dene woman with her master's in education and working as a teacher in Lac Brochet, introduced the story of Thanadelthur into the classroom. From that day on, the students wore red on February 5 to commemorate the memory of this young peacemaker, since that was the day on which Thanadelthur journeyed into the spirit world. I wear red today, and every day, for my sisters. Today I also wear the moccasins given to me in 1979 by Dene Elder St. Pierre.

This story takes place before Canada was reinvented as a nation and before Manitoba became a province. There were no borders, only territorial boundaries of each of the Indigenous nations. This story occurs at the height of the fur trade. Both the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company were trading in the vicinity of York Factory.

Thanadelthur was born in the latter part of the 1600s. Prior to written history, and over the ages, the Dene people counted the number of winters from the birth of their children to keep account of age. The reason for bringing this up is because there are varying ages assigned to Thanadelthur in different historical forums, including the Hudson's Bay Company Archives and

accounts told by individual historians. Regardless, she was a young girl in her early to mid teens when she arrived at the Hudson's Bay fort.

Honourable senators, we are hard-pressed in modern times to find the actual names of Indigenous women in history. History has normalized reducing these women, referencing them as "Indian" or "Aboriginal" women, thereby contributing to the erasure of our peoples and history. In our community of Lac Brochet, when the French priest who had lived among us for over 50 years wrote his book about our lives in our lands, he referred to the people simply as an "Indian." He never gave their names even though he lived with them, not even acknowledging our humanity.

So, at a time when Indigenous women rarely made it into history books, we have this remarkable Dene girl whose name, Thanadelthur, is etched into history books for eternity. As such, this information exists as oral history, yes, but it transcends that medium, as it is also archived and housed in history books, as well as through teaching tools used in schools. Author Rick Book's *Blackships/Thanadelthur*, which features the life and contributions of this young woman, is being used as a teaching aid in the Northwest Territories.

Colleagues, during Thanadelthur's life, the Dene and Cree were warring ancient enemies. Dene Elders from different Dene communities in Manitoba and Saskatchewan tell of the warring between the two nations. When the Cree came upon a Dene encampment, they killed the majority of the Dene but captured the young girls, as Dene girls were known to be hard workers. Conversely, when the Dene came upon a Cree encampment, they did not take any prisoners.

In 1712-13, Thanadelthur's family was hunting caribou in the area near Arviat, Nunavut, where they were attacked in their encampment and slaughtered by the Cree. Thanadelthur was taken into captivity. The Cree Elders called her "Akwakan Iskwew," which means "slave woman." The Dene Elders say that she survived because she was stunningly beautiful and very skillful.

Thanadelthur was enslaved for over a year, and late in 1714 she and another young woman escaped their Cree captors and headed north to find their people. Without warm food and clothing, they were soon in dire straits. The girls survived on edible plants and berries and small game they snared along the way. It is believed they used their long hair to make snares. During this journey, Thanadelthur's young companion tragically passed away, forcing Thanadelthur to then abandon her route and make her way to the fort, hoping to encounter the English. Thanadelthur was aware of the fort but had never been there.

When she made it to the fort, she met William Stuart, who was in charge of the fort. He had been working with another Dene woman, and he wanted a peace treaty with the Dene and the Cree so that they could hunt for furs. It was to enhance their economic development.

When they met with the Cree, Thanadelthur asked that the Cree come and meet with the Dene people to make the peace treaty, and they went on that expedition. When they were travelling in the cold winter, Thanadelthur made their winter clothes from animal skins and made snowshoes from sticks and animal sinew.

More than once, Thanadelthur saved the expedition from starvation. Hunger was kept at bay by drinking tea and eating soup made only from snow blackberries and animal hides. In the end, the party was reduced to Thanadelthur and Stuart, along with the Cree leader and about 10 of his people. Near their destination, they came across the bodies of nine Dene, apparently killed by the Cree. Afraid they might be blamed for their deaths, Stuart and the Cree refused to go any farther. Thanadelthur asked the party to make camp and wait for 10 days while she went to find her people and bring them back to negotiate terms of peace.

She struck out alone over the Barrens, and within a few days, came upon several hundred Dene. Having been attacked earlier by the Cree, it took much talking for Thanadelthur to convince her people to accompany her to the Cree camp. In the end, more than 100 agreed, and in a true epic fashion, she arrived at the Cree camp on the tenth day.

Then the peace negotiations began. Thanadelthur led the talks, scolding the parties into making peace. Finally, heading a delegation of 10 Dene, including her brother, she led them back to York Fort in May 1716. At the post, she quickly became a chief adviser to Governor James Knight, who sought her thoughts on a variety of plans. He found her to be one of the most remarkable people he had ever encountered.

• (1700)

In early 1717, Thanadelthur fell ill. Realizing she was dying, she spent hours teaching one of the young Hudson's Bay Company workers to speak Dene so that he could take her place. She died on February 5, 1717, at the age of 16.

In the book *Muskegowuck Athinuwick: Original People of the Great Swampy Land*, author Victor P. Lytwyn gives more detail about this time:

When the HBC re-settled York Factory in 1714, it was anxious to facilitate a peace between the Lowland Cree and the Dene. The company had economic motivations for encouraging such a peace initiative; it planned to establish a trading post at the mouth of the Churchill River to collect furs from the Dene. There were also rumours of precious metals in the Dene territory, and the company wanted to develop a friendly relationship to exploit these mineral resources. The motivation for peace on the part of the Lowland Cree is more difficult to ascertain. There were no obvious economic advantages to be gained by making peace with their traditional enemies. However, the peace initiative does make sense if it is viewed from the perspective of the alliance between the Lowland Cree and the HBC. As allies of the company, the Lowland Cree may have participated in peacemaking with the Dene in order to solidify their relationship with the English traders. A careful examination of the peace mission in 1715-16 clarifies the role of the Lowland Cree in this initiative. This peace mission has been

previously analysed by scholars who have been interested in the role of the HBC or the Dene woman who acted as interpreter.

James Knight, through feasts and gifts, persuaded the leader of the Lowland Cree to undertake the peace mission. The Cree leader was followed by 17 men and their families, numbering about 150 people in total. Accompanying this group was William Stuart and Thanadelthur, who had been captured by the Lowland Cree.

They left York Factory on June 27, 1715, and headed north toward the Churchill River. Nothing was heard of the peacemakers until April 13, 1716, when three Lowland Cree arrived at York Factory with news that the party had suffered from a shortage of food and forced to break into four or five smaller groups. According to their report, the Lowland Cree leader had taken four men, along with Stuart and Thanadelthur, in the direction of the Dene winter hunting grounds. Another group of eight Lowland Cree men also continued along a different route toward Dene winter hunting grounds. These men in the party of eight met a group of Dene and killed nine people in self-defence.

On May 7, 1716, the Lowland Cree leader returned to York Factory with Stuart, Thanadelthur and four Dene men. The latter had joined the Cree leader as evidence of the peace that had been made between the two groups of Indians. According to Stuart's report, their party came across the bodies of the Dene who had been slain by the other Lowland Cree. Thanadelthur agreed to go out and bring her people to the camp in order to explain the situation and reach a peace. Within ten days, Thanadelthur returned with 400 Dene, including 160 men. Using Thanadelthur as an interpreter, the Lowland Cree leader explained that they had come in peace and offered his pipe to smoke in friendship. The Dene leaders accepted and after two days of meetings and gift exchanges, they parted company in peace. The Lowland Cree leader took four Dene boys who were "adopted" as a sign of the peace. One of these boys remained with the leader and he was thereafter treated as his own son.

Honourable senators, as I mentioned near the outset of my speech, in present day, teaching guides are used in the classroom to highlight Thanadelthur's experiences for teaching and covering sensitive subjects and issues.

On August 13, 2017, a 300-year commemoration took place in Churchill, Manitoba. Many of the Dene and Cree people congregated in Churchill to honour and commemorate Thanadelthur.

Furthermore, for her courage, her peacemaking abilities and her contribution to Manitoba and Canadian history, Thanadelthur was commemorated in 2000 as a person of national historical significance and in 2002 as an historical role model for the youth.

Additionally, in 2024, the main-belt asteroid 88786 Thanadelthur was named in her honour.

In August 2022, I was invited to Churchill by Ms. Lucy Antsanen and representatives from the Dene Nation in Manitoba and Saskatchewan to witness the renaming of Hudson Square to Thanadelthur Square. At that time, I delivered my second apology speech to the Dene for the pain that was inflicted upon them.

Treaty 10 was signed by the Dene in Brochet, Manitoba, and as I said, the Cree started to move in. The relationship between Cree and Dene in Brochet was violent in many ways for many years, but there was intermarriage between the two, and these families have lasted over our lifetime. My aunt and other relatives are Dene.

The violence culminated through the act of the Dene moving from their traditional lands, losing the wisdom and historical connection that resides in that place for them from when they moved to Lac Brochet in 1974. They made that extremely difficult decision and moved to a place where there was no electricity. Through sheer determination, they shaped a place for themselves.

In 2009, at the 100-year celebration of the treaty, I gave my first apology speech to the Dene because it was the right thing to do. I remain close friends with and an ally to my Dene brothers, sisters, grandmothers and grandfathers. My mom and dad were close to the Dene, and my dad visited the Dene in Lac Brochet. He helped them through hard times and celebrated with them during good times, because his trapline was near Lac Brochet.

I have been told stories of my parents from the Dene, and I would not have known this side of my father if not for the Dene sharing these stories with me.

Throughout these years, as Cree and Dene, we have continued to gather and have conversations, not only about our troubled shared history but also what connects us.

I have always felt like an intruder in another's territory, because we were in historical Dene territory. In 2005, at our yearly gathering in Brochet, after Elder Joe Hyslop said it was his land and his territory, I spoke and informed the people that it was indeed his land and his territory, but it was also mine. I was born and raised there, and it was the land I was connected to from birth. I knew then — as I always have — that we needed to keep looking for peace. They are my family.

You see, we were already making our way toward reconciliation, even before the word became popular. We have been actively working toward it from the time of Thanadelthur.

• (1710)

I want to share a bit of that apology speech I delivered:

Thank you to the Dene for inviting and welcoming me to their home territory.

I would like to start with a moment of reflection on the mistreatment of the Dene throughout history and in this instance by the Cree. I want to say how sorry I am for the fear, the pain, the suffering and the indignities suffered while in close contact with the Crees.

I know there is nothing I can say today that can take away the pain and hurt you and your ancestors have suffered individually and collectively. But I am extending my hand out to you in the spirit of brotherhood/sisterhood in the hopes of helping to resolve our past and begin a new beginning — one that Thanadelthur strived for and worked on relentlessly.

“I remember . . .” coming home from residential schools and hearing:

. . . the drumming and the hand-games that the Dene played and these cultural events remain a cherished part of my memory. When the evenings were calm you could hear the sound of the drums throughout the whole village. In times of great stress in my life, I sought the sound of drums because it reminded me of my home and kinship in Brochet. The drums continue to remain very powerful healers for me today. In times of great stress in my life, I have sought the advice and comfort of both my Cree and Dene friends and family. The Dene will always be a strong anchor in my life and I hope to continue to walk with you in my journey in life.

I remember hearing stories of the trauma that was inflicted upon our Dene brothers and sisters and how they felt they had to move from Brochet to make the lives of their children safer. Their decision to move was based on great courage, courage to leave their home territory and to make a new life. What we cannot forget now is their stories of hurt and trauma that went with the displacement and that the Dene continue to feel [today] as a consequence of the brutal treatment of the Crees, that we face the cold uncomfortable truth anywhere violence and trauma occurs including Churchill — we need to face it, deal with it and let's start with the historical story of Thanadelthur and, like her, champion justice.

I must also remember the existence of intergenerational trauma. These types of historical injustices, whether in Lac Brochet, Tadoule or Churchill still continue to exert their impact today, their impact on the continuing existence and vitality of their communities, their laws and customs, their language, their land ownership, and their sovereignty.

I do not know the extent of the horrors that some of the families and individuals went through, not only in Brochet, but in Churchill. In her book *Night Spirits* Ila Bussidor was articulate about many of the harms that occurred and that continue to occur today.

I understand that the Inuit, the Metis, the First Nations and the non-Indigenous Peoples inflicted trauma on the Dene in Churchill. How do we start the conversation to include the federal government who removed the Dene from their nomadic lifestyle and lands and forcefully placed them in Churchill without any resources, including housing? How does the government acknowledge the harm that these removal policies inflicted on the Dene?

Identifying the impact on communities as well as individuals is a powerful way to recognize the foundation of First Nations differences. As you are aware, Thanadelthur, a skilled interpreter and negotiator, played a crucial diplomatic role that led to peace between her people, the Dene, and their traditional enemies, the Cree.

On behalf of the Cree, I acknowledge the hurt that was inflicted on our brothers and sisters, the Dene. The Cree and Dene have their own unique cultures and in Brochet there was a mixing of the two because we lived and loved together. We have families together. The Creator put us together for a reason and we must honour the unity of the two tribes for that reason. For the sake of our children we need to find each other again.

My hope is that this acknowledgement and apology leads to a process of healing, a recognition and an acknowledgement of the Dene's human worth and dignity. How do we start to end the cycle of resentment, of hurt?

I am not expecting forgiveness and as an individual I promise not to repeat any of the trauma you have undergone. I offer my apology in the spirit of healing between the Cree and Dene Nations. It is important that we do not stay where we are. I acknowledge that the Dene, as sovereign nations, have the power to reject this statement/apology.

I understand that to allow space for a response is important and that the response might not be immediate, and when it comes, may not be positive. The point is to acknowledge and recognize that injustice did happen. For that I am truly sorry.

Honourable senators, in July 2023, I went to Brochet to celebrate Treaty 10 celebrations along with the Treaty 10 chiefs from Saskatchewan and Manitoba. We revisited and truly celebrated our Dene-Cree kinship. The Crees hosted the Dene in their homes, cooked all the traditional foods, played hand games and challenged each other in various competitions. There was dancing, singing, drumming and feasting. It was the best and most collegial gathering that we have ever had.

These Treaty 10 celebrations will continue to occur for seven more years because we're now going to go into Saskatchewan. They will serve to revive a modern peace treaty between the Cree and Dene today, and we have started that.

This is in alignment with the understanding that apologies are always followed by concrete actions. One female Dene chief from Saskatchewan said to me, "I never thought I would ever hear those words 'I'm sorry.'" We ended the celebrations with drumming and a round dance of the Cree and Dene.

Colleagues, as I am nearing the end of my remarks, I want to read a quote from Chief Simon Denechezhe, from the Lac Brochet Dene Nation.

As a strong ally, the Cree councillor Billy Linklater, a proxy for the chief from the Barren Lands First Nation, was the seconder. There was a resolution, which called on the federal

government to adopt legislation recognizing February 5 as Thanadelthur Day, and it was unanimously adopted by the Manitoba Keewatinowí Okimakanak Chiefs with the full support of the Keewatin Tribal Council and their Grand Chief Walter Wastesicoot. In speaking to this resolution, Chief Denechezhe said:

This is oral history that has been passed on, generation to generation. It happen[ed] in the early 1700s. I heard it orally, too, from my parents and Elders. This is not only recognition, but it[']s also for the path to truth and reconciliation, and as Nations, we must learn to respect and acknowledge each other. And this is the form of working collectively together with all nations. Truth and Reconciliation; we are on the path now. This needs to be clearly understood and that we need to work Nation to Nation, in th[ese] modern times. I [have] heard it many times that we need to help each other. It seems like we are always at . . . odds, but us around the table, that's our voice, voices of our Nations, and we need to [be] recognized, too, and be on the path to reconcile. Thank you. *Maci-chok!*

• (1720)

Honourable senators, I would like to wrap up my speech by reading words from our former colleague and the critic of this bill in the last Parliament, Senator Don Plett. In his response speech to this bill last November, Senator Plett said:

Now, while I might not intervene very often on these types of bills where we are enacting a month or a week of recognition — I'm not the biggest fan of recognizing days, weeks or months — Bill S-274 —

— as it was then —

— presented by Senator McCallum, in my opinion, is different. It's an exception because, in my opinion, it's an opportunity for our country, especially our children, to learn a little bit about our history.

Senator Plett continued:

. . . [Thanadelthur's] story has not found the wider recognition that it rightfully and importantly deserves. We know of the impact that other major figures have had in our country and various provinces, but we also need a light to shine on stories like Thanadelthur's. In a storied country like ours, too many important figures are pushed to the margins of history.

Senator Plett went on to conclude:

Colleagues, I would encourage all senators here to support Bill S-274 at second reading, for it to be studied at committee and for the committee to determine if this is the best avenue with which to recognize Thanadelthur, because, without a doubt, there needs to be recognition.

Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

ARAB HERITAGE MONTH BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Al Zaibak, seconded by the Honourable Senator Aucoin, for the second reading of Bill S-227, An Act respecting Arab Heritage Month.

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan: Honourable senators, I am mindful of the time. I'm normally very brief, but I'll be even briefer still.

Honourable senators, I rise today to speak as the official critic for Bill S-227, which would designate the month of April as Arab heritage month. Thank you to Senator Al Zaibak for reintroducing this important bill.

As I was getting ready to speak, I asked myself, "Who is an Arab?" Well, Arabs are considered to be Semitic peoples, and they speak Arabic, a Semitic language. The Arab world consists of 22 countries in the Middle East and North Africa where Arabic is the main spoken language. In terms of religion, most Arabs are Muslims, but there are also Arab Christians and Arab Jews — just as there are Muslim, Christian and Jewish Canadians. Despite their differences in ethnicity and religion, Arabs are united by their distinctive history, culture, music, art forms, food and customs.

In Canada, the first Arab immigrant to arrive is widely believed to have been Ibrahim Abou Nader, who settled in Montreal in 1882. Since then, the Arab-Canadian community has grown steadily, with the biggest communities located in Montreal and Toronto.

Honourable senators, the Arab world has offered gifts to humanity that transcend borders, centuries and disciplines. The roots of Arab contributions to global civilization run deep. I would therefore like to highlight a few Arab inventors who paved the way for Newton, Galileo and even the Wright brothers.

First, something as innocuous as our morning cup of coffee originated in the Arab world. Legend has it that coffee was first discovered by a goat herder named Khalid or Kaldi in the 9th century Ethiopia who noticed goats chewing on seeds and getting particularly excited. Coffee plants were taken across the Red Sea in Yemen, where it was first cultivated and brewed in the 15th century. The port city of Mocha, or Al-Makha, on Yemen's Red Sea coast became the epicentre of the global coffee trade from the 15th to the 17th centuries. From there, coffee spread across the Islamic world, reaching Mecca, Cairo, Damascus and then the Ottoman Empire before eventually making its way into Europe. This Arab-led domestication and commercialization of coffee laid the foundation for modern global coffee culture.

A thousand years before the Wright brothers invented the flying machine, Abbas Ibn Firnas, an Andalusí polymath, invented the first heavier-than-air flying contraption to be recorded in history. He crafted a rudimentary glider from wood, silk and feathers and was said to have launched himself from a

mountain in Yemen, gliding for several minutes and steering well enough to land near his starting point. This endeavour presaged concepts that centuries later informed the work of Leonardo da Vinci and the Wright brothers.

In mathematics, ancient Egypt and Babylon were the centres for the development of algebra, a word that was derived from the Arabic word "al-jabr," which means "restoration" or "reunion." Ancient Babylonians were the pioneers in using algebra in the field of mathematics, with evidence suggesting that this practice dates back as far as 1900 to 1600 BC.

We have heard about the first medical doctors. Al-Zahrawi, a celebrated physician, surgeon and chemist, published a book in the year 1000 called *Kitab al-Tasrif*, a 30-volume Arabic encyclopedia on medicine and surgery which was used in Europe as a medical reference for the next 500 years.

Another prominent figure was Ibn Sina, known in the West as Avicenna, who wrote *The Canon of Medicine*, a text that became a standard in European universities for more than 500 years. His detailed observations laid the groundwork for clinical trials, quarantine procedures and holistic treatment centuries before modern science caught up.

Honourable senators, these are not just footnotes in history. These are the cornerstones of modern science and culture.

We don't hear much about these inventors as recorded history is subjective, but I hope that with Arab heritage month, we can learn about the rich culture and history, and the notable achievements and contributions of Canadians of Arabic origins.

These contributions are not locked in the past. They live and breathe among us here in Canada. Arab Canadians have made and continue to make outstanding contributions to the social, cultural, scientific and political fabric of this country.

We know that in recent years, Arab communities — particularly those who are Muslim, racialized or newcomers — have faced discrimination, profiling and marginalization. Recognizing Arab heritage month is not only an act of celebration but also an act of solidarity, an affirmation that every Canadian, regardless of origin, belongs fully and equally to this country.

Honourable senators, let us use Arab heritage month to ensure that Arab-Canadian youth see themselves reflected in our institutions, that every Arab-Canadian culture is celebrated in our classrooms and that Arab-Canadian voices are heard in our conversations. With this, we can all look forward to weaving a more authentic version of our collective history together.

Thank you. *Shukran*.

(On motion of Senator Patterson, debate adjourned.)

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION

FIRST REPORT OF COMMITTEE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the first report of the Committee of Selection, entitled *Nomination and duration of senators to serve on committees*, presented in the Senate on June 18, 2025.

Hon. Michael L. MacDonald moved the adoption of the report.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

(At 5:31 p.m., the Senate was continued until Wednesday, June 25, 2025, at 2 p.m.)

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