SENATE SÉNAT

CANADA

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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, June 3, 2026

The Honourable RAYMONDE GAGNÉ,
Speaker

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# THE SENATE

**Wednesday, June 3, 2026**

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

Prayers.

## BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

**Hon. Kim Pate:** Honourable senators, on behalf of Senator McBean and myself, I want to apologize unreservedly for our failure to accord our behaviour yesterday with the decorum and order that this chamber and all of our colleagues and staff deserve.

Many of you know that the two of us have been incredibly enthusiastic about the Professional Women's Hockey League, or PWHL. When the players surprised us by arriving here yesterday afternoon, we charged into the visitors gallery opposite — some of you may not even know what I'm talking about — with the Montréal Victoire team and the Walter Cup. We apologize for doing that. We were caught up in the moment. That's no excuse, however, for failing to temper our excitement, so I want to apologize unreservedly.

Thank you very much for providing me this opportunity to apologize on behalf of Senator McBean and myself. We will continue to cheer for the Montréal Victoire and the Ottawa Charge and maybe some of the other teams. However, in this moment, we want to emphasize our respect for this place, and in the future we will do our best to ensure that, when we know guests are coming, we advise ahead of time. Again, there is no excuse that we didn't know; we know what the rules are.

Thank you very much, Your Honour.

# SENATORS' STATEMENTS

## THE RIGHT HONOURABLE MARY SIMON, C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., O.Q., C.D.

**Hon. Nancy Karetak-Lindell:** Honourable senators, on July 26, 2021, we witnessed a moment in history, a wonderful occasion and a day of dawning as Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary Simon was sworn in as the first Indigenous Governor General of Canada, the thirtieth since Confederation. I was so very proud that day, as an Indigenous person, to see her take the position with such grace and dignity. It was a moment that affirmed a sense of belonging in this country and reflected a long-overdue recognition of Indigenous Peoples as equal partners within Canada.

The Honourable Mary Simon has dedicated her life to public service across many fields. She began her career at CBC North in the 1970s, held executive positions with Inuit organizations and was actively involved in negotiations for the 1982 repatriation of the Canadian Constitution, which formally entrenched Aboriginal and treaty rights in the supreme law of Canada. She also became the first Inuk to hold an ambassadorial position and was instrumental in the establishment of the Arctic Council. Her areas of expertise and past work are too numerous to fully capture here.

Importantly, Her Excellency has also embodied the significance of Indigenous language in public life. As a bilingual teacher in English and Inuktitut, she has brought Inuktitut into the highest office of the country, affirming that Indigenous languages are not only living languages but languages of governance, diplomacy and national importance. Her presence and her voice have underscored that reconciliation must include the protection, revitalization and everyday use of Indigenous languages, which remain central to identity, culture and self-determination.

I have known Mary since I was in high school, and she has been a lifelong role model for me. She paved the way for many Inuit women to be involved in advancing Inuit voices, advocating for healthier and more sustainable communities and creating opportunities for Inuit to pursue education and employment.

I pay tribute to Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary Simon for being our shining light and guiding us all on our continued road to reconciliation. I thank her for giving herself to public life, and I wish her well on her retirement.

Thank you. *Matna*.

**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 Norris Hoag, former Assistant Deputy Minister of Research at the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and Carol Hoag. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Black.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

## CANADA-MERCOSUR FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

**Hon. Robert Black:** Honourable senators, I rise today to highlight a pressing issue that will impact our North American beef trading relationship and our country's food sovereignty.

The Government of Canada is quickly pursuing numerous trade deals. However, they are rushing through the Mercosur negotiations with countries having the largest, lowest-cost beef producers in the world. However, these lower costs reflect the different standards for animal care, labour, food safety and sustainability in the Southern Common Market countries, or Mercosur.

Canadian beef farmers and ranchers cannot compete with these lower prices and should not compromise our high standards because they are being displaced by Mercosur beef imports.

Canadian beef is some of the most sustainable beef in the world. According to the Canadian Cattle Association, beef raised in Canada generates 52% fewer emissions than the global average.

Increasing beef imports through a Mercosur trade deal will not only decrease our country's domestic beef production, but it would also go against Canada's environmental goals.

Additionally, Mercosur countries present significant foreign animal disease risks that could have catastrophic consequences for our national herd and rural communities. Lower-priced imports are a short-term and misleading solution to rising food prices. If we don't protect our Canadian beef industry, we will discourage herd rebuilding, reduce domestic supply and thereby increase long-term price volatility, weakening Canada's food security and food sovereignty.

Furthermore, we cannot afford to further jeopardize our trading relationship with the United States by adding another trade irritant ahead of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, or CUSMA, review. Given the high integration of Canadian and U.S. markets, the U.S. may see the Canada-Mercosur deal as our country opening a back door for Mercosur beef into their country.

All Canadian farmers, including beef farmers, must be recognized for the vital role they play in food security, economic growth and maintaining the strong agricultural traditions that communities rely on across this country.

There must be thorough consideration of the effects that a Mercosur trade deal will have on all Canadian sectors. Let me reiterate: We cannot, and should not, weaken our beef sector and our country's food sovereignty for minor short-term gains.

Honourable colleagues, the agriculture sector is frequently forgotten and disregarded when trade deals and policy changes are made. I hope you will join me in raising awareness of this vital industry and advocating for policies that support Canadian farmers and ranchers.

Thank you. *Meegwetch*.

[ Senator Black ]

[*Translation*]

## VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Luc Régimbal and Stéphane Giroux, co-owners of the Régimbal Group, as well as Mr. Régimbal's father, Jean Régimbal. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Moncion.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

• (1410)

## RÉGIMBAL GROUP

CONGRATULATIONS ON ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY

**Hon. Lucie Moncion:** Honourable senators, I rise today to highlight the remarkable success of a business in the National Capital Region, the Régimbal Group, a Franco-Ontarian family business that is celebrating its one hundredth anniversary this year.

The Régimbal Group's story began in 1926, when Horace Régimbal began repairing jewellery and watches in the back room of a barbershop on Sussex Drive in Ottawa. Over the generations, this modest workshop grew into a business that is firmly rooted in the community and a true flagship of francophone entrepreneurship outside Quebec.

After the founder's passing in 1960, the Régimbal family resolutely carried on his work. Then, in 1992, Luc Régimbal and his friend Stéphane Giroux took the reins. They had an ambitious vision to modernize the company, diversify its operations and prepare it for the future.

Under their leadership, the Régimbal Group expanded its offerings to include promotional items, screen printing, engraving and personalized clothing. This growth did not happen by chance. It is a result of bold choices, strategic acquisitions, sustained investments in new technology, and an ongoing commitment to innovation. Above all, it is a result of a deep conviction: A business thrives when it puts quality first and ensures that every customer feels valued and satisfied. Thanks to this philosophy, the Régimbal Group has built an enviable reputation throughout the region.

Today the company serves large and small businesses, community organizations and public institutions. It is also a major economic driver, currently providing quality jobs that support 37 families in the region. This sustained growth is a testament to how dynamic this company is, and its team continues to expand in line with its success.

Luc Régimbal's exceptional career was recognized recently when he was named personality of the year at the gala organized by the Regroupement des gens d'affaires de la capitale nationale.

This distinction highlights not only his leadership and entrepreneurial spirit, but also his contribution to the region's francophone business community.

With a fourth generation already joining the family business, we wish them every success in building on this momentum, bringing their many future plans to fruition and continuing to grow this great business for the next 100 years.

I would like to extend my congratulations to the co-owners, Luc Régimbal and Stéphane Giroux, as well as to the Régimbal family and to all the employees of the Régimbal Group for this outstanding achievement and for their contribution to French-Canadian entrepreneurship.

Thank you.

[*English*]

## VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of a delegation from the Canadian Association of Social Workers led by their president, Barb Whitenect. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Bernard.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

## CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

**Hon. Wanda Thomas Bernard:** Honourable senators, I rise today to recognize the 100-year anniversary of the Canadian Association of Social Workers. This centennial milestone is guided by the theme "Reflecting on Our Past, Reimagining Our Future."

As many of you know, I am a social worker who is moonlighting as a senator. I connect with social workers across Canada through our shared commitment to human rights, social justice and advocating for marginalized individuals, families and communities.

Reflecting back, we must be honest: Our profession does not have a squeaky clean history. Social workers were at the helm of the Sixties Scoop. Social workers were among those who convinced the residents of Africville to leave their homes before their community was forcibly removed.

Social workers have caused harm to members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and to the disability community. These are only a few examples, but they are important truths.

When I speak to organizations about creating meaningful systemic change, I often use the Canadian Association of Social Workers, or CASW, as a success story. Their work on reconciliation and reparations gives me critical hope.

For example, in addition to providing extensive and culturally relevant continuing education initiatives, CASW actively supports the work of Indigenous and Black social workers within their own communities. In addition, they have revised their code of ethics to reflect evolving core values and a renewed commitment to ensuring that social workers are indeed agents of positive social change.

I am proud to work alongside CASW as we shape the future of our profession. We are indeed stronger together.

Tonight, at 6:30 p.m. in SJAM, I invite you to join Senator Muggli and me as we co-host CASW members from across the country, three of whom are with us here today. It is a time to celebrate, reflect, discuss and connect as we honour this remarkable milestone in the history of the Canadian Association of Social Workers.

Thank you. *Asante*.

## TELLING OUR STORY

**Hon. Fabian Manning:** Honourable senators, one of my favourite country artists is the legend himself, Mr. George Jones. While I am a huge fan of many of his songs, one of my most favourite songs is "Choices."

The song's lyrics tell of how the choices we make on our own journey of life will dictate where the road most likely will lead us.

During the past couple of months, I have been looking back at my journey and the choices I have made. On March 30, 2026, it marked the fortieth anniversary of my election as a town councillor in my hometown of St. Bride's at the tender age of 22. Following 10 years of service as a member of the House of Assembly in Newfoundland and Labrador, I was elected to the House of Commons in January 2006. Thus, this past January marked my twentieth year here in Ottawa, first as a member of Parliament and then since joining you here in the Senate in 2009.

My wife, Sandra — a very patient lady, may I add — our son Fabian Jr. and his wife, Gina; our son Mark; and our daughter, Heather, along with our two precious grandchildren, Fabian III and Ricki Ann, have been my support system during this journey, and I will be forever grateful for their continued support and love.

My mother often advised us that every now and again, we should stop, sit back and take the time to look at the road on which we have travelled and, even more importantly, explore the options that are available to us as we map out the journey ahead. For the last several months, I have been doing just that. I have been talking and listening to family and friends and seeking their advice and wisdom.

Except for some minor health issues that we all endure as the clock keeps on ticking, I am enjoying great health and looking forward to what I hope and pray my many tomorrows will bring.

I have had several conversations with my immediate family, and I have sat and talked with a few of my close colleagues back home on the island and here in the Senate Chamber. I made a couple of visits to my family doctor and sought the advice of my very close friend Dr. Ravalia, seeking not only his medical advice but also his sage guidance on other aspects of life. I did not know Dr. Rav before he arrived here in the Senate, but through the years, Rav has become a very close family friend and confidant, even on the days that he attempts to orchestrate a coup to take over as the Chair of the Fisheries and Oceans Committee.

I have taken the time to run my thought process through my other Newfoundland and Labrador colleagues, Senators Petten, Wells and White, and I thank them for their encouragement and support. Let me take a moment to say that it is my honour to be serving with all four of my island colleagues here in this very honourable house, and we miss terribly our former colleague Senator Marshall.

With all that said, I would like to make what I believe is a very important announcement today, and I sincerely apologize to my leader, Senator Housakos, whom I did not advise of this decision. I hope and trust that he will understand.

Now that I feel a level of comfort that I have your attention, I would like to announce that when the Senate reconvenes in September for the fall session, I will be beginning a new chapter, and it will be Chapter 101.

Yes, my friends, after much thought and consideration, I have decided that even though I have told you many stories of the people, places and events of the place I am so happy and proud to call home, there is so much more to tell.

• (1420)

From the pine-clad hills, to the windswept shores, to watching the earliest sunrise in North America, to enjoying a memorable night of music and fun on our famous George Street, to the northern lights of Labrador and to the quiet of the coves and bays throughout our province, you will never be disappointed because there are no strangers there — only friends you haven't met.

I look forward this coming fall to beginning the process of bringing you volume 2 and the next 100 chapters of "Telling Our Story" about Newfoundland and Labrador: the Rock, the Big Land and my home sweet home.

**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 Safa Chebbi, Ehab Lotayef, Luiza Ravalli and Umir Tiar. They are the guests of the Honourable Senator Woo.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!

## CHIEF FIREARMS OFFICERS

**Hon. Dawn Anderson:** Honourable senators, I rise, as I often do, to draw attention to another issue for which I have sought answers for nearly three years.

The issue I am speaking to is not simply about the location of chief firearms officers, nor is it about whether the government honoured its commitment to appoint resident CFOs in the three territories. This is about something far more troubling: Canada's recurring failure to act on its own findings, honour its own commitments and deliver on the expectations it creates.

The greatest injustice is not that Indigenous Peoples have not been heard; it is that they have been heard for generations. Their words exist. The evidence exists. The recommendations exist. The commitments exist. Section 35 of the Constitution Act; historical and modern treaties; the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, or UNDRIP; the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, or TRC, Calls to Action; and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, or MMIWG, Calls to Justice all exist.

Indigenous Peoples should not bear the burden of identifying injustices, proving their existence, proposing solutions and then spending generations advocating for governments to fulfill obligations they have already recognized.

A commitment should not require a lifetime of advocacy to become a reality. And reconciliation cannot mean that Indigenous Peoples carry both the burden of suffering the inequity and the burden of demanding its correction.

Too often, Indigenous Peoples are thanked for their testimony, resilience, patience and partnership. Yet gratitude without action becomes another form of delay. When delay follows decades of testimony, inquiries, reports and promises, it ceases to be administrative; it becomes a perpetuation of harm, compounding intergenerational trauma and eroding faith that justice will ever arrive.

I struggle to find comfort in the word "reconciliation," not because I question its importance but because it has too often become convenient language. It appears in speeches, strategies, reports and announcements. It is invoked to signal progress and good intentions. It is spoken without requiring action and accountability.

Some may hear frustration in my words and mistake it for cynicism. It is not. I am not jaded by Canada but shaped by my experience within it.

I am profoundly defined by my life as an Inuk, by the stories of my family, my Elders, my communities and generations of people who endured hardship without surrendering hope, carried responsibility without surrendering dignity and refused to stop believing in a better future.

My perspective is not born of bitterness, nor is it born merely of observation. It is born of experience.

I have seen what happens when promises are kept. I have also seen what happens when they are not.

I have watched communities solve problems not because they have every resource they need, but because they have no choice. I have watched people show remarkable patience while waiting for decisions that should have come long ago.

I have watched Northern and Indigenous communities continue to demonstrate strength, resilience and generosity despite challenges that many Canadians never face. That experience has not made me cynical. It has made me unwilling to confuse words with action and unwilling to celebrate intentions while communities wait for results. More importantly, it has made me unwilling to accept that asking governments to honour their commitments is somehow unreasonable.

At some point, reconciliation must stop being Indigenous homework and start becoming government responsibility.

The measure of a nation is not whether it can recognize an injustice but whether it is willing to inconvenience itself to correct it.

*Quyanainni*, *mashi*, thank you.

# ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

## EXERCISE OF POWERS UNDER THE BUILDING CANADA ACT

FIRST REPORT OF SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE TABLED

**Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the first report (interim) of the Special Joint Committee on the Exercise of Powers Under the Building Canada Act.

## ADJOURNMENT

NOTICE OF MOTION

**Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

> That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, June 9, 2026, at 2 p.m.

## CANADA-UNITED STATES INTER-PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS NATIONAL CONFERENCE, DECEMBER 4-7, 2024—REPORT TABLED

**Hon. Michael L. MacDonald:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group concerning the Council of State Governments National Conference, held in New Orleans, Louisiana, United States of America, from December 4 to 7, 2024.

CANADIAN EMBASSY INAUGURATION EVENT FOR THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, JANUARY 19-20, 2025—REPORT TABLED

**Hon. Michael L. MacDonald:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group concerning the Canadian Embassy Inauguration Event for the Forty-seventh President of the United States of America, held in Washington, D.C., United States of America, from January 19 to 20, 2025.

CONGRESSIONAL VISIT, MARCH 4-5, 2025—REPORT TABLED

**Hon. Michael L. MacDonald:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group concerning the Congressional Visit, held in Washington, D.C., United States of America, from March 4 to 5, 2025.

COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS SOUTHERN LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE, JULY 19-23, 2025—REPORT TABLED

**Hon. Michael L. MacDonald:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group concerning the Council of State Governments Southern Legislative Conference, held in Birmingham, Alabama, United States of America, from July 19 to 23, 2025.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST ECONOMIC REGION ANNUAL SUMMIT, JULY 20-24, 2025—REPORT TABLED

**Hon. Michael L. MacDonald:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group concerning the Pacific Northwest Economic Region Thirty-fourth Annual Summit, held in Bellevue, Washington, United States of America, from July 20 to 24, 2025.

COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS MIDWESTERN LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE, JULY 27-30, 2025—REPORT TABLED

**Hon. Michael L. MacDonald:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group concerning the

Council of State Governments Midwestern Legislative Conference, held in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, from July 27 to 30, 2025.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES, AUGUST 4-6, 2025—REPORT TABLED

**Hon. Michael L. MacDonald:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group concerning the National Conference of State Legislatures, held in Boston, Massachusetts, United States of America, from August 4 to 6, 2025.

COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS EASTERN ANNUAL MEETING, AUGUST 17-20, 2025—REPORT TABLED

**Hon. Michael L. MacDonald:** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group concerning the Council of State Governments Eastern Annual Meeting, held in Providence, Rhode Island, United States of America, from August 17 to 20, 2025.

# QUESTION PERIOD

## CANADIAN HERITAGE

MINISTERIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RIGHTS, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

**Hon. Leo Housakos (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the government leader.

This past Monday, the Prime Minister stood at a synagogue in Toronto and announced the creation of a faith advisory council tasked, among other things, of course, to combat anti-Semitism, which is noble enough. It took many years for this Liberal government to take action on this scourge that the Jewish community is facing.

Yet over a month ago, the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights published a report on anti-Semitism that we sent to the Prime Minister. This report was conducted over a period of a year, and we heard from dozens of witnesses. The report has 22 concrete recommendations, all ready to go, yet the Prime Minister is brushing them off and putting into place another advisory committee.

Will you agree that it is not time for talk but for action? Since the Senate did its work, the report and recommendations are there. Why isn't the government following those recommendations?

**Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate):** The government is extremely concerned. I think the Prime Minister was clear on that question, having heard about reports of gunfire hitting a Jewish-owned restaurant in North York.

The government is strengthening the Canada Community Security Program and increased its budget by $10 million to specifically protect Jewish places of worship, schools and community centres.

• (1430)

Senator Housakos, you know that the commitment of the government is not only a commitment but an action, and that's exactly what the Prime Minister is doing. By implementing and putting in place a new committee, the government wants to have a clear picture of what is happening and what should be done, and this is exactly the reason why the Prime Minister announced the committee you just mentioned.

**Senator Housakos:** If the government were committed in terms of action to fight anti-Semitism, it wouldn't put into place another advisory committee to duplicate the robust work that a standing Senate committee or a parliamentary committee has already done for them.

It raises two questions here: Is the government not really that committed in a tangible way to fighting anti-Semitism, or, more importantly, does the government have absolutely no confidence in the parliamentary process and in this very institution and the work that our committee did?

**Senator Moreau:** I disagree with the last part of your introduction. I think that $10 million is quite a clear action. The new committee that the government announced has a very clear mandate to reassess, develop, improve and measure government action for all groups, including the Jewish community, facing historical and systemic injustices.

It's a very serious matter, and the government is acting accordingly.

## GLOBAL AFFAIRS

CANADA-UNITED STATES RELATIONS

**Hon. Michael L. MacDonald:** Senator Moreau, last week in New York, the Prime Minister once again promoted the idea of "Fortress North America," telling an American audience that "Canada Strong will help make America great again." Yet, during the same week, he welcomed China's foreign minister to Ottawa, seeking closer ties with the regime in Beijing. Now these mixed messages are catching up to Canada.

Just this morning, the U.S. Trade Representative proposed tariffs of 10% or more on certain Canadian products, citing concerns about Canada's enforcement of forced labour import restrictions.

Senator Moreau, why is the Prime Minister compromising our most important trading relationship instead of focusing on a successful Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, or CUSMA, renegotiation?

**Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate):** Just this week, Minister LeBlanc was in Washington to continue discussions with the U.S. partner concerning CUSMA.

If you have an answer, please provide it, and stop talking when I'm trying to answer the question of your colleague, Senator Batters. This is quite difficult to do.

Now, this morning, the Prime Minister was quite clear. These tariffs will not affect any goods under CUSMA, and we still have the best relationship with the United States as far as commerce and tariffs are concerned.

We are doing everything we can to protect Canadians from those unjustified tariffs, but, senator, you must accept that we are facing a rupture in the geopolitical relationship when you are listening to the U.S. President at this time.

**Senator MacDonald:** I didn't mention the U.S. President.

Senator Moreau, Chinese-made electric vehicles, or EVs, are now entering Canada in significant numbers. Nearly 3,000 vehicles arrived last month alone. We cannot champion "Fortress North America" while opening the doors to products from a regime linked to forced labour and human rights abuses.

Which is it, Senator Moreau: Closer alignment with our North American partner or deeper engagement with Beijing?

**Senator Moreau:** Senator, we are a facing a rupture in the geopolitical relationship. I just mentioned that. Strained supply chains and climate change impact our economy.

Canadians are looking for a plan, and the government has one: diversifying our trading partners. That's exactly what we're doing with 12 new strategic agreements.

Do you accept that Canadian businesses should be able to do business all around the world to increase our economy? The government thinks so.

## TRANSPORT

### HIGH-SPEED RAIL

**Hon. Bernadette Clement:** Hello, Senator Moreau. I rise today as the Alto project speeds ahead. Eastern Ontario is deeply engaged in the conversation about where the rail line will be built, how communities will be impacted and whether bypassed towns and cities will benefit at all from this project. Clarence-Rockland Mayor Mario Zanth said recently that nation building shouldn't be community dividing.

As "No Alto" signs pop up next to farms and homes and groups organize to rally on Parliament Hill next week, I'm wondering: What does constructive, meaningful engagement actually look like? How can we ensure nation building doesn't divide communities, both figuratively and geographically?

**Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate):** I think that we will agree, Senator Clement, that building the first high-speed rail network in Canada is a generational project that will stimulate our economy, create tens of thousands of good-paying jobs and deliver to Canadians a transportation system deserving of a major economy.

Alto has hosted open houses and provided forums for individuals to share their feedback on the high-speed rail project. Since January 2026, over 10,000 Canadians have attended consultations on the project and taken part in discussions. Alto and the government are still working on the route and alignment, and as soon as a decision is made, I'm sure it will be shared with the communities.

As the project progresses to its next phase, the government will work closely with community and local authorities to provide opportunities for input and engagement as it strives for a balance between property rights, infrastructure development and —

[*Translation*]

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Thank you, Senator Moreau.

**Senator Clement:** Thank you, Senator Moreau.

[*English*]

We can agree that high-speed rail is way past due. I was mayor of a city served by VIA Rail Canada. Our train station isn't staffed, went years without upgrades and often feels forgotten by VIA Rail. Cornwall, like many communities in this country, would benefit greatly from improved intercity transit options, and Alto isn't going to provide those benefits to some of us.

Has this government committed to maintaining or even improving transportation networks, like VIA Rail, that may see a decline in ridership once high-speed rail is operational?

**Senator Moreau:** I can assure you, Senator Clement, that the government continues to work closely with VIA Rail and other partners in the railway industry to provide good services.

The government believes that Canadians must have access to a safe, reliable and modern rail system, as it is integral to connecting communities and supporting our economy.

My understanding is that, since Alto's alignment is not defined yet, it won't change anything as far as VIA Rail is concerned.

## CANADIAN HERITAGE

MINISTERIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RIGHTS, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

**Hon. Yuen Pau Woo:** Senator Moreau, good afternoon.

I also want to talk about the Prime Minister's announcement of the Ministerial Advisory Council on Rights, Equality and Inclusion and congratulate the Prime Minister on this initiative, which will focus on anti-Semitism as its first priority.

Shortly after the council was announced, a number of Jewish groups came out criticizing it, saying that it did not address the fundamental problem of anti-Semitism, which it claims is harsh criticism of Israel and anti-Israel narratives.

This is a key question. Senator Housakos is right to refer to the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, or RIDR, report. There is a lot of good stuff in it. But the report did not address this issue, so I'm asking you if you can clarify.

Can you confirm that it is not anti-Semitic to criticize Israel harshly for grave violations of international law, as documented by the United Nations and other international organizations?

**Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate):** Senator Woo, I am not an expert in defining what is or is not anti-Semitism. There is one thing for sure: The government is committed to ensuring there is no anti-Semitism in the country. That's the reason why an advisory council has been put in place.

I repeat that the mandate of the council is to reassess, develop, improve and measure the government's actions for all groups, including the Jewish community, to ensure that all Canadian values are respected in this action, and that's the purpose of the committee.

Now, to directly address your question, I am not the one who will define today in Question Period what is or is not anti-Semitism. I think it's more important than that, and it requires more than one minute to answer.

**Senator Woo:** It is extraordinary that you cannot say that a country engaging in grave violations of international law cannot be criticized and that it's possible that such a criticism can be deemed to be anti-Semitic. Is this why the government has been so silent on the United Nation's inclusion of Israel to the black list of countries that indulge in sexual violence in conflicts? There has been no comment from the Canadian government.

**Senator Moreau:** I'm not aware if that's the reason, but I don't think it is.

• (1440)

## IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKERS

**Hon. Todd Lewis:** Senator Moreau, in May 2025, the federal government ended the Agri-Food Pilot, a program that helped temporary foreign workers in meat-packing plants, mushroom farms, livestock farms and greenhouses become permanent Canadian residents. The pilot, which began in 2020, provided 2,750 annual immigration spots for temporary foreign workers who were employed at agri-food jobs in these specific industries.

Jobs like meat processing aren't seasonal or temporary work, but they do struggle to attract Canadians. The Canadian Meat Council says that the meat processing sector has gone from 1,700 to over 10,000 empty butcher stations over the past few years.

What's the government's plan moving forward?

**Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for that important question.

The government knows that some rural regions face persistent labour shortages, despite ongoing recruitment efforts. At the request of provinces and territories, the federal government has made time-limited and targeted changes to the program to support rural businesses and communities. The agricultural workforce of the future needs the right mix of skills, youth, new entrants and under-represented groups. A number of additional programs support the sector, including the Youth Employment and Skills Program, the Provincial Nominee Program, the Atlantic Immigration Program and the AgriDiversity Program.

The government remains committed to rural immigration, and that is why the government's new one-time In-Canada Workers Initiative will give permanent residents a quicker opportunity to select applications, including those in the Agri-Food Pilot and the Rural Community Immigration Pilot.

**Senator Lewis:** Thank you for that, Senator Moreau.

The Agri-Food Pilot allowed experienced non-seasonal workers in specific industries and specific occupations to immigrate permanently to Canada.

Since the Agri-Food Pilot was a pilot program, when will the Government of Canada release a report on the outcomes of the program so that affected industries can plan for their employment needs going forward?

**Senator Moreau:** Thank you for that question as well.

I can tell you that the minister is aware that some stakeholders are calling for international workers to continue as an important part of the agricultural workforce, particularly given the labour needs of rural and remote communities. For example, the Rural and Francophone Community Immigration pilots are pathways for permanent resident workers who want to work and settle in rural and more remote communities.

Thank you for the question. I'm sure that the minister is listening.

[*Translation*]

## GLOBAL AFFAIRS

### FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS

**Hon. Amina Gerba:** My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate. Senator Moreau, Canada recently recognized Morocco's autonomy plan for Western Sahara as a "serious and credible" basis for a political solution. This stance marks a significant shift in Canada's diplomatic approach to Morocco.

Given that Canada and Morocco were involved in unsuccessful negotiations for a free trade agreement between 2011 and 2013, is the government considering resuming discussions for a free trade agreement with Morocco?

**Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for the question, senator. As you know, Canada and Morocco already have extremely strong bilateral relations, especially in the areas of trade, culture, women's rights, and joint efforts to fight terrorism and violent extremism.

In fact, in 2024, Morocco was Canada's third-largest bilateral merchandise trading partner in Africa, with trade amounting to $1.8 billion. Today, I can confirm that the government sees Morocco's autonomy plan for Western Sahara as a basis for a mutually acceptable solution and as a serious and credible initiative in achieving a just and lasting settlement of the conflict, opening the door to renewed bilateral relations and trust between Canada and Morocco.

**Senator Gerba:** Thank you. The figures you just presented do indeed justify deepening Canada's engagement with Morocco. However, there's still no free trade agreement.

Minister Anand also said that she'll soon be making an official visit to Morocco. What's the purpose of the visit? Who will be part of the delegation?

**Senator Moreau:** I cannot confirm who will be part of the delegation. However, I can confirm that Minister Anand wants to strengthen relations between the two countries, while continuing productive discussions on the Western Sahara issue. As you know, international negotiations are the result of highly complex multilateral considerations that I cannot discuss in this chamber, but Minister Anand's visit is certainly a very positive sign in that regard.

[*English*]

## INDUSTRY

### INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE

**Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Government leader, your government has repeatedly promised to create a "One Canadian Economy." You even established a dedicated cabinet position to advance that goal. Yet more than a year later, Canada remains far from having a truly integrated domestic market.

I could go on and on, but, in fact, one of the most obvious opportunities for reducing internal trade barriers — interprovincial alcohol sales — has seen little meaningful progress.

Senator Moreau, why has your government failed to deliver on this important economic commitment, one that could strengthen Canada's economic resilience and unblock billions of dollars in economic activity?

**Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate):** I will repeat the answer that the Honourable Minister LeBlanc provided to you when he was here in this very chamber. He said that all barriers for which the federal government is responsible have already been abolished, so it's not accurate to say that there are barriers the federal government is concerned about that still exist. They have all been abolished.

**Senator Martin:** That may be your presentation or your perspective, but we still see tremendous barriers and a lack of economic cohesiveness. The government should not point a finger at the provinces but do something.

There is something very specific. You have the tools. Conservative MP Dan Albas's Bill C-262 would allow Canada Post to ship alcohol directly to consumers across provincial boundaries. The federal government could do a lot, even by ensuring that a bill that is ready to be applied will be.

**Senator Moreau:** You're well aware that, for instance, alcohol sales in Ontario fall under the mandate of the LCBO. In Quebec, it's the Société des alcools du Québec.

I'm not saying that there are no barriers anymore, but most of them are barriers related to the provinces. We don't want to point a finger at the provinces because we want to work with provincial governments on this matter, but there is still work to be done at the provincial level to ensure that the flow is broadly open.

## NATIONAL DEFENCE

### CANADIAN FORCES SNOWBIRDS

**Hon. Denise Batters:** Senator Moreau, on March 26, I asked whether your government planned to ground the iconic Canadian Snowbirds. You laughed this off. You said you'd ask the Minister of Defence and get me an answer. That never came.

That same day at a photo op, the Prime Minister crawled around on a newly revamped Tutor jet already delivered to the government that would keep the Snowbirds flying safely until 2030. Seven weeks later, the Liberal defence minister shamefully stood in front of the whole Snowbirds team at 15 Wing Moose Jaw and announced they would be grounded until the early 2030s and then moved to prop planes.

At that announcement, the head of the Royal Canadian Air Force, or RCAF, said that 11 revamped Tutor jets had been delivered. Two delays later, the Department of National Defence, or DND, admitted to the media that, in fact, 13 Tutor jets had already been delivered, and your government had spent the full $31.2 million.

Why didn't your government properly disclose that at the Moose Jaw press conference? Since you've already received and paid for 13 safe, upgraded jets, why are you still clipping the Snowbirds' wings?

**Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate):** Clipping the Snowbirds' wings is a question of security for the pilots themselves.

There is a security issue with the actual planes, and the government has spent millions of dollars to replace those planes to ensure that the Snowbirds continue to exist. In the meantime, the Air Division of the Armed Forces will be spending a lot on their equipment to ensure that all air shows continue to be supported by the federal government. If you want to make an issue of that, do so. But the security of the Armed Forces and the pilots is the main concern of the government, not Question Period for the opposition.

• (1450)

**Senator Batters:** The pilots are safe now in those planes, and that's why they are safe in the future.

Last week here, I read a compelling letter to the Prime Minister from former Snowbirds team lead Ian McLean. He warned that a five-year Snowbirds hiatus means the loss of the team's knowledge and skills, which could prove unsafe. Former Snowbirds commander Maryse Carmichael suggests that the squadron should reduce the length or complexity of shows in the interim, like the U.K. Why isn't your government following the excellent advice of those who know to keep the Snowbirds' certified and safe Tutor jets flying and not ground them for several years without a proper transition, which they say is unsafe?

**Senator Moreau:** As far as the safety of the pilots is concerned, I think I will listen to the experts at the national level rather than a question at Question Period.

The security and safety of the Armed Forces and of all Canadians, including the Snowbirds, are a major priority. The Snowbirds' equipment will be delivered sometime in the first years of the 2030s, and this is a government commitment. Not only —

[*Translation*]

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Thank you, Senator Moreau.



[*English*]

## CANADIAN HERITAGE

### MINISTERIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RIGHTS, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

**Hon. Paulette Senior:** My question is for the Government Representative.

Prime Minister Carney recently announced an Advisory Council on Rights, Equality and Inclusion. While council membership includes voices from various marginalized communities, there are no advocates for Black Canadians on this council.

Recent RCMP stats on hate-related offences show us that while national hate crimes have spiked 32%, doubling since 2019, Black Canadians remain the most targeted racial group at 37% of these offences, despite comprising just 4.3% of the population.

The evidence shows that Black Canadians face a unique risk of violence. Senator Moreau, if the express purpose of this council is the protection of rights and the promotion of equality and inclusion, why are Black Canadians excluded?

**Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate):** That's an important issue and question. The advisory council has been formed to combat racism and hate in all forms and their intersectionality and to guide the Government of Canada as we build a fairer, more just and more inclusive country.

You are right. While there is no specific member representing each individual community that has faced discrimination or prejudice in Canada, the committee still has a mandate to reassess, develop, improve and measure government action for all groups, including Black Canadians, who face historical and systemic injustices.

In addition, the government is working with Black communities to advance Canada's Black Justice Strategy to specifically combat the overrepresentation of Black people in our criminal justice system and as victims of crime and to address systemic discrimination, which includes a 10-year implementation plan backed by a $276-million investment.

**Senator Senior:** Senator Moreau, you have to agree that at this point in time in history, and based on the statistics I just read, that is truly a huge oversight in terms of excluding Black voices on this critical council, which was announced with much fanfare yesterday.

We would like to know — I would like to know — from the Prime Minister's Office itself when there will be representation on the council.

**Senator Moreau:** I will raise your question with the Prime Minister's Office and get back to you with an answer.

My understanding is that this is the first draft of the committee. I think it's an evolving situation. Your question is accurate, and I will raise it with the Prime Minister.

[*Translation*]

## JUSTICE

### CANADA LABOUR CODE

**Hon. Manuelle Oudar:** Senator Moreau, since June 2024, the government has been using section 107 of the Canada Labour Code to end work stoppages. This provision has existed for over 40 years, but until two years ago, it had been invoked only in very exceptional circumstances. Traditionally, when a dispute became economically untenable, the government would introduce special back-to-work legislation, which would be debated and voted on in Parliament in a transparent manner.

The government keeps saying that such a decision "is not taken lightly" and that it is "examined on a case-by-case basis," but, under the circumstances, what are the legal criteria on which the government bases its conclusion that a labour dispute justifies the use of section 107 rather than following the legislative process?

**Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate):** Senator, there are different legal regimes across Canada. You are aware that the provinces intervene in labour disputes. I did it myself by passing special legislation to end disputes. Generally, that is done in very exceptional circumstances.

As you mentioned, within the federal system, section 107 has been in place for 40 years and has been used very rarely, only in cases where there would be legal and economic repercussions for the country as a whole. It is in these exceptional circumstances that section 107 has been invoked. Every time this section is invoked, the same system of checks and balances that exists when Parliament passes special legislation comes into effect, since the government must debate it in the House of Commons.

Section 107 is one way to end disputes, but the government believes that the best labour relations happen at the bargaining table, and that is the basic principle that the government supports.

**Senator Oudar:** Senator Moreau, in the 2015 decision *Saskatchewan Federation of Labour v. Saskatchewan*, the Supreme Court ruled that the right to strike was protected by the Charter — a fact that is not in dispute — and that any limitation on that right must be accompanied by a meaningful and independent alternative mechanism.

In this context, can the government assure us that binding arbitration and the measures imposed under section 107 meet the Supreme Court's requirements and the constitutional requirements for a meaningful alternative mechanism?

**Senator Moreau:** This is a highly complex legal issue. I grappled with it when I was President of the Treasury Board and the government's lawyers went on strike. I can assure you that I will put myself in the Supreme Court's shoes in order to determine whether this mechanism meets the criteria of the *Saskatchewan* ruling, since, in the specific case of the government lawyers, the Government of Quebec had established a mechanism, but the court ruled seven years later that it did not meet the *Saskatchewan* criteria. I will not define them today, since I have only 30 seconds.

## NATIONAL DEFENCE

### BILINGUALISM

**Hon. Réjean Aucoin:** Senator Moreau, a few weeks ago, we learned that the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston, which was founded in 1876, had designated English as the sole language of work for its administration.

According to Radio-Canada, an internal directive states that English must now be used for meetings and management, based on federal criteria that have remained unchanged since 2002. This sidelines French in many of this federal institution's key functions.

What is even more troubling is that, on May 20, the Minister of National Defence acknowledged that this decision made no sense and that he had not been informed of it. How can the government justify an English-only administration at a national Canadian Armed Forces institution?

**Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for the question, Senator Aucoin. I will be very clear: The right to receive training and personal services in the official language of one's choice is a fundamental right of every member of the Canadian Armed Forces. The Royal Military College is committed to ensuring that this right is respected.

However, Kingston is located in a region where English is the language of work, while the Royal Military College continues to provide instruction and services to members of the Canadian Armed Forces, naval cadets, and officer cadets in both official languages. This designation does not diminish the importance of bilingualism at the Royal Military College in Kingston. The training is still bilingual, and personal services to students are provided in the official language of the student's choosing. Members of the public can still interact with the Royal Military College in both official languages. RMC continues to foster a work environment conducive to the use of French and English, as this is a central element of staff development.

**Senator Aucoin:** Thank you, Senator Moreau. I have plenty of arguments to present. We could discuss this at length, but does the government intend to take action so that students can communicate and meet with the administration in their own language?

• (1500)

**Senator Moreau:** Training is usually offered in the students' language, either in English or in French. Unilingual students, whether anglophone or francophone, have the right to receive services in English or French. We know that promotions within the college are awarded to English- and French-speaking staff on

an equitable basis and that only discussions that are administrative in nature are held in English, because Kingston is an English-speaking area.

However, the college's services are bilingual.

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[*English*]

# ORDERS OF THE DAY

## BILL RESPECTING CYBER SECURITY, AMENDING THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT AND MAKING CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS TO OTHER ACTS

THIRD READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

**Senator McNair** moved third reading of Bill C-8, An Act respecting cyber security, amending the Telecommunications Act and making consequential amendments to other Acts.

He said: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak at third reading of Bill C-8, An Act respecting cyber security, amending the Telecommunications Act and making consequential amendments to other Acts.

I wish to first thank my colleagues on the Standing Senate Committee on National Security, Defence and Veterans Affairs for their thoughtful study of the bill.

Colleagues, every aspect of our daily lives, from how we communicate with loved ones to how we heat our homes, access health care and manage our finances, relies on digital infrastructure. The digital space is no longer just a tool for convenience; it is a foundational piece of our modern society, our economy and our national security. While this interconnectedness brings immense opportunity, it also exposes us to unprecedented vulnerabilities.

To understand why Bill C-8 is before us, we must first look at the threat landscape facing Canada. Our critical infrastructure, including our telecommunications networks, financial systems, energy grids and transportation pipelines, all operate on highly interconnected digital pathways. These vital systems are now targeted daily by state-sponsored actors, cybercriminals and hacktivists. Collectively, these attackers seek to disrupt our way of life, steal our intellectual property and undermine our democratic institutions.

As we heard during the course of our study of Bill C-8, these threats to Canada's cybersecurity are no longer abstract warnings but are measured in the hours or mere minutes it takes an attacker to cripple a network. They present real and urgent risks to our public safety, national security and economy, and that is why we must act.

Indeed, as we have already heard, the data confirms the scale of this threat. Just in the last year, we have witnessed a significant rise in incidents targeting Canada's critical infrastructure. In 2024-25, there were more than 1,400 cyber incidents against critical infrastructure. That is an astounding average of almost four incidents every day and a nearly 20% increase from the previous year.

Ransomware remains the top cybercrime threat facing our critical infrastructure. Operators are frequently targeted because cybercriminals know they are highly motivated to pay ransoms to avoid service disruptions for customers. These numbers are also staggering. In 2023, ransomware incidents skyrocketed by 159% in information technology, 157% in finance and 67% in the energy sector, compared to the previous year.

Just in recent months, we have seen high-profile domestic incidents, including a ransomware attack on Nova Scotia Power as well as a server breach at WestJet. These are not isolated IT glitches. They are direct hits on the essential services and private data of everyday Canadians.

We have also seen the devastating potential of these attacks on a global scale. The 2021 ransomware attack on Colonial Pipeline in the United States demonstrated exactly how an assault on critical infrastructure can understandably trigger panic. A single breach led to widespread fuel shortages, price spikes and the declaration of a national state of emergency by the President.

The Communications Security Establishment has explicitly warned that Canada's oil, gas and broader energy sectors face this exact same threat.

Every single cyber incident also comes at a direct cost to Canadians, Canadian businesses and our national economy. These disruptions cost Canada's economy $5 billion annually.

Colleagues, we are living in an era where our national security is no longer defined solely by physical borders. Today, our sovereignty, our economy and the daily lives of Canadians are linked to the digital architecture that underpins our nation. A successful, coordinated cyberattack on our energy grid during a Canadian winter or a widespread disruption of our banking systems is no longer a hypothetical plot point. It is a clear and present threat to national stability.

Aaron Shull, Research Director at the Centre for International Governance Innovation, laid out the threat environment in his testimony at committee:

> It is trite to say that our electrical grids, pipelines, telecommunications, water systems and financial networks are the arteries of modern life, but the point is that they're all increasingly automated and under sustained pressure from sophisticated state-sponsored adversaries who are not simply stealing data any longer; they are pre-positioning to disrupt.
>
> This is not an academic concern. Salt Typhoon told us what happens when telecommunications networks are penetrated at scale. Volt Typhoon told us that pre-positioning in operational technology is no longer a hypothetical, and every operator I work with has stories about the rising tempo of intrusions against industrial control systems.

He went on to say:

> The problem is that too often, we can't tell if an outage was a fault or a foreign intrusion. The honest answer is that we just don't know. That is a posture this country cannot afford.
>
> In my view, Bill C-8 is the foundation to change that. It establishes a unified framework across federally regulated critical sectors and gives governments the tools to compel the hardening of the systems Canadians depend upon.

Bill C-8 provides a comprehensive, proactive and robust framework to safeguard Canada's digital ecosystem.

I will not repeat today what the bill does, but I will talk briefly about our committee study and some of the testimony we heard.

Stakeholders were generally supportive of the bill in its amended form. Industry stakeholders who have always been in favour of the bill emphasized that the need for this legislation has continued to grow as technology evolves rapidly.

Todd Warnell, the Chief Information Security Officer for Bruce Power, stated before the committee:

> . . . Bill C-8 is not an end state; it is a foundation. However, in a world defined by greater volatility and uncertainty, establishing that foundation is urgent. The threat environment has evolved faster than our policy framework, and this legislation is an essential step toward closing that gap.

Philip Stupak, the former Assistant National Cyber Director for the Biden administration, said:

> The bill before you sends two unambiguous messages: First, to our shared adversaries, pre-positioning cyber weapons in civilian critical infrastructure will not be tolerated. Second, to all of Canada's cyber defenders, you are not alone. The Canadian government will answer the call to help you keep us safe.
>
> By passing Bill C-8, you are meeting this moment of heightened uncertainty and protecting Canadians against the next threat.
>
> My experience has afforded me the understanding that the arduous and slow process of passing cyber legislation means we need to respond to both the crisis of the moment and the unknown ones of the next 20 years. Bill C-8 provides the flexibility to adapt as the digital world evolves. This flexibility matters. It enables Canadians to defend against the threats and adversaries of today and tomorrow.

Mr. Stupak went on to state:

> Bill C-8 also maximizes Canadians' privacy rights. The Canadian Centre for Cyber Security has a long operational history of simultaneously protecting Canadians' security and their privacy. They know how to do this, and they do it well.
>
> The biggest, most persistent threat to privacy comes not from the Canadian government but from all the governments Canadians do not elect. Foreign adversaries can exploit vulnerabilities to gain access to your calls, emails and text messages. Bill C-8 shuts down that privacy violation by giving the government the tools it needs to secure the telecommunications sector, and it does so by expressly adding privacy-enhancing language to this security bill.

• (1510)

David Shipley, the Chief Executive Officer of Beauceron Security Inc., stated:

> There have been well-intentioned objections to Bill C-8 from various groups on privacy grounds. I believe the updates from Bill C-26 have gone a significant way to address many of them. Some may still feel otherwise.
>
> However, the idea that Canadians' data may be caught up in a Bill C-8-related incident filing is truly incidental. While we debate the potential risks of edge cases, criminals and nation-states are deciding whether Canadians get timely, lifesaving health care or safe access to drinking water.

Even those who expressed concerns over how the bill treats privacy rights recognized the need for this legislation and acknowledged that, while Bill C-8 may not be a perfect bill, it is very much needed.

Aaron Shull spoke about the importance of passing the bill and beginning the regulation process:

> Operators are now waiting for two things from Parliament. The first is the certainty of an act that is in force. The second is regulations that will tell them what compliance actually means. Every additional week without that certainty is a week during which investment is deferred, hard governance conversations are deferred and adversaries continue their work uncontested.
>
> To be sure, Bill C-8 is not perfect, but the threat surfaces are evolving faster than statutes can anyway. That is precisely why the five-year review matters and why the regulations that will follow the act will matter at least as much as the wording of the act itself.
>
> The work that the House did, in my humble estimation, produced a workable, principled framework that addresses an urgent national security gap. Canada's critical infrastructure operators and the Canadians who rely upon the systems they run are waiting for Parliament to finish what it started.

As Mr. Shull stated, timely implementation of the regulations will be key.

In a letter to our committee, the Minister of Public Safety said this about the regulatory process:

> With regard to Part 1 of Bill C-8, the first orders could be developed in roughly 6-12 months after receiving Royal Assent. This timeline would support a robust order-making process, including opportunities for stakeholders to provide information and submit comments, and for the Minister or Governor in Council to consider relevant factors set out in the Bill. It would also provide stakeholders with time to review and align investment and operational planning with any new requirements.
>
> Regulations to implement the [Critical Cyber Security Systems Protection Act] are expected to take approximately 12-24 months consistent with the *Cabinet Directive on Regulation*. In line with the Government's commitment to consult throughout regulatory development, this process will include engagement with provincial and territorial governments, industry stakeholders, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the Privacy Commissioner, the Intelligence Commissioner, and Canadians more broadly.

Personally, I am pleased to see the government's commitment to consult with the Privacy Commissioner and the Intelligence Commissioner as part of the regulatory process.

As we debate this bill at third reading, our responsibility as a chamber of sober second thought is to balance the absolute necessity of national security with the fundamental rights, freedoms and privacy guarantees owed to every Canadian citizen.

This legislation contains robust guardrails. It is not a back door to surveillance, nor will it repress free expression. Instead, it ensures the security and resilience of our country's digital networks.

Colleagues, Bill C-8 is focused on technical, operational and network data. The bill limits data collection strictly to regulatory necessities, such as equipment configurations, software update protocols and threat details.

The Communications Security Establishment, or CSE, submitted a brief to the committee clarifying this. They indicated:

> The specific requirements for incident reporting have not yet been finalized. The design of the reporting framework — including the structure and types of data collected — will be developed through a regulatory process that includes consultation and engagement with industry stakeholders.
>
> This process will help ensure that only necessary and appropriate technical information is collected. Potential data elements may include indicators of compromise, exploited vulnerabilities, tactics, techniques, and procedures used by threat actors, and other technical details relevant to incident analysis.
>
> This data can include information that has a Canadian privacy interest, such as suspected malicious IP addresses or a username, but it does not include information like the content of emails, credit card numbers, relationships, or birth dates.
>
> All information collected will be handled in accordance with the *CSE Act* and other applicable legislation, including the *Privacy Act*. Protecting the privacy of Canadians is a legal requirement that underpins all of CSE's activities.

Colleagues, to provide absolute certainty, the bill explicitly states that any personal data must be destroyed in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act once it is no longer required. It now also specifies that federal powers cannot be used to assist law enforcement investigations or intercept private communications.

Ensuring infrastructure operators maintain high security standards will likely create stronger protections for the privacy of Canadians, as it will reduce the likelihood of data breaches of companies who hold their sensitive personal information.

In fact, the greater risk to our privacy right now is not having this framework in place. Andre Arbour, Director General of the Telecommunications and Internet Policy Branch at Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, or ISED, said the following at committee:

> What's keeping me up at night is the lack of authority to take action in this space, and we have just scratched the surface in some of the questions in the first hour on the range of threats that we're seeing. There is a fivefold increase in catastrophic damage from extreme weather events and skyrocketing increases in ransomware due to what we've seen in terms of organized crime and crypto-currency. There are hostile state actors, and CSE has publicly . . . [pre-positioned or linked] them to other geopolitical events.
>
> . . . a lot of the devil in the details will be worked out through the regulatory process, but we are already pretty substantially behind and are champing at the bit to try to get on with it, frankly.

Mr. Shull laid out an example for us of our current reality without the bill being in place. He said:

> Suppose we are dealing with an interprovincial pipeline in the winter. Suppose, further, there is a hostile state. . . . [that] injects malicious code into the infrastructure and turns the gas off. Suppose, further, that the government knows how to fix it. They need to inject certain code into the infrastructure in order to address it. As it stands right now, there is no legal requirement for that infrastructure provider to take that code. Under this bill, there would be.

Furthermore, the regulatory bodies responsible for enforcing this act will be subject to accountability structures, ensuring that their powers are exercised reasonably, proportionately and in accordance with the law.

This legislation achieves a vital balance between rapid executive action and democratic accountability. Every order issued under this act must meet strict standards of reasonableness and necessity.

To ensure robust oversight, the government must notify the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, or NSICOP, and the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency, or NSIRA, within 90 days of any confidential order being issued.

Furthermore, the minister will table annual reports explaining in detail the utility and necessity of these powers, which will also be augmented by a mandatory five-year review of the legislation following Royal Assent.

Taken together, these rigorous guardrails ensure transparency, protect confidentiality and, in my view, give Canadians confidence that these powers will be used responsibly.

Honourable senators, the digital threats we face are evolving at an alarming rate, and our laws must evolve with them. We cannot afford to wait for a catastrophic cyber incident to expose the gaps in our defences before we take action. The passage of Bill C-8 is an essential step forward in our national defence.

This is not about imposing unnecessary bureaucratic red tape on businesses. It's about establishing a baseline of resilience.

We now live in a world where cyber-threats are a daily reality. Bad actors constantly target our financial systems, energy sectors and telecommunications networks. When a hospital's systems are held to ransom, patient care is compromised. When an energy grid is disrupted, homes lose power and businesses grind to a halt. When our banking system is targeted, Canadians lose access to their money, and trust in our financial institutions is shaken.

• (1520)

These attacks are larger and more complex than ever before. When a cyber incident succeeds, the consequences are severe and long-lasting. Indeed, it is individual Canadians who suffer most when their data is stolen and their daily lives are disrupted. Because our critical infrastructure is so interconnected, a breach in one sector can quickly cripple another.

Colleagues, in the development of policies meant to help protect Canadians, there will necessarily be tension between protecting privacy and ensuring our national security. I think the House of Commons did a good job at committee in balancing those competing priorities while making sure that our security agencies have the tools they need to protect Canadians. They did this through the introduction of 37 amendments.

Our allies have already moved to protect their digital borders. Canada must keep pace. We cannot afford to leave our critical systems unsecured for another day.

As lawmakers, we have the power to secure our digital economy. We can ensure that our banks and telecom networks remain safe and reliable. This bill protects Canadians, businesses and the vital systems they rely on today and into the future.

For all of those reasons, I hope all senators will join me in supporting this bill. It is long overdue and it is urgently needed. Let us work together to secure our digital borders, protect our citizens and ensure Canada remains a safe, prosperous and free society in the digital age.

Thank you. *Meegwetch*.

**Hon. Colin Deacon:** Senator McNair, would you take a question, please?

**Senator McNair:** I certainly would.

**Senator C. Deacon:** Senator McNair, you started your speech — and we are thrilled to see this bill and be at this point. It was a year and a half ago when we were at this point before. It was December before we sent it back to the House because of a very consequential error that you identified. I am glad to hear that you think good progress has been made in the meantime.

I want to focus on one of the first things you said: This is the first step in a long journey. We have a lot more work to do as a country to keep Canadians safe in an area where adversaries are really doubling down on their efforts because they have been successful.

Can you give us any indication about what next steps we might be seeing and where you see this moving from what you've heard? It is crucial that this be step one and that we see more work coming down this road.

**Senator McNair:** Thank you for the question. It is a good question.

The next steps are the regulatory process, putting the teeth into the bill so that they can take action. I mentioned the letter that the Minister of Public Safety sent to the committee. One of the sections in the letter — about a page and a half of it — deals with federal-provincial-territorial collaboration. I think that is part of the next steps.

I look forward to seeing the regulatory process start. I'm pleased the minister confirmed in writing that it could take place for Part 1 of the bill within 12 months, suggesting they would adhere to 12 to 24 months for Part 2 of the bill.

**Senator C. Deacon:** Thank you.

Were there discussions on the importance of incorporation by reference — incorporating industry consensus-based standards by reference — in order to speed up the regulatory process? I am not talking about developing stand-alone, unique regulations to move the bill forward but, wherever possible, to incorporate industry standards as being equivalent to the intention of the bill. That could rapidly speed up the process, especially in consultation with industry experts.

Was that a consideration as guidance to the government during discussions because that two-year period is still a long time away?

**Senator McNair:** I didn't hear any discussions generally, but what you are suggesting makes sense. I will suggest that to the minister in my future conversations.

**Senator C. Deacon:** Thank you.

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Senator Batters, would you like to ask a question?

**Hon. Denise Batters:** I would. Thank you.

You said in your third reading speech today that stakeholders are generally in favour of the bill, but what about those witnesses who had significant criticisms of the bill and testified at committee and suggested improvements and amendments right up until the end of our government-truncated Bill C-8 time frame? Off the top of my head, those include the Intelligence Commissioner, Kate Robertson of the Citizen Lab, Professor Matt Malone and Sharon Polsky.

You also said in your speech today that you are ". . . pleased to see the government . . . consult with the Privacy Commissioner and the Intelligence Commissioner . . . ." But, Senator McNair, this is too little, too late on this bill. The government's own senior officials testified at committee that the government had not consulted with the Privacy Commissioner or the Intelligence Commissioner in between that six-month time frame, which was between the time that the House received back the amended Bill C-26 and when they basically reintroduced an unchanged bill as Bill C-8 in the House of Commons in the new Parliament. They didn't consult with either of those senior officials. Then when Intelligence Commissioner Simon Noël testified at the National Security, Defence and Veterans Affairs Committee about Bill C-8, he told us that he is "completely absent" from the processes that the Liberal government has set out in Bill C-8.

Do you contend that is appropriate?

**Senator McNair:** I'm encouraged by the fact that the minister is committing that there will be discussions with both the Privacy Commissioner and the Intelligence Commissioner during the regulations-making process. The Intelligence Commissioner is a well-respected individual, as is the Privacy Commissioner.

The Privacy Commissioner made three recommendations to the committee in the other place. Two of those recommendations were followed up on and put into action. As to the third one, it is really a difference of opinion on whether they have to notify the Privacy Commissioner of security breaches when there is a requirement already in the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, or PIPEDA, for individuals to do it.

I am pleased they will have further discussions.

I know they didn't meet within the window of time you talked about, but they had met with both the Privacy Commissioner and Intelligence Commissioner before that window of time to discuss generally. I think the discussions will be much more focused from both sides.

**Senator Batters:** Regarding the time frame you just talked about, they told us they met with the Privacy Commissioner at an official level in 2019. The first bill — Bill C-26 — was only introduced in 2022. That's what they were talking about for their time frame of meeting.

You were just saying in one of your answers to our colleague here that you expect the full regulations to come into effect in "12 to 24 months." I thought they were going to try to get them done at the outset — which would be 18 months when I was asking about it at committee — but now it is back to 24 months. That will be more like a 12-year time frame from the start of their consultations on this bill to the end.

Is 24 months correct?

**Senator McNair:** The letter talks about a range of 12 to 24 months.

There is a sense of urgency, not only at the ministerial level but also at the official level. As Minister Anandasangaree has clearly shown, they are chomping at the bit to get this done. And 18 months is halfway between 12 and 24 months, as you know.

The goal is to push hard on this. My understanding is that officials are ready to start out as soon as they get the proclamation.

**Hon. Hassan Yussuff:** Senator McNair, would you take a question?

**Senator McNair:** Certainly.

**Senator Yussuff:** First, let me start by thanking you for the second time for trying to get this bill through the Senate. I recognize the exhaustive process we went through the last time in having to fix the deficiencies and deal with an election.

• (1530)

The vast majority of witnesses who came before the committee to testify on this bill recognized that it's not perfect in its ideal sense, but they also stressed the importance of us passing this bill as soon as possible so that we can protect Canadians writ large. In the absence of this legislation, they remain vulnerable to the challenges of cyber breaches in this country.

**Senator McNair:** Senator Yussuff, that's exactly the position that the vast majority of people appearing before the committee took, as it was in 2024. If anything, the sense of urgency is heightened today even more, as you say, because we're in a position where we can't protect Canadians properly.

Mr. Shull said, “If I have one thing to tell you, it’s pass the legislation now.”

**Senator Yussuff:** Colleagues, we’re all aware that we live in a federation called Canada, and the vast majority of cyber protection in this country falls at the local level at the provincial or territorial level and at the municipal level.

Senator McNair, we did, of course, ask the minister very directly about this question in regard to how we can better integrate the federal government’s responsibility and also collaborate with the provinces and territories and include the municipalities in the important work they are doing, including private industry. He gave what I thought was an important answer, recognizing that we live in a constitutional democracy and we have the division of powers in this country.

Is it possible for you to reflect so that this chamber can understand the importance of this and why we need to get this right in working with the provinces, territories and municipalities across this country?

**Senator McNair:** Thank you, Senator Yussuff. The minister referred to the ongoing collaboration with the provinces, territories and municipalities. He is a champion of that, and in his letter to the committee, there was a page and a half dealing just with the intersection points and how he uses those to promote collaboration and cooperation.

I am satisfied that he will continue to push hard on that. The best-case scenario from the federal government’s point of view is that they use Part 2 of the bill as a template for putting in their own legislation. The best-case scenario would be if all provinces and territories have the critical cyber systems protection act in place provincially and nationally.

**Hon. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia:** Senator McNair, let me begin first by wishing you a happy birthday. That’s partly why I got a question in.

Senator McNair, during the formulation of this bill, was there any discussion about quantum computers and the severe threat that they pose, potentially using quantum technology to break standard encryption? And how might we protect against this on a go-forward basis? Thank you.

**Senator McNair:** There was no direct discussion at the committee level, but there was discussion among people on artificial intelligence and quantum computing.

The point about this bill is that it’s robust enough and not specific — it’s generic at this stage — so the regulatory process can deal with issues around quantum computing and artificial intelligence.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

## CRIMINAL CODE

BILL TO AMEND—THIRD REPORT OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE—DEBATE

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the third report of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights (*Bill C-9, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (hate propaganda, hate crime and access to religious or cultural places), with amendments and observations*), presented in the Senate on June 2, 2026.

**Hon. Paulette Senior** moved the adoption of the report.

She said: Honourable senators, I rise today as the Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights to speak to the report on Bill C-9, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (hate propaganda, hate crime and access to religious or cultural places).

Bill C-9 amends the Criminal Code to address hate crimes. Specifically, Bill C-9 creates a new offence that applies when another offence is motivated by hatred; a new prohibition on promoting hatred through the display of certain terrorism and hate symbols; and new offences relating to intimidation, obstruction or interference with access to places of worship and certain other places.

The committee began its study on Bill C-9 on May 20, 2026. The committee held five meetings, heard from 56 witnesses and received 51 written briefs.

The Minister of Justice presented to the committee on the intent and purpose of the bill. Officials were present to answer questions during hearings and to advise the committee during clause-by-clause deliberations.

We heard from a diverse range of witnesses, including representatives from civil liberties organizations, police representatives, Indigenous organizations, faith communities, charitable organizations, academics and human rights organizations. The committee examined and considered proposed amendments during clause-by-clause consideration on Monday, June 1. During the process, four amendments and seven observations were adopted. I will outline each of them now.

First, the committee amended clause 4 of Bill C-9 to add the noose to the terrorism and hate symbols included in new section 319(2.2) of the Criminal Code. As with the other listed terrorism and hate symbols, this amendment makes it a criminal offence to wilfully promote hatred against any identifiable group by displaying the noose in any public place.

Second, the committee amended clause 4 of Bill C-9 to add new section 319(2.4) to the Criminal Code, making it a criminal offence to wilfully promote hatred against Indigenous Peoples by condoning, denying or downplaying the Indian residential schools system.

A related amendment to Bill C-9 made coordinating amendments to the Criminal Code to provide that this new offence has similar defences and procedural protections to the existing offence of wilful promotion of anti-Semitism, which is section 319(2.1) of the Criminal Code.

Finally, the committee amended clause 6 of Bill C-9 to add an exception to new section 423.3 of the Criminal Code, which creates a new offence that would prohibit conduct that intentionally provokes a state of fear in someone in order to impede their access to a religious building or certain other places. The amendment clarifies that this offence does not apply to someone who is at such a place for the sole purpose of obtaining or communicating information.

I will now spend a few moments highlighting the seven observations that were adopted. They are grounded in the testimony heard by the committee during its study of Bill C-9 and are intended to reflect the evidence, concerns, perspectives and areas of consensus and disagreement presented to the committee by witnesses appearing before it.

To begin, we heard recurring testimony from a broad range of witnesses that the long-term effectiveness, fairness and public legitimacy of Bill C-9 may depend significantly on transparent implementation, meaningful public reporting, training and education and ongoing parliamentary oversight.

The committee therefore observes that implementation accountability, public reporting and periodic parliamentary review are essential to the long-term operation and public legitimacy of the provisions of Bill C-9.

• (1540)

Second, we heard from policing representatives, legal experts, community organizations and witnesses from affected communities that the effective implementation of Bill C-9 may depend significantly upon specialized hate crime expertise, dedicated investigative capacity, standardized training for law enforcement and prosecutors, community education, outreach, and coordinated approaches across Canadian jurisdictions.

We, therefore, observe that funding and strengthening specialized hate crime expertise and implementation capacity across federal, provincial and municipal institutions may be essential to the effective operation, fairness and long-term public legitimacy of Bill C-9 and broader efforts to address hatred directed toward vulnerable communities in Canada.

Third, the committee heard significant testimony from Indigenous witnesses that the current drafting of the bill may not fully reflect Indigenous understandings of sacred spaces, land-based spirituality, burial practices and residential-school-related harms.

The committee therefore observes that while Indigenous witnesses consistently framed these concerns not as opposition to the bill's objectives, they are fundamental to recognition, inclusion, community safety and equal protection within the bill's existing framework.

We also heard concerning testimony about the lack of consultation with Indigenous Peoples as part of this bill. The committee urges the government to consult Indigenous Peoples about measures to address hate crimes.

Next, the committee heard differing testimony respecting the proposed hate symbol provisions, including testimony relating to critical absences, drafting precision, interpretation, operational enforceability and cultural literacy. We, therefore, observe that many witnesses considered the importance of implementation guidance, prosecutorial screening, enhanced law enforcement training and cultural literacy to be essential to the practical operation and public confidence associated with the proposed hate symbol provisions.

The committee observes that hate symbols evolve over time and highlights the recommendation from several witnesses to establish an advisory body or other mechanism to evaluate hate symbols on an ongoing basis and recommend changes as needed.

The fifth observation pertains to protest rights, access offences and public confidence. We heard substantial testimony concerning the importance of maintaining a clear distinction between unlawful intimidation and constitutionally protected protest activity. We, therefore, observe that ensuring that the distinction between unlawful intimidation and lawful protest remains fundamental to the clear, objective and consistent application of this legislation in practice.

Next, we heard differing testimony respecting the repeal of the former good-faith religious opinion defence. We also heard repeated testimony from legal experts, policing representatives, equality-seeking organizations and government officials that the proposed offences continue to require a high threshold involving wilful promotion of hatred and do not criminalize lawful religious belief, worship, sermons, theological discourse or good-faith expression that does not meet that significant legal threshold.

The committee observes that continued public communication, legal education and clear government explanations respecting the distinction between lawful religious expression and criminal hate propaganda are essential.

Finally, we repeatedly heard testimony that many communities view Bill C-9 as both an important protective measure against hate and a potential source of uneven or discriminatory enforcement. The committee therefore observes that fairness, transparency, accountability and equitable implementation are crucial to the long-term legitimacy and public confidence associated with Bill C-9.

In closing, I would like to thank the senators and their staff for all of their hard work throughout our study of the bill. They are Senators Arnold, Arnot, Ataullahjan, Bernard, Ince, Karetak-Lindell, LaBoucane-Benson, Martin, McPhedran, Moncion, Osler, K. Wells and D. Wells. Thanks, in particular, for attending the meetings during the non-sitting week.

Thank you to the Library of Parliament analysts Madalina Chesoi and Robert Mason; the clerk, Caroline Woodward; and other committee staff for their dedicated efforts throughout the study. I also want to thank the witnesses who invested time and effort to share their expertise and perspectives on this bill.

[ Senator Senior ]

Thank you, *meegwetch*.

**Hon. David M. Arnot:** Honourable senators, I rise to speak to the third report of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, concerning Bill C-9, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (hate propaganda, hate crime and access to religious or cultural places), which was adopted with amendments and observations following the committee's clause-by-clause consideration on June 1, 2026.

During consideration of clause 4, Senator Bernard moved an amendment to page 2, line 5. In the course of debate on that amendment, I moved a subamendment intended to clarify the list of hate symbols captured in that provision. Following the meeting, it was brought to our attention that the written version of the subamendment distributed to members did not reflect the wording that was discussed during debate and adopted by the committee.

The committee's deliberations and decision clearly provided for the inclusion of SS bolts, a well-known Nazi symbol that appears in the original version of the bill in English.

As members will recall, this subamendment reflects the significant body of evidence the committee heard throughout its study of the bill.

Witnesses emphasized the importance of ensuring that the legislation clearly captures commonly recognized hate symbols, including Nazi imagery, such as the SS bolts. The wording that was debated and agreed to by the committee was intended to give effect to that evidence.

For clarity, the English version should have read:

> That the motion in amendment be amended by replacing the text in paragraph (a) with "also known as the SS bolts, or a noose; or" and by deleting paragraph (b).

After consultation with the committee clerks and the Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel, I am advised that the most appropriate way to ensure that the record accurately reflects the committee's intent and decision is to amend the committee report now before us.

This correction does not alter the substance of the committee's decision; rather, it ensures that the English version properly reflects what was debated, agreed to and intended by the members of the committee during clause-by-clause consideration.

I am further advised that the French version accurately reflects the committee's intent and, therefore, requires no correction.

I ask for your support in adopting this correction so that the report with the amendments and observations on Bill C-9 accurately reflects the will of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights.

MOTION IN AMENDMENT ADOPTED

**Hon. David M. Arnot:** Therefore, honourable senators, in amendment, I move:

> That the third report of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights be not now adopted, but that it be amended, in amendment No. 1, by replacing the text of subparagraph (a)(i) with the words "(b) the Nazi Hakenkreuz, the Nazi double Sig-Rune, also known as the SS bolts, or a noose; or".

Thank you, honourable senators.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** In amendment, it was moved by the Honourable Senator Arnot, seconded by the Honourable Senator Moncion:

> That the third report of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights be not now adopted, but that it be amended, in amendment No. 1, by replacing the text of subparagraph (a)(i) with the words "(b) the Nazi Hakenkreuz, the Nazi double Sig-Rune, also known as the SS bolts, or a noose; or".

Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion in amendment?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion in amendment of the Honourable Senator Arnot agreed to.)

• (1550)

BILL TO AMEND—THIRD REPORT OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE NEGATIVED

On the Order:

> Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Senior, seconded by the Honourable Senator Clement, for the adoption of the third report, as amended, of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights (*Bill C-9, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (hate propaganda, hate crime and access to religious or cultural places), with amendments and observations*), presented in the Senate on June 2, 2026.

**Hon. Nancy Karetak-Lindell:** Honourable senators and Canadians watching across the country, I rise today to speak to Bill C-9, the combatting hate act, at report stage. I am speaking today not just as a senator for Nunavut but as a residential school Survivor. Out of eight siblings, seven of us attended residential schools.

While the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights adopted several amendments, I will be speaking to one in particular: the committee's amendment to address the wilful promotion of residential school denialism within the Criminal Code by classifying it as hate propaganda. This amendment was

adopted by the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights by a vote of 7-1. The near-unanimous support reflects the committee's recognition of a clear gap in the Criminal Code.

The Government of Canada has already formally acknowledged the harms and lasting impacts of the Indian residential school system through apologies, settlements, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and ongoing reconciliation commitments. These harms are well documented and are not contested in Canadian public law or policy. This amendment does not create a new legal principle; it applies an existing one consistently.

Throughout our study of this bill, we have recognized the very real harms caused by Islamophobia, anti-Black racism, anti-Semitism and other forms of hate. We have heard compelling testimony about the need for targeted responses where particular communities are disproportionately impacted by hatred and discrimination. I support those protections.

The question before us is why Indigenous Peoples should be treated differently.

The obligation of the Government of Canada to protect Canadians does not diminish when the affected community is Indigenous. Indigenous Peoples should not be required to wait longer for protections already recognized as necessary in other contexts. The Prime Minister has stated that anti-Semitism requires a serious and targeted response, a principle currently reflected in Canadian law, including through the recognition of Holocaust denialism as hate propaganda when it meets the statutory threshold. I agree with that approach.

This legal framework creates a precedent, which has been established by Parliament, that certain forms of denialism, when used to wilfully promote hatred against identifiable groups, can constitute hate propaganda under the Criminal Code. This includes Holocaust denialism where the wilful denial, condoning or gross minimization of genocide, when used to promote hatred, falls within existing provisions. While provisions are reserved for the most egregious cases, the principle is clear: Denialism is captured by hate propaganda law when it is used to promote hatred.

By the same measure, anti-Indigenous hate is also severe and persistent. Indigenous Peoples have been targeted for generations through discrimination, violence and the denial of their lived experiences. Addressing residential school denialism through its inclusion in the Criminal Code is, therefore, a concrete and consistent application of the same legal precedent that Parliament has already established.

With regard to the committee's amendment, the same safeguards and defences would apply. Truth is a complete defence, and statements that are true cannot lead to a conviction. Likewise, were an individual to make statements that they believed were for public benefit and, on reasonable grounds, believe to be true, the law continues to protect that expression.

That means that some Survivors of Indian residential schools who publicly speak of their own lived experience and who may believe that residential schools were beneficial to them, because they believe it to be true or use that as a coping mechanism to process their own trauma, would not be targeted by this new provision.

The amendment is also narrowly tailored so that it applies only to public communications that wilfully promote hatred; it explicitly excludes private conversations. It does not restrict historical discussions, academic inquiries or personal testimonies.

With regard to penalties, the current wording, that an individual convicted under this provision would be found ". . . guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years . . ." is consistent with the established precedent already used in comparable hate propaganda offences. It is important, colleagues, that there is a consistent application in Canadian law. Therefore, this amendment reflects continuity, not expansion. It recognizes that residential school denialism can function as a vehicle for anti-Indigenous hate, retraumatize Survivors and their families and contribute to intimidation and racism against Indigenous Peoples.

This amendment responds directly to concerns raised by Indigenous witnesses who appeared before the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights and emphasized that denialism causes harm, fuels racism and undermines reconciliation. The question is whether Parliament is prepared to respond to their calls for action and address the rise of residential school denialism and anti-Indigenous hate in Canada. The Government of Canada has repeatedly acknowledged the harms inflicted on Inuit, First Nations and Métis Peoples through colonial policy, including residential schools.

At its core, this amendment asks whether Parliament is prepared to take a meaningful stand against anti-Indigenous hatred.

Residential school denialism is not a matter of historical disagreement; it is a tactic that can be used to diminish Indigenous suffering, undermine truth and promote hatred toward Indigenous Peoples. Parliament has already recognized that denialism, when weaponized in such manners, can warrant criminal sanction. Today, the Senate has an opportunity to ensure that Indigenous Peoples are afforded the same protections under the law and to demonstrate the fortitude required to confront hatred in all its forms.

• (1600)

When Indigenous Peoples raise concerns about a modern form of Indigenous hate, we are told that further barriers must first be overcome. The real question I place before the Senate today and, if passed, before the other place is whether those harms will be met with equivalent seriousness under the Criminal Code. Indigenous Peoples should not be asked to wait longer for protections that Parliament has already recognized as necessary in other contexts.

This amendment responds directly to testimony heard at committee, as well as recommendations put forward by Indigenous leaders, Survivors and their families; the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples report published

in 2023 entitled *Honouring the Children Who Never Came Home*; the Independent Special Interlocutor Kimberly Murray; and the Assembly of First Nations' resolution calling for the government to criminalize residential school denialism.

It is evident, senators, from both our witnesses and publicly available information, that denialism is a growing threat and a hateful phenomenon that demands a legislative response. Importantly, this amendment does not alter, diminish or infringe on Aboriginal or treaty rights. It does not regulate Indigenous governance, lands or jurisdiction. It is narrowly focused on the wilful promotion of hatred and the protection of Indigenous Peoples from harm. It is forward-looking, consistent with existing law and grounded in the principle that all Canadians deserve equal protection from hate-motivated denialism under the Criminal Code.

In closing, senators, we have heard this quote many times in this chamber, but I think it is important to reiterate the Supreme Court of Canada's *Reference re Senate Reform*:

> Over time, the Senate also came to represent various groups that were under-represented in the House of Commons. It served as a forum for ethnic, gender, religious, linguistic, and Aboriginal groups that did not always have a meaningful opportunity to present their views through the popular democratic process . . . .

Today, this institution has an opportunity to stand for and defend those who have long been under-represented and marginalized in Canada. I ask you to vote in favour and adopt the committee's report. Thank you. *Matna*.

**Hon. Bernadette Clement:** Would Senator Karetak-Lindell accept a question?

**Senator Karetak-Lindell:** Yes.

**Senator Clement:** Thank you, senator, for your work on this and especially for pouring your lived experience into this. It is much appreciated.

I'm not part of the Human Rights Committee, but I've been following this conversation as a concerned Black woman and as an ally. Senator Arnot and I met with representatives of the Anishinabek Nation some weeks ago, as well as with the Chiefs of Ontario. They talked about being in this space where there is an increase in denialism and where people are feeling increasingly unsafe.

But as with everything, there is a balance. Those of us from vulnerable groups tend to anticipate pushback, so I wonder if you could say more about this amendment and how it complies with the right to freedom of speech and how it does not impact legitimate academic inquiries or legitimate historical conversations.

**Senator Karetak-Lindell:** Thank you for the question. I thought of a way to make this comply with precedents, and I was assured that it would not prohibit good-faith academic expression, historical research or legitimate public discourse, but rather that it targets wilful promotion or denial of residential school harms in a manner that rises to the threshold of hate propaganda already outlined.

I want to add that the term "wilful" is an exceptionally high threshold that has been established and that it would not capture good-faith freedom of expression. I feel that because the threshold is high, freedom of expression is not impaired by my amendment. Thank you.

**Hon. Michèle Audette:** Will the senator accept a question?

**Senator Karetak-Lindell:** Yes, I will.

**Senator Audette:** *Nakurmiik. Tshinashkumitin*. Thank you very much. Today is a special day and a hard day. It is eight years since the report on the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, so I say thank you for your courage to speak the truth. I'm exhausted because we have to speak the truth too many times, so I hope the amendment will pass. We are in 2026.

My mom — all our moms — dad and family know what we tasted, what we saw, what we felt — all the five senses. We are very aware of this. I don't know if you remember this, but the national inquiry spoke about genocide, and it was proven by Québécois Canadian lawyers. Then, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission did that important work, and you mentioned Kimberly, so I thank you —

[*Translation*]

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** I'm sorry to interrupt you, but the senator's time is up.

[*English*]

Senator Karetak-Lindell, are you asking for five more minutes so you can answer her questions?

**Senator Karetak-Lindell:** Yes.

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Is leave granted?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**Senator Audette:** I wonder: Was the Crown's duty to consult Indigenous Peoples meaningfully engaged in the development of this amendment that you spoke of?

[*Translation*]

Thank you.

[*English*]

**Senator Karetak-Lindell:** Thank you for the question. I wanted to address concerns regarding consultation by drawing an important distinction that informed my approach throughout this process. Earlier in this study, I considered introducing an amendment that would have expanded protections relating to cultural, ceremonial and religious bases, but I chose not to do that because I would want that to include consultation with the affected groups. I paralleled this with Holocaust denialism, and,

in doing that, I hope that it is pretty straightforward and will meet all the obligations. I narrowed my amendment to reflect that.

**Hon. Hassan Yussuff:** Senator, would you take another question?

**Senator Karetak-Lindell:** Yes, I would.

**Senator Yussuff:** The evolution of rights in society comes through struggle and also learning. Six million Jews died in the Second World War. Despite that fact, there are still people who perpetuate the hateful idea that it didn't happen. I know we must learn.

The treatment of Indigenous people in this country is our own responsibility and burden. Is it your hope that, in introducing the amendment, it will help us learn and change our attitudes and behaviours as to how we conduct ourselves and understand the history of this country and how we have treated Indigenous people in this country?

**Senator Karetak-Lindell:** Thank you for the question.

It is pretty sad that we have to legislate hate and understanding. I would hope that, with my amendment, people are more willing to understand our way of looking at this and our way of looking at all the injustices that have happened to Indigenous people in this country and that it is lived experience, and our point of view is not always considered when studies are done. This is an opportunity for conversation and, hopefully, to continue the path to reconciliation. Thank you.

• (1610)

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Pierre Moreau (Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, I don't intend to speak for long, but I wanted to put forward a few considerations that I hope will inform your work as we continue to study Bill C-9, which is currently before us.

First, I want to thank the members of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights for the hard work they put into examining this bill seriously. Bill C-9 delivers on an election promise and addresses a social issue that matters to all of us.

[*English*]

Bill C-9, the combatting hate act, introduces a targeted suite of Criminal Code reforms to protect safe access to community spaces and religious buildings, denounce hate-motivated crime, clarify the legal meaning of "hatred" and criminalize the wilful promotion of hatred against an identifiable group by displaying hate or terrorism symbols in public.

It is designed to safeguard Canadians' security and dignity while preserving space for lawful protest and protected expression under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In its consideration of the legislation, the committee adopted four amendments: first, the addition of the symbol of a noose; second, the creation of a new offence of residential school denialism, which carries a maximum penalty of two years of imprisonment if prosecuted by indictment; third, the extension of the defences for the existing offence of downplaying the Holocaust to the new offence of residential school denialism; and, fourth, the extension of the statutory defence to the obstruction offence to that of the intimidation offence, which specifies that individuals are not to be found guilty where their sole purpose is to obtain or communicate information.

The addition of the noose as a hate symbol is a meaningful step. It acknowledges the specific and documented history of racial terror that symbol carries and sends a clear message that our law does not look away from anti-Black hatred. I wish, nonetheless, to underscore that the stand-alone hate crime offence as originally drafted in Bill C-9 already applies to anti-Black hate in all its forms, including conduct involving the noose.

While the government is in agreement with the first amendment, it has reservations with respect to the remainder, and it is the latter point that I wish to expand upon.

Before I address these amendments, however, I want to thank Senator Karetak-Lindell for her work on this bill. The chamber is privileged to benefit from the perspective of residential school Survivors, whose lived experiences bring important and unique perspectives to our deliberations.

Regarding the amendment that would establish a new offence of denying the history of the residential school system, including defences, no consultation has taken place and no legal analysis has been conducted.

As has been reflected in the past, neither the Senate nor the other place is a consultative body. That responsibility rests with the government and the cabinet. The duty to consult on legislative amendments continues to evolve, but it is widely understood that changes directly affecting Indigenous Peoples, their rights or how they are described in federal law must have meaningful engagement.

Proceeding without such consultation risks privileging some voices over others or, worse, silencing them altogether. It is First Nations and Inuit Peoples who are retraumatized by the denial of their harms who have a better understanding of the issue.

This past December, the Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly adopted a resolution on the criminalization of residential school denialism, emphasizing the need to work with Survivors, Elders and First Nations leadership across the country to ensure that any legislative approach reflects lived experiences, provides clear legal definitions and can withstand constitutional scrutiny.

Honourable senators may have already noticed that online backlash to the amendment has begun. There was no consultation on whether this amendment was the appropriate way for denialism to be addressed or to have it as stand-alone legislation. In opposing this amendment, the government is not rejecting the objective of addressing denialism. There are avenues in the bill that already cover the protection of hatred toward Indigenous

Peoples. Rather, what we are doing is affirming that it must be done in the right way, grounded in a comprehensive and respectful consultation process.

Turning to the amendment extending the proposed statutory defence to the proposed intimidation offence, I respectfully submit that the legal doctrine of absurdity would apply. Furthermore, the proposal would create inconsistencies in the Criminal Code.

Let me explain: The proposed obstruction offence in Bill C-9 includes a statutory defence, which specifies that individuals who attend at, near or approach a religious or cultural institution for the sole purpose of obtaining or communicating information are not guilty of the offence. Given that the elements of the proposed intimidation offence would require proof that an offender had a specific intent — *mens rea* — to provoke a state of fear in another person, the exception could not apply in those circumstances.

[*Translation*]

In other words, there could be no situation where an accused person whose sole purpose is to obtain or communicate information exhibits behaviour intended to provoke fear. I can't imagine a situation where this defence would apply. No one could intentionally provoke fear if their sole purpose is communicating information. Therefore, adding this defence to the intimidation offence is pointless and could cause confusion about behaviours not covered by this offence.

This amendment also weakens the very purpose of the intimidation offence, which is to protect people in their place of worship and community spaces. Bear in mind that this offence was one of the government's election promises. There is no justification for accepting an amendment that undermines its scope.

Furthermore, as pointed out earlier, the proposal to expand this defence is inconsistent with other similar Criminal Code offences and has absolutely no bearing on the offences regarding intimidation of health professionals, justice system participants or journalists. For that reason, the government cannot consider this proposed amendment to Bill C-9.

[*English*]

Honourable colleagues, while I have raised these reservations on debate, I do not wish to further delay the progression of this important piece of legislation. I raised them out of respect for the collegiality and professionalism we share in an increasingly divisive environment so as to facilitate our deliberations as we proceed.

For all these reasons, when the question is called to adopt this report, I will call, "On division." If there is a standing vote, I will be voting against the report.

I look forward to your continued dialogue, both within and between our democratic institutions.

Thank you, colleagues, for your kind attention.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Question.

• (1620)

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

**Some Hon. Senators:** No.

**Some Hon. Senators:** Yes.

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

**Some Hon. Senators:** Yea.

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

**Some Hon. Senators:** Nay.

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

*And two honourable senators having risen:*

**The Hon. the Speaker:** I see two senators rising. Is there an agreement on the length of the bell?

**An Hon. Senator:** Fifteen minutes.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** There will be a 15-minute bell. The vote will take place at 4:35.

Call in the senators.

• (1630)

Motion negatived on the following division:

YEAS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

| | |
|---|---|
| Al Zaibak | Karetak-Lindell |
| Arnold | McBean |
| Arnot | McNair |
| Audette | Mohamed |
| Bernard | Moncion |
| Black | Moodie |
| Boehm | Osler |
| Burey | Oudar |
| Cardozo | Pate |
| Clement | Petitclerc |
| Cormier | Senior |
| Deacon (*Ontario*) | Varone |

Dean
Galvez
Gerba
Hébert
White
Woo
Youance
Yussuff—32

NAYS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Adler
Aucoin
Batters
Boudreau
Carignan
Dalphond
Deacon (*Nova Scotia*)
Downe
Duncan
Forest
Fridhandler
Gignac
Harder
Hay
Housakos
Klyne
LaBoucane-Benson
Lewis
Loffreda
Manning
Martin
Moreau
Muggli
Patterson
Petten
Pupatello
Quinn
Ravalia
Ringuette
Robinson
Ross
Saint-Germain
Sorensen
Surette
Tannas
Verner
Wells (*Alberta*)
Wells (*Newfoundland and Labrador*)
MacAdam
MacDonald
Wilson—41

ABSTENTIONS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Dasko
Simons—2

• (1640)

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

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

## BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

**Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-13(2), I move:

That the Senate do now adjourn.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(*At 4:44 p.m., the Senate was continued until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.*)

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## SENATORS' STATEMENTS



## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS



## QUESTION PERIOD

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