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The Honourable GEORGE J. FUREY,
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Tuesday, February 27, 2018

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

[*Translation*]

Prayers.

Senator Black devoted himself to the public good as a provincial government official, a municipal politician, and as the head of and a volunteer at many community organizations.

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

[*English*]

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

Senator Black has deep roots in the rich agricultural region of southwestern Ontario. For those of you who don't know, that's close to Niagara but it's not quite that good.

Is it agreed, honourable senators?

He has spent his career ensuring that rural issues get the attention they deserve, from serving on boards to leadership roles with the Ontario Soybean Growers and the Centre for Rural Leadership.

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

• (1410)

I want to especially note the decades-long leadership of Rob Black within 4-H, an organization almost as old as the Senate of Canada, which has championed rural causes and developed leadership amongst children and youth.

[*Translation*]

[*Translation*]

NEW SENATOR

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I have the honour to inform the Senate that the Clerk has received a certificate from the Registrar General of Canada showing that Robert Black has been summoned to the Senate.

Let's welcome Senator Black, who brings to the Senate a wealth of experience in community, provincial and national engagement.

[*English*]

INTRODUCTION

The Hon. the Speaker having informed the Senate that there was a senator without, waiting to be introduced:

Senator Black, I think you will find that the Senate provides fertile ground for new ideas and plenty of opportunities to see them grow and bear fruit. I will make no other allusions to things that you might find here.

The following honourable senator was introduced; presented Her Majesty's writ of summons; took the oath prescribed by law, which was administered by the Clerk; and was seated:

Your leadership will be welcomed and valued here amongst us. Welcome to the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Robert (Rob) Black, of Centre Wellington, Ontario, introduced between Hon. Peter Harder, P.C., and Hon. Frances Lankin, P.C.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Larry W. Smith (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I would like to also join with my colleagues in welcoming the newest member to our Senate, the Honourable Robert (Rob) Black.

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

And just a comment, senator: It is great to see all your family and friends. You have a lot of family and you have a lot of friends, so we'd like to welcome all of you to the Senate of Canada with the new senator.

[*English*]

I wish Senator Black all the best as he takes on new responsibilities here today. As always, we are eager to get to know our new colleague and to have Senator Black know about us and the important role Conservative senators and all senators perform within the Government of Canada.

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): It's my pleasure as the Government Representative in the Senate to welcome our newest colleague, the Honourable Robert (Rob) Black, here to represent his home province of Ontario.

As we have all come to learn, Senator Black brings to this place a long professional background in agriculture and rural affairs. Senator Harder mentioned the 4-H organization, which is

in over 50 countries throughout the world. It started in the agricultural area with youth development in the 1920s — almost 100 years of existence — dealing with the head, heart, hands and health. Of course, congratulations for his involvement in that. This expertise will no doubt serve him well in the years ahead, as agricultural matters are often part of the political discourse, whether it relates to global or domestic trade, health, safety issues and more.

It is a tremendous honour to be appointed to serve as a senator. I still feel this way after seven years in the Senate, and I hope all senators do also.

Welcome, Senator Black. All Conservative senators and all senators extend best wishes to you and your family as you embark on the next phase of your life here in the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Hon. Yuen Pau Woo: Dear colleagues, it is an honour and a privilege for me to rise on behalf of the Independent Senators Group to welcome Senator Robert Black to the Senate today.

• (1420)

[*English*]

Senator Robert Black is only the fifth senator to hail from Wellington County in southwestern Ontario. He is only the first since 1951. He is a long-time resident of Wellington County; his family has been in the region, we learned just this morning, since the early 1800s.

Senator Black currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the Rural Ontario Institute, a group that mentors community leaders in Ontario's rural and northern communities. Senator Black has also been on the Wellington County Council since 2014. He currently chairs the county's Information, Heritage and Seniors Committee, and is a member of the Social Services Committee. He has worked in various positions within the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

As you've heard already, he is a previous executive director — indeed the first one — of Ontario's 4-H. He has also been a general manager of the Ontario Soybean Growers and Executive Director of the Centre for Rural Leadership.

Reflecting his diverse interests and his deep roots in the community, Senator Black has served in organizations such as the Wellington County Historical Society, the Fergus Scottish Festival and Highland Games and the Ontario Trillium Foundation. It is surely only a matter of time before we have caber tossing on the lawn of the Centre Block.

We very much look forward to working with our new colleague and drawing on the rich experience and expertise that he brings to the chamber.

Senator Black, welcome to Canada's upper house.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Joseph A. Day (Leader of the Senate Liberals): Colleagues, I'm delighted to welcome another new senator to the chamber, Senator Robert (Rob) Black from Ontario.

Senator, you join us at a very interesting time. In addition to fulfilling the traditional role as the chamber of sober second thought, we are also in the midst of a period of renewal and modernization. You yourself were selected through a new appointment process, which is a part of that.

While you are no stranger to politics, having served as the councillor for Ward 5 on the Wellington County Council, you will likely find that this place requires some adjustment and a wee bit of a learning period. I encourage you to take the time needed to get acquainted with the Red Chamber and your new colleagues here. I assure you we will be happy to provide you with words of friendly advice and encouragement as you settle into your new role.

I know that, for our part, we look forward to your contributions, particularly those arising from your work in the agricultural community. Our very own Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry has taken up a variety of important topics, like the effects of climate change on agriculture, access to markets, bovine tuberculosis and my personal favourite, the buzz-worthy importance of bee health to sustainable food production.

I know this committee would be well served by both your wisdom and your experience.

I have no doubt that with your arrival to this chamber, not only Ontarians but rural Canadians everywhere will have gained a very strong voice in Parliament.

On behalf of my Independent Senate Liberal colleagues, a small but mighty group in this part of the chamber, I welcome you to the Senate, and I look forward to working with you, Senator Black.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

TUCK WALTERS AWARD

2018 AWARD RECIPIENTS

Hon. Norman E. Doyle: Honourable senators, the 2018 Tuck Walters Award was recently presented in St. John's, Newfoundland, to Wayne Ledwell and Julie Huntington of the Whale Release and Strandings Group for their long-term dedication to the protection of wildlife in Newfoundland and Labrador and for their education outreach regarding natural history and appreciation. This award honours the pioneering work of Dr. Leslie Tuck, Newfoundland's first Dominion wildlife officer following Confederation, and Captain Harry Walters, director of the Newfoundland Ranger Force.

Wayne Ledwell and Julie Huntington were the first couple to receive this prestigious recognition in the history of the award. The Whale Entrapment Release Program, as it was called, was

initiated in 1979 under the innovative leadership of Dr. Jon Lien of Memorial University. Dr. Lien's core technique and approach were firmly grounded in the principle that fishermen and their communities always had to be fully involved in every step of the release process.

Operating 365 days a year from their residence in St. Philips, Conception Bay, it is estimated that Wayne and Julie have participated directly or indirectly in the rescue of more than 400 whales from all areas of the province's coastline over the past 30 years.

A recent article in *The Telegram* quoted Dr. Bill Montevecchi, Chair of the Tuck Walters Award committee, who said that they try to choose recipients whose work has a long-term effect, and that Huntington and Ledwell have championed whale release around the world:

They've managed to keep a lot of whales alive that would otherwise be dead. Some of those whales live longer than we do, and so you think about . . . the lives they've saved. . . . In this sense, it's a timeless kind of award. Every time they save a whale, and they've saved many of them, it goes on for decades. . . . [in terms of] generating interest in terms of biology, in terms of tourism, and so the effect is really quite profound.

The Telegram also quoted Doug Ballam, President of Nature NL, who said that the pair's work comes at a perilous time for many species of whales, particularly the endangered North Atlantic right whale. He said Huntington and Ledwell:

. . . are really conservation heroes, not just for Newfoundland, or even Canada, but for North America and the world.

Congratulations and thank you for your tireless efforts, Wayne Ledwell and Julie Huntington.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

BLACK WOMEN DOMESTICS

Hon. Wanda Elaine Thomas Bernard: Honourable senators, I rise today in honour of Black History Month. In light of this year's theme of Black Canadian women, I wish to share stories of the strength, courage and vision of an invisible segment of our society: Black women domestics. I stand on the shoulders of these women.

Following World War II, privileged women were able to enter the workforce due to the availability of Black domestic workers. There are two groups in particular that I will bring to your attention: the African Caribbean women who migrated to Canada under the domestic workers scheme, and the African Nova Scotian women who were domestics or char workers.

It was in 1910-11 that the first Caribbean domestic scheme was created to fill the demand for cheap labour in Quebec, recruiting 100 Guadeloupean women without their children. With time, more women were recruited to come to Canada to perform deplorable duties in deplorable working conditions for low pay and long hours, and to be treated with little respect or decency.

[Senator Doyle]

Western trade boards lobbied the federal government in 1911 to stop "dark-skinned" domestics from taking up roots in Canada. Black women domestics were seen as expendable. Many of the strong Black women and men professionals in Canada today are from families that were led by Black women domestics.

• (1430)

Until the 1960s, the available education for African Nova Scotians was segregated and only went as far as Grade 8. Most families could not afford to send their children to integrated high schools. Domestic labour was the only employment open to these women. They were typically paid in cash, \$5 per day, with no benefits or protection. They experienced racism and sexism regularly in their workplaces.

But many of these women were domestic workers by day and community leaders by night. They fought for social change in their communities and for human rights reforms that benefited all Nova Scotians.

My mother, the late Marguerite Thomas Parent, was one of those domestic workers. And there are many others. My mother taught us the value of hard work and how to fight for our rights.

Honourable senators, today I thank the incredible Black domestics who were women of strength, courage and vision. We are deeply indebted to the Black women domestics who helped to transform their communities. I am because they were.

VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Alice Nderitu, recipient of the 2018 Jack P. Blaney Award. She is accompanied by Grace Lee, Shauna Sylvester and Shaheen Nanji. 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!

Hon. David Tkachuk: Honourable senators, Gerald Stanley, as you all know, was acquitted of charges in the death of Colten Boushie, an Indigenous man from Saskatchewan. Stanley is White. He was investigated, charged with murder, put on trial before a jury of his peers and found not guilty. The anger of Mr. Boushie's family and friends at the verdict was palpable and understandable.

Shortly following the verdict, the Prime Minister made a statement, which was unfortunate. The Minister of Justice also made a statement that implied Mr. Stanley should have been found guilty.

I wasn't in that courtroom. But neither was she. For the Minister of Justice to do what she did is just plain wrong. She should resign. She has interfered in the process, and this is a disservice to the friends and family of Mr. Boushie and Mr. Stanley.

This is a tragic story. None of us were in that courtroom. The jurors were. They heard the evidence. They listened to the prosecution's case. The prosecutor was one of the most experienced in the province. They listened to the defence lawyer's case. They listened to the judge, who was the Chief Justice of Saskatchewan's Queen's Bench. They deliberated for 15 hours.

The Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice seem to be suggesting that justice wasn't done, that the verdict would have been different if the jurors were all Aboriginal or if it was evenly split between Indigenous and White, but that assumes racism all around.

There is racism everywhere, no doubt, but no more in Saskatchewan than anywhere else. Our justice system is designed to make jurors focus on the evidence in a case. I am going to trust that they did that in this case.

When we, as legislators, make comments in the heat of the moment because we didn't get the verdict we expected, based on information that is less than what the jurors have, we undermine that system. We also add more heat than light to a situation that is already simmering. When things like this happen, there have to be adults in the room. The job of legislators is to ensure calm when emotions are strong so that reason can prevail. Jurors in Canada cannot defend themselves. They deserve better.

I want to quote you something another politician wrote on Twitter after he was asked to comment on the verdict:

1. . . . It would be irresponsible to make any statement that might colour perspectives in the event of what may be an inevitable appeal.

2. Additionally there is a necessary separation between judicial, legislative and executive powers in this country. They are parallel systems that should, as far as is possible, stay in their lanes. This is important.

3. There is already division. By offering my own personal thoughts and words I would be deepening this division without accomplishing anything beyond signalling virtue.

That politician is Aaron Paquette. He is an Edmonton municipal city councillor. He is Cree and Metis. This is the kind of language we were expecting to hear from our government, the kind of language that Canadians deserve.

VISITOR IN THE GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Megz Reynolds. She is the guest of the Honourable Senator Batters.

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

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

STUDY ON CANADIANS' VIEWS ABOUT MODERNIZING THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

SEVENTH REPORT OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES COMMITTEE
DEPOSITED WITH CLERK DURING ADJOURNMENT
OF THE SENATE

Hon. René Cormier: Honourable senators, I have the honour to inform the Senate that pursuant to the orders adopted by the Senate on April 6, 2017, and February 15, 2018, the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages deposited with the Clerk of the Senate on February 16, 2018, its seventh report (interim) entitled *Modernizing the Official Languages Act - The Views of Young Canadians*.

[English]

SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO MEET
DURING SITTING OF THE SENATE

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

That the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology have the power to meet on Tuesday, March 20, 2018, at 7:00 p.m., even though the Senate may then be sitting, and that rule 12-18(1) be suspended in relation thereto.

QUESTION PERIOD

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

PRIME MINISTER'S TRIP TO INDIA

Hon. Larry W. Smith (Leader of the Opposition): I have a question for the Leader of the Government. I have a bit of a preamble because this is a really important issue, so please bear with me. I won't be long.

On Sunday, the *Times of India* reported:

Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau's visit was a disaster that has little parallel in India's recent diplomatic history.

When it was discovered that a convicted terrorist had been invited to participate in a Canadian delegation in India, the blame was initially placed on the high commissioner's office. Then it was placed on a single Liberal member of Parliament. Then, most shockingly, the blame was placed on India itself. Global News reported on Friday that a senior member of the non-partisan public service provided an immediate briefing organized by the Prime Minister's Office, during which it was claimed:

... That Jaspal Atwal, the terrorist invited by the Liberals to Mumbai, may have been planted there by the Indian government or maybe by Indian security agencies or perhaps by factions in the Indian government.

Will the Government of Canada confirm or deny the very serious allegations against the Government of India related to the media by the national security adviser at the PMO's request? If so, what evidence does the government have to support this claim?

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): Again, I thank the honourable senator for his question. He will know, and let me repeat, that the individual in question should never have received an invitation. As soon as it was brought to the attention of the government and relevant officials, the invitation was ultimately rescinded, and the member of Parliament who included this individual has assumed full responsibility for his actions, as was referenced by the Prime Minister.

• (1440)

Senator Smith: I'm not sure if that's necessarily the answer to the question asked, but contrary to the serious accusations made against India, CTV News reported last night that the Indian government requested the names on the guest list for screening, but they were refused access.

Why did the Government of Canada deny India access to the guest list, and did the direction come from the Prime Minister's Office?

Senator Harder: Again, I thank the honourable senator for his question. What I can indicate, as the Minister of Public Safety indicated to the other place yesterday, is that the level of cooperation between and amongst the security agencies was extraordinarily close and was in accordance with existing procedures.

Senator Smith: If there's any way you could ask the question specifically about finding out who was there, that would be helpful. It would answer the question, if you could undertake to try.

Senator Harder: I would certainly undertake to do that, senator.

Hon. David Tkachuk: My question is also for the Government Representative in the Senate. Senator Harder, I know that after Senator Smith's question, you've heard of the holiday that the Prime Minister was on in India, and there's the odd photograph of him and his family in various exotic costumes at various exotic events.

[Senator Smith]

When he wasn't playing Mr. Dressup, the Prime Minister was inviting his friends from B.C. and assorted diplomats to a dinner at the high commission. It was prepared by Mr. Vikram Vij — a chef, unabashed Liberal supporter and one-time member of the so-called arm's-length Independent Advisory Board for Senate Appointments. He may have supported a number of you here.

Global Affairs Canada said they covered Mr. Vij's hotel and travel expenses so that he could assist with the menu and food preparation for the Canada reception. They flew him over for one meal. They said it is an accepted practice for Canadian missions to invite chefs from Canada to showcase Canadian food products and cuisine.

Senator Harder, could you tell me how many times this or the previous government flew private chefs on trips with the Prime Minister to assist with the menu and food preparation for one meal, and could you also tell me what the cost of this travel was for this celebrity chef, including his airplane, hotel and all sundry expenses?

Senator Harder: I thank the honourable senator for his question. Let me preface my specific answer to the specific question by assuring all senators that this visit by the government at the most senior levels, with a large delegation of CEOs and business leaders in Canada, was extraordinarily important in establishing personal, economic and people-to-people relationships.

I won't reference the billion-dollar bilateral two-way trade agreements that were signed — \$750 million one way, \$250 million the other. But at the same time, honourable senators, two-way trade is what we are all seeking to do, because that builds the relationships that build ongoing economic growth.

With respect to the chef that the honourable senator referenced, let me repeat that even the Senate of Canada has spoken on the importance of cultural diplomacy. I note there is work presently under way on exactly that subject. Culture, the promotion of culinary skills and soft diplomacy generally are seen by many countries as an important expression of their foreign policy and foreign engagement. That is the case here. The high commissioner in India, Nadir Patel, is at the forefront of utilizing public diplomacy in this fashion, and I am told it was a great success.

Senator Tkachuk: Senator Harder, could you also add to that other information I requested about the chef, how many designer outfits were ordered by the Prime Minister and his family for their trip to India, who paid for them initially, and what was the total cost for all the outfits and accessories?

Senator Harder: I will endeavour to find those answers.

FINANCE

PHOENIX PAY SYSTEM

Hon. Terry M. Mercer (Deputy Leader of the Senate Liberals): Honourable senators, I'd like all of us to contemplate the question I'm about to ask. When you're about to buy a new car, what do you do? You do a little research, especially online,

about what you want, how you want to finance it, the history of the car, if it was a used car, for accidents and whatnot. When you do that, if you find an accident in a car's history, would you buy that car? Perhaps not.

I ask this of the Government Representative in the Senate for a particular and important reason. We know that Australia learned the hard way that our Phoenix-based pay system has troubles, and yet the government, under Prime Minister Stephen Harper, seems to have had no knowledge of this, went ahead anyway and contracted IBM to build our Phoenix pay system.

Could the Government Representative tell us how this even happened, and if the government knew what it was getting into?

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for his question. Let me simply say that when this government took office, the transition to the Phoenix system was well under way. Unfortunately, a decision had been made before they took office to separate a large number of pay clerks from the Government of Canada, on the assumption that the efficiencies and effectiveness of the new system would be seamlessly calibrated to go online.

It is absolutely true that there have been some bumps along the way as the government has sought to respond to this situation. The minister responsible has publicly made this her highest priority. The Government of Canada has invested significant resources, has brought back on over 600 pay clerks, has invested in technology to accelerate the remedial actions, and is monitoring the situation very closely. This is an intolerable situation, but it is one that the government has inherited and is seeking to repair.

Senator Mercer: Bumps may be a little understatement, Your Honour. If you were a public servant in this country and your pay was being disrupted by this incompetent system that had been put in place by the previous government, bumps is not what you would consider this to be; it is a bit of a mountain.

Well, honourable senators, it seems the government bought a lemon, and now it is spending hundreds of millions of dollars to fix a problem that it should have known was going to happen. Simply Google "Phoenix pay system" and you would have found out there were problems all around the world. Now that the new government under Prime Minister Trudeau has inherited this mess, what plans does it have to recoup the money that it is spending to fix the problem that seems to have no solution? When will they sue IBM?

Senator Harder: I thank the honourable senator for his question. As he will know, the government has made public statements and continues to ensure that the contractual obligations are met. We follow the contract, and should the contract not be met, there are provisions in the contract which will be followed.

HEALTH

CANNABIS BILL—REGULATIONS

Hon. André Pratte: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate. A week ago, the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee heard from Ms. Amy Peaire, Chair of the Drugs and Driving Committee at the Canadian Society of Forensic Sciences.

She said:

Whereas in years past you would have marijuana strains with 2 to 3 per cent THC, now they are regularly between 20 and 40 per cent. There's also an increasing frequency of having THC concentrates . . . in concentrations ranging from 70 to 90 per cent. . . .

One of the concerns that's coming out from health officials is that this high-potency cannabis has much more potent effects on individuals that are not properly known and that may have much more significant health effects upon them than otherwise.

• (1450)

Given that many experts recommend that limits be set on the concentration of THC in cannabis products that will be legally sold in Canada, would Senator Harder seek from the government the undertaking that such limits will be part of the regulations that will be published in the next few weeks?

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank Senator Pratte for his question. Before I answer it specifically, it does allow me to welcome back to the chamber Senator Dean, who has done so much work in this area.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Harder: Honourable senators, I can confirm that the government is assessing various approaches that could be utilized to manage the levels of concentration of THC through various cannabis products as part of the regulatory process. Indeed, it is the government's intention to set regulatory requirements that would standardize the amount of THC that could be in a single portion of specific cannabis products, and that the THC amounts be clearly referenced on product labels.

Therefore, consumers would have specific information when making decisions when choosing to use a product for personal consumption.

This is in line, as the senator will know, with recommendations made by the task force and the government's consultation paper entitled, *Proposed Approach to the Regulation of Cannabis*, which was released last November, and which did reference the limits on THC concentrations on cannabis products such as cannabis oil, for example.

Senator Pratte: Thank you very much for this response. It's very interesting. There's a difference, of course, between giving the information on the packages and setting a limit to the maximum THC level.

The approach of Bill C-45 is an approach built on public health. I think the impression that many experts have — and I'm beginning to share that impression — is that over a certain limit, there is a major risk to public health of products that are over 40 and 50 per cent, and I believe they would go against the government's approach to allow production and sale of certain products over a certain limit. That's why I would again ask the government representative to insist that the government set such limits in regulation before we have a final vote on Bill C-45.

Senator Harder: Again, I will certainly bring the senator's view to the government. I do want to reassure him and all senators that the regulatory regime that is contemplated is one that contemplates actually established limits.

NATURAL RESOURCES

TRANS MOUNTAIN PIPELINE

Hon. Douglas Black: Before my question, I would, as Senator Black from Alberta, welcome Senator Black from Ontario and assure my colleagues that although we're not related by blood, I know we're related in our love of Canada and our desire to do the best job we possibly can in the Senate of Canada.

My question for the leader relates to Trans Mountain pipeline. Last week, the Government of British Columbia indicated that it would refer the constitutionality of the interprovincial pipeline between Alberta and British Columbia to the B.C. courts. Recognizing, leader, that this is part of a ploy on the part of the British Columbia government to delay, and recognizing that British Columbia will surely lose this reference case and will appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada, I would ask if you could confirm that you would recommend to your colleagues that the Government of Canada refer this matter immediately to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): Again, I thank the honourable senator for his question and for his ongoing vigilance on this important matter. What I can confirm, as I have in the past, is the priority this government attaches to this project and the determination to see it successfully concluded. I will bring to the attention of the appropriate ministerial team, given the nature of the question, to inquire of them as to whether the Government of Canada is contemplating the action the senator is recommending.

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

PRIME MINISTER'S TRIP TO INDIA

Hon. Jean-Guy Dagenais: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate. Rarely has something been so unanimously condemned as Prime Minister Trudeau's family trip to India in the company of a gratuitous delegation and a chef. This trip led to numerous other unacceptable expenses that taxpayers are on the hook for, not to mention as many costume changes as you would see in a Just for Laughs show starring the quick-change artist Arturo Brachetti. It is shameful. The Prime Minister was a laughingstock, not only in Canada, but in several

other countries as well. There is also the question of his dubious and, above all, unexplained ties to the terrorist world. I wonder if the Prime Minister's representative approves of this kind of behaviour. I would also like him to tell us how he would rate this taxpayer-funded trip, on a scale of one to five.

[English]

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): Let me respond to the question by assuring this house that it is the government's view that this trip was indeed important and that the delegation that accompanied the Prime Minister was very much involved in ensuring a high level of business-to-business relationships and cultural exchange.

You will know that there were 20 initiatives and six MOUs agreed to in specific areas like intellectual property, civil nuclear science and technology, education, audiovisual co-production and sports.

Projects will also focus on women's empowerment and research to clean polluted waters and improve environmental conditions.

The government announced \$7.9 million in funding for Grand Challenges Canada; \$11.5 million to the Right Start initiative; and the government has launched Nutrition International's She Shall Grow campaign.

Relevant to the insinuation of the question is that Canada and India reaffirmed the framework for cooperation on countering terrorism and violent extremism in order to collaborate effectively between law enforcement and security agencies and legal and policy practitioners.

This was an extraordinarily important visit and one that follows in the footsteps of other prime ministerial visits in the past.

[Translation]

Senator Dagenais: In an interview with The Globe and Mail last week, Mr. Atwal said he has a friendly relationship with Prime Minister Trudeau and had a private chat with him in his Hummer. Can the government leader tell us whether that is true or false?

[English]

Senator Harder: I can confirm what the Prime Minister has already stated publicly and that the Prime Minister is unacquainted with the person in question, and, as I indicated earlier, when the government became aware of the invitation it was rescinded.

FINANCE

PHOENIX PAY SYSTEM

Hon. Jane Cordy: My question is a follow-up to Senator Mercer's question on the Phoenix pay system. I wonder, Senator Harder, if you would check with the powers that be on the other

side and table the contract that was signed between the previous government and IBM, particularly relating to follow-up services to the pay system.

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I will endeavour to do that.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

PRIME MINISTER'S TRIP TO INDIA

Hon. Claude Carignan: My question is about the definition of "friends."

[*Translation*]

My question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Last week, Prime Minister Trudeau invited Jaspal Atwal to several official receptions during his trip to India. Mr. Atwal is a terrorist who has been convicted of attempted murder. He told journalists that he knows Justin Trudeau well and has met him on several occasions over the past 15 years. Mr. Atwal also said that he is friends with Mr. Trudeau, a claim the Prime Minister's Office denies.

According to the Ethics Commissioner's December report on Mr. Trudeau's trip to the Aga Khan's island, Mr. Trudeau said that he was friends with the Aga Khan, that he knew him well, and that he had met with him a number of times over the past 15 years. The Ethics Commissioner disputed those claims.

Can the Leader of the Government in the Senate tell us exactly what the Prime Minister means by the word "friend"? Why did the Aga Khan suddenly become Mr. Trudeau's friend during the Ethics Commissioner's investigation while Mr. Atwal was just as suddenly struck from his list of friends last week?

[*English*]

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I want to thank my honourable friend for his question. I thought that was funny.

Senator Neufeld: Only you.

Senator Harder: That's probably true.

Let me reiterate that the Prime Minister is not acquainted with Mr. Atwal, and when the invitation to the dinner was made known to the government, the invitation was rescinded.

[*Translation*]

Senator Carignan: I will repeat my question. What is the Prime Minister of Canada's definition of "friend"?

• (1500)

[*English*]

Senator Harder: I would have to take that under advisement, as my honourable friend suggests.

JUSTICE HEALTH

CANNABIS BILL

Hon. Serge Joyal: The government leader can rest assured, my question is not about the Indian carnival.

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): That's a relief.

[*Translation*]

In a February 23 letter to the federal Ministers of Justice and Health, Quebec's Minister responsible for Canadian Relations and the Canadian Francophonie, Jean-Marc Fournier, raised the importance of first resolving the two governments' difference of opinion about whether a province can prohibit people from growing four cannabis plants at home, as Quebec is seeking to do with its Bill 157.

[*English*]

Can the government leader take it upon himself to make sure that the two federal deputy ministers concerned will get in touch with their Quebec counterparts in the following weeks to resolve, in definitive terms, this issue before the final vote on Bill C-45 so that the bill will not be challenged in court by Quebec in the next days and create uncertainties for the police forces responsible for its enforcement?

Senator Harder: I thank the honourable senator for his question. I will undertake to do that.

However, let me also add that the government, as you would expect, is monitoring the debate in Quebec with great interest and is committing to study what emerges from the National Assembly as they debate their response to, or the integration of, their role.

As you will know, pursuant to Bill C-45, provinces and territories will be able to make additional restrictions on personal cultivation. As the Minister of Justice has said, there are limits to the extent that a province or territory can adapt rules to their circumstances.

I would also note that the Premier of Quebec welcomed the predictability provided for the legislative timetable that this chamber has agreed to with regard to Bill C-45. I know that the Government of Quebec is anxious to have a smooth implementation process, and the issue you're raising is one that we'll need to ensure is part of that.

Senator Joyal: In fact, would it not be better to amend Bill C-45 to recognize the capacity of a province to ban, for a period of time, the cultivation of four plants of cannabis in private residences or dwellings to clear up the uncertainty that could be very damaging and, in fact, give rise to a parallel illegal market of cannabis in direct competition with the legal sale of cannabis in the government's stores?

Senator Harder: Again, I thank the honourable senator for his question. I think the time for the debate on potential amendments will soon be upon us. At that time, I would be happy to report to the chamber the positions of the Government of Canada on various amendments that may or may not find favour in this chamber.

Let me simply say that the Government of Canada welcomes the engagement of this chamber on this important piece of legislation, and I welcome the return of Senator Dean to help us manage the debate effectively.

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

SENATE AND FEDERAL OFFICE APPOINTMENT PROCESS

Hon. Denise Batters: Last week, the Trudeau government trumpeted improvements to their so-called new independent, non-partisan Senate appointment process. Applications are now open year-round and you can apply on their website. You can nominate yourself. You can nominate your buddies and special interest groups can nominate their people. They say applicants will be reviewed by supposedly non-partisan, independent Senate advisory panels, one for each province or territory.

The problem is, every position on every single Senate advisory panel is vacant, except for the federal chair, Huguette Labelle. Those must be some very lonely meetings.

The Trudeau government claims to have an open and transparent Senate appointment process. In fact, 28 out of 29 positions are so transparent, they're invisible. Ten days ago, the Prime Minister advised us that we have two new Senate colleagues from Ontario. Who were the panellists for those Senate selections, other than Ms. Labelle and Gerry Butts?

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): Gerry Butts is not a member of the panel.

Senator Batters: We'll wait to hear who the other panellists were.

The Trudeau government's 28-month track record on federal appointments is abysmal. The government has neglected to fill 600 federal government appointments, a new record, including 63 crucial judicial vacancies. Boards with essential roles, like the Immigration and Refugee Board, can't function without members. Meanwhile last week's government press release on Senate appointments states:

For the next applications review cycle, the Independent Advisory Board will review applications that are submitted by April 3, 2018.

That's one month from now.

The Trudeau government has a failed record on filling appointments. Only 1 out of 29 Senate advisory panellists is even in place right now. Why does this Liberal government continue to make promises it knows it can't keep?

Senator Harder: Let me try to parse out the questions and respond.

There are a number of jurisdictions in Canada in which Senate vacancies have only recently come about, and those jurisdictions will have to establish the advisory panel.

Premiers, as honourable senators will know, are part, at least if they wish, of the nominating process for the independent panels that are provincially based or territorially based. That process, I understand, is under way so that the commitments being made with respect to the time frame can be respected.

That's with respect to the independent process for Senate appointments, and I know that my colleagues in this place who are part of that process would take issue with your suggestion that it is a partisan process.

With regard to the judiciary appointments, this government made a commitment with respect to ensuring diversity not only in the appointments that it made but in the process of the appointments and, therefore, took some time to re-establish the advisory panels in various jurisdictions to ensure that the advisory panels themselves reflected the diversity that the government wished appointments to reflect. I'm happy to report, as I have on other occasions, that that is exactly what has happened.

Hon. Percy E. Downe: Obviously, colleagues, the Prime Minister's appointment system has gone downhill ever since Marjory LeBreton left. We will look for a rebound at some point. Half of the people wouldn't know who that was, but anyway, we'll carry on.

I want to thank Senator Harder. It was mere weeks ago that I raised concerns about the Senate appointment process, the nomination process, the time frame and when people could apply. All of that apparently was cleaned up last week. I read on the website that the appointment process is now very clear.

It was, again, just mere weeks ago that I raised concerns about representation in the Senate and that we didn't have any fishermen or fisherwomen, any farmers or any veterans.

I'm delighted to see the new Senator Black here, and only those from rural Canada would recognize the significance of the tie he wore today, indicating his rural roots. He is a tremendous new appointment to the chamber.

Obviously, one is not enough. There are many more vacancies to fill.

I checked the Senate website. I note that we currently have 18 lawyers, which is a good thing. I want to footnote that. The Speaker himself is a lawyer. Their legal training is very helpful in working through legislation. We have 13 professors, a dozen businessmen and women, journalists, chartered accountants, nurses, teachers and so on, but again, we're missing some very important voices.

We have done very well with representation. Forty-five per cent of senators are women compared to only 27 per cent of members of the House of Commons, but the other forms of diversity need to be addressed, including those from the primary

industries, including farming, fishing, agriculture and agri-food and those who wore the uniform of the Canadian Forces in the service of their nation.

Particularly with veterans, I would urge the government to consider people with the rank of colonel and below. Almost all of our issues with veterans and their families are of the lower ranks. Those who are colonels and above seem to be well taken care of by the current system. We never hear any complaints from them. We hear massive complaints at the other end. I think that's another area the government could consider.

Given Senator Harder's success at addressing my earlier concerns, I wonder if you can pass these concerns on. We look forward to a resolution within the next few weeks or days.

Senator Harder: Senator, I welcome your comments and I hope I can have an equally timely effect. I did note, though, that you didn't reference the fact that we have only one chief of staff to a Prime Minister here, and that too would be a deficiency, I would have thought.

• (1510)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CANNABIS BILL

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—
DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Dean, seconded by the Honourable Senator Forest, for the second reading of Bill C-45, An Act respecting cannabis and to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Criminal Code and other Acts.

Hon. Richard Neufeld: Honourable senators, I rise today at second reading to speak to Bill C-45, an act to legalize and regulate cannabis. Bill C-45 is one of those once-in-a-lifetime bills.

Despite the attempts of ministers and others to convince me to think otherwise, I feel too many unanswered questions and unintended consequences will result with the passing of this bill.

The purpose of this bill, according to clause 7, is to protect public health and public safety. The bill also lists seven specific objectives. Three of those objectives are: number one, to restrict youth access to cannabis; two, reduce the burden on the criminal justice system; and three, deter and reduce criminal activity. I am not convinced Bill C-45 is the answer to these objectives. I would even say, as many experts argue, that Bill C-45 contradicts the basis of these objectives.

While I recognize the Trudeau government feels its agenda to legalize marijuana is progressive, I have serious concerns with a number of aspects of this bill. The literature on this subject matter is extensive. We have to get this right. We owe it to our kids and our future generations.

With my limited time, I want to focus on two issues that I think need to be thoroughly reviewed — drug impairment in the workplace and youth access to marijuana.

I come from northeastern British Columbia. Oil and gas, agriculture, forestry and heavy industries are the driving forces of our local economy. These are highly specialized fields, with heavy equipment operators working in sometimes hazardous environments. We all know that employers are required by law to ensure a safe work environment. Most have codes of conduct or workplace safety and health policies that forbid workers from being drug impaired, but the best code of conduct is not always foolproof.

Last year, the Canadian Human Resources Professionals Association published a report called *Clearing the Haze: The Impacts of Marijuana in the Workplace*. The association conducted an exclusive members-only survey to identify employers' concerns. The top five concerns were: number one, employees operating motor vehicles; number two, disciplinary measures; number three, decreased work performance; number four, employees using heavy machinery; and five, attendance.

Workplace safety was the top concern. As the report states:

Marijuana is already the most commonly encountered substance in workplace drug testing, but its use is expected to grow exponentially after full legalization.

Which begs the question: What tools are available to employers to ensure their employees are not impaired on the job?

Doctors of BC recognizes that, unlike measurements of blood alcohol, there is currently insufficient scientific evidence to link a particular blood THC level with impairment. As they point out, tests on oral fluid testing devices are still being conducted to ensure their reliability and accuracy, and, while such devices may be coming, they do not exist now. That is an issue.

We all know that companies in many industries, including the oil and gas sector, conduct non-random drug and alcohol testing. We also know that many work sites are dry. In other words, no alcohol or drugs are allowed on site. But what about random testing? What would be accepted? Consider this recent court decision.

Suncor is a major oil company. Last year, it decided that it wanted to conduct random tests to bolster workplace safety. Unifor argued that random tests would be a violation of the rights and privacy of its 3,000 or so members. In a December 2017 decision, a judge ruled with the union. Disappointed with the court's injunction, Suncor said:

Preventing Suncor from taking steps to address known safety hazards associated with workplace alcohol and drug use is not reasonable.

The union, for its part, felt that the ruling gave weight to a person's dignity on the job and that human rights were being upheld.

I find it concerning that someone would disagree with allowing an employer to randomly test someone. Many work in high-risk environments where a person's motor control, balance or reaction time, all of which can be affected by the consumption of marijuana, could be a matter of life or death.

The BC Trucking Association also weighed in on the issue. It agrees on a regulatory framework to allow employers of workers in safety-sensitive occupations to conduct random workplace drug and alcohol testing.

As the Canadian Trucking Alliance argues, trucking companies will be faced with two new dangers with this bill: first, how to ensure truck drivers are not under the influence; and, second, the likelihood of increased danger to their own drivers through the presence of more motorists operating while impaired.

The alliance believes that until there is clear evidence and a complete understanding of what level of impairment is deemed to be considered safe, a zero-tolerance policy regarding the presence of marijuana in a truck driver's system is the only safe choice. Yet, in the absence of roadside tests to measure impairment and/or if impairment cannot be measured on the job, it will be impossible for employers to enforce a zero-tolerance policy.

In a brief tabled before the Task Force on Cannabis Legalization and Regulation, the association representing 500,000 federally regulated employees for the transportation and communication sectors recommended that government pass legislation allowing employers in the federal sector to conduct random drug and alcohol testing for safety-sensitive positions.

I'm no legal scholar, but Bill C-45 could create a legislative vacuum with regard to random testing and lead to more litigation and uncertainty in the law. I raise these questions because I am worried about the unintended consequences of legalizing marijuana on safety at work.

I don't want to address drug-impaired driving today, but there are many similarities with impairment in the workplace. All I will say is that the results of the March 2016 survey of 3,000 Canadians shows that, of those who drive high, 44 per cent of them think they can drive safely.

Now onto youth and cannabis.

The second issue I want to address is youth. I think it's fair to say that this issue is likely top of mind for most of us. Bill C-45 is based on the principle that marijuana should be far from the hands of kids. Unfortunately, this bill is contradicting that principle.

The Canadian Paediatric Society argues that cannabis legislation will have a significant impact on the lives and health of children and youth, and safeguards are necessary. Based on the physical and mental health risks and with many legal, financial and public safety issues at stake, policy-makers must continue to limit access to cannabis.

I agree with the Canadian Paediatric Society. We must limit youth access to marijuana. This bill does not achieve that goal.

Doctors of BC have stated that evidence suggests that the younger a person starts using cannabis, the greater the risks for a variety of adverse health and social outcomes, which may include injury, substance abuse and mental health or education problems.

Further, statistics show that 1 in 6 people who start using cannabis as a teenager become addicted to it. We also know that frequent and continued use in early adolescence has been associated with increased risk of harms. Brain development can be affected until the age of 25 and perhaps even beyond that, as noted by some members in the Senate.

Having said that, I have concerns with clause 8 of the bill, which basically allows young persons to possess and distribute five grams or less of dried cannabis or its equivalent. In this context, youth would not face criminal prosecution or be subject to a criminal record. Anything above five grams would be subject to the Youth Criminal Justice Act. For context, one joint typically contains 0.33 to 1 gram of dried marijuana, so kids could have anywhere between 5 and 15 joints on them at any time.

• (1520)

I find it remarkable when the Ministers of Health and Justice write that they "... have been encouraging provinces and territories to establish offences to prohibit young people from possessing any amount of cannabis." According to the Minister of Justice, all those who have introduced cannabis legislation have established such prohibitions.

The government claims it wants to keep marijuana out of the hands of youth. If that's the case, why hasn't it prohibited it entirely and not allow the 5-gram provision?

Many of us are grandparents. Is it reasonable for our grandkids to carry 5 grams of dried cannabis? My oldest grandson is 9. In a few years he could pack around 5 grams. I find it amazing that we would have a bill that says we want to keep it out of the hands of young people, yet at 12 years old he could pack around 5 grams of it. Think about the peer pressure on those kids in school. Kids can hardly go to school now without the right pair of jeans on, let alone having a few joints in their pocket. I don't want my grandkids to have to face that. In no way, shape or form do I want that to happen.

While I appreciate not criminalizing youth for possession of small amounts of marijuana — and I agree with that — one needs to question where this youth would have access to cannabis in the first place. Under the current law and even under Bill C-45, youth cannot buy marijuana legally. The Justice Minister told us, “Youth should not have any amount of cannabis.” Yet her bill allows for it. Talk about a contradiction. How can that be? Further, she adds, “There will be no legal means for a young person to obtain recreational cannabis.”

The black market will continue to serve our youth. In fact, I’m worried it will cater specifically to them in some ways. As Senator White said:

Clearly, the legalization of marijuana will have no impact on black market illegal trafficking among youth purchasers. Any suggestion here by the minister or the Prime Minister or this government is untrue.

I agree with that statement. Further, the government argues that this bill seeks to eliminate illegal cannabis-related activities. Minister Goodale feels that Canadians will adapt to purchasing behaviours and switch to legal pot shops. Unbelievable. I think that’s a little naive. Some may, some may not. Last time I checked, there is still an illicit tobacco market out there generating millions of illegal dollars.

The private home cultivation of four plants will make marijuana much more readily accessible to youth. As the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police submit, the “personal cultivation provisions are counter to the bill’s stated objective of protecting youth.” That’s what I talked about earlier.

I want to go back to one of the underlying objectives of this bill, to keep marijuana away from our youth. Like the chiefs of police, I’m actually worried that this bill will lead to increased exposure and consumption. This could also lead to addiction. Some have even talked about marijuana as a gateway drug. Many questions remain unanswered.

Marijuana is a gateway drug as far as I’m concerned. I can stand here today at 73 years of age and say I’ve never touched illegal drugs, none, except alcohol. It’s not illegal. It’s legal.

Senator Lankin: Was it when you were younger?

Senator Neufeld: I can tell you what happens with alcohol, and it’s similar to drugs. I didn’t start drinking whiskey. I started drinking beer, the lighter stuff, the gateway, cheap wine. At that time, wine was cheap in British Columbia. That’s a long time ago. You could drink as much as you wanted. You went on to drinking the hard stuff. For 35 years I’ve been clear. I’m an alcoholic. I don’t drink alcohol in any way, shape or form and haven’t touched it for just under 35 years.

I believe that marijuana is much the same as alcohol, and it’s something that will get our kids started on it. I don’t drive around Vancouver as much as I used to, but when I go to the Downtown Eastside and I see what’s happened there with people’s lives, it is terribly sad. I don’t think those people just started on heroin or the hard drugs. I think many of them started on marijuana.

Senator Tkachuk: Absolutely, almost all of them.

Senator Neufeld: They continued on to the hard drugs.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Senator Neufeld, I’m sorry to interrupt you, but your time is up.

Senator Neufeld: May I ask for another five minutes?

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Agreed?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Neufeld: Thank you. I won’t take a full five. I just have a few things left to say.

That part worries me an awful lot. It worries me about the youth. It worries me about my grandkids who will be subject to this, that they can carry around 12 grams. I find it terrible.

One of the underlying objectives of this bill is to keep marijuana away from our youth. Like the chiefs of police, I’m actually worried that this bill will lead to increased exposure and consumption. This could also lead to addiction. Some have even talked about marijuana as a gateway drug, as I said. Many questions remain unanswered.

In conclusion, while I highlighted a few issues that I’m concerned about, many other issues need to be addressed, for example, the unreliable and unscientific drug recognition testing, law enforcement training, revenue sharing with municipalities, the sale and accessibility of edibles, and the list goes on.

I am confident that the committees that have been tasked with studying Bill C-45 will do a thorough review. I hope they will take into consideration all of the points of contention that have been raised by senators during second reading debate.

In my view, this bill is inconsistent with the government’s intended goals, which is why I will not support it. Thank you.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Senator Neufeld, would you take a question?

Hon. Tony Dean: Senator Neufeld, thank you for outlining some of the questions we have in this chamber about Bill C-45. We’re all concerned about the health of young people. We’re all concerned about workplace health and safety.

One of the things I'm pleased about right now is that we're having open discussions about these issues as a result of the introduction of this bill. They're all issues that predated the introduction of the bill, and I think it's good for kids and good for public health in Canada that we're having this discussion now.

I want to ask about two things; one is the so-called 5-gram allowance for kids between 12 and 17. I'm glad that you mentioned it. Bill C-45 was clear that such an allowance was available, and it left the provinces and territories the ability to bury that if they wished. I wonder if you're aware that the large majority, in fact all provinces and territories that landed on implementation plans and enabling legislation, have removed any access to a 5-gram allowance, that nobody under the age of 18 or 19 should have legal access to cannabis or a free pass, so the 5-gram allowance across provinces and territories is essentially being eliminated.

I would raise one other question with you. I wonder if you're aware of the age 18 and 19 limits, where the federal government set a minimum age of 18 and then gave to provinces and territories the ability to set a higher limit if they wished. All those provinces that currently have plans — and that's the large majority of provinces — have landed on 18 or 19. I wonder if you're also aware that, on the question of ages 18 and 19, the Canadian Public Health Association, the Canadian Paediatric Society, the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse and Addiction, the Canadian Centre for Addictions and Mental Health, the Canadian Association of Paediatric Health Centres, Paediatric Chairs of Canada, the Canadian Mental Health Association, registered nurses and the Institut Nationale de Santé Publique have landed —

• (1530)

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Senator Dean, could you get to the point?

Senator Dean: — on age 18.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Where is the question?

Senator Dean: That is the question. I wanted to know if the senator is aware that 5 grams is being eliminated across the country by provinces and territories.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Honourable senators, we're out of time. I'm sorry, but Senator Neufeld's time is up.

Senator Neufeld, are you requesting more time?

Senator Neufeld: Yes. I could just give a quick answer.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Are we in agreement, honourable senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Neufeld: In answer to your questions about youth — and that's one I'll stay on — the purpose of the bill:

(a) protect the health of young persons by restricting their access to cannabis;

Why did the federal government have to leave it to the provinces to do that when they wrote in the bill that kids could actually carry it when they're 12 years old? Why didn't they actually live up to what they wanted to do? Why do the provinces have to do it? This is a federal bill and federal legislation, and the federal government should have had the sense to do it in the first place, instead of saying to the provinces, "Now it's in your court. You do whatever." Thank goodness the provinces have the good sense and the brains to say, "We're going to do something about this crazy thing." Thank goodness they did, because it seemed to be that the federal government couldn't figure that out.

Hon. Betty Unger: Honourable senators, the Liberal government's plan to legalize marijuana will make Canada the first developed country in the world to do so. This fact alone should give us pause.

So what is it with this plant — this weed — that makes it a pariah in all other democratic countries and the reason Canada should not, absolutely not, be contemplating legalization?

Why is it that these Canadian institutions that were mentioned: the Canadian Medical Association, Psychiatric Association, Paediatric Society and the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, have all been voicing their concerns about the negative impacts of cannabis?

Question: To whom is this Trudeau government listening and/or taking advice from?

Let's consider some facts. The main psychoactive chemical that today's users seek and the chemical that is responsible for most of the intoxicating effects is commonly known as THC, or Delta 9 tetrahydrocannabinol.

Upon consumption of marijuana, THC enters the lungs, is quickly absorbed into the bloodstream and gets carried to the brain, where it begins to interfere with normal brain activity.

The chemical structure of THC is remarkably similar to a naturally occurring brain chemical called anandamide which functions as a neurotransmitter in the brain, sending chemical messages between nerve cells and throughout the nervous system. This similarity allows THC to mimic the role of anandamide which then allows the THC to alter normal brain communications and to be recognized by the body.

But THC is much stronger than anandamide and can have profoundly negative effects such as impaired thinking, interference with the ability to learn and perform complicated tasks and also disrupting functioning of brain areas that regulate balance, coordination and reaction time, to name but a few.

Simply put: If someone attempts to rewire the electrical system of your car by altering a system that is complex, delicate and carefully designed, you would be alarmed and probably outraged because you would know that your car will never again run properly. This scenario is the developing brain on marijuana.

Effects of THC are felt almost immediately, with feelings of euphoria and relaxation, but the pleasant feelings are by no means universal. Others may experience feelings of anxiety, panic, paranoia or fear, potentially caused by unexpected THC concentrations, excessive consumption or if the user is inexperienced.

An acute psychosis with delusions and hallucinations is possible with large THC doses, but these temporary reactions are distinct from the permanent damage — most importantly, to the brain — from persistent marijuana usage. Study after study has demonstrated that THC impairs the wiring of a young person's brain in an irreversible manner.

Regular marijuana use by children and by youth — those under the age of 25 — permanently alters their brain size, structure and function, and brain fibre connectivity is diminished.

Regular usage by children and youth under the age of 25 has been linked to poor school performance, increased school dropout rates, a significant decrease in IQ that does not recover with cessation, increased risk for psychotic disorders, a decrease in initiative later in life, resulting in diminished lifetime achievements, and the gateway effect of marijuana has been well documented.

But in addition to being stronger than anandamide, THC remains in the body's fatty tissues for much longer. This is because THC is fat soluble. After being rapidly absorbed into the bloodstream, THC can attach to — and be stored in — fatty deposits in the body, impacting brain functioning for potentially untold periods of time.

But the harm doesn't end there. THC which has been sequestered in body fat can be released back into the bloodstream of the user possibly by exercise, fasting or trauma. Upon re-entry into the bloodstream, the THC again travels to the brain and can produce a second high which, although less intensive, has the same negative impacts.

The implications of this are numerous. A couple of examples: Researchers tell us it is possible that THC concentrations re-released into the blood could reach sufficient levels to cause cannabinoid-related cognitive deficits. For example, having smoked a joint a week ago, a near-miss car accident could release THC back into the person's bloodstream, causing possible impairment.

Heavy marijuana users have been known to give positive urine samples after 77 days of drug abstinence. This introduces significant complications when doing drug testing for employment or impairment.

But marijuana doesn't just harm children and young adults. Marijuana exposure during pregnancy results in lower birth weights, an increased risk of behavioural problems and neurocognitive challenges regarding short-term memory.

Anandamide is responsible for the development of the fetal brain and marijuana consumption — even in low concentrations — during pregnancy interferes with this process.

• (1540)

Additionally, in 2009, the *Journal of Toxicology* reported:

Due to the intake of cannabis . . . by mothers, infant children depending on breast-feeding might exhibit physiological effects such as sedation, reduced muscle tone and other adverse effects.

Furthermore, while marijuana reportedly helps minimize nausea, heavy use can lead to episodes of violent retching and abdominal pain, a condition known as Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome or CHS. At one time this condition was considered to be quite rare, but a study published last month in the journal *Basic & Clinical Pharmacology & Toxicology* found that amongst frequent marijuana users over one third presented CHS symptoms.

Colleagues, time doesn't allow me to attempt to detail more of the many negative health impacts that are caused by marijuana usage, but these impacts are real, and they are many. The question is, what can be done?

The primary way to reduce the harm caused by marijuana or any illegal drug is to reduce usage. Legalization will do the opposite. Rather than reducing consumption, legalization will cause it to increase. Legalization creates normalization of a dangerous, life-altering drug, which reduces the perception of risk.

Researchers have observed for decades that “when anti-drug attitudes soften there is a corresponding increase in drug use in the coming years.” That is from the United States Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Agency.

The DEA goes on to say:

An adolescent's perception of the risks associated with substance use is an important determinant of whether he or she engages in substance use . . . youths who perceive high risk of harm are less likely to use drugs than youths who perceive low risk of harm.

The historical record clearly illustrates this fact.

If you look at the historical usage of marijuana by youth, you will find that, over the last 50 years, the rate of use has followed a nearly identical trend line in both the U.S. and in Canada. In the early 1970s, usage began to increase rapidly until 1978, when it peaked at about 35 per cent in Canada and 37 per cent in the U.S.

But then usage began to drop — steadily and rapidly — for the next 13 years, until it reached a low of almost 12 per cent in 1992. This downward trend stopped in 1993, when youth usage began to rise again quite quickly, and by 2015, settled in at roughly 22 per cent in the U.S. and 24 per cent in Canada. That's according to Statistics Canada.

The question is, why did it change?

The American Society of Addiction Medicine studied this in 2012 and found that over the last 40 years youth usage has moved in concert with the perceived risk of harm. When perception of harm goes down, usage goes up; when perception of harm goes up, usage goes down. When plotted on a graph, the lines move in almost perfect symmetry. You will see these graphs. They're being emailed to everyone.

So what caused the plunge in usage through the 1980s and early 1990s? Researchers have noted that the decline coincided with the rise of "The Parents' Movement" in the United States. This movement has been credited with changing public attitude towards marijuana, resulting in a change of government policy under President Reagan.

Concerned parents worked hard to educate their kids and the government about the harms of pot usage. Marijuana became de-normalized and the perception of risk increased. What became known as "The Parents' Movement" lasted from 1978 to roughly 1992. This time frame coincides with the largest drop in youth usage of marijuana in history, as youth were provided information about the harms and risks of usage.

To date, the U.S. federal government has not legalized marijuana, and in the States which have legalized, the minimum age for use is 21.

So changes are needed. Canada of late has become very concerned about "concussions," with many strict protocols being implemented by sports organizations around the globe dealing with this serious issue. But most concussions heal with time without life being altered. Yet, in this place, we senators appear to be ready to appease the Trudeau government and agree with legalizing this noxious weed which is known to cause permanent, irreversible damage to our most vulnerable groups, our children and our young adults.

Why would we say "yes," when the horrible, irreversible consequences are proven by MRI and brain scans and autopsies?

Senator Galvez, in her recent speech, had many questions for the government. Each senator in this place should have many questions. Senators, I remind you that we are in this place representing 30 million Canadians.

We should, each of us, have 50 questions for this government, and we should demand answers from this government. And we, the select few with sober second thought, should not consider saying "yes" to this odious legislation until we, on behalf of all Canadians, have all the answers. I believe that, at a minimum, an intensive four-year education blitz should begin now before any government contemplates legislation. As our American neighbours have shown, when people of all ages have all the facts, they just say "no." Thank you.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Senator Unger, Senator Pratte I think would like to ask a question and you're out of time.

Senator Unger: Could I have more time to answer a question?

[Senator Unger]

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Honourable senators, are you in agreement with five more minutes?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Hon. André Pratte: Will you take a question?

Senator Unger: Yes.

Senator Pratte: Senator, you mentioned in your interesting speech the fact that the percentage of users has varied over time, but there is one factor that you did not mention, the fact that this evolution has been totally indifferent to the prohibition regime and the fact that, for instance, when you look at the number of arrests in Canada over the years, whether the number of arrests has increased or decreased over the years, the percentage of users has been totally indifferent to that. After all, this is why we're here. We're here to replace an inefficient prohibition regime with something else.

Would you agree that at least the prohibition regime has not been working to reduce use and that we should look at something different?

Senator Unger: Senator Pratte, I didn't speak about convictions or sentencing, but I do know that legalization means normalization. Kids who may never have considered using marijuana, now that it's legal, they're going to go and try it because the government said it's okay; it's now legal. So I think that what is needed, as was the case in the United States, is education, not after this legislation passes but before this legislation passes. Beyond that, I have no further comment.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

• (1550)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Lucie Moncion: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Bill C-45, An Act respecting cannabis and to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Criminal Code and other Acts. This bill deals with a very sensitive and complex matter that will change the social and cultural fabric of this country.

Talking about legalizing and decriminalizing marijuana is one thing, but discussing its effects and ways we can help young people between the ages of 10 and 17 is quite another. In my view, this aspect has not been sufficiently addressed in the study of this bill and therefore lies at the heart of our concerns.

This bill does not suggest any solutions regarding early use of marijuana and the mental health problems that are likely to develop as a result.

[English]

Many of us believe that marijuana education, prevention and awareness programs are inadequate, and that the investments being considered in this area are insufficient. The same is true for investments in research into the harmful effects of marijuana and the implementation of addiction programs.

According to an article on the BBC website under the heading "Health," adolescence would now extend from the age of 10 to 24 years old. This period of life dedicated to exploration and adventure is the stage where the individual tries to define himself as a future adult, where he believes himself invincible and safe from danger. The desire to experience all that life has to offer is exhilarating. Young people want to explore sex, drugs, cigarettes and thrill-seeking experiences. It is the very nature of the individual going through an exhilarating period of his life.

For these reasons, and as we have seen, the elimination of cannabis use among young people is wishful thinking.

[Translation]

My remarks at second reading are meant to add to the debate and complement the observations made by my colleagues who have already talked about what concerns them the most with regard to Bill C-45. I hope my contribution will help the committee members who will be studying this issue better understand the aspects that are troubling us, so they can assure us that nothing has been overlooked in the study of this important bill.

[English]

I will focus on the key issues surrounding the regulatory framework for Bill C-45, specifically with respect to the multiple licence categories that will be awarded, the licensing process and the security clearance. I will briefly discuss the financial aspect of this bill, including the Canadian market for production, the selling price per ounce, and the supply and demand management. Finally, I will provide comments on edible cannabis and unregulated cultivation of marijuana plants.

[Translation]

Bill C-45 proposes 11 different kinds of licences and permits, including four for production, two for processing, three for testing, research and exportation, and two for the sale of cannabis products for medical or recreational purposes.

The licences and permits have three specific objectives: 1) to enable a diverse, competitive legal industry comprised of both large and small players in regions across the country; 2) to reduce the risk that organized crime will infiltrate the legal industry; and 3) to provide for legal cannabis products that meet high quality standards. Health Canada will be responsible for overseeing the record checks and for issuing, tracking and managing these licences or permits, except those having to do with the retail sale of medical and recreational products, which will fall under provincial and territorial jurisdiction.

Because the process for issuing licences and permits will be complicated and there could be violations, we will need a framework that better defines how the RCMP, the Department of Justice, and Canadian police forces will work together.

[English]

On the basis of the information provided by the various police forces, it is proposed that the minister may refuse a security clearance to all persons associated with organized crime or who have had previous convictions for drug trafficking with young people, for corruption, money laundering, fraud or violent offences.

It is also proposed that the names of the directors and officers, not only of the organizations applying for the licence or permit but also of their parent company, be provided. The names of the shareholders holding more than 25 per cent of the shares must be provided to prevent the real owners from evading the transparency requirements.

[Translation]

At the outset, I must say that the logistics surrounding the cultivation, production and sale of recreational cannabis will be onerous. The large number of licences and permits and the regulations governing the overall operation of this new industry will be even more complex when it comes to issuing licences, tracking crops, and monitoring production and supply chains. The government will have to be particularly vigilant when issuing these licences and permits.

Furthermore, the regulations on the recreational cannabis industry will require frequent monitoring and inspections of the production chain, the processing system, and the retail outlets. Producers will be required to conduct systematic quality-control tests, follow good production practices, and keep current records on production volumes, amounts in storage, and the quality of the products on the market.

[English]

The government will have to put in place a monitoring system along the supply chain to ensure the quality and conformity of products to established standards, compliance with the rules on the sale of consumer products and to prevent derivation of legally produced cannabis to the illicit market.

The costs associated with the implementation of this new infrastructure will be high and will require the hiring of a highly skilled and competent workforce to meet the monitoring and control requirements. Without questioning the government's skills in this area, there are still unknowns about the management and implementation of this new industry.

[Translation]

The cannabis market represents an excellent business opportunity for Canada. Although we may not agree with legalization, the fact remains that there will be significant economic spinoffs associated with this industry and that more

and more countries will move toward legalizing marijuana. Currently, Canada is the largest producer of medicinal cannabis in the world, with producers primarily concentrated in Ontario.

[English]

A Canadian company specializing in the production of cannabis for medical purposes has eight facilities located in Ontario, Quebec and Saskatchewan. The company's executives are working to establish an additional 2.4 million square feet in Canada for the production of cannabis for recreational purposes. The economic benefits associated with this market and the generation of jobs will be important for the provinces of Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick and British Columbia.

In addition, this company has already entered into business partnerships with other countries, including Jamaica, Chile, Brazil, Germany, Spain, Denmark and Australia, which gives additional access to raw materials and strains of different cannabis plants.

[Translation]

That brings me to the subject of retail pricing and managing cannabis supply and demand. One of the government's stated objectives with Bill C-45 is to reduce or even eliminate the illegal cannabis market. To that end, it is essential that we study the matter of pricing.

[English]

The Parliamentary Budget Officer has issued a report on the subject and recommends that the median price of 1 gram of cannabis be around \$7.50 before applicable taxes. The report focuses on the unit price, 1 gram of cannabis, and not that of larger purchases.

The study commissioned by the federal government, Price of Weed, also refers to a price per gram of between \$7.14 and \$7.69. This price depends on the quality of the product. If the government wants to tackle the illicit cannabis market, it will have to take into account the current purchasing habits of regular users, who buy much more by volume than by unit.

The three most popular quantities bought on the illegal market are 7 grams that sell for around \$50. One ounce, which contains 28 grams, sells for between \$120 and \$190, and a quarter of a pound, which contains four times 28 grams, sells for around \$400. The cost of a gram sold varies between \$3.57 and \$7.14, depending on the quantity purchased. This leads me to question the unit price set by the government. How can \$10 a gram help the government compete with the illegal market?

• (1600)

[Translation]

According to the recommendations of the Task Force on Cannabis Legalization and Regulation, there would be a limit of 30 grams for personal possession of non-medical dried cannabis in public. How much will those 30 grams cost? \$300?

[Senator Moncion]

Although some will say that legal products are of better quality and their THC and CBD levels are less variable, the fact remains that the price in the legal market is high, which leads us to believe that the profits of the legal market will be lower than projected.

[English]

The percentage of THC contained in cannabis will also be an important factor in comparing the two markets. The illegal market offers THC concentrates up to around 30 per cent, whereas Bill C-45 refers to a concentrate of less than 10 per cent.

According to the recommendations of the working group on the legalization and regulation of cannabis, the concentrate should not exceed 15 per cent. This component needs to be studied carefully. On the one hand, a 10 per cent concentrate of cannabis better protects the health and safety of the population. On the other hand, this percentage is too low to attract regular users.

[Translation]

Lastly, how will supply in the legal market be managed? What will happen if the supply of cannabis exceeds demand? Will the price go down? Will the government ask producers to destroy their excess production? Will excess production be collected by the government and turned over to organizations doing cannabis research? What about the opposite situation? If supply falls short of demand, where will we get the product to make up the difference? What will happen to the price?

Let's now examine edible products containing cannabis, which will only become available 12 months after Bill C-45 is implemented. This 12-month period will be key in order for the government to adequately prepare and make the public aware of the properties of edible products.

[English]

Edible cannabis is available in a wide variety of foods, including cooking oils and beverages, ointments, extracts, creams and concentrates. With the legalization of cannabis, we will find it in thousands of new products.

The Colorado experience tells us that these products are very popular. However, their effects are less understood than those of smoked cannabis, and it is more difficult to control the amount of THC consumed, which represents a danger in terms of overconsumption. While the effect of cannabis is felt, on average, nine minutes after being smoked, the effect of an edible product takes longer to appear. The consumer will need to be informed and given instructions as to the maximum quantities that can be taken at one time.

[Translation]

Colorado's experience shows that the accidental consumption of cannabis by children is a real danger. The number of incidents involving children under the age of eight more than doubled after edible products were legalized.

The 12-month period between the legalization of cannabis and the legalization of cannabis edibles must be used to make consumers aware that these products can be dangerous.

[English]

The working group that has studied the legalization and regulation of cannabis recommends prohibiting any product that is deemed attractive to children, including products that look like or mimic familiar foods, that have a candy-like packaging, that are brightly coloured or are attractive to children.

In addition, this same working group recommends that the packaging be opaque, reclosable and childproof. These edible products could even be placed in sealed, difficult to open containers, as is currently the case for some pharmaceuticals and highly toxic products or poisons.

[Translation]

Packaging for such products must provide a list of ingredients and the maximum quantity of THC and CBD per serving, as well as a health warning and a safety warning indicating that the product could pose a risk to children.

The last point I want to talk about is safety when it comes to home-grown marijuana plants. We know that this bill will allow people to grow four plants per “dwelling-house.” Reasonable safety precautions must be taken to prevent these plants from being stolen and to keep them out of the hands of children.

Small-scale cultivation of cannabis in the home is not without risks, particularly when it comes to children’s safety. The current version of the bill does not set out any restrictions with regard to growing these plants in lockable secure areas either indoors or outdoors or with regard to the visibility of the plants from the street or from neighbouring homes.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Senator, your time is up. Would you like five more minutes?

Senator Moncion: Yes, please.

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Moncion: Thank you.

Despite the fact that growing marijuana at home is not necessarily expected to be very popular, proper regulations should still be developed and put in place in order to protect vulnerable people.

[English]

To conclude, I would like to speak on the need to legalize cannabis. Since the late 1960s, thousands of Canadians have used cannabis and are doing so freely. They maintain the organized crime market at over \$4 billion a year.

Despite that we can be against the legalization of cannabis for recreational purposes, the fact remains that products are accessible on the illicit market and that consumers have easy access to them. By legalizing recreational cannabis, we allow the creation of a regulated industry that meets high-quality standards

and over which we have some control. And I say some control. We provide Canadians with standardized products that meet specific inspection standards. In addition, we inform them of the harmful effects of cannabis use on physical and mental health and we allow them to make an informed decision.

Thank you for your attention.

Hon. David Tkachuk: Colleagues, as we have seen time and time again, whether it is with the Minister of Finance’s tax reform proposals, the Minister of Defence’s peacekeeping efforts and now with this cannabis legislation, the government has not paid much attention to the details.

As Kelly McParland writing in the *National Post* put it:

This government is proving itself to be long on messes. The electoral reform mess. The botched inquiry into murdered and missing women. The shambles of a policy on procuring new fighter planes

A government that cannot organize a Prime Minister’s trip to India cannot be trusted with developing the infrastructure for the legalization and sale of marijuana.

This government, as usual, doesn’t seem to have given much thought to the implication of what they are proposing. It’s more interested in the superficialities of their message — tax the rich, Canada is back — than they are in getting the policy right.

That stands to reason. If you are just not ready, your policy isn’t going to be ready either. If there’s any piece of legislation deserving of thoughtful analysis and sober second thought, it is Bill C-45. If the goal is to legalize marijuana, then thoughtful consideration must be given to all gaps which currently exist with a serious effort to address them.

Canadians have lived under the current legal regime for many decades, so what is the emergency? I’m confident that we can manage to wait longer to ensure that public safety is protected.

Tamara McCarron, a PhD candidate in health sciences at the University of Calgary, and Fiona Clement, an assistant professor at the same university, wrote recently:

We suggest that marijuana regulation in Canada might be a 10-year project. There are some key issues that urgently need to be decided before legalization this year — such as online sales and occupational health and safety.

These two individuals are scientists. They are experts. They are the people that this government, with its supposed focus on evidence-based policy-making, promised to listen to.

And they are not alone, these two. I have received dozens of emails, as many of you also have, from individuals expressing the legitimate concern about the fast-tracking of legalization. I’m sure that the rest of you have as well.

Here is an excerpt from one:

If there has ever been a piece of legislation that clearly called for that cool second thought, I'd suggest it is the bill to legalize possession & distribution of Marijuana. Among the many medical experts warning us that it is harmful not only in the short term, but also permanently are Health Canada & the Canadian Medical Association. Please act to prevent our young people from growing up with reduced mental capacities due to use of Marijuana. As well, other areas which have legalized this drug have found that it leads to higher vehicle accident rates; not only the users, but every driver on our roads is put at increased risk as people with impair judgment cruise our highways. Please protect us from this dangerLegalization of Marijuana use starts us on a nightmare road of death & loss.

• (1610)

Here's another one from a gentleman who outlined some of the issues he has, citing and providing links to reputable sources for his information as well. He summed it up like this:

I'm not necessarily against decriminalization or legalization once there are adequate studies to clarify the health risks, but it seems reckless for the government to forge ahead without this crucial information. What's the harm of delaying legalization by a year or so to give time for adequate research It seems to me that at this stage it is only the Senate that has the power to slow down the process and demand time for proper research to be done to answer the concerns of Canadian citizens. I'm asking you as a member of the Canadian Senate to take the perhaps unpopular and difficult step of helping the Senate fulfill its mandate of providing a "sober second thought" regarding Bill C-45.

These emails aren't like the ones we usually get that are part of an orchestrated campaign of form letters sent out by some interest groups. These are from individual Canadians who are worried, not necessarily because they do not want to see cannabis legalized, but because, like me, they feel the government hasn't adequately prepared and considered the implications of legalization.

A study on the legalization in Colorado found that youth past-month marijuana use from age 12 to 17 increased 20 per cent in the two-year average since Colorado legalized recreational marijuana compared to the two-year average prior to legalization. Nationally, youth past-month marijuana use declined 4 per cent during the same time frame.

What better place than in the Senate, which can exert its highly advertised and self-promoted power of sober second thought? Isn't that what the Trudeau appointees keep telling us this place is for? What better time than now with this bill?

For a lot of Canadians one of the most worrying areas is that of workplace safety and for me, transportation safety. There are those who tell us there is nothing to worry about. For instance, last month when *Maclean's* published an article calling on the need for more research on the effects of marijuana in the workplace, a pundit we are all familiar with tweeted:

Can we stop with these? You don't drink in the workplace, and it's legal. Why should smoking up be any different?

Perhaps he'd forgotten about the Sunwing pilot arrested one year earlier at the controls of an airliner. He'd been drinking. How did they find out? Not because of a random testing regime that does not exist in Canada. It was because he passed out in the cockpit prior to takeoff. He had a blood alcohol level of more than three times the legal limit for driving a car, not to mention an airline full of passengers.

This is not an anomaly. According to the FAA figures, one pilot a month failed alcohol and drug tests over a five-year period, and 64 in total failed the tests between 2010 and 2015. For people like us, many of whom get on a plane twice a week when the Senate is sitting, this should be — how should I put it — sobering.

Now we are adding another substance to the list. Not that marijuana hasn't been as widely available as alcohol before, but now that we are making it legal, the government is involved. And the onus is on the government to do everything it can in the area of workplace and transportation safety.

Here's a quote from the *Maclean's* article that I mentioned earlier:

What is striking is how little high-quality evidence there is on the impacts of marijuana in the workplace and how inconsistent the existing data is.

We urgently need high-quality observational research studies to be able to better understand the effects of marijuana on work. We also need to develop an accurate measure of impairment for use in Canadian workplaces.

It's very easy to sit back and say there's nothing to worry about. "You don't drink in the workplace, and it's legal. Why should smoking up be any different?" It wasn't more than a week after these words were tweeted out that two Toronto police officers had to call for backup after eating marijuana edibles on duty. At least they didn't smoke up.

A Health Canada survey found that only half of those surveyed felt that marijuana use affects driving. Nearly 20 per cent were convinced cannabis use does not affect driving. A CAA survey found that 1 per cent of those surveyed believed that someone under the influence of marijuana is actually better behind the wheel than someone who is sober.

Police in Canada are legitimately worried that impaired driving will go up when marijuana becomes legalized. And the evidence in Washington and Colorado bears that out. Experts in the field of addiction medicine agree. I can tell you that if people think they can drive a car high, they will think they can drive a train high or that they can fly a plane high.

Having met with a number of people in the industries where workplace safety is an issue, I can tell you they are all very concerned. They urged us to make sure that before the government passes this legislation, it first passes legislation mandating alcohol and drug testing in federally regulated, safety-sensitive positions.

That may delay the passage of the bill. So be it. I can live with that. What I can't live with, and I don't think anybody here can, is to be in the position of having voted for this bill and seeing those regulations coming in only after it becomes law, not in response to the bill but in response to a tragedy.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Éric Forest: Honourable senators, I want to share my main concerns about Bill C-45, which will have a significant impact on our society.

Many speeches have already been made in this chamber about the legalization of cannabis, and I have been particularly struck by some of the points that have been raised. To begin with, I want to thank Senators Joyal and Pratte, who are doing a great job of highlighting the very troubling problems associated with the financing of cannabis production companies. It is imperative that we keep this issue in the public eye.

It would be utterly ludicrous if we, as parliamentarians, used the pretext of taking criminals out of the illegal cannabis trade to legalize cannabis, only to turn around and let them in through the back door by allowing them to finance legal production companies. I will therefore support any amendments to the act to fix that issue.

I want to start by saying that I am in favour of legalizing cannabis, for one very simple reason: if we manage to remove any amount of cannabis from the black market by offering a legal alternative, with certified, quality-controlled products, that alone will be a victory for our society, given current consumption rates in Canada.

I agree with the government's objectives of removing the criminal element from cannabis production and distribution. I also agree with its assessment that the public policy of criminalizing and prohibiting cannabis has been a total failure.

I also support the scheduling negotiations that have been going on over the past few days with the various offices to delay the implementation of the act beyond July 1, 2018. My reasons are twofold. First, the situation on the ground clearly shows that the July 1 deadline has been causing a tremendous amount of anxiety and worry. If we are going to make such a radical change, we had better do it right. I agree with Quebec's public health minister, Lucie Charlebois, who has spoken in favour of delaying the implementation of the act.

Second, we have a mission to improve this bill. We will have to take the time to do so, and I am confident that this will happen.

My speech today will have two main components. First, I would like to talk about something I often hear in speeches on Bill C-45. Since I do not sit on the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, which will likely study the bill, I would like to raise some points that I hope will help fuel the study in committee.

Our colleague, and my seatmate, Senator Galvez, said the following in her speech in this chamber:

Bill C-45 is a complete repeal of prohibition and an absence of regulation. It transfers the majority of the responsibilities of legalization to the provinces, which in turn are transferring them to municipalities. However, consideration should be given to keeping more controls at the federal level.

• (1620)

When it comes to the Criminal Code, there's no getting around the primacy of the federal government. Still, we have to operate within the constraints of a power-sharing model laid out in our 19th-century Constitution.

The longstanding principle that particular areas of jurisdiction are federal unless explicitly stated otherwise bothers me. In existence since 1957, the European Union operates according to the principle of subsidiarity, which states that the most effective level of government should be given the means to deliver services and create appropriate regulations in a given area of jurisdiction.

With that in mind, and considering that the repercussions of cannabis legalization will be felt most keenly at the municipal level, Ottawa must ensure that communities have the legislative, technical and financial means to handle such onerous responsibilities. That conversation needs to happen with provincial, territorial and municipal governments.

[*English*]

The reality lived by each of our communities is very different. I will take, as an example, the great speech given by my colleague, Senator Patterson, in which he voiced the concerns of the mayors of his territory about the bill.

[*Translation*]

Each mayor had different concerns. I don't think one-size-fits-all solutions to local problems are an effective approach to developing public policy. We are writing history with cannabis legalization. As we strive to produce an act and a regulatory framework that meet these objectives, why not also seize this opportunity to adopt a different implementation model? Let's give local communities the power to adapt regulations to their reality.

The Minister of Finance's decision to give the provinces 75 per cent of the excise tax revenues was a positive step. It will be relatively easy to copy the gas tax fund model and apply it to cannabis in order to inject stable, predictable funding into the communities that are delivering the services.

[English]

The truth is, the federal level of government is rarely doing work on the ground. There are former mayors here, former police chiefs; you know what I mean. It is *sur le terrain* that we will see the consequences of the decisions we are taking in this chamber.

[Translation]

I would like this to be considered during the implementation of the regulatory framework. The federal government certainly has the money, but not necessarily the solutions for all our problems. Secondly, I would simply like to offer some thoughts that the Senate Committee on Social Affairs might consider when it studies the bill. I am sharing some of the concerns that are often expressed to me. I think they merit serious consideration.

First, Norway seems to have the lowest cannabis consumption rate in the world even though the Norwegian government did not decriminalize cannabis until recently, in December 2017. We might benefit from inviting representatives from the Norwegian government to come and share their experiences with us so that we might draw on their best practices.

I am also quite concerned about the psychological impact of normalizing the substance, especially on our young people considering that the legislation would allow young people to have less than five grams in their possession. Compelling examples of alcohol and cigarette use among our young people should make us extra careful about ensuring that the prevention and awareness campaign for young people is sound and has the necessary funding to achieve its objectives.

In addition, the legalization of cannabis use may be interpreted as the normalization of consumption, which can result in an increase in consumption. We need to be doubly cautious. The objective is not to encourage consumption. The bill must provide the provinces with clear rules for distribution and marketing. In my opinion, marketing and advertising to promote sales must be prohibited. Furthermore, we must ensure that THC levels are clearly and readily identified and indicated on all products for sale in order for consumers to make an informed choice about their purchases. In these matters, federal authority must be exercised uniformly across the country.

As for the thorny issue of drug-impaired driving and going to work in that state, we must be clear and take our lead from our laws on alcohol. In these areas, on the one hand, legislation must be firm and precise to clearly support those responsible for enforcement. Furthermore, these people must have the training and proper tools to effectively carry out their mandate. To my mind, the whole issue of authorized place of use is crucial. I am convinced that the current study on Bill C-46 will do the same thing for drug-impaired driving.

[Senator Forest]

In a few years, we will be required to review just how successful we have been in meeting the objectives of the legislation. To that end, we need very clear indicators: the percentage of the population that consumes cannabis, the number of court cases, and the number of automobile accidents. I urge our public and private institutions to be diligent when collecting data. This information will be particularly valuable when determining whether the objectives of the bill have been achieved.

In closing, Canada is about to take an important step in terms of public policy. We must not be afraid to admit it, in a responsible manner, if certain aspects of legalization, as we pass them, do not turn out as expected, and if certain aspects, particularly regarding protecting young people, do not meet their objectives. Our mission in this chamber is to do our best by analysing all aspects of this very important piece of legislation in order to make the best decisions in the interest of Canadians. To conclude, I sincerely hope that personal, corporate and partisan interests will not impede our deliberations, which will be critical to the future of our country. Thank you.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Senator Forest, will you accept a few questions?

Senator Forest: Gladly.

Hon. Serge Joyal: Senator Forest, if I'm not mistaken, you were the president of the Fédération des municipalités du Québec at one time. In this morning's Ottawa Citizen, the Chief of the Ottawa Police, Mr. Bordeleau, estimated that it's going to cost his force alone \$6.2 million in the first year of cannabis legalization. If we use the Ottawa Police estimates as a guideline for all of Canada's municipalities, I think the implementation of Bills C-45 and C-46 will cost municipal police forces a lot more than 75 per cent of the tax dollars the government will collect from the sale of cannabis products at various sale and distribution points.

When you were at the Fédération des municipalités, did you have an opportunity to assess the overall impact this bill and the additional costs it will impose on police forces will have on municipal budgets?

Senator Forest: Thank you for your question. I chaired the Union of Quebec Municipalities, which represented roughly 80 per cent of the population of Quebec. That said, the federation is another excellent umbrella organization working at the municipal level.

• (1630)

The impact was not assessed at the time. However, from my experience, I can say that the daily task of enforcing the rules governing the legalization of cannabis will fall to the municipalities. The government took a first step when Minister Morneau decided to give the provinces 75 per cent of the tax revenues rather than 50 per cent. However, history tells us that even if these tax revenues are given to the provinces, the municipalities will not necessarily see any of that money, even though they are the ones managing this file on a daily basis. To answer your question, I would say that no assessment was conducted in this regard. It will cost a lot of money to provide

police forces with the training and equipment they need, and the municipalities will have to absorb those costs. It is important to remember that municipalities have a property-tax-based financial structure. However, that tax structure is completely inadequate when it comes to dealing with a challenge as daunting as the regulation of cannabis.

Senator Joyal: Given his experience in municipal affairs, couldn't the honourable senator try to find out the reasonably projected needs from his colleagues at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities? As he said, the actual costs of implementing this bill will be passed on to municipal taxpayers through property taxes, which have a very limited margin. We saw what happened recently with the City of Montreal.

Could we —

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Excuse me, Senator Forest, but your time is up. Would you like five more minutes?

Senator Forest: Yes, please.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Yes.

Senator Joyal: Senator Forest, could you provide some numbers to give us an idea of the scope of what we are talking about here? From a practical standpoint, I get the impression that there is something unrealistic about this, because no data has been provided to help us understand the financial impact that this bill will have on the law enforcement agencies that will be responsible for enforcing it.

Senator Forest: I would be pleased to consult my former colleagues. I assume there is an assessment of the issues at stake.

Senator Moncion: I have a quick question. Marijuana is not legal yet. However, police officers have already been trained. What are the extra costs involved?

Senator Forest: Marijuana is indeed not yet legal. Often it is not just the municipal police forces that intervene, but also the provincial police and the RCMP. The costs will be related to purchasing equipment to screen for impaired driving and to conduct roadside checks. Money will have to be allocated for training because the municipalities do not have enough staff trained for this. Police forces unanimously agree that training is an issue and that they need to acquire the necessary equipment.

[English]

Hon. Carolyn Stewart Olsen: Colleagues, I rise today to contribute to our debate on Bill C-45, more specifically known as the newly envisioned cannabis act. I want to thank everyone today that I've listened to on debate for raising very important issues that perhaps many of us haven't thought about, and it gives a great floor to show the Senate and how we can respond and debate civilly and try to get through what we're doing with this legislation. So I thank you all for that.

My job as a senator is to represent the people of New Brunswick. One of the best ways I can do that is to reflect concerns raised in New Brunswick and how they complement my own misgivings, as a senator and former health professional, about this cannabis legislation.

New Brunswick's provincial government has noted that they support Ottawa's approach, but, in their consultations and in my own meetings with municipal politicians, I think there are some problem areas that must be closely examined since, by all indications, this is being forced too quickly on the provinces.

New Brunswick's Legislative Assembly struck a cannabis committee to consult with New Brunswickers during the summer of 2017. The committee reported back in September and noted that the provincial government does not have a choice as far as this legislation is concerned. The report states:

... provinces without a retailer will not gain any revenue from the legalization of recreational cannabis but will remain responsible for cannabis-related public health and safety.

I remind you that this is 2017.

It is thus no surprise, as Minister Petitpas Taylor noted in her appearance before Committee of the Whole, that the provinces have been urging the federal government to give them more time.

The concern is not new. The Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice appeared before the Commons Health Committee in the fall and noted that the rush has been forced upon them:

We must go outside our normal practice rules in order to meet the July 2018 deadline. Although we are doing our best to do so, there are no guarantees we'll be able to meet this federal deadline.

... Having 12 to 18 months post royal assent would have been an easily attainable time frame. ...

... There are a lot of responsibilities the federal government has put on our provincial plates, without giving us a lot of time to get things ready. ...

Time for appropriate regulation is a critical factor we consider in what we are actually doing. We are putting a harmful product in people's hands and giving them the impression that this is safe to consume. Legalization is ultimately permission, no matter what the government says about its education plans.

At the practice level, as the Canadian Association for Pharmacy Distribution Management notes, Colorado has had legal cannabis for three years and is only now properly able to address demand. Nevada legalized cannabis in July, but due to poor planning they ran out in less than two weeks and had to look at emergency measures for supply.

Canadians do expect better, and we do not want this U.S. experience to become the Canadian experience as we approach legalization. Our police, nationwide, reflect these concerns. Police forces will simply not be ready in time. I've heard this from municipal politicians in New Brunswick who are already

dealing with local police forces that are struggling with heavy budgetary constraints. Vast swaths of New Brunswick are already totally reliant on the RCMP, who are stretched thin and in desperate need of expanded resources and training if they are expected to internally manage these extra responsibilities.

The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police echoed these concerns in a written submission to the House of Commons Health Committee. The brief notes:

Canadian police services will not be equipped to provide officers with the training and resources necessary to enforce the new regime within the existing contemplated time frame.

The rush with which the government has moved this bill forward is compounded by the regulatory confusion that is building across the industry.

As Ottawa lawyer Tina Fraser notes in an *Ottawa Citizen* piece:

Someone should invent an app called "Am I breaking the law?" to help Canadians navigate the confusion when cannabis becomes legal.

Fraser points out that no two provinces are taking the same legislative and regulatory approach. In other words, it's difficult for people to understand how they are supposed to obtain and use this product without breaking the law. The confusion has become so great that it extends beyond cannabis into the hemp industry.

As Senator Griffin has noted, Bill C-45 may have broad implications for the cultivation of hemp. The government has no proposed draft regulations available. How will the industry know what the regulations are until they become law? How will law enforcement and regulators distinguish between legal hemp, legitimate cannabis grown inside, and illegal cannabis grown outdoors? I ask you again: How are we going to know this?

• (1640)

One of the key arguments proposed for pursuing such an aggressive legalization schedule are the decades of reports on record recommending legalization or decriminalization. Senator Dean specifically referred to the 1969-1972 Le Dain commission, the 2002 Special Senate Committee on Illegal Drugs, and, of course, the most recent 2016 Task Force on Cannabis Legalization and Regulation.

The Le Dain commission is the most exhaustive review of cannabis prohibition that has likely ever been done. The commission travelled more than 80,000 kilometres, held hearings in 27 cities and 23 universities, but more importantly it did a systemic review of all known scientific literature related to cannabis use at the time.

The commission stopped short of recommending the full legalization that we are contemplating now, but nevertheless strongly recommended decriminalization.

One has to consider why, then, Pierre Trudeau never acted on the commission's recommendations and why its work was shelved for more than 30 years. We can only speculate, but perhaps the answer lies in the research the commission

uncovered. At the time, very little was known about cannabis and its effects. However, the final report noted clinicians pointing to the link between chronic cannabis use and mental disorders like schizophrenia. Even then, the commissioners were able to note that "cannabis . . . has, in all probability, a harmful effect on the maturing process." That was 30 years ago.

The Le Dain commission was not the only government effort to comprehensively study cannabis at the time. In the United States, the Nixon administration's Shafer commission made a clear statement on how these reports, over the years, should be viewed:

The media, prominent politicians, educators, and religious leaders have interpreted this report as conveying the sense that [cannabis] is harmless. Careful reading of [the report] . . . indicates that the commission does not recommend the legalization of [cannabis] . . .

We believe, on the contrary, that the untoward social and medical effects of [cannabis] reported by the [cannabis] commission and in the past and present medical literature do not justify the legalization of cannabis anywhere in the world.

The impact of this statement is compounded by the fact that cannabis has changed dramatically in the 40-plus years since those commissions presented their reports.

As the Canadian Medical Association noted before the House of Commons Health Committee, the potency of cannabis has increased tenfold since the early 1980s.

We know that cannabis may not be safe to consume. The Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, Canada's only agency with a legislated mandate to reduce the harms of drugs on Canadians notes:

Cannabis use affects the prefrontal cortex, which continues to develop into the mid-twenties. This portion of the brain is critical to higher-order cognitive processes such as impulse control, working memory, decision making, planning, problem solving and emotional regulation. Long-term, regular use of cannabis beginning in adolescence is associated with long-term impairments in attention, memory and verbal learning.

Data collected by the Canadian Institute for Health Information shows that we should be concerned about this. Hospitalization for cannabinoid-related issues is on the rise. Between 2006 and 2011 hospitalizations increased by 44 per cent, and this reflects only those instances that we are aware of.

The 2016 task force approached the cannabis legalization a bit differently. In a November briefing held for parliamentarians, the Honourable Anne McLellan, chair of the government's Task Force on Cannabis Legalization and Regulation, said that the task force did not approach the question as a matter of "if" they should regulate cannabis; they approached it on "how," which shows you the mindset of the government at the time. So they did not have to go through the possible dangers to come to perhaps a different recommendation. Nonetheless, the task force also noted more education and more consultation is needed.

Senators, the government has simply not made the case for doing this. The gaps in the research, the harmful nature of cannabis, and the utter confusion on how to safely regulate and police this substance as a consumer product are recurring themes in cannabis debates going back more than 40 years. I've heard our colleagues address these issues, but I remain unconvinced. Moreover, I think Canadians remain unconvinced. While some polling indicates Canadians favour cannabis legalization, other polling shows that by and large Canadians do not trust the cannabis industry with their safety.

Hundreds if not thousands of Canadians have written to us individually and to our offices expressing their concerns about how this legislation will impact them and their communities.

In pursuing legislation like this, the government is further cultivating a culture of permissiveness around drugs and intoxicating substances. The government clothes these proposals in the language of reducing incarceration, but what we are really talking about is a government that wants to push massive social change on Canadians.

The rush is incomprehensible. Within the space of a year we have gone from debating supervised heroin injection to pushing cannabis use nationwide. I'm not sure Canadians want Canada to be known for its liberal drug laws. In a sense, this shift amounts to a form of social engineering in that it has consequences for how we are perceived and how we perceive ourselves.

With these issues in mind, we must be mindful of our constituents and represent them well by taking our time and giving Bill C-45 the full examination and due diligence it demands.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Question.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I thought Senator Eaton wanted to speak to this bill, so I move the adjournment of the debate.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

[*Translation*]

EXPUNGEMENT OF HISTORICALLY UNJUST CONVICTIONS BILL

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—
DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Cormier, seconded by the Honourable Senator Petitclerc, for the second reading of Bill C-66, An Act to establish a procedure for expunging certain historically unjust convictions and to make related amendments to other Acts.

Hon. Marc Gold: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak in support of Bill C-66, An Act to establish a procedure for expunging certain historically unjust convictions and to make related amendments to other Acts. Senator Pate and Senator Cormier have already given powerful and moving speeches describing the bill, its objectives and its scope. Today, I want to briefly explain why I support this bill in principle and present the questions that I hope will be considered in committee.

In his essay entitled *Deadly Identities*, renowned Franco-Lebanese author Amin Maalouf reminded us of the danger of focusing on only one of the facets of our identity that make us who we are as complete human beings. In fact, we all have many identities, including our profession or trade, our religion, our sex, our political ideology, our marital status, our sexual orientation, or even our national origin. The list is as varied as humans are diverse.

[*English*]

If I may paraphrase the great American poet Walt Whitman, we all contain multitudes. And here is the rub.

• (1650)

The injustice suffered by members of the LGBTQ2 community was that one identity, their sexual orientation, was the exclusive prism through which the law viewed their lives, whether at work or at play, whether in the public or in the privacy of their homes. And the law came down hard. Careers were smashed and lives were ruined. And why? Simply because of whom they loved, how they loved.

No apology can undo what happened, and no legislation can erase the pain and suffering endured by those who were convicted under laws we now judge to be unconstitutional. But as parliamentarians, we have the opportunity to remedy this injustice, and we should seize this opportunity to do so.

Honourable senators, we regularly remind ourselves, and others, that our duty as senators is to ensure that legislation respects our constitutional values and protects the rights of minorities. Another way to put it is that our job is to ensure that our laws are just or, at the very least, not unjust. And when we can correct an historic injustice, I believe that it's our constitutional duty to do so.

On a personal note, I feel bound to support this bill because in doing so I am being true to certain important aspects of my own identity. The ideal of equality, as a core component of justice, was at the heart of my career as a constitutional scholar. It is also at the heart of the religious tradition to which I belong, as captured in the *Book of Deuteronomy*, "Justice, justice, shall you pursue."

[*Translation*]

Honourable senators, Bill C-66 is not perfect. It has drawn scathing criticism from a group of historians who see it as the product of political expediency and argue it is flawed in several important respects.

Some of the issues they raise have already been addressed by Senators Cormier and Pate and I will not repeat what they said. In any case, I expect that the committee studying the bill will invite these historians to appear as witnesses and will evaluate their recommendations on how to improve the bill.

However, there are certain points I want to make. One of their main criticisms of the bill is that it does not cover all crimes committed against sexual minorities. Instead, it restricts the crimes to those that violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The bill's detractors say that the list of crimes should be expanded to include the laws governing bawdy houses, indecent acts, obscenity and vagrancy.

[*English*]

I understand the point and I have some sympathy for it. However, I also accept the government's rationale for focusing on the crimes that they did. Moreover, Bill C-66 represents the first, but not necessarily the final, step in addressing the injustices that the enforcement of the criminal law visited upon members of the LGBTQ2 community. And that should not be minimized. Bill C-66 will allow for the expungement of the criminal records of hundreds, indeed thousands, of Canadians who we now judge to be wrongfully convicted. That is both right and good. Let us not allow the better to be the enemy of the good.

That said, some of the criticisms of the bill strike me as worthy of more careful consideration in committee. Let me address two of them.

First, it has been argued that the criminal records should not be destroyed but retained in some way as a historical record. This strikes me as worth pursuing. Accordingly, I would encourage the committee to consider whether it would be possible to achieve the objectives of the bill while still retaining the historical records for research and scholarly purposes.

The committee should also consider the provisions in the bill that require that those who participated in the acts, now judged unconstitutional, must have been at least 16 years of age at the time. As critics have pointed out, up until 2008, the age of consent for analogous sex acts among heterosexuals was 14. So is this not discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, and moreover, one that reinforces the view that members of sexual minorities are a threat to our children? This too should be examined carefully in committee.

Honourable senators, our role at second reading is to debate the bill in principle, and it is on this point that I conclude.

I do not believe that Bill C-66 is a product of political expediency. I don't believe it's a sop on the altar of political correctness. On the contrary, I believe that Bill C-66 is a product of principle — the principle that our government and our laws should seek out injustice and remedy it where possible.

As for us in this chamber, I believe it is our duty to take a step to remedy a clear historic injustice — one that was perpetrated against our fellow Canadians, simply because of one aspect, and only one aspect, of their identity.

[Senator Gold]

Honourable senators, Bill C-66 is such a step. I support it in principle and I urge you to do the same.

(On motion of Senator McPhedran, debate adjourned.)

NON-NUCLEAR SANCTIONS AGAINST IRAN BILL

THIRD READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Tkachuk, seconded by the Honourable Senator Carignan, P.C., for the third reading of Bill S-219, An Act to deter Iran-sponsored terrorism, incitement to hatred, and human rights violations.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, this item is at day 14. I've spoken with Senator Cools. If I may, I'd like to adjourn in my name.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK ON POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator White, seconded by the Honourable Senator Enverga, for the second reading of Bill C-211, An Act respecting a federal framework on post-traumatic stress disorder.

Hon. Joseph A. Day (Leader of the Senate Liberals): Honourable senators, I would like to join in the debate with my colleagues in voicing support for Bill C-211, which calls for the development of a comprehensive framework to address post-traumatic stress disorder. I wanted to thank Senator Housakos for acting as the sponsor for this much-needed bill and Senator Bernard for her thoughtful remarks earlier in relation to this particular matter.

I do not intend to speak at length today, but I did want to bring to your attention and highlight the work that has already been done in this area by the Senate and, in particular, the Standing Senate Committee Veterans Affairs.

When I served as chair of this subcommittee in 2014, we began a comprehensive study on the medical, social and operational impacts of mental health issues affecting serving and retired members of the Canadian Armed Forces. This included operational stress injuries, sometimes referred to as OSIs, like post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD. The intent of our study was to examine the existing programs and services, both public and private, that were available to serving members and veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces and Royal Canadian Mounted Police who were suffering from operational stress injuries. We also

hoped to learn more about the new technologies and new treatments to help those suffering to recover from their mental health conditions.

• (1700)

We began by hearing from the Canadian Armed Forces, the RCMP, departmental officials, mental health experts and care providers. We learned a great deal about the incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder, and the programs and services in place at that time. We heard that post-traumatic stress disorder is one of the most well-known operational stress injuries associated with military service. Dr. Greg Passey of the British Columbia Operational Stress Injury Clinic testified that research shows between 5 and 15 per cent — and some claim even more — of military personnel returning from military operations are affected by post-traumatic stress disorder. We heard about the components of treatment — clinical treatment like behavioural therapy and possibly medication, and psychosocial support, such as from family and colleagues.

We also learned a great deal about research into operational stress injuries, the broader category. The Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research, CIMVHR, which was founded a little over seven years ago at Queen's University in conjunction with the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston, is a leader in research. I can tell you, honourable colleagues, that 43 different universities across Canada and elsewhere are part of this research collaboration. In addition to partners at each of those universities, there are literally hundreds of researchers involved in this particular area. We should be very proud of this effort that CIMVHR has begun. It has grown very quickly.

Both the Canadian Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs Canada work extensively with the Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research.

Finally, we received extensive information from senior representatives of the Canadian Armed Forces, National Defence, the RCMP as well as Veterans Affairs Canada on various programs and services their organizations provided to serving members and veterans suffering from operational stress injuries. We heard about the successes but also the very real challenges of interdepartmental cooperation. While the subcommittee found that great strides are being made, there is still significant work to do.

In June 2015, after 13 hearings, we tabled an interim report outlining the subcommittee's findings. I'd commend that to your attention. It's a very good background document.

Now, almost three years later, a recent article in the *National Post* reminds us that the problem is not getting any better. According to National Defence, the number of Canadian Armed Forces members who have applied for long-term disability benefits has increased by 60 per cent over the past five years.

As honourable senators will know, the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder often manifest many years after the trauma. That's what we're starting to see, and what we have been

seeing, with respect to veterans of the Afghanistan war, a conflict for which some are just coming to grips with some of the symptoms these men and women didn't know they had.

There's another part to this that is extremely distressing. Honourable senators will recall the figure that we went through day after day when a new death took place when we were in Afghanistan. The total was 158 soldiers who died in operations during the years we were in Afghanistan. But, honourable senators, since leaving Afghanistan and returning home, almost half that number again have died from suicide — over 71 at last count. Seventy-one veterans of Afghanistan have died as a result of not being able to handle the internal stress of post-traumatic stress disorder. That's a huge number. It's almost half. The other figure we saw a lot, but we don't see this one enough to realize that we have a tremendous challenge here.

Honourable senators, the department attributes some of the increase in long-term disability applications to increased awareness and recognition, and that might be true. As we learn better ways to diagnose, the numbers will go up because we're diagnosing something that wasn't diagnosed previously.

A recent article reads:

Experts have long warned that it will take years to reach a full understanding of the psychological cost of the war in Afghanistan, with many more veterans expected to come forward years after having served tours [there].

I would also like to reiterate that post-traumatic stress disorder is certainly not limited to the military and military service. Dr. Passey, whom I referenced earlier, pointed out that the rate of PTSD and suicide is actually higher among first responders, ambulance attendants, firefighters and police than the military and the veterans from Afghanistan. He also told us that the RCMP rates of post-traumatic stress disorder are higher than those of the Canadian military. So first responder and RCMP officer rates are higher than the military's, and the military is at a rate that's not acceptable.

Ms. Natalie Harris, a paramedic who appeared before the Standing Committee on Health in the other place, talked extensively about her own experience with post-traumatic stress disorder. She said:

We thought we would be strong enough to avoid being uncomfortable, but no one is. Strength isn't measured by the number of deaths we pronounce. It's measured by the number of deaths we recognize we need to talk about in order to sleep at night. First responders are some amazing people, but signing up to be one didn't mean we signed our hearts away.

That is very true. It is my hope that a post-traumatic stress disorder framework will help Canadians like Ms. Harris and all those suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. That's the purpose of this bill.

• (1710)

Our good friend, former senator and Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire, reminded me recently that this spring marks the one-hundredth anniversary of the death of Lieutenant-Colonel Samuel Sharpe, MP.

As you may be aware, Colonel Sharpe was a member of Parliament who had served as a soldier both at Vimy Ridge and at Passchendaele. But tragically, he also stands as the first Canadian politician to return from having served overseas only to take his own life as a result of post-traumatic stress disorder. I think it's only fitting that we are discussing this legislation here at this time, and I strongly support Bill C-211 and hope that you will do likewise.

(On motion of Senator McPhedran, debate adjourned.)

GENDER EQUALITY WEEK BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Dawson, seconded by the Honourable Senator Joyal, P.C., for the second reading of Bill C-309, An Act to establish Gender Equality Week.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I'd like to adjourn this item for the remainder of my time.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

STUDY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STRATEGY TO FACILITATE THE TRANSPORT OF CRUDE OIL TO EASTERN CANADIAN REFINERIES AND TO PORTS ON THE EAST AND WEST COASTS OF CANADA

SIXTH REPORT OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE AND REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator MacDonald, seconded by the Honourable Senator Patterson:

That the sixth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications, entitled *Pipelines for Oil: Protecting our Economy, Respecting our Environment*, deposited with the Clerk of the Senate on December 7, 2016 be adopted and that, pursuant to rule 12-24(1), the Senate request a complete and detailed response from the government, with the Minister of Natural Resources being

identified as minister responsible for responding to the report, in consultation with the Ministers of Transport and Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard.

Hon. Joseph A. Day (Leader of the Senate Liberals): Honourable senators, this is the fifteenth day. I have been working on some remarks but I haven't got them in proper order for presentation. With your indulgence, I would seek leave of the Senate, notwithstanding rule 4-15(3), that this matter be adjourned in my name.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(On motion of Senator Day, debate adjourned.)

[Translation]

STUDY ON THE REGULATORY AND TECHNICAL ISSUES RELATED TO THE DEPLOYMENT OF CONNECTED AND AUTOMATED VEHICLES

NINTH REPORT OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE AND REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the ninth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications, entitled *Driving Change: Technology and the Future of the Automated Vehicle*, deposited with the Clerk of the Senate on January 29, 2018.

Hon. Dennis Dawson moved:

That the ninth report of the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications, entitled *Driving Change: Technology and the Future of the Automated Vehicle*, deposited with the Clerk of the Senate on January 29, 2018, be adopted and that, pursuant to rule 12-24(1), the Senate request a complete and detailed response from the government, with the Minister of Transport being identified as minister responsible for responding to the report, in consultation with the following Ministers:

- (a) Innovation, Science and Economic Development;
- (b) National Defence;
- (c) Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness; and
- (d) Employment, Workforce Development and Labour.

He said: Honourable senators, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues on the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications. As you know, the report was tabled while we were on our break.

[English]

I want to assure Senator Black that given it is his first day, I will not talk long because I don't want to stand between him and his family.

I want to thank my colleagues on the committee. I see Senator Boisvenu in front of me, who gave me a big hand, and Senator Bovey. And I want to thank the Chair of the Transport Committee, who gave me the opportunity to present this report. I also want to thank the analysts and Communications.

So if you don't mind, I would propose the adoption of this report.

[Translation]

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

Hon. Senators: Question!

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and report adopted.)

[English]

LEGISLATIVE WORK OF THE SENATE

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Bellemare, calling the attention of the Senate to the Senate's legislative work from the 24th to the 41st Parliament and on elements of evaluation.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I was speaking to Senator Andreychuk and I know she will be speaking to this item after the break weeks. It is at day 14 and I see that she had reset it previously. So, with leave of the Senate, I would like to adjourn debate in her name again.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

THE SENATE

ROLE IN THE PROTECTION OF REGIONAL AND MINORITY REPRESENTATION—INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Seidman, calling the attention of the Senate to its role in the protection of regional and minority representation.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, this item is also at day 15. I have not even had an opportunity to begin. I've already reset this a few times, so I don't know if others wish to speak. Senator Seidman had begun this inquiry.

With leave of the Senate, I would like to adjourn debate.

Hon. Jane Cordy: Could you tell us how many times you've adjourned it already?

Senator Martin: This would probably be my third time.

Senator Cordy: That's a lot of times.

Senator Martin: I know. That's why, with leave, if it's okay with all of you, I will take the adjournment.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

RELEVANCE OF FULL EMPLOYMENT

INQUIRY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Bellemare, calling the attention of the Senate to the relevance of full employment in the 21st century in a Globalized economy.

Hon. Ratna Omidvar: Honourable senators, I move that further debate be adjourned until the next sitting of the Senate in the name of Senator Petitclerc.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(On motion of Senator Omidvar, for Senator Petitclerc, debate adjourned.)

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY ISSUES RELATING TO AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY— DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Diane F. Griffin, pursuant to notice of February 26, 2018, moved:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, in accordance with rule 12-7(10), be authorized to examine and report on such issues as may arise from time to time relating to agriculture and forestry; and

That the committee report to the Senate no later than June 30, 2019.

She said: I move the motion standing in my name.

The Hon. the Speaker: Is there anything on debate? Question?

Hon. Carolyn Stewart Olsen: Senator, would you take a question?

Senator Griffin: Sure.

• (1720)

Senator Stewart Olsen: I am looking at “authorized to examine and report on such issues that may arise from time to time relating to agriculture and forestry.”

Could you expand on what you may be studying?

Senator Griffin: Certainly. The committee is asking for this somewhat generalized mandate. The reason is it seems to be working very well for several other committees, including an order of reference for the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. That’s one example.

What it would do is provide the opportunity for the Agriculture and Forestry Committee to react on a prompt basis if a time-sensitive issue comes up that justifies our attention. This could involve a small amount of time on the committee’s schedule and may or may not result in a full report back to the Senate.

The important goal is to have the flexibility to look into any topic that is within our assigned mandate. Obviously, agriculture and forestry, in the broadest sense, is the mandate of our committee. However, within that mandate, especially related to many forest-related matters, not necessarily only on provincial Crown land, are included federal government policies. These include fiduciary responsibility to Aboriginal peoples, a responsibility for the protection of endangered species, migratory birds, navigable waters, fisheries, environmental assessment, forest research and technology involving development. It also relates to issues on conservation and the well-being of rural Canada.

This is a rather broad mandate, which will give some appreciation as to why the committee is requesting this generalized order of reference. It will enable the committee to be nimble in responding to an issue of importance in a timely manner.

Senator Stewart Olsen: Thank you, senator. While I understand your rationale behind it, I’m a little uncomfortable with it. I think you would have the time to come to the Senate and ask for permission to do this emergent study.

I like to know what committees are doing. However, I’m in the hands of the rest of the senators. But I am questioning this broad mandate which does not tell me exactly what you’re studying and gives a lot of leeway to study anything at all and would probably include costs that the Senate hasn’t considered or anything like that.

So I am just questioning it. I’m not sure that I like this, but I am in the hands of the senators. Thank you.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Griffin, do you want to reply?

Senator Griffin: Yes, thank you.

I can appreciate where you’re coming from. You don’t want every committee running all over the place studying everything and tripping over each other. That’s certainly not our intention. Our committee has been careful to liaise with other committees, such as the Foreign Affairs Committee, so that we don’t trip over each other.

But what we’re looking at here is, for instance, Bill C-45, the marijuana act, as I’m calling it now in the short term, this legislation does have some issues that relate to agriculture, such as land use. Our role in this would not be large, but what we would like to do is have the flexibility to study it and then provide our input to others who are dealing with the substantive parts of that bill, Bill C-45. That’s one example.

I don’t see this as taking a lot of time. In fact, it may be a way of investigating whether or not we want to actually undertake a study on something. This is not for a study. This is for investigative ventures where we would determine if we want to move further and actually do a full study, in which case we would be coming back to the Senate for an order of reference related to that study.

Hon. Scott Tannas: Senator Griffin, there are a lot of committees that do have what I’ve come to understand is a general order of reference. Do you have one, or is that what you’re attempting to do?

Senator Griffin: Thank you for the question. Yes, there are a lot of committees that have a general order of reference, but we are not one of them. We’re trying to join the crowd.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I don’t have a question. Given the debate that has taken place, I’m thinking that it would be wise for us to reflect on it, so I’d like to adjourn the motion in my name.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

[*Translation*]

CHALLENGES OF LITERACY AND ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

INQUIRY—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Diane Bellemare (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) rose pursuant to notice of February 13, 2018:

That she will call the attention of the Senate to the challenges of literacy and essential skills for the 21st century in Canada, the provinces and the territories.

She said: Honourable senators, I rise today to call the attention of the Senate to the challenges of literacy and essential skills for the 21st century in Canada.

[*English*]

Let me begin by thanking all senators who have spoken on this matter, either recently on in the past. I'm thinking in particular of Senators Fairbairn, Callbeck, Hubley, Cordy, Griffin, Hartling and Ringuette as well as Senators Demers and McIntyre. I hope I have not forgotten anyone.

In 1987, a survey entitled "Broken Words" revealed that more than 5 million adults in Canada, about 24 per cent of the working age population, were functionally illiterate. Five million. As you know today, in order to be able to cope with our complex world, it is no longer enough to know how to read, write and count. Is Canada truly ready to adapt to and take advantage of new technologies like artificial intelligence?

[*Translation*]

During my brief speaking time today, I will address three questions. What conclusions can we draw from official statistics about Canadians' literacy and essential skills? Should we be concerned about this? Can we do better?

I would like to begin by defining literacy and essential skills. In other words, what essential skills do people need if they want to live and work decently in the 21st century?

As Senator Harder pointed out, the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills identifies nine essential skills. They are reading, document use, numeracy, writing, oral communication, working with others, digital skills and continuous learning. For its part, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the OECD, focuses on literacy, numeracy, and problem solving in a technological environment. The OECD defines literacy as something broader than reading. It is the ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities at home, at work and in the community to achieve one's goals and to develop one's knowledge and potential.

These basic skills are not easy to measure. That is why research organizations such as the OECD and Statistics Canada use survey data based on testing of the working age population. The tests measure three groups of skills: literacy, numeracy, and problem solving in technology-rich environments.

The results I will be discussing come from the latest international survey conducted by the OECD with the participation of Canada, the United States, and other countries. It is called the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies and is known by its acronym PIAAC. The survey was held from 2011 to 2012. The provinces and territories took part in it, as did 24 other countries. In 2015, other countries became involved in this international survey.

• (1730)

PIAAC is therefore the most up-to-date official source on literacy, numeracy, and problem solving in technology-rich environments. What are the main findings for Canada? First, the results for literacy, numeracy, and problem solving in technology-rich environments indicate that, generally, Canada performed above average by international standards.

[*English*]

Canada performed above average among G7 countries for the three competencies, but it was largely surpassed by Japan and other non-G7 countries, such as Finland, the Netherlands, Australia, Sweden, Norway and others. In fact, Canada did not break through the top 10 countries in terms of essential skills.

[*Translation*]

Canadians' essential skills can certainly be improved. On a scale of 0 to 5, Canadians' average score did not reach level 3. Just like the Conference Board, I would say, as a former teacher, that this is a C.

Let's take a closer look at literacy. Nearly one in five Canadians between the ages of 16 and 65, or 17 per cent of the working-age population, has a very low level of competency in literacy, scoring at level 1 or below. This means that 4.1 million people have serious problems with literacy. They have difficulty reading a simple text and finding identical information. They need help. It would seem that Canada has made little progress in this area since 1987.

Almost 49 per cent of Canadians obtained scores under the proficiency level required to function well in society. That is the level 3 that I mentioned. Thus, 49 per cent of Canadians failed to attain the level 3 threshold. We are talking about 11.8 million people aged 16 to 65. According to the OECD, these people do not have the minimum skills required to obtain a secondary school diploma and to find a decent job. They often have diplomas, but according to the statistics, when they have to take tests, these people do not meet today's requirements for decent employment, either because they are old or they have problems.

In terms of numeracy, 55 per cent of the working-age population have a level of 3 out of 5, which is the minimum level required to function in the job market. As for the ability to evolve in technology-rich environments, 64 per cent of Canadians rate between 0 and 1 on a scale of 0 to 3.

Canadians are, however, doing well in terms of education. Canadian high school, college and university diplomas are well respected internationally. In short, we may be highly educated, but we could be more skilled.

Second, the results of this international survey indicate that in Canada, the average means nothing. Canada has larger proportions of people who have very few skills and others who are rated at the top, compared to other countries.

[*English*]

In other words, the results suggest large disparities or inequalities in the distribution of skills in Canada.

[*Translation*]

The disparities among the provinces are worrisome. Alberta and Prince Edward Island have the highest literacy rates, followed by Yukon and British Columbia. The problems are the most serious in Nunavut, where 24 per cent of residents have a skill level below 1, and where 56 per cent of residents have a skill level below 3. I remind senators that 3 is the minimum level required today to get a decent job.

My home province of Quebec, the second most-populated province, posted figures below the OECD and Canadian averages. Quebec ranked 9th out of 13, which includes all of the provinces and territories. For example, in literacy, 50 per cent of working-age Quebecers have not achieved the desired minimum level. This is more than half of working-age Quebecers, or 2.5 million people, according to the Conseil de l'éducation du Québec.

[*English*]

In fact, closer analysis suggests significant differences between a number of demographic groups such as immigrants, Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, people who are unemployed or who have never had paid employment, seniors, as well as groups with a low level of education. There are few differences between men and women, with the exception of numeracy skills, where men perform better.

The third and final observation is surprising. In fact, a C.D. Howe study published in November 2017 — a study using the official data of the OECD — indicated that although Canadians are still more educated than in the past, there was a decline in the levels of literacy and numeracy of the Canadian population between 2003 and 2012.

[*Translation*]

Literacy and numeracy levels actually declined between 2003 and 2012 for native-born Canadians in all age groups except among those over the age of 55, whose performance was already weak. Scores also declined for all levels of education, even for Canadians with a university education. This decline in essential skill levels deserves our attention. Why are Canadian-born adults having more problems with literacy, numeracy and digital skills even though they are more educated? Is education quality declining? Is the pace of technological change a factor? Have

computers and the Internet made us lazy? Or does the problem lie with the study methodology? This is something researchers need to investigate.

Are Canadians ready to face the social and economic challenges of the 21st century? Esteemed colleagues, you already know the short answer. Although some people are able to adapt easily, a very large number of people are not and may be left behind if society does not address this situation. That is why we must take action.

[*English*]

If we do not want to exclude a substantial portion of the population from the benefits of new technologies such as artificial intelligence, we must take into account now the challenges we face in the fields of literacy, numeracy, digital skills and other basic skills essential in today's world not only to get a good job but also to benefit from them as a citizen, consumer and user.

[*Translation*]

Acquiring essential skills enables people to get ahead in life. It also stimulates the economy. This is both a social and an economic problem.

[*English*]

Economists from Statistics Canada did an in-depth study on the contribution of literacy to economic growth. The study found:

... investment in human capital, that is, in education and skills training, is three times as important to economic growth over the long run as investment in physical capital, such as machinery and equipment. The results also show that direct measures of human capital based on literacy scores perform better than years-of-schooling indicators when explaining growth in output per capita and per worker.

• (1740)

[*Translation*]

From there, a group of economists, including well known Quebec economist Pierre Fortin, estimated that every one percentage point increase in the literacy rate in Canada would lead to a 2.5 per cent increase in productivity, or an increase in national revenue of more than \$32 billion annually.

A study published last week by economist Pierre Langlois, conducted for the Literacy Foundation and the Fonds de solidarité FTQ, estimated that if Quebec's literacy rates caught up to Ontario's, the province's GDP would increase by 1.4 per cent annually.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator, your time is up. Would you like five more minutes?

Senator Bellemare: Yes, please.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Bellemare: Thank you.

The advent of technology such as artificial intelligence will cause greater income inequality and disparity if nearly half of Canadians cannot use it. Some provinces and territories will go through an economic downturn in their region if a high proportion of their population is unable to adapt to the changes.

We could ask ourselves whether we should be doing more than we are and the answer is yes, but what should we do?

[*English*]

This is not an easy question, but at least Canadians — and we have a role to play — have to be aware of the situation in Canada. We have to be aware, and then we have to look at best practices.

[*Translation*]

Review of the practices used elsewhere reveals a number of options. I will come back to that some other time. The European Union is proposing some very interesting solutions, as are Australia, Sweden, and other Nordic countries that are posting better results. They too are offering nationwide results.

However, I would like to close by saying that Canada should pay close attention to what is being done in Australia, because, like us, Australia is a federation where the states play a major role in training and education. Let's take a quick look at what Australia is doing, and do keep in mind that it is faring better than we are.

First, the states and the central government, in other words all levels of the Australian government, worked together to adopt a national strategy on the development of basic skills in the context

of continuing education. It is a shared national objective. Second, this strategy has concrete objectives, namely to ensure that two-thirds of the working age population achieve literacy and numeracy skills at level 3 or above by 2022. Third, this strategy involves all economic and social stakeholders, including educational institutions, NGOs, businesses, and unions. Finally, this strategy involves implementing common tools across the country to promote both formal and informal training and the recognition of skills acquired as part of lifelong learning.

In closing, Canadians do not have the basic skill levels required to meet the challenges of the 21st century. It is urgent that Canada implement a basic skills development and continuing education strategy in partnership with the provinces and all relevant stakeholders. That is the message of the most recent report of the Advisory Council on Economic Growth, which is chaired by Mr. Dominic Barton. The report is entitled *Learning Nation: Equipping Canada's Workforce with Skills for the Future*, and it states, and I quote:

[*English*]

It is time to fundamentally rethink how we equip Canadians for the work dynamics of the future. Meeting this challenge will require a system-wide approach, and active collaboration between employers, citizens, educational institutions, and governments. In essence, we must develop mechanisms that support Canadians on continuous learning journeys throughout their lives.

[*Translation*]

Dear colleagues, thank you for your attention. I encourage everyone to take part in the debate on this inquiry. I will come back to this matter at a later date. In my view, it is very important to the future of Canada and Canadians.

(On motion of Senator Gagné, debate adjourned.)

(*At 5:45 p.m., the Senate was continued until tomorrow at 2 p.m.*)