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The Honourable GEORGE J. FUREY,
Speaker

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(Daily index of proceedings appears at back of this issue).

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THE SENATE

Thursday, December 12, 2019

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

Prayers.

[Translation]

ROYAL ASSENT

NOTICE

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that the following communication had been received:

RIDEAU HALL

December 12, 2019

Mr. Speaker:

I have the honour to inform you that the Right Honourable Julie Payette, Governor General of Canada, will proceed to the Senate Chamber today, the 12th day of December, 2019, at 3:30 p.m., for the purpose of giving Royal Assent to a certain bill of law.

Yours sincerely,

Assunta Di Lorenzo
*Secretary to the Governor General and Herald
Chancellor*

The Honourable
The Speaker of the Senate
Ottawa

[English]

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, there have been consultations and there is an agreement to allow photographers in the Senate Chamber to photograph the Royal Assent ceremony today.

Is it agreed, honourable senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I received a notice from the Government Representative in the Senate who requests, pursuant to rule 4-3(1), that the time provided for the consideration of Senators' Statements be extended today for the purpose of paying tribute to the Honourable Joseph A. Day, who will retire from the Senate on January 24, 2020.

I remind senators that pursuant to our rules, each senator will be allowed only three minutes and they may speak only once, and the time for tributes shall not exceed 15 minutes. However, these 15 minutes do not include the time allotted to the response of the senator to whom tribute is paid.

TRIBUTES

THE HONOURABLE JOSEPH A. DAY

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, today we bid farewell to one of our longest-serving colleagues, Senator Day. In Senator Day, we have a Renaissance man: engineer, lawyer, military man, marathoner and senator.

Of course, the sum of every person is much more than what they have accomplished in their professional lives; what we remember of a person is who they are much more than what they do. In the case of Senator Day, we have a man who combines great accomplishments with great humility and kindness. All of us have had our day brightened by his ready smile, such as just now, and all of us in this chamber know that in a political environment, such qualities are invaluable.

Senator Day's life has been one of consistent public service. In addition to his contributions in committee — Banking, Trade and Commerce, as well as National Finance, as deputy chair of the former committee and then chair for the latter — Senator Day also served as a member of many interparliamentary associations, including as international vice-president of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

[Translation]

I also want to commend him for his leadership in the independent Liberal caucus.

[English]

Also, I would like to commend him for his work to rebrand this group as the progressives and, in doing so, accurately identifying the common ideology of this group in a non-partisan way. Remember that it was as a progressive that Senator Day

introduced Bill C-2 in the last Parliament, “the middle-class tax cut,” a bill that helped millions of middle-class Canadians pay less in taxes.

• (1410)

In this Parliament, in recognition of his leadership and years of service, I was pleased to ask Senator Day to introduce Bill S-1, an act relating to railways, a ceremonial bill to be sure, but one that asserts the Senate’s indelible and continuous role to legislate as an independent chamber.

[Translation]

Senator Day, thank you for everything you’ve done for New Brunswick and Canada. Thank you for being such a great colleague, for always being cordial, and for demonstrating an admirable work ethic. We will miss you.

[English]

Your beloved New Brunswick, I wish your days filled with happiness and good health among family and friends. Thank you for your ongoing service to Canada, and indeed to this chamber.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, for just over 18 years, our colleague, Senator Joseph Day, has been a strong advocate for his home province of New Brunswick here in the Senate of Canada. Serving as Leader of the Senate Liberals, and the recent progressive senate group, he has provided his fellow caucus members with principled leadership.

As a chair, deputy chair and member of more committees than I have time to mention, he has made a lasting contribution to the work of the Senate. For these reasons, and many more, when Senator Day takes his leave of this place next month he will be missed by all honourable senators.

Since his appointment to the Senate upon the recommendation of former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien in October of 2001, Senator Day has been a dedicated member of this place. And as a marathon runner, Senator Day knows the importance of pacing yourself, taking the long view and enjoying the journey. No matter what has been thrown his way over the last few years, he has dealt with the ups and downs of life in Parliament with versatility and good humour.

The discipline, integrity and professionalism instilled in Joseph Day over 50 years ago as a cadet at the Royal Military College of Canada has served him well as a senator. His deep understanding and appreciation of the Canadian Armed Forces can be found throughout his work here in the Senate.

In 2003 Senator Day co-sponsored Bill C-411, which established Merchant Navy Veterans Day held every September 3. He has been a mentor to the RMC cadets during their annual day on Parliament Hill, hosted the annual Air Force Day on the Hill and served as one of the international vice-presidents of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

[Senator Harder]

The men and women of Canada’s military have always had a steadfast supporter in Senator Day. I know that will not diminish with his upcoming retirement.

For nine years, from 2006 to 2015, Senator Day served as Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on National Finance. He led the committee with careful attention to detail, treating all members fairly and with respect. Senator Day has previously said that, although it may be difficult to get a clear understanding of government expenditures, it is our obligation as parliamentarians. Our colleague performed a difficult task in untangling complex public spending, and, in doing so, he did a service to Canadians by holding their government to account. Colleagues, we all develop many friendships across party lines as we serve together in this chamber. Over the last 10 years, I was blessed to become good friends with Senator Day and his wife, Georgie. We got to travel on numerous trips to Asia and I always found them both a pleasure and a delight to be with.

Senator Day, we will miss your presence in this chamber. On behalf of our entire Conservative caucus, I wish you a happy and active retirement filled with the people and things you love. May you return to your family home in Hampton safe in the knowledge that you have served your fellow Canadians with distinction.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Yuen Pau Woo: Honourable senators, on behalf of the Independent Senators Group, I rise today to add my voice in bidding farewell to our colleague Senator Joseph Day. Senator Day has contributed much to this place, and with a little help from some of his friends I will highlight just a few of the ways that he left his mark on Canada’s upper chamber.

Senator Day’s list of accomplishments is long. He graduated from RMC in 1968 and was named best all-around graduate and outstanding college athlete. He has completed nine marathons, and many of you will have had glimpses of him flashing by in his gym kit on the streets of Ottawa on his daily jog to the Senate.

He has a bachelor’s degree in engineering, a Juris Doctorate, a masters in law and he has been a member of the bars of New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario. Senator Wetston reminds me that, before he joined the Senate, Senator Day had a distinguished career as a lawyer specializing in intellectual property in Toronto.

Throughout his 19 years in Canada’s upper chamber, Senator Day has been a constant advocate for veterans, Indigenous people, New Brunswickers and Canadians on the international stage. His numerous contributions to furthering Canada’s international relations include his role as vice-president of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, and a member of both the Canada-Japan Interparliamentary Association and the Canada-China Legislative Association.

Senator Day has not only been a role model with respect to his work in the Senate, but he has also demonstrated professionalism, generosity and mentorship to senators of all groups and experience levels. If you will indulge me, I would

like to pass along anecdotes from my colleagues in the ISG and beyond. There were so many of us who wanted to stand today and pay tribute.

Quite a few of the anecdotes had to do with encounters in the airport and particularly introducing some of our colleagues to A&W burgers. There were references to badminton connections, and expressed pleasure from all of my colleagues who have had the opportunity of travelling with you; they were such pleasant experiences, whether it was on short trips or trips to remote places such as the Arctic.

Senator Cormier wanted to highlight the fact that Senator Day, who comes from an English-speaking region of New Brunswick, went out of his way to master French and express himself so well in that language.

Even Senator Day's former colleagues have reached out to me to offer their tributes. Former Senator Jack Austin specifically asked me to pass along that Senator Day exemplifies dedication to the public interest of the highest standard, and that he represented the finest level of Canadian values.

I will end with a quote that former Senator Austin asked me to pass to Senator Day:

My personal best wishes to Senator Day, and my advice: Don't retire; rewire.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Percy E. Downe: Honourable senators, Senator Day's very impressive achievements have been well covered by other speakers today, so I will not repeat them. But many years ago, when Prime Minister Chrétien was looking to fill a New Brunswick Senate seat, I was tasked with the responsibility of determining if the quality of Joe Day's resumé matched the quality of the person.

I remember well meeting Joe Day in my office at the Prime Minister's office to determine if he was Senate ready. I was struck then, that notwithstanding his outstanding education and career, he was a very humble person, only motivated to help others. I was pleased to report to the Prime Minister that Joe Day was a high-quality candidate, and his body of work in the Senate over the years has proven that assessment was indeed correct.

In addition to his education and career, Senator Day had another very appealing quality: a passionate love of politics, and particularly the Liberal Party. However, Senator Day has the political misfortune of living in a part of New Brunswick where Liberals are often on the endangered species list.

Notwithstanding the difficult political odds of running in elections when the tide was going out for the Liberal Party, he tried his best to get elected. In the end, Senator Day answered a higher calling and was able to serve the citizens of New Brunswick in the Senate of Canada.

I know how much they appreciated his work on their behalf.

• (1420)

One of the many things that has always impressed me about Senator Day was his ability to arrive in Ottawa, often landing late at night from somewhere — usually China — and then give a detailed speech the next day on Supplementary Estimates (A), followed by another long, detailed speech on Supplementary Estimates (B), and the supplementaries seemed to go on and on. Not only did Senator Day have a speech, but he took all questions from senators on the financial items enclosed in those documents. This is an amazing example of his dedication to the work of the Senate.

Colleagues, in closing, I would like to relay some personal information you may not know about Senator Day: He is, among other things, an expert on beer. He combines that knowledge of beer with a running routine, so he enjoys the occasional beer but avoids the corresponding weight gain.

Also, Senator Day, as we all know, is a very positive person, but he does have one quirk. He is always concerned that former senators don't live long after they retire from the Senate. But as we heard from Senator Woo, Senator Austin, who I believe is 87, is still very active. I checked others and they all seem very active. For example, Peter Stollery, your former colleague, is 84, and the last I heard, he was headed to a fishing trip in the Indian Ocean.

Senator Day, we look forward to hearing for many, many, many years about your activities after you leave the Senate of Canada. Senator Day, I know you will miss the Senate, and the Senate will miss you.

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: Honourable senators, after more than 18 years in the Senate, our friend and colleague, Senator Joe Day, will soon be leaving us. As a young man, he left his beloved Hampton, New Brunswick for Collège militaire royal de Saint-Jean, then went on to graduate from the Royal Military College with a degree in electrical engineering.

He went on to law school at Queen's and completed his master's at Osgoode Hall Law School. In the intellectual property law days, he worked at some of the most prestigious law firms in this country: Borden & Elliot, Sim & McBurney, Ogilvy Renault and Gowling & Henderson. He also worked as legal counsel to J.D. Irving, Limited. Every New Brunswicker does that, I think.

At one time, he even made a foray into electoral politics in his home province when he ran in the riding of Fundy Royal, albeit unsuccessfully.

When he came here to this place in 2001, he brought with him all the skills and experience of his previous life. His ability to pore over technical material served him and, indeed, all Canadians well as he pored over budget implementation acts, supply bills and estimates. He ably spent more than a decade as Chair and Deputy Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, proving that he does, indeed, understand how budgets work.

He was Deputy Chair of the Banking Committee, and Deputy Chair of the Veterans Affairs Subcommittee, a nod to his RMC background. In fact, every year, he hosts an RMC cadet visit to

Parliament Hill, as well as the Royal Canadian Air Force Association's Air Force Day on the Hill and the Intellectual Property Institute of Canada's World IP Day on the Hill.

Since June 2016, he has been the leader of our merry band of senators, once the Senate Liberals and now the progressive Senate group. For more than three years, he helped steer our ship through this new Senate and provided our group with steadfast representation. We thank you for your service in that regard, Joe.

Joe, your loyal progressive colleagues and I will miss you and your mischievous smile terribly, though not your enthusiasm for the minutiae of the budgetary process. We wish you and Georgie all the best for the next chapter of your lives. Thank you, Joe.

[Translation]

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

Hon. Joseph A. Day: Colleagues, I am overwhelmed by your kind words. On this, my last day in the Senate, I'd like to begin my remarks by quoting from the farewell speeches of two former colleagues from my home province of New Brunswick, namely Senator Erminie Cohen and Senator Louis J. Robichaud.

[English]

Senator Erminie Cohen represented the same region of New Brunswick that I do, Saint John-Kennebecasis. In fact, I arrived here after her retirement, filling the seat she vacated. When she spoke for the last time in the Senate, Senator Cohen said:

... I have come to think of the Senate and those who fill the benches on both its sides as a unique community within this wonderful land.

She was right. The Senate is a unique community, and we are all uniquely privileged to be part of that community.

And as part of that community, we have an obligation, according to Senator Cohen, to:

... persevere in the endless struggle to bring prosperity and wellbeing to all Canadians. ...

According to another of my New Brunswick predecessors, we are unusually well-placed to do that job. Louis J. Robichaud, after serving as premier of my province, served in this chamber for 27 years. As I was preparing my own remarks, I was curious about what that distinguished politician and close friend had to say as he took his leave from the Senate, colleagues, in October of 2000, just a year before I arrived here. Senator Robichaud made a point, on his final day, of describing what makes our chamber special:

... those who support an elected Senate are, in my judgment, making a mistake, because if it were thus, senators would become even more keen politicians than they already are. Senators are balanced, because they are appointed without being elected, for a period of time. They are capable of reflection and are not afraid of expressing their opinions at any time. They are not blinded by purely political considerations ...

[Senator Mercer]

So a chamber whose members are less partisan and more independent than those in the House of Commons has long been a feature of this Senate. It's not a recent development or a recent discovery.

As Senator Cohen described, we are a unique community, but we are also a small community. Our other legislative bodies measure their membership in the hundreds. Our House of Commons has 338 members. And in the Parliament on which we are modelled, the mother of all Parliaments in the U.K., the House of Commons has 650 members, and the House of Lords has 793 lords. By contrast, our normal working complement here is usually something under 100.

• (1430)

Our job is to ensure, as best we can, the well-being and prosperity of more than 37 million of our fellow citizens. That is a sobering responsibility for such a small group. Our rules ensure that not a single one of us can be ignored or taken for granted as we do that job here in the Senate.

It has always been expected that we would work together in a collegial fashion, setting aside our personal and partisan differences for the greater good. Do we have differences? Of course we have differences. There have always been differences of opinion in this chamber about what is best for Canadians. Those differences will undoubtedly continue. Those differences exist because when we arrive we bring to the chamber our own individual life experiences.

As you've heard, I studied engineering and then went to law school. My formative years were spent at Collège Militaire Royal de Saint-Jean and the Royal Military College in Kingston. In the Senate, I was able to build on that experience. In the year that I arrived, the Senate created the National Security and Defence Committee and the Subcommittee on Veteran Affairs. I was honoured to be given the opportunity to serve on both of those committees. It was also an honour to be a member of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and to serve as the international vice-president for a term.

As parliamentarians, we have a duty not only to our country and people but also to the people outside our borders, to promote democracy, collective action and enhance every individual's personal security wherever they may be in this world.

I arrived in the Senate less than a month following the horrific events of 9/11. Our chamber, through the pre-study technique that was being used, was deeply involved in the design of Canada's immediate legislative response to that terrible event. I was proud to serve on two special committees, one in 2004 and one in 2012, that were subsequently established to monitor anti-terrorism laws.

The NATO Parliamentary Assembly played an important role with respect to the developing terrorist threat by hosting 29 meetings with other parliamentarians of other NATO countries where we shared best practices and ideas moving forward.

Honourable senators, we do not live in a silo called Canada. We live in a country which is a valued and influential member of the international community, and that gives rise to obligations on the international stage. We may have differences about the role we should play, but there are matters where we should have no differences.

I graduated from the Royal Military College in 1968, and the officer cadets were taught, among other values, to find truth, duty and service. These values apply equally to all of us in this chamber. We serve the people of Canada in order to help make their lives as fulfilling as possible.

We have a duty to act truthfully and with integrity with Canadians; to do what is legally and morally right. If the prefix “honourable” before our names is to be deserved, we must act truthfully and with integrity toward one another.

In the military, truth and integrity among the members of one’s unit is paramount because without it the consequences can be fatal. If truth and integrity are compromised in Parliament, it is the well-being of Canadians that suffers, because instead of focusing on Canadians’ needs, we become even more preoccupied with our own internal battles.

Much has been made of the alleged need for fundamental change of our rules and procedures to better reflect the so-called new reality of this chamber and to make the work here more efficient.

On two occasions, I appeared as a witness before the Modernization Committee. I invite honourable senators who might wish to delve deeper into the subject to review my testimony. But I briefly ask: Could the legislative process be made more efficient? The answer is: Yes, it could. Would the executive branch of government be pleased with a more efficient Senate to scrutinize the legislation sent this way? Of course the cabinet would be happy. But what would be the cost to the independents and to the individual authority each of us now possesses as a member of this body and as a member of this small community? That’s the question we have to ask ourselves.

I fear that the unintended consequences of trying to seek greater efficiency have not been fully explored or appreciated. Perhaps they are being fully appreciated by some and for that reason are being encouraged. That all has to be discovered. It should be obvious to all of us that sober second thought was never meant to be about efficiency and speed but about the quality of the result.

In any event, that is a matter for this Senate of the future. I leave it to you to grapple with those challenges. However, I am concerned about the time, energy and resources we are devoting to introspection, about our institution and how it works.

We are a small community with a sobering responsibility for the well-being of 37-million people. Canadians, rightly, expect us to focus on their living environment and not our working environment. That should be our priority here.

When I entered the Senate more than 18 years ago, I did so as a member of the governing Liberal Party and caucus at that time. Much has changed since I arrived. I now leave the Senate as a

proud member and leader of the progressive Senate group. This group was created to gather together progressive-thinking and liberal-minded senators who believed that government has an important role to play in the lives and well-being of all Canadians. The progressives are inspired by the Algonquin word *mamidosein* which means “meeting place and walking together.”

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms lists “freedom of association” as a fundamental freedom. Like-minded individuals who wish to associate with one another in a legislative body, meet and walk together in pursuit of a common vision of what constitutes the public good is, in my view, a good thing. This is how legislative bodies function the world over, so long as they are not in a one-party state.

• (1440)

So I am pleased that the new progressive group was created, and I am equally pleased that my good friend Senator Jane Cordy has agreed to act as the leader of our group. Senator Dennis Dawson will be her deputy leader and Senator Terry Mercer will be the whip for our group.

[Translation]

In closing, I’d like to thank the Right Honourable Jean Chrétien for giving me the incredible opportunity to serve Canadians as a member of the Senate of Canada. I am immensely grateful to him for appointing me.

[English]

I also thank colleagues on both sides of the chamber for your many years of camaraderie and friendship. You have made my life here interesting and sometimes challenging. I wish to thank all staff members who professionally and loyally assisted me over the many years —

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Day: — particularly Cindy McCavour, who has been with me throughout — thank you — and Len Kuchar, who will be retiring. I’m not sure whether he would be retiring if events had been somewhat different, but he is, after more than 35 years here. Len started working in the Senate as a messenger. He worked with Allan J. MacEachen and virtually all leaders of the Liberal caucus throughout those 35 years. If you ever get a chance — and go quickly, because we won’t be there much longer — to visit his office upstairs, you will see the photographs of all the people he served with.

Thank you, Len.

Finally, I would like to thank all the table officers and pages. You’re great. Chasse, you keep after the pages. Monsieur Denis, I know you have a great team with you, and I am sure you will continue to do the great work, along with our Speaker, that you have in the past.

Thank you all very much.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

THE HONOURABLE ANDREW SCHEER, P.C.

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, as you have probably heard or seen on television, our leader, Andrew Scheer, announced earlier today that he will be stepping down as the leader of the Conservative Party and as Leader of the Official Opposition as soon as his replacement is elected.

I am personally disappointed but respect that Andrew has carefully considered what course of action he should take and feels that this is the right decision for him, for his family and for the party.

I have known Andrew Scheer for many years and would like to take a moment to thank him for his service as the leader of the Conservative Party and salute him for all he has contributed to both the party and the nation.

If you know Andrew at all, you will know that he is a man who has repeatedly surprised people. He started in our political party as a teenager and ran in 2004 against NDP Member of Parliament Lorne Nystrom. Mr. Nystrom had been an MP for 25 years, and few people gave Andrew any hope of defeating him. So when Andrew won the seat, no one was more surprised than he was.

A few years later, in 2011, he was elected Speaker of the House of Commons, making him the youngest speaker in the chamber's history. In 2017, Andrew was elected as leader of the Conservative Party and took the party through the 2019 election, winning the popular vote and gaining 22 more seats. Leaders of political parties are used to dealing with criticism, but I believe Andrew is probably the first leader in history to be criticized for being too nice and smiling too much.

This is the real Andrew Scheer — a man who loves his family, loves his country and selflessly serves in order to see Canada be the best it can be. Colleagues, please join me in thanking Andrew Scheer for his many contributions to our country, and join me in wishing Andrew, Jill and their entire family a very merry, relaxed and peaceful Christmas.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

THE HONOURABLE JOSEPH A. DAY

Hon. Mary Coyle: Honourable senators, I rise today to give voice to a tribute to our esteemed New Brunswick colleague and my fellow Arctic traveller, the Honourable Joe Day. The voice I bring into our chamber is that of our former Senate colleague — your friend and mine, Joe — Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire. This is from General Dallaire for you, Joe:

I entered the Senate my very first day amazed by the historic atmosphere of that chamber and the portraits of the past in those great tableaux. I was led to my seat, and who do I find sitting in the seat behind me but none other than my class senior from military college, Joe Day — no longer an officer cadet, nor a lawyer, but a senator. What a sense of confidence I felt seeing my elder — by a bit — my colleague and my loyal friend.

[Translation]

Joe and I sat in those seats for 10 years. From time to time, we had some lively debates to move our democracy forward, and we enjoyed the occasional chuckle together when frivolous arguments were presented to the Speaker of the Senate.

[English]

And on occasion, my old military buddy and I would stand together feeling the pain of the cost of peace, decided in this chamber and the other place and impacting families and members who serve out these incredibly powerful decisions of life and death.

Senator Joe Day, with diligence, with an exemplary work ethic, with a sense of duty and with attention to detail, served well beyond the norm of what is expected of a member of the upper chamber. Joe served on a number of committees, never shirking work, and was one of the better senators to keep the mailroom busy. And Senator Joseph Day never forgot his military roots as he continued to serve not only on the Defence Committee but also giving so much of his energy and his heart to his alma mater and the men and women of Canada's Armed Forces.

[Translation]

Over the years, he has never lost his sense of humanity or his passion for serving our country and its people. Senator Joe Day is a man who has served honourably, honestly and with all the talents God gave him.

[English]

I miss Joe Day. The Senate will miss Joe Day. But his fellow compatriots will thank him; of that I am sure, as Joseph Day is most deserving today of the accolades of his Senate colleagues and the appreciation of all Canadians.

Senator Day, I leave you with this tribute from your dear friend and brother, Roméo Dallaire.

[Translation]

Many thanks to our colleague and friend.

• (1450)

[English]

WORLD SOIL DAY

Hon. Robert Black: Honourable senators, I rise today in recognition of World Soil Day which took place last week on December 5. Some of you may have noticed I have been talking a lot about the importance of soil over the last while. I'd like to warn you that's not going to stop any time soon.

I believe that soil degradation has the potential to be one of the major issues of our lifetime, and addressing soil issues will have to play a key role in the fight against climate change. The theme

of the 2019 World Soil Day was “stop soil erosion and save our future.” That slogan pretty well sums it up. Soil plays a crucial role in maintaining healthy ecosystems and feeding the world. The food that many of us take for granted in our daily lives would not be possible without soil. Healthy soil leads to healthy crops, which leads to healthy livestock and healthy people. With the decrease in healthy usable soil, food availability could be and will be at risk around the world. Soil is an important natural resource, but it is a finite resource.

We have not always treated our soils with care, partly because we have not always understood and known the severity of the situation and partly because it’s very hard to change the way we do things when we don’t see immediate benefits.

That said, at the same time we have seen consequences in recent years of soil degradation and climate change with more frequent and extreme weather events here and around the world. We are experiencing more major floods, hurricanes, heat waves, wildfires and tornadoes. As soil is degraded, its carbon dioxide enters the atmosphere, contributing to the greenhouse effect and these severe weather events I speak of.

All that said, it’s not too late to make changes. Government and organizations need to lead the way in soil management by engaging in the protection and improvement of soil health.

I encourage all of us to get our hands dirty and make it happen while we still have time to do something about it. World Soil Day is an important reminder about the crucial role soil plays in our lives. While Ontario and other jurisdictions have been making some moves in the right direction, the federal government can and should be doing a lot more about soil health. As you may have heard, I’m hoping we will be able to carry out a study on the topic in the Senate at some point in the future. I look forward to the reconstitution of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry so we can get to work on this important issue and others facing all Canadians. Let’s stop taking this precious resource for granted and do what we can now to conserve it for the benefit of all of us and our planet.

It’s time to take action. Thank you. Merci.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

L'ÉCOLE POLYTECHNIQUE DE MONTRÉAL

COMMEMORATION OF TRAGEDY

Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu: Honourable senators, 30 years ago, on the evening of December 6, 1989, 14 young women were brutally murdered at the École Polytechnique de Montréal and another 14 were seriously injured. Fourteen women were killed just for being women. These women were in their prime. They had their whole lives ahead of them. They were pursuing their passion, following their dream of earning an engineering degree from an outstanding university. They represented the hopes and dreams of their families, their province and their country. When they were gunned down that evening, their entire province, their entire country felt their pain and suffering.

Ever since, on December 6, when we think of those 14 young women, we remember other women who have lost their lives to family violence over the past 30 years. That is why December 6, 1989, will forever be a dark day in Canadian history. Thirty winters have passed, but every week a woman in Canada dies at the hands of her partner or ex-partner. Just yesterday, in Montreal, a mother and her two children were found dead. Each one is one too many.

Since 1989, over 1,000 women and children were murdered in Quebec alone. One in three women experiences some form of violence in her lifetime. The risk is even higher for Indigenous women and girls. December is a difficult month for many families of victims — and I am one of them. It is a time of the year for reflection, for remembering the precious happy moments that we would so love to relive with our mothers, sisters and daughters who were killed. However, December is also a time of hope, a time to think about changing things, to save the lives of the women and girls of tomorrow, to extend the springtime of their lives, which for others came to a brutal end because they were murdered.

Let’s spare a thought for all the women and girls who were tragically taken from us in 2019. Let’s think about the all too many women and girls who have or are currently enduring violence, intimidation and sexual assaults, including those who worked in the Senate and who may still work here, those who should have been better protected and who deserve justice from our institution.

Let’s hold in our hearts the memory of these women who have left us. Let’s better protect the most vulnerable and those who ask for help. Commemorations are important, but taking action to remedy and improve things is even more so. Let’s share their legacy of love by working together, regardless of our political affiliations, so that their lives were not destroyed in vain.

Thank you and merry Christmas.

THE HONOURABLE ANDRÉ PRATTE

Hon. Julie Miville-Dechéne: Honourable senators, ‘tis the season for paying tribute, so I would like to draw the chamber’s attention to the enormous contribution to the Senate made by our colleague, the former Senator Pratte, who stepped down on election night. His departure is a great loss for the upper chamber and the Independent Senators Group. At the same time, I am also losing a friend. We both had careers in journalism in the past, so we often shared the same instincts. André was part of the first Independent Senators Group. Anything seemed possible at the time. He took on the task with fervour. He believed in it. He’s the real deal. He sponsored four bills, and he wrote and delivered nearly 60 speeches in three and a half years on subjects ranging from medical assistance in dying to pipelines, firearms, freedom of expression and, of course, the infamous Salisbury Doctrine.

You have all witnessed his capacity to synthesize and analyze, his quickness and his many historical references. If a columnist were to attack the Senate in the morning headlines, no problem, we would all have André’s well-crafted response, in both French

and English, by 8:00 a.m., and it would have already been sent to the papers for publication. I often wondered whether André ever slept.

On a more personal note, Senator Pratte stood by me on two occasions since my appointment during debates on issues I championed. During the debate on Motion No. 410, on the importance of services in French for Franco-Ontarians, André helped with the writing, went into the trenches and tried to persuade the Conservatives, since he was always looking for a compromise.

On Bill C-48, André Pratte took up the torch with Senator Sinclair. They proposed an original compromise that rallied the independent senators. It was all for naught. The government rejected our amendment. That was one of the reasons why André Pratte decided to leave this place, a decision that greatly upset me because his analysis of the problems in the Senate is, as always, honest, fair and uncompromising.

I wish our dear colleague all the best. Thank you for everything, André.

[English]

THE LATE WILLIAM (BILL) MCKNIGHT, P.C.

Hon. David Tkachuk: Honourable senators, the Honourable Bill McKnight was a lot of things in his long life, but from first to last he was a friend of First Nations. Before he was an MP, he was a neighbour who came to visit and listen. Before he was a minister of the Crown, he carried our views to his caucus in Ottawa and to the floor of the house. When he was a minister, both in Indian Affairs and in several other portfolios, he broke the crusty mould of history. These are not my words. These are the words of George Lafond from the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation and Bill's former deputy minister, Harry Swain, in a letter they wrote to me after the death of Bill McKnight on October 4, 2019.

• (1500)

In a Mulroney government, Bill fought for the Arctic treaties and helped bring the Charter to bear on the most ambitious treaty up to that time and perhaps since, which recognized self-government for the Inuit in the eastern Arctic.

It was Bill McKnight and Premier Grant Devine in Saskatchewan who convinced the Mulroney government to sign a historic land agreement with Saskatchewan First Nations. It was signed in 1992 with the NDP government, who replaced the Conservatives in 1991.

Bill McKnight was also the Minister of Labour and Western Diversification and ended his career as the Minister of National Defence during the Gulf War, a farmer from wartime Saskatchewan, appropriate hometown for the Minister of Defence. He represented the constituency of Kindersley-Lloydminster from 1979 until his retirement in 1993.

Before he became an MP, he was active in the community of Elrose, coaching hockey and baseball and serving on the local school board. He was married and had two children, Rob and Torrie, with his wife Bev. He spent the 1970s helping build the

Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan and served as its president and campaign chairman in a decisive Conservative victory in 1982.

Stephen Harper appointed Bill as treaty commissioner in 2007, a fitting appointment for a man who, while a minister, was instrumental in convincing the federal government to establish the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. As George Lafond said about the work of the commission:

This painful, five-year excavation of ancient and present harms did not proceed without tears and its report did not get much of a response from the government in office.

I should note that it was the government following the Mulroney government.

After his political career, Bill opened a Kenny Rogers Roasters restaurant with his son, served on numerous boards and was heavily involved in business. He was a true son of Saskatchewan — unassuming, friendly, who loved his family, country and fellow man. He was an Honorary Chief of the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation.

Please join me, honourable senators, in expressing our deepest condolences to Bill's wife, Bev, his children, Rob and Torrie, their spouses, his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INFORMATION COMMISSIONER

2018-19 ANNUAL REPORTS TABLED

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Annual Reports of the Office of the Information Commissioner of Canada for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2019, pursuant to the *Access to Information Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. A-1, s. 94 and to the *Privacy Act*, R.S.C. 1985, P-21, s. 72.

[Translation]

CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

2018-19 ANNUAL REPORTS TABLED

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Annual Reports of the Chief Electoral Officer for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2019, pursuant to the *Access to Information Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. A-1, s. 94 and to the *Privacy Act*, R.S.C. 1985, P-21, s. 72.

[English]

AUDITOR GENERAL

COSTS OF CROWN CORPORATION AUDITS—REPORT TABLED

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Parliament of Canada entitled *Costs of Crown Corporation Audits*, pursuant to the *Financial Administration Act*, R.S.C., 1985, c. F-11, s. 147.

EXPORT DEVELOPMENT CANADA'S ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL REVIEW DIRECTIVE—REPORT TABLED

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Parliament of Canada on Export Development Canada's Environmental and Social Review Directive, pursuant to the *Export Development Act*, R.S.C., 1985, c. E-20, s. 21(2).

[Translation]

COMMENTARY ON THE 2018-2019 FINANCIAL AUDITS—REPORT TABLED

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Parliament of Canada entitled *Commentary on the 2018-2019 Financial Audits*, pursuant to the *Auditor General Act*, R.S. 1985, c. A-17, sbs. 7(5).

TREASURY BOARD

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS OF CANADA—2018-19 REPORT TABLED

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Public Accounts of Canada for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2019, entitled (1) *Volume I—Summary Report and Consolidated Financial Statements*, (2) *Volume II—Details of Expenses and Revenues*, (3) *Volume III—Additional Information and Analyses*, pursuant to the *Financial Administration Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. F-11, sbs. 64(1).

FEDERAL REGULATORY MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES—2018-19 ANNUAL REPORT TABLED

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Annual Report of the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat entitled *Annual Report to Parliament for the 2018 to 2019 Fiscal Year: Federal Regulatory Management Initiatives*.

[English]

INTERNAL ECONOMY, BUDGETS AND ADMINISTRATION

FIRST REPORT OF COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Sabi Marwah, Chair of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration, presented the following report:

Thursday, December 12, 2019

The Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration has the honour to present its

FIRST REPORT

Your committee, which is authorized by the *Rules of the Senate* to consider financial and administrative matters, has approved the Senate Main Estimates for the fiscal year 2020-21 and recommends their adoption (Appendixes A and B).

Your committee notes that the proposed total budget is \$115,563,738.

Respectfully submitted,

SABI MARWAH
Chair

(For text of budget, see today's Journals of the Senate, p. 46.)

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this report be taken into consideration?

(On motion of Senator Marwah, report placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting of the Senate.)

[Translation]

CRIMINAL CODE

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu introduced Bill S-207, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (disclosure of information by jurors).

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

[English]

SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY SUICIDE PREVENTION AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS AMONG CANADIANS

Hon. Patrick Brazeau: Honourable senators, I am humbled and feel a great deal of pride to be able to rise here today and propose what I am about to propose. To the many thousands of Canadians who deal with mental health issues and suicide, know that I was broken too, but I am broken no more.

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 be authorized to examine and report on suicide prevention and mental health needs among Canadians, including a particular emphasis on boys and men, and the over-representation of Indigenous peoples in suicide statistics, when and if the committee is formed; and

That the committee submit its final report no later than December 31, 2020.

• (1510)

DEFICIENCIES OR GAPS IN SENATE POLICIES

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Lillian Eva Dyck: Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to the deficiencies or gaps in the policies of the Senate of Canada compared to other parliamentary bodies on behaviours of individual senators that constitute bullying, harassment, or sexual misconduct that occur during parliamentary proceedings.

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AMEND THE *RULES OF THE SENATE* SUSPENDED

Leave having been given to revert to Notices of Motions:

Hon. Tony Dean: Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence, I will move:

That the *Rules of the Senate* be amended:

1. by:

- (a) deleting the word “and” at the end of rule 12-3(2)(e) in the English version; and

- (b) replacing the period at the end of rule 12-3(2)(f) by the following:

“; and

(g) the Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight, three Senators and two qualified external members.”;

2. by replacing rule 12-3(3) with the following:

“Ex officio members

12-3. (3) In addition to the membership provided for in subsections (1) and (2), the Leader of the Government, or the Deputy Leader if the Leader is absent, and the leader or facilitator of each recognized party and recognized parliamentary group, or a designate if a leader or facilitator is absent, are ex officio members of all committees except the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators, the Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight and the joint committees. The ex officio members of committees have all the rights and obligations of a member of a committee, but shall not vote.

Restriction on membership

12-3. (4) No Senator shall be a member of both the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration and the Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight.”;

3. by replacing the portion of rule 12-5 before paragraph (a) by the following:

“**12-5.** Changes in the membership of a committee, except for the ex officio members and members of the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators and the Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight, may be made by notice filed with the Clerk, who shall have the notice recorded in the *Journals of the Senate*. The notice shall be signed by:”;

4. by replacing rule 12-6 with the following:

“Quorum of standing committees

12-6. (1) Except as provided in subsection (2) and elsewhere in these Rules, the quorum of a standing committee shall be four of its members.

EXCEPTION

Rule 12-27(2): Quorum of committee

Audit and Oversight

12-6. (2) The quorum of the Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight shall be two Senators and one external member, except in the case of the organization meeting, for which the quorum shall be three Senators.”;

5. by:

- (a) deleting the word “and” at the end of rule 12-7(15) in the English version; and
- (b) replacing the period at the end of rule 12-7(16) by the following:

“; and

Audit and Oversight

12-7. (17) the Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight, which, for the purposes of integrity, independence, transparency and accountability, shall be authorized, on its own initiative, to:

- (a) retain the services of and oversee the external auditors and internal auditors;
- (b) supervise the Senate’s internal and external audits;
- (c) make recommendations to the Senate concerning the internal and external audit plans;
- (d) report to the Senate regarding the internal and external audits, including audit reports and other matters;
- (e) review the Senate Administration’s action plans to ensure:
 - (i) that they adequately address the recommendations and findings arising from internal and external audits, and
 - (ii) that they are effectively implemented;
- (f) review the Senate’s Quarterly Financial Reports and the audited Financial Statements, and report them to the Senate; and
- (g) report at least annually with observations and recommendations to the Senate.”;

6. by adding the following new rule 12-9(3):

“Audit and Oversight — access to information

12-9. (3) The Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight may review the in camera proceedings of other Senate committees, including any transcripts of meetings, as they relate to the mandate of the Audit and Oversight Committee.”;

7. by replacing rule 12-13 with the following:

“Organization meeting

12-13. (1) Once the Senate has agreed to the membership of a committee, the Clerk of the Senate shall, as soon as practicable, call an organization meeting of the committee at which it shall elect a chair.

Chair of Audit and Oversight

12-13. (2) The chair of the Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight shall be a Senator who is not a member of the recognized party or recognized parliamentary group to which the chair of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration belongs.

Audit and Oversight — nomination of external members

12-13. (3) After electing its chair and deputy chair, the Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight shall adopt a report to the Senate nominating two qualified external members for the committee. This report must be agreed to by all three Senators who are members of the committee. The report shall include recommendations on remuneration and permissible expenses for the external members, which shall be paid from Senate funds once the report is adopted by the Senate.”;

8. by replacing rule 12-14 with the following:

“Participation of non-members

12-14. (1) Except as provided in subsection (2) and elsewhere in these Rules, a Senator who is not a member of a committee may attend and participate in its deliberations, but shall not vote.

EXCEPTIONS

Rule 12-28(2): Participation of non-members

Rule 15-7(2): Restrictions if declaration of interest

Rule 16-3(6): Speaking at conferences

Audit and Oversight

12-14. (2) Senators who are not members of the Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight shall not participate in its meetings, unless they are appearing as witnesses.”;

9. by replacing the portion of rule 12-16(1) before paragraph (a) by the following:

“**12-16.** (1) Except as provided in subsections (2) and (3) and elsewhere in these Rules, a committee may meet in camera only for the purpose of discussing.”;

10. by renumbering current rule 12-16(2) as 12-16(3), and by adding the following new rule 12-16(2):

“Audit and Oversight — in camera

12-16. (2) The Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight shall meet in camera whenever it deals with the in-camera proceedings of another committee.”;

11. by replacing the portion of rule 12-18(2) before paragraph (a) by the following:

“**12-18.** (2) Except as provided in subsection (3) and elsewhere in these Rules, a Senate committee may meet when the Senate is adjourned.”;

12. by adding the following new rule 12-18(3):

“Audit and Oversight

12-18. (3) The Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight may meet during any adjournment of the Senate.”;

13. by replacing rule 12-22(1) by the following:

“Majority conclusions

12-22. (1) Except as provided in subsection (7), a report of a Senate committee shall contain the conclusions agreed to by majority.”;

14. by replacing rule 12-22(2) by the following:

“Presentation or tabling

12-22. (2) Except as provided in subsection (8) and elsewhere in these Rules, a committee report shall be presented or tabled in the Senate by the chair or by a Senator designated by the chair.

EXCEPTION

Rule 12-31: Report deposited with the Clerk”;

15. by adding the following new rules 12-3(7) and (8):

“Reports of Audit and Oversight Committee — Content

12-3. (7) The Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight shall include the opinions of the external members in its reports.

Audit and Oversight — report deposited with the Clerk

The Hon. the Speaker: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, that the sitting be suspended to await the arrival of Her Excellency the Governor General?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(The Senate of the Senate was suspended.)

• (1550)

[Translation]

ROYAL ASSENT

Her Excellency the Governor General having come and being seated at the foot of the Throne, and the House of Commons having been summoned, and being come with their Speaker,

The Honourable Anthony Rota, Speaker of the House of Commons then addressed Her Excellency the Governor General as follows:

May it Please Your Excellency:

The Commons of Canada have voted certain supplies required to enable the Government to defray the expenses of the public service.

In the name of the Commons, I present to Your Excellency the following bill:

An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020 (*Bill C-2, Chapter 30, 2019*)

To which bill I humbly request Your Excellency’s assent.

Her Excellency the Governor General was pleased to give the Royal Assent to the said bill.

The Commons withdrew.

Her Excellency the Governor General was pleased to retire.

(The sitting of the Senate was resumed.)

[English]

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, the sitting is resumed.

Resuming Notices of Motions. Senator Dean.

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AMEND THE RULES OF THE SENATE

Hon. Tony Dean: Thank you, Your Honour, I will continue where I left off.

12-22. (8) A report of the Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight may be deposited with the Clerk at any time the Senate stands adjourned, and the report shall be deemed to have been presented or tabled in the Senate.”;

16. by replacing the opening paragraph of the definition of “Committee” in Appendix I, starting with the words “A body of Senators, Members of the House of Commons or both,” by the following:

“A body of Senators, Members of the House of Commons, members of both houses, or others, appointed by one or both of the two houses to consider such matters as may be referred to it or that it may be empowered to examine, including bills. A Senate committee is, except in the case of the Standing Committee on Audit and Oversight, one composed solely of Senators (as opposed to a joint committee — see below). (*Comité*)”; and

17. by updating all cross references in the Rules, including the lists of exceptions, accordingly.

[Translation]

**SENATE ETHICS OFFICER’S INQUIRY REPORT DATED
JUNE 28, 2019 CONCERNING FORMER
SENATOR DON MEREDITH**

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Josée Verner: Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to the Senate Ethics Officer’s *Inquiry report under the Ethics and Conflict of Interest Code for Senators concerning former Senator Don Meredith*, dated June 28, 2019.

• (1600)

[English]

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Pamela Wallin: Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to:

- (a) a September 2019 Quebec Superior Court ruling, which declared parts of federal and provincial law relating to medical assistance in dying (MAiD) to be too restrictive;
- (b) the recent Quebec Ministry of Health and Social Services report, which recommends provisions allowing for advance requests in MAiD, out of a “moral duty to respond to it”;
- (c) the ongoing and tireless work of Dying with Dignity Canada, a non-for-profit organization that advocates for vulnerable Canadians regarding their right to die;

- (d) the recommendations of the federally mandated, December 2018 Canadian Association of Academies report relating to advance requests in medical assistance in dying; and

- (e) the urgent need for the Senate to study and propose new rules pertaining to advance requests for medical assistance in dying.

QUESTION PERIOD

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

**EXEMPTION OF GRAIN DRYING COST FROM
FEDERAL CARBON TAX**

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Senator Harder, over the last four years I have raised many different issues impacting our agricultural and agri-food sector. Today is your last Question Period as the Government Leader in the Senate, and I will once again raise some concerns from our farmers and see if your last answer to me is a direct one.

Statistics Canada reports that net farm income fell almost 10 per cent in 2018, while operating expenses went up 5.6 per cent. While 2018 was a challenging year for farmers, it’s hard to believe that 2019 was any better. Market access problems are everywhere we look. India, China, Italy, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam have all placed barriers on agricultural trade with Canada.

The carbon tax is another challenge. Keystone Agricultural Producers of Manitoba recently pointed out that farmers have incurred unavoidable grain-drying costs due to the wet harvest conditions, and the carbon tax made the situation even worse.

Senator Harder, will your government help our farmers in these difficult times and exempt their grain-drying costs from the federal carbon tax?

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for his question. It is with some relief that I can say this is my last Question Period.

He is absolutely right about the importance of the agricultural sector to Canada and that in the global marketplace there are challenging times in trade, which is why the government is pursuing such an active agenda in trade diversification and ensuring that the markets have the best trade agreements.

The recently re-concluded NAFTA provides some degree of assurance within the North American marketplace. The opening up of the European market and the Asia Pacific Trade Agreement through the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership is important for us. I dare say that ensuring that the existing markets in Asia beyond the TPP, such as China, remain open to Canadian products is very important for us, even in times of strained bilateral relations.

The honourable senator will know that this diversification agenda is one that requires cooperation with provinces that have a role here, and the government has the responsibility of all stakeholders in the bilateral and multilateral fora. I hope the government can continue to count on the support of the honourable senator opposite and his colleagues on these initiatives as they make their way through Parliament.

With regard to the specific question of the impact that carbon pricing is having on the drying of lentils and other products, I can tell honourable senators that the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Environment are reviewing this issue to ensure that the ongoing support, where necessary, is provided.

Senator Plett: Thank you for that answer. Hopefully that review will be finished sooner rather than later.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION—BSE STATUS

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Senator Harder, honourable senators will no doubt remember and you will no doubt remember the impact Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy had on our beef industry when it was detected back in 2003. A lot of work has been done in the years since to reopen markets closed to our beef. In fact, Japan only lifted its last trade restriction on Canadian beef in May of this year.

Senator Harder, a few months ago your government missed the deadline to apply to the World Health Organization for Animal Health Offices to have Canada's BSE's status upgraded in 2020 from "controlled" to "negligible."

Senator Harder, will you make inquiries and let us know why your government missed this chance to improve our status on BSE that would have helped our livestock sector?

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for his question. Of course I will make inquiries. I will ensure that a robust and prompt response is provided by my successor.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question is also for the Government Leader in the Senate.

Senator Harder, one of the first questions I asked you in Question Period in 2016 concerned liquefied natural gas, which is of tremendous significance to my province of British Columbia. I will return to this topic today as my final question to you as Government Leader in the Senate.

In recent comments to the *Globe and Mail*, the new Minister of Environment, Jonathan Wilkinson, also a British Columbian, appeared to minimize the importance of LNG in meeting our GHG emission targets. For years now, B.C. governments of

varying political stripes have argued our LNG exports will help to reduce the use of coal in Asia, thereby reducing global emissions.

Honourable senator, why is your government downplaying the importance of LNG now, when a year ago you were boasting about giving approval to the LNG Canada project in Kitimat? What has changed?

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for her question. The government, of course, and I think all Canadians are very proud of the approximately \$42-billion investment represented in the Kitimat project. It is certainly our hope that is not the first and last of the major investments in the LNG sector. There is value in the LNG export in and of itself. What is under discussion, of course, in the international multilateral dialogue on climate change is how credits with respect to lowering carbon intensity are distributed, and those are continuing.

[Translation]

Senator Martin: Yesterday we learned that Chevron is going to sell its entire 50 per cent stake in the Kitimat LNG project, which plunges this major project into great uncertainty. Senator Harder, how much do Minister Wilkinson's words affect the strength of our LNG industry and the likelihood that other LNG projects will be approved by this government?

[English]

Senator Harder: The honourable senator will know that the government is very attentive to new projects, and there are procedures under way and processes in place to deal with those. I won't comment on that, except to say that the minister responsible is very alert to the potential investments.

There will be changes in structures and ownership in various aspects of the energy sector. That's the way of life in the private sector. What is important for Canada is that those investments come to fruition, that they are seen by their shareholders as successful, and that is done best when we all, in the political class if I can put it that way, remind global investors of how secure and positive an investment destination the Canadian marketplace is.

HUMAN RIGHTS

INVOLUNTARY STERILIZATION OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN

Hon. Yvonne Boyer: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. The United Nations Committee Against Torture tasked the Canadian government to provide, by December 7, 2019, a report on the involuntary sterilization of Indigenous women. As you know, the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights undertook a short study on the topic in the Forty-second Parliament, which should be revived in short order, and the subject was studied in the other place by the Standing Committee on Health.

• (1610)

In both instances, the testimony heard was alarming. Has the government met the December 7 deadline in submitting a report to the United Nations Committee Against Torture? Can the Leader of the Government inform the chamber of any other initiatives that the government has undertaken to resolve these human rights abuses?

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): Again, I thank the honourable senator for her question. I'm particularly grateful that she gave me notice so I could ensure an appropriate and adequate response.

In regard to the UN Committee Against Torture, Canada intends on providing a response to this matter. In the meantime, Canada's new Advisory Committee on Indigenous Women's Wellbeing is guiding a response to this issue, among other issues that are impacting Indigenous women and girls. The committee is comprised of all national Indigenous organizations, including women's organizations.

To improve cultural safety and quality of service, the government has taken the following steps: To ensure an expecting First Nations or Inuit mother knows she is entitled to a travel companion through the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program; investing in services to support healthy pregnancies and births in communities; and investing for the first time in midwifery in First Nations and Inuit communities. Collaboration is required between all orders of government and health and social system professionals to ensure culturally safe health services for all Indigenous women. And finally, individuals impacted by this issue requiring mental health or crisis support can contact the 24-7 Hope for Wellness Help Line and online chat.

Senator Boyer: Thank you, Senator Harder. Can you tell me when that report will be available and when they expect to have it finished?

Senator Harder: My understanding is soon.

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

SUPPORT FOR BEEF AND DAIRY INDUSTRIES

Hon. Robert Black: Honourable senators, my question is for the Government Representative in the Senate. Senator Harder, as you may know, Ryding-Regency Meat Packers Limited has recently closed its Toronto plant. The closure of this facility means that we have a surplus of cattle and not enough processing capacity. These effects are being felt not only in Ontario, but in Quebec, the Maritime provinces and into Manitoba and Saskatchewan. It truly is a national issue.

The federal government has very recently announced it will grant a two-year delay to the cattle industry — beef and dairy — on the coming into force of new transportation regulations. Obviously, this is good news, but it doesn't solve the problem of the processing capacity shortage.

Senator Harder, what is the government doing to support the beef and dairy industries through this growing crisis in both the short and long terms?

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for his question. I will take it on notice and ensure the answer is provided.

HEALTH

REGULATION OF VAPING FLUIDS

Hon. Jane Cordy: Honourable senators, thank you all very much, I think. It had better be a good question, I guess, after your kind applause.

Senator Harder, along with our colleagues, Senator Petitclerc, Senator Martin and Senator Seidman, who asked questions on Tuesday, I'm also greatly concerned about the reports of the increase in vaping by young people.

When we debated it and passed the Tobacco and Vaping Products Act, the benefits of vaping as a smoking cessation option were highlighted, and indeed I highlighted that in the two speeches I made in this chamber. However, I believe in hindsight, which is always 20/20, that the use of vaping is introducing a whole new demographic to nicotine consumption. I believe that was underestimated in our debate in this chamber.

What is alarming is that the nicotine and vaping products permitted under the current Tobacco and Vaping Products Act regulation may be more than five times the dose of nicotine deemed to be highly toxic to a child; this comes from Ottawa Public Health. That means that e-cigarette devices can deliver nicotine at greater concentrations than combustible cigarettes.

So my question is: Since young people are becoming addicted to nicotine and vaping products, to the point where I have heard from a doctor that some young people are unable to sit through their high school classes without leaving to vape, what is being done to strengthen the regulations on the labelling of vaping products and to restrict the nicotine limits of vaping products?

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): Again, I thank the honourable senator for her question. I would simply repeat what I said in response to the previous questions.

First of all, I think that we all, when we dealt with the legislation, were concerned where the balance would be between vaping as a cessation tool and vaping as an entry tool. What we have had the benefit of in the last number of months and years is increased study to provide the informed basis on which regulatory measures are being contemplated and put into force.

As I reported, those regulatory discussions with the health care community and the medical community are under way, and the minister has this as an early and high priority.

Senator Cordy: Thank you. Currently, there is a regulatory void across the country, and what is happening is that the provinces and municipalities are scrambling to fill the void. My province of Nova Scotia, for example, has just banned flavoured products for vaping.

So my question is: When can we expect Health Canada to take a leadership role on this and to present the public with a fulsome, national regulatory framework so that we're not going to have a smattering of different regulations across the country?

Senator Harder: Again, as I indicated the other day, this is an early and high priority, and the minister intends on moving forward at the earliest appropriate opportunity.

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

PROTECTION OF JOURNALISTS OVERSEAS

Hon. Claude Carignan: Leader, I think this will be my last question for you as Leader of the Government in the Senate. I think I'll miss you. I liked asking you questions, even though I wasn't always happy with the answers. That is all part of the game.

The *Journal de Québec* reported yesterday that at least 250 journalists are behind bars around the world, especially in China. This is one of the authoritarian regimes that has little patience for independent media. A number of journalists are accused of publishing fake news or being enemies of the state. This was reported by the Committee to Protect Journalists, based in New York. How does Canada plan on sanctioning China for imprisoning journalists?

[English]

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for his question. It reminds me of my first, early days here, when he was the regular questioner and always asked, I thought, rather good questions, which, of course, challenged my answers. As he reminded me, it was called Question Period, not Answer Period.

The question he raises is one that is very important to Canadians, and it's part of the whole concern with respect to the fabric of freedom, democratic expression and human rights. The treatment of journalists is one that is of concern, not just to the Government of Canada, but to parliamentarians and average Canadians. I am always impressed with the way in which Canadian leadership of PEN International has highlighted the international concern for journalists in particular in authoritarian countries. That concern is one that is often raised here on PEN's Day by a number of senators, and I think that should be continued.

[Senator Harder]

What I can point to is that the Government of Canada has continued to raise issues of specific concern with regard to journalists with the offending parties and will continue to do so, but the vigilance is part of our collective requirement to be vigilant in particular in the concern for journalists because they, through their work, are essentially telling us what is really going on.

TRANSPORT

TRANS-CANADA HIGHWAY

Hon. Diane F. Griffin: Senator Harder, I guess this will also be my last question for you since Senator Plett took my first one.

My question relates to the construction timelines for the completion of the twinning of Highway 185 between Saint-Antonin and Saint-Louis-du-Ha! Ha!, Quebec. That section of the road is part of the Trans-Canada Highway and is a critical transportation route to Atlantic Canada.

• (1620)

In its *Made in Canada: Growing Canada's Value-Added Food Sector* report, the Senate's Agriculture and Forestry Committee recommended that the federal government work with the Quebec government to expedite twinning the highway in this area to maintain and expand an efficient road network to reduce the transportation costs to Atlantic Canada.

A recent article in the *New Brunswick Telegraph-Journal* indicated that the Quebec government has no plans to speed up construction and will instead complete the project in 2025. This delay amounts to close to \$2 billion in lost GDP per year for our country.

Will the federal government provide additional funding to expedite the building of a road to economic prosperity for Maritimers?

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for her question, and I'm grateful that she gave notice of her question so that I could inform myself and be able to report to the house.

The government clearly understands the importance of the vital linkage to which the honourable senator has referred and is investing \$390 million to this project of twinning Highway 185. Having uninterrupted highway linkage between Quebec and New Brunswick is, in the view of the government, critical for our trade agenda as well as for the movement of people between the Maritime provinces and Quebec.

While the government is pleased to be making the investment alongside the Government of Quebec, it is important to note that the management of the project and its timelines are the province's alone to decide. In keeping with the practices of the Government of Canada, the government does not dictate project schedules and routes to our partners but are always there to support the priorities of Quebec, as appropriate. The government will continue to do so.

THE SENATE

[English]

SENATE PRECINCTS

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: Honourable senators, we all see the construction going on across the Parliamentary Precinct every day, especially those of us who still are in the East Block, as I am. I wonder if the Government Representative could provide us with an update on these activities. I think, quite frankly, Senator Harder, one recommendation you should make to your successor is that he or she should be providing us with a regular update as to what is going on over there. We get asked questions by constituents and people on the streets of Ottawa about these things.

We receive e-mail updates on occasion, but I would like to know if we could hear whether there have been some archaeological findings. I'm concerned about the protection of the building's vast heritage features and particular problems with the construction plan and the like.

Hon. Peter Harder (Government Representative in the Senate): I thank the honourable senator for his question. I certainly will recommend that my successor consider the suggestion.

I know that our own Internal Economy Committee has a responsibility here through its working group. I was happy to note, as I was observing CIBA this morning, there was a report on the work of that committee. If there is a desire to have a broader briefing, perhaps even outside of Question Period itself, I think that is perhaps a more desirable forum, but I am in your hands and will relate this to my successor.

[Translation]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION ADOPTED

Hon. Grant Mitchell (Acting Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate), pursuant to notice of December 11, 2019, moved:

That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, February 4, 2020, at 2 p.m.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

CRIMINAL CODE

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—
DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Serge Joyal moved second reading of Bill S-202, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (conversion therapy).

He said: Honourable senators, it's really the last time I have an opportunity to stand up in this chamber. I would be remiss if I would not speak at second reading, even though I know it's late; it's Thursday afternoon. But once I have gone through the door and we will have adjourned today, it will be over, especially since the motion of Senator Mitchell has just been adopted.

I am really concerned that this debate take place in this chamber. As a matter of fact, I think Bill S-202 is quite an eloquent illustration of what we can do in this chamber as individual senators.

You will remember, honourable senators, that I introduced Bill S-202, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (conversion therapy), last spring. I had the opportunity on May 7 to go at length to explain the purpose and the substance of the bill. Since it is essentially the same bill, I will seek leave from you so that the speech I made on May 7 be reprinted in today's proceedings so that I could address you with what I think has happened since we first approached this bill.

Therefore, maybe Your Honour, if you would want to confirm that is the will of the house.

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Is leave given?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Joyal: Thank you, honourable senators. You certainly remember, then, that the purpose of this bill, as it is well spelled out in its summary, is to make it an offence to advertise conversion therapy services for consideration and to obtain financial or other material benefit for the provision of conversion therapy to a person under the age of 18 — and I stress under the age of 18. This bill aims to protect, in fact, the youth.

What has happened since we first debated this issue? There was an election campaign and, during that campaign, different parties took a stand on this issue. I want to remind honourable senators that, for instance, the Liberal Party had this commitment in its platform:

Conversion therapy is a scientifically discredited practice that targets vulnerable LGBTQ2 Canadians in an attempt to change their sexual orientation or gender identity. There is international consensus in the medical community that conversion therapy is not founded in science and does not work.

To continue:

To ensure that no one is subjected to this practice, we will move forward on our promise to work with provinces and territories to end conversion therapy in Canada, including making amendments to the Criminal Code that will prohibit this harmful and scientifically disproven practice, especially against minors.

In other words, what I want to illustrate is that when we start a debate here, we introduce a private member's bill and we debate it, it has an impact on the government of the day — whatever the government. I invite you, honourable senators, to consider introducing private members' bills. You will have an impact on the Government of Canada — maybe not immediately, maybe not the next day.

Our colleague Senator Miville-Dechéne paid tribute to former Senator Pratte. Senator Pratte was feeling impatient sometimes that his amendments were not all accepted by the government; that sometimes he thought it was a loss of time. But you have to let society absorb changes that open avenues in wider directions.

• (1630)

That's the most positive way I can put it in easy terms for any one of you to try to reflect upon your privilege. It's the most important privilege — you can initiate legislation. There are very few Canadians who can do that. By initiating debate on conversion therapy, the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Mr. Lametti, commented on the petition tabled in the House of Commons last spring, but in fact the issue was sent back to the provinces. Now we have a commitment of the government to move in that direction. The government was not the only party to move in that direction.

I can quote the platform of the NDP:

When it comes to sexual orientation and gender expression, damaging practices such as so-called "conversion therapy" have no place in Canada. We will develop a national action plan to ban conversion therapy for minors in Canada and work with provinces and territories to support eliminating this practice in all parts of the country.

Hence another party. You are probably better skilled in arithmetic than me, but if you have the votes of the government and those of the NDP, there is a majority.

I was very pleased to read in a Global News report on July 15, and quote the former leader of the Conservative Party who stated the following:

We will always, of course, stand up for the rights of LGBTQ individuals and protect their rights and, of course, we're opposed to any type of practice that would forcibly attempt to change someone's sexual orientation against their will or things like that.

I was the happiest man on earth when I read that because I said "here is a consensus that has emerged from that debate." I think that this bill is needed today, and I'll tell you why. You were all here last Thursday to listen to the Speech from the Throne, and I was all ears to try to find a passage or a statement that would

refer to the commitment of the government on its platforms, and here is what I heard. I'll read from what Her Excellency the Governor General said:

Every one of them expects their Parliamentarians to get to work and deliver on a plan that moves our country forward for all Canadians, including women, members of the visible and linguistic minorities, people with disabilities and members of the LGB2Q communities.

Vague, good intentions, but not specific. Hence the need to introduce this bill. That's why I introduced it at the beginning of the week, because I said maybe the government needs a little support. Maybe the Senate should continue to lead the way in that direction. I would say to the Leader of the Opposition that no Canadian doubts that Mr. Andrew Scheer is an honest person and he speaks his values. And nobody in Canada should have to bear any additional weight because he or she speaks to his or her religious values. Senator Plett, as someone who has deep commitments to human rights, I think we have to be very cautious in Canada to embark this way in the political debate.

This country has been diversified on religious ground, and if we start to question the reliability of a person on his or her religious moral values I think we are going in a very wrong direction.

That's why, when I read those comments from Mr. Scheer last summer, I said he is an honest man. He understands that there is a distinction between his own belief and where Canadian society is in terms of respect for individual rights. I took his word as a true commitment when he stated that last summer, and as much as he would still be the leader of the Conservative Party in the other place, I would still respect his commitment and I will take his words for what they are. I think that we should remind ourselves of this because what we've seen today, to me, is not a very happy day for Canada.

Honourable senators, I think that when we look into this bill, be very mindful that it doesn't prevent somebody from believing what he or she believes in their true moral and religious commitment. It doesn't impose anything on anyone. It leaves anyone to choose whoever, whatever in which direction the person wants to organize his or her life.

I think this therapy, which has been scientifically disproved — that nobody can come forward and establish that it is effective. Not only that, but it is damaging to the physical integrity of a person. We are at the point where we need to prohibit that. This bill seeks to prohibit the advertising of, and to prohibit any kind of benefit for the practice of it.

Honourable senators, I commend this bill to your attention. I hope another senator will carry the debate on this. Let's keep the debate continuing. You might see what we have lived in the previous Parliament. I introduced a bill to recognize Aboriginal languages, and it took three years for the government to come forward with a bill that we were so proud to adopt last June. I hope this bill will find its way into the government's agenda. I hope the government will come forward with a bill and we will have a template to evaluate and study it with this proposal I am sharing with you today.

This is the Senate at its best, honourable senators, because we act in a way to open evolution, direction, in the full respect of any Canadian beliefs. I think that this bill, honourable senators, should be carried on among you. That's more or less my gift to you in terms of human rights, and I hope that you will be proud to continue that debate and to study any private member's bill that senators table. It's the way that Canada evolves, and that is the power that you have. You have the power in your hands to help this great country evolve in the right direction. Thank you, honourable senators.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[Translation]

Hon. René Cormier: Would the honourable senator take a question?

Senator Joyal: Yes, if there is enough time.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Yes.

Senator Joyal: Yes, Senator Cormier.

Senator Cormier: Honourable colleague, thank you for this bill, which once again shows your great concern, great interest, and great sensitivity when it comes to human rights. I first want to thank you for introducing this important bill, and I can assure you that you can count on me to continue this work.

My question concerns the ambit and scope of this bill. I told you that you would not be retired when you leave this chamber and so I will take the opportunity, since you are here, to ask you a question. This bill concerns people under the age of 18. We recognize that, in Canadian society, these people may be more vulnerable than others before they reach the age of majority. While young people are part of this vulnerable population, other groups in society are just as vulnerable, for example, people with mental health issues or those in a position of dependency because of their psychological or emotional state.

In your opinion, senator, during our work on this bill — and I ask this question without knowing all the potential repercussions in the context of the Criminal Code — should we think about extending this bill to those more vulnerable populations I just mentioned?

• (1640)

Senator Joyal: Thank you for the question, Senator Cormier. That is an extremely important question because, as you point out, this bill seeks to strike a balance between the vulnerability that an 18-year old may presumably experience and the vulnerability of someone who, for example, may have a disability or who, for other reasons, may be exposed to a context of vulnerability of any kind.

Obviously, I devised the bill in such a way as to ensure that it would not be subject to a court challenge based on personal convictions.

What is more, as you know, several provinces have already passed legislation to ensure that professional bodies governing doctors, psychologists and psychiatrists do not have to practice this “therapy,” which has not been scientifically proven to be effective and, on the contrary, may be extremely harmful.

That is why we saw it in the Liberal and NDP platforms. Mr. Scheer also mentioned that he was open to considering the government's bill, probably in the context of extending it to encompass other categories of people who might also qualify as vulnerable. That's the kind of debate we could have in committee, and we could hear from representatives of the various professions involved. We could also hear from representatives of the provinces that are actively involved in banning this practice. In addition, we could hear from other groups that believe this practice should be allowed.

There may be different opinions, and the goal of our committee, or rather your committee, the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, since we are talking about an amendment to the Criminal Code, would be to come up with a list of expert witnesses who should be invited to testify in order to determine whether it would be constitutionally possible for this bill to be extended to include other categories of vulnerable people without infringing on their fundamental freedom to make their own choices. You will see that in the text of the bill itself.

[English]

For greater certainty, this definition does not include a surgical sex change or any related service.

[Translation]

In French, the bill reads, and I quote:

Il est entendu que la présente définition ne vise pas le changement chirurgical de sexe ou tout service qui s'y rapporte.

As you know, we debated the issue of gender in this house. We need to be very careful when legislating on such issues because they can infringe on other freedoms. We need to ensure that, by protecting one group, we do not intentionally or unintentionally undermine the rights of others to make other types of decisions and thus give effect to other types of decisions.

That is why I suggest that this bill be referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs so we can determine its parameters.

In so doing, you would help the government determine for itself the bill that it deems appropriate, should it decide to follow up on its election promise.

However, since this is a minority government — and this is a political observation — the government probably has many other priority bills that it wants to pass with the support of the opposition parties. In short, we have the opportunity to chart the course that a government bill could take.

(On motion of Senator Cormier, debate adjourned.)

[English]

NATIONAL CAPITAL ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING— DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Serge Joyal moved second reading of Bill S-203, An Act to amend the National Capital Act (buildings or works of national significance).

He said: Honourable senators, I am looking at the clock.

[Translation]

I don't want to try your patience, but I would like to talk about the issue addressed in Bill S-203, which amends the National Capital Act.

[English]

That question is directly linked to the question that my colleague Senator Mercer asked of the Government Representative, which is essentially to protect Parliament Hill, its archeological resources and its heritage character.

I had the privilege to sit on the subcommittee of Internal Economy that was overseeing the renovation of Parliament Hill, and singularly the Centre Block and this very building. I have also been witness, as have all of you, to the expansion project of Château Laurier at the end of the tunnel. I would not even say “across the street,” because we have an organic link to the Château Laurier building. I have seen the architectural horror that has been proposed, especially the first plan that led the Mayor of Ottawa, Jim Watson, to state that it was equivalent to a container but, of course, of monumental proportion.

There is, in my opinion, a way to approach this issue. In the course of our study at the subcommittee, so ably chaired by Senator Tannas of Internal Economy, we asked — Senator Forest, Senator Munson, Senator Bovey and myself — about the status of Parliament Hill in terms of a national historical site. The answer we received was: There is no Canadian statute in which Parliament Hill is protected by the status of being a national historical site.

Of course, a Public Works representative informed us that Public Works follows the standards and guidelines for conservation of historical places in Canada, but Parliament Hill does not enjoy any legal protection. Not only does it not benefit from that protection, but the immediate area is a jungle for development. So that means that anything on the Hill that doesn't belong to the government, outside that precinct, any developmental initiative can take place. We have heard the

Château Laurier argument that this is a private hotel; as a private enterprise, we can do whatever we want. We will do whatever we want, unless, of course, maybe the City of Ottawa refuses the building permit. Or maybe the City of Ottawa will impose some restrictions. But in the National Capital Act, there is no power granted to the National Capital Commission to review any proposal of alteration, construction, demolition, any works — they are mentioned in here — that could change the immediate landscape of the Hill.

• (1650)

I was amazed by that because, being from Quebec and being quite active on the issue of protection of heritage — and my colleague Senator Massicotte could testify to that — Phyllis Lambert from the Canadian Centre for Architecture and I have opposed over the years a lot of demolition in the downtown core area because we thought that it would totally change the heritage value of the downtown core. A city cannot lose its identity from one generation to the other without recognizing that there is some value to protecting the heritage of a site or of a building that has been closely linked to the historical and cultural evolution of a city.

In Quebec legislation, in Quebec's Cultural Heritage Act, section 40 — and I can quote it for you. It's very short. Section 40 of Quebec's Cultural Heritage Act states that the minister can, after having gotten advice from the commission, determine an area of protection around a building that has been classified as heritage or a national historical site.

In other words, there is a capacity for a provincial minister to determine that if a building has been recognized as a historical site, the minister can determine an area of protection. That area of protection is determined to be under 52 metres. In other words, if somebody, anyone, wants to demolish a building in the close vicinity of the building being protected, that project could be submitted for evaluation and restriction.

You may say to me, “Well, it's an impingement on property rights because if I happen to be the owner of the Chateau Laurier, I will decide how I want to do any expansion, even though it would drastically change the immediate landscape around Parliament Hill.”

Hence the bill that is in front of you. It aims to give power to the National Capital Commission to adopt regulations and determine within a radius around Parliament Hill or around a national historic site the limits or the condition through which the permit would be granted.

You may ask, “Well, does the federal Parliament have the capacity to give this power to the National Capital Commission, which would limit the absolute right of building, changing, erecting or demolishing anything around Parliament Hill?” And my answer is — not because I have determined that answer through my own knowledge and expertise, but because the Supreme Court of Canada so decided in 1966 in a famous case called *Munro vs. National Capital Commission*.

The National Capital Commission was created in 1966. At the time, the commission decided to adopt a greenbelt around Ottawa to protect the future of the capital. A person, Mr. Munro, felt

[Senator Joyal]

aggrieved that his land would be expropriated if he lived in the greenbelt, so he challenged the power granted by a statute of Parliament to the National Capital Commission to do the expropriation. It went to the Supreme Court. In 1966, the Supreme Court concluded in this way, and I will read it very quickly:

I find it difficult to suggest a subject matter of legislation which more clearly goes beyond local or provincial interests and is the concern of Canada as a whole than the development, conservation and improvement of the National Capital Region in accordance with a coherent plan in order that the nature and character of the seat of the Government of Canada may be in accordance with its national significance.

The court has recognized quite clearly that the National Capital Commission enjoys that power because there is nothing more symbolic than the seat of the Government of Canada. That's what the Supreme Court concluded.

There is no doubt, in my opinion, that the National Capital Commission, through this bill, can be granted the power to regulate any kind of destruction, demolition or alteration in the immediate area of Parliament Hill. The Parliament of Canada Act, as a matter of fact, if you look at it, defines what Parliament Hill is. I will read it:

The grounds in the City of Ottawa bounded by Wellington Street, the Rideau Canal, the Ottawa River and Kent Street known as Parliament Hill, and any buildings or work located on those grounds.

The Senate of Canada Building, located at 2 Rideau Street in the City of Ottawa. That's us, here. The building located at 1 Wellington Street in the City of Ottawa. That's where we have two committee meeting rooms, which are almost in the basement of the Château Laurier. The Victoria Building at 140 Wellington. That's where many of you have offices. The Sir John A. Macdonald Building, located at 144 Wellington, where we have parliamentary gatherings. The Confederation Building, the Justice Building, which is immediately adjacent, and the Supreme Court of Canada Building.

That is what the bill defines as Parliament Hill, and that's where the protection area would be defined. In other words, you would have the centre, and then a radius around that centre whereby any major alteration or changes would be submitted to the commission. The commission would then determine regulations through which the permit would be granted.

In my opinion, honourable senators, this will address the problems that we have been facing with the expansion of the Château Laurier. I say that, honourable senators, because the legislation that governs heritage sites in Canada is wanting. You might think that it's because I am a groupie of heritage protection. I might be a groupie of heritage protection, but I am not the only one in that category. As a matter of fact, there are also groupies in the House of Commons in relation to heritage protection. For example, there was a study conducted by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and

Sustainable Development during the Forty-second Parliament, and they tabled a report in December 2017; two years ago. I want to quote something from that report that is quite interesting:

During its study, the committee learned that Canada is the only G7 country that has not passed legislation to protect historic places and archaeological resources under its jurisdiction.

That's from the committee report of the House of Commons.

• (1700)

What was the minister's answer to that? As you know, when there is a report tabled by a committee, the minister may be invited to react. You will remember the minister responsible for historical sites and Parks Canada was Minister McKenna. She answered to the report of the Heritage Committee. Her letter is dated March 23, 2018, a year-and-a-half ago. I will read the letter because it is very instructive:

Together, these measures have helped strengthen the conservation of many of Canada's heritage places. I acknowledge, however, that more can be done. In particular, the committee's report notes the lack of comprehensive legislation to protect national historic sites, archaeological sites, and other heritage resources under federal jurisdiction. The government is therefore committed to reviewing what legislative measures might be warranted to strengthen heritage conservation and protection at the federal level.

I repeat: The government is therefore committed. Well, like you, I was sitting here and listening to the Throne Speech. I said to myself that I will be so happy when I listen to the Throne Speech and there will be three words stating that the government will introduce legislation to review the Historic Sites and Monuments Act and the National Capital Act to better modernize the legislation. There was not a single word in the Throne Speech, unfortunately. That's why you saw me looking sad at the end of it. Like many of you, I might have expected something out of it.

Honourable senators, this bill will help the government come forward with legislation in answer to the Heritage Committee of the other place, and the commitment that Minister McKenna made on behalf of the government in March 2018 to review the legislation so that our legislation in Canada will be in sync with the best legislation of any G7 country.

There is more in this bill than just what you read in the title. In fact, this bill will trigger and push the Department of Canadian Heritage to come forward with legislation. I submit, honourable senators, that it is our responsibility individually to make sure that this building and the area around it, as much as the whole of the Parliament Hill area, is protected at the same level as any provincial historical site will be protected in Quebec. If you look at buildings across the river, they will be protected with areas of protection, while here, on the other side of the river, we're not and, singularly, the seat of the Government of Canada.

This is my gift for Christmas. I'll leave you with the file. I will stay very attentive to what will happen. As you have seen, Senator Munson and Senator Bovey have taken public stands to

make sure that the project of the expansion of the Château Laurier be in sync with the true heritage character of the Hill, and now it's in the hands of private citizens. As I say, a groupie like me comes to the media to try to push and what not, but I think that, as legislators, you have the capacity to do something more, which is table legislation, have it adopted and send it to the other place so that the government will be stuck with it. And they will say: If Minister McKenna was true in saying that the government is committed to review the legislation, there we are. Answer the call. The bill is there in front of you.

Thank you, honourable senators, and my sincere thanks for your hearing me out. Good wishes, and I hope to see you in another world.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Patricia Bovey (The Hon. the Acting Speaker): Senator Duffy, do you have a question?

Hon. Michael Duffy: I wonder if Senator Joyal would take a question.

Senator Joyal: Yes, if I have time left, Your Honour.

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Yes, Senator Joyal.

Senator Duffy?

Senator Duffy: Thank you, Your Honour. Congratulations, Senator Joyal, on your two pieces of legislation today. I join everyone else here in expressing our gratitude on behalf of all Canadians for your amazing contributions to building a better Canada over your entire political career, and I feel confident that will continue.

On this question that you have just raised about this planned horror next door, my concern is a slight expansion on this issue. I would be interested in hearing your thoughts on the Greenbelt, which surrounds the national capital and is the province of the National Capital Commission. Ontario, since way back in 2006, has had a policy of increasing urban density. We see this being pushed at municipal council levels week after week, almost.

Do you think it would be a good idea to expand your bill, or would it require another piece of legislation, to preserve the unique nature of the national capital so that the Greenbelt will be protected and that places like the Experimental Farm, which is in the middle of the city of Ottawa, will also be protected.

Because of this pressure for urban development, we have developers looking at this land, saying, "Hey, there's millions of dollars to be made here." So far as I can tell, they are not in a much better position than we are with the Château Laurier in that those lands are quite vulnerable.

I would appreciate your comments on that.

Senator Joyal: Thank you, Senator Duffy, for your question, because it raises a very real economic issue which is indivisible from modern life.

As you know, everybody wants to be downtown. The cost of a condo in the downtown area close to Parliament Hill is much higher than in Kanata or any other suburb of Ottawa. The city is much more vulnerable to economic pressure because of the value of the additional taxes that, of course, they can draw from a tower of 55 storeys versus a two-storey brick house in the Glebe.

There is a point whereby the economic and financial pressure of development is almost unbearable because the city councillors, like any person being elected, don't want to increase taxes, but they want to maintain the same level of services or even increase the level of services. That is how they are elected. That's what happens in any municipal campaign; it's the same in Ottawa and in any other city across the river and so forth.

There is no doubt that the National Capital Commission also feels that pressure. That pressure is exercised on the Greenbelt as much as it is exercised around Parliament because members of Parliament want to live around it. As was said today, there are 338 parliamentarians. How many live in Ottawa and how many have to go to a hotel to stay? There is a strong pressure in Ottawa for development and for expansion of hotels.

It doesn't mean that we don't recognize that. We have to recognize it. But we have to adjust it to a certain number of criteria whereby we make a choice as a society to protect the Greenbelt area around the capital for obvious reasons. We want this city to become one of the model cities of Canada because it's where each Canadian identifies himself or herself. When they are seeing you on TV on Parliament Hill, you have always had the backdrop of the Parliament buildings or, on the other side, the Langevin Block or the former American embassy. It's part of what I call the "imaginary landscape" of Canadians, and in a way, we all are here when we switch on our TV, tap on our telephone or are at our computer, and we see the images of the national capital.

• (1710)

So we can't let the capital develop wildly without some criteria, and we have to recognize the pressure. There is no unemployment in this city, because, as I say, the pressure is here. The pressure to occupy the site of what is the national capital is renewed from generation to generation.

I have been here for 50 years, and believe me, the first time I arrived here, I was renting a room in a boarding house on Somerset Street, very close to Elgin, when I was an assistant to Jean Marchand. Well, if I went there today, I would not be able to rent a room in that same two-storey brick house because it is now so gentrified that it has pushed people away. Where will those people go? They will go farther and farther. There is a need to build, and hence the pressure on the greenbelt increases.

The point you raise is a valid one. This subject should be reviewed when the bill is sent to the appropriate parliamentary committee to have a broader picture of the national capital and where it is going. Of course, the national capital has a plan for future years, and they try to maintain the objectives of the plan, but those plans are always susceptible to review, chopping, curtailment, exceptions or derogations. After 20 years, the plan

will become a patchwork that is far away from the model it was supposed to be when first conceived. I believe the committee would be the best forum to review this issue.

Many of you have been here for a long time. You will have seen the changes that the capital has gone through in the last 50 years, since the creation of the National Capital Commission. This is part of our responsibility. We owe it to the rest of Canada to ensure that the capital develops in sync with the values of the protection of the environment, being mindful of our heritage, our national character and identity. There is no other place in Canada that is closer to the definition of Canada in the minds of Canadians than the precincts of Parliament Hill.

Don't fool yourself, honourable senators. If there had not been protesters to defend this building, it would have been demolished in 1966. Organizations of citizens — made up of groupies like me — fought to prevent the demolition. The Public Works Department had already decided, once the railway tracks were removed, to demolish this building. Public Works had planned to create a parking lot. If that happened, there would probably be a 30-storey tower on this site, and we would not be in this building. Parliament Hill, as I defined it in this bill, includes part of the Château Laurier, part of the Supreme Court and part of the other buildings that are now on Wellington Street, and that have been integrated through the years to what we call the heart of Canada.

So we have to be mindful of that and think about future generations. What would have happened if those in 1966 followed the expedient decision of the department? Cars were taking more and more space in the urban downtown area, and they needed to have space. "Okay, what building can we demolish? Well, there are no more trains so the station can go." It was a group of citizens who opposed that. Finally, the decision was reviewed due to public pressure. But we cannot always rely on private citizens to do the job. The legislation must be right at a point in time.

What I propose to you is to make the legislation right and to expand that legislation on the basis of the issue that you raised, which is part of exactly the same reality.

[Translation]

Hon. Lucie Moncion: Senator Joyal, thank you for bringing this issue to our attention like that. I don't know if I chose the right word in French. Regardless, thank you for making us aware of that heritage. You did not include the residence at 1 Sussex Drive in this bill, even though many Ottawa buildings are part of our heritage. They are very nice buildings, but they are not included in your proposal. Would you mind commenting on that?

Senator Joyal: Thank you for your question, Senator Moncion. The bill actually does cover those buildings because paragraph 1(k) includes the following element:

[English]

(j) any place that has been commemorated as a historic place under paragraph 3(a) of the Historic Sites and Monuments Act;

(k) a national historic site as defined in subsection 2(1) of the Parks Canada Agency Act; and

For obvious reasons, 24 Sussex Drive is such a place. Prime ministers have resided there since the 1950s. I think the Right Honourable Louis St. Laurent was the first Prime Minister of Canada to live at 24 Sussex Drive when the property was offered as a gift to the Government of Canada. The negotiations took place during and after World War II.

There is no doubt that could also be part of the regulations that are proposed in the bill, to add to the historic sites in the capital so that area is also protected.

In the context of regulation, it's quite clear that a building that would be across the street would be subject to more stringent regulation than one that is at 500 or 1,000 feet away because there is a limit of the radius here. Essentially, the goal is to ensure that horrors will not easily be constructed or that a site would be clear of this historic building, or that works are done that would destroy the quality of the environment and the character of the environment.

Your question is covered in the bill.

(On motion of Senator Forest-Niesing, for Senator Bovey, debate adjourned.)

THE SENATE

MOTION TO CALL UPON THE GOVERNMENT TO IMPOSE SANCTIONS AGAINST CHINESE AND/OR HONG KONG OFFICIALS—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Leo Housakos, pursuant to notice of December 10, 2019, moved:

That the Senate call upon the Government of Canada to impose sanctions against Chinese and/or Hong Kong officials, pursuant to the *Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act (Sergei Magnitsky Law)*, in light of the violation of human rights, of the principles of fundamental justice and of the rule of law in relation to the ongoing protests in Hong Kong and to the systematic persecution of minority Muslims in China.

He said: Honourable senators, the motion that Senator Ngo and I have put before you is one that is at the core of who we are as Canadians and embodies the most essential values dear to our citizenry: democracy, freedom, human rights and the rule of law.

We say proudly that we are a nation that defends these fundamental values at home and abroad. Throughout our history, we have proven it with blood spilt and countless Canadian lives lost in conflicts and battles around the world, including both world wars and in Afghanistan as well as with various peacekeeping missions around the world. We have defended our values through diplomacy, leading the fight against the brutality of apartheid in South Africa. Canada has never backed down in the face of tyranny, and we most certainly should not start now. We appear to be dangerously close to doing so where China is concerned.

• (1720)

Quite bluntly, Canada and the People's Republic of China have a very serious clash of values. The PRC is a dictatorship possessing a complete disregard for fundamental freedom, democracy and, certainly, the rule of law. They are amongst the world's worst violators of human rights.

I had initially hoped to speak to this motion on Tuesday, as it was Human Rights Day around the world, as many of you, being very ardent and vocal supporters of human rights, already know. Human Rights Day is observed around the world every year on December 10 in recognition of the United Nations' adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. So even though it's a couple of days late, my remarks today are in honour of all victims of human rights abuses around the world, including mainland China and Hong Kong.

The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has reported that it had received credible information that some 1 million ethnic Uighurs in Xinjiang region are being interned in camps on the mainland. The allegations suggest that the Uighurs have been targeted as enemies of the Chinese state based solely on their ethno-religious identity.

Alex Neve, Secretary General of Amnesty International Canada, has said:

... what is underway is a sinister program of incarceration on a massive scale that the world has hardly seen anywhere in decades.

As disturbing as such actions are on their own, they are particularly disquieting as a larger pattern. The regime is not only engaging in a program of mass incarceration and Orwellian-like surveillance when it comes to minority Muslims, but it is also brutally cracking down on pro-democracy dissidents in Hong Kong.

What started six months ago, as a protest against a proposed extradition agreement between Hong Kong and China that many feared would undermine Hong Kong's autonomy, judicial independence and civil liberties have turned into a broader fight for full democracy and accountability for police action against protesters. The situation in Hong Kong has become untenable for the people who are standing for freedom and suffrage.

While the principle of One Country, Two Systems was the cornerstone of the PRC/Hong Kong structure following British rule, Hong Kong officials appear to be appointees working vociferously in concert with the Chinese regime to force through the PRC's aspirations for one China rather than the vocal aspirations of the people of Hong Kong.

Clashes between police and protesters have become increasingly violent. In the face of this, Chinese President Xi Jinping has warned against an independent Hong Kong, saying that any attempt to divide China would end in "bodies smashed and bones ground to powder."

If that and the internment and forced re-education of a religious minority doesn't warrant the intervention of a country that claims to promote freedom and human rights, colleagues, I don't know what does.

It should outrage all of us at our core as Canadians. And quite frankly, coupled with China's increased aggressiveness internationally and increased militarization, it should also worry us from a national security standpoint.

Canada and Canadians have been victimized on a multitude of levels by the PRC, including spying, illegal detainment and theft of intellectual property, and we have nobody but ourselves, colleagues, to blame. We have allowed China to infiltrate every aspect of our lives, whether it's direct involvement by the Chinese government or through proxies like Huawei. China is now involved in Canada's agriculture sector, energy sector and tech sector. We have slowly and uncomfortably become extremely reliant on China, just as they intended.

Let me just say this: This didn't happen overnight or even over the last four years. There have been five successive Canadian governments dating back to the 1970s that, in our zealous pursuit of expanding our trade and commercial interests, became complacent to the egregious human rights abuses and disregard for the rule of law in China.

We have been turning a blind eye for too long and putting our thirst for dollars over our basic values of decency and justice. Shame on us, but, colleagues, it must stop.

That's why I think this motion is so important. I believe it's time we as a country strike a different tone and approach with the government of China, and on many fronts. This motion is just, I believe, a beginning.

Our current approach to China appears to be one of appeasement. In the face of their unlawful detainment of two of our citizens and threats of execution of two other Canadians, we have continued with investments in the Chinese-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, as well as continued ministerial and parliamentary missions to China.

Last year, we even had the Government of Canada's departments hosting fancy lobster dinners in China. If you all recall, I asked the government leader repeatedly about that in this chamber.

Then there are the public statements that have been made by senior cabinet ministers, past and present, that seem to reward and further encourage China's boorish behaviour towards our nation.

Former Minister John McCallum was forced to resign as Canada's ambassador to China after his comments regarding the ongoing extradition case of Huawei executive Madam Meng Wanzhou. Former Prime Minister Chrétien suggested that Canada should just drop the extradition case against Meng Wanzhou, and former Minister John Manley suggested we should have tipped China off about the impending arrest, colleagues.

An Hon. Senator: Disgraceful.

Senator Housakos: This is a former prime minister and a former Minister of Foreign Affairs. Is that the way a country founded on the rule of law and democracy behaves?

I will give credit to Canada's then-Global Affairs Minister, the Honourable Chrystia Freeland, who, in response to former Prime Minister Chrétien, appallingly suggested this to say to the *Globe and Mail*:

We need to be very thoughtful and very mindful of precedents that our actions and our decisions set. And I think when we reflect on it, it would be clear to all of us that it would be a very dangerous precedent indeed for Canada to alter its behaviour when it comes to honouring an extradition treaty in response to external pressure. . . . When we think about the implications of setting such a precedent, we could easily find ourselves in a situation where, by acting in a single specific case, we could actually make all Canadians around the world less safe. That is a responsibility I take very seriously.

And Minister Freeland was absolutely right. Sadly, we don't see enough of that in our current approach when it comes to China. We should be seeing a lot more of that.

Minister Freeland's successor as Global Affairs Minister, the newly appointed François-Philippe Champagne, outlined his perspective in 2017 when he stated:

China [stands] out as [a] beacon of stability, predictability, a rule-based system, a very inclusive society.

Excuse me, colleagues. When has China ever been any of these things, particularly inclusive?

Also recently, former Minister Manley again weighed in on Canada's detainment of Meng Wanzhou, suggesting that Canada do a prisoner swap in return for Canadians arbitrarily and unlawfully detained in China, as if somehow these two Canadians actually did anything to justify their detention. They did not.

And it isn't just Liberals who are making comments that are completely abhorrent. Just this past weekend in an interview with Mercedes Stephenson, Alykhan Velshi, a former senior Conservative staffer who is now a VP with Huawei's Canadian operations, said that Huawei Canada respects Canadian law, and made it sound like all things are equal in this matter and that it's all just a misunderstanding between us that needs to be worked out amongst friends.

That's the issue I take with our current approach to China, colleagues. We are behaving as if we have done something for which we should apologize. We have absolutely nothing to apologize for except for our continued appeasement of China in the face of their increasingly confrontational and adversarial actions both domestically and internationally.

The time for appeasement is over. It is now time for Canada to stand up and be counted in the fight for the protection of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It is not enough to

say we stand for these values if we are going to stand idly by when we are being grossly infringed on by a tyrannical regime just because we don't want to upset them.

We don't seem to mind upsetting our greatest friends and allies like the United States or Israel. What are they doing wrong? Not behaving like brutes? Should they threaten us or maybe imprison and illegally detain Canadians in order to somehow get us to treat them a little bit nicer?

Even now, Canada's new ambassador to China, here in his new post for mere weeks, has threatened us not once but twice already, most recently about this very motion.

Last Thursday in Montreal, in my hometown, Ambassador Cong Peiwu had this to say about the prospect of this chamber adopting our motion:

We firmly oppose this kind of behaviour. And I think it'd cause serious damage to our bilateral relations . . . we'll make very firm countermeasures to this. It is not in the interest of the Canada side. So we do hope that we stop this kind of dangerous activity.

Imagine that, colleagues: an ambassador of a foreign country threatening our Parliament over applying a law that was duly passed in accordance with our parliamentary democracy. That may work in China, but that's not how we do things in Canada.

That threat illustrates perfectly why we need to adopt this motion and invoke Magnitsky sanctions as soon as possible. There comes a time in every schoolyard where you can no longer be a bystander. There comes a time in every schoolyard when you must stand up to the bully who is bullying you. That time, colleagues, I believe is now for Canada. We have applied Magnitsky sanctions against officials from other countries, including Russia, Venezuela, Myanmar and others. I see no reason not to apply them against China.

• (1730)

Like you, I've heard the arguments that doing so or taking any steps against China that even closely resemble steps taken by the U.S. may be seen as merely taking the side of the U.S. in its trade war with China. Forget how insulting that is, implying that we are not a sovereign nation, capable of acting of our own accord, but it shows a complete disregard and whitewashing of real human rights abuses taking place in Hong Kong and mainland China. Either we are defenders of democracy, human rights and the rule of law or we are not. That's the question. I put to each and every one of you in this chamber; ask yourselves: Are you a defender of those values that are so fundamental to our freedom, our country and who we are?

We as parliamentarians have a job to do in holding our government to account, and it extends beyond domestic policy and governance. We also have a responsibility to hold government to account in our actions internationally, to ensure those actions reflect who we are as a people.

I'll ask you again: Are we a nation that defends democracy, human rights and the rule of law, or are we not?

Despite the threat from the ambassador, the danger here is not in adopting this motion. The real danger is that the more we appease China, the more emboldened they become. It is time for a change in tone and approach. As Canada's former ambassador to China, Guy Saint-Jacques, stated recently, "The only language China understands is one of firmness." That is a sentiment echoed by another former ambassador to China, David Mulroney. He was responding to a social media post from the Mayor of Winnipeg, following a meeting with the new ambassador for China. In it, Mayor Bowman said he was pleased with the visit and called it "a productive discussion about our Sister City Chengdu, trade, and Winnipeg's goal of becoming a leader in the protection and promotion of human rights." I would argue that, unfortunately, they are not off to a very good start.

However, former Ambassador Mulroney said it best in his response:

Statements like this play into the PRC's agenda of obfuscation, and actually undermine efforts to protect human rights. They reflect the false assumption that diplomacy cannot cope with plain speaking and hard truths.

Mr. Mulroney has also been quoted as describing some of the policies of the PRC as "the greatest threat to human freedom on the planet." I couldn't agree more, and we as a nation, along with our allies, need to start treating them as such. With that, I leave you with these words from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:

He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetrate it. He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it.

Thank you, colleagues.

Hon. Thanh Hai Ngo: Honourable senators, along with my colleague Senator Housakos, I, too, rise today to call your attention to pressing issues and immensely grave concerns to all humanity.

Two days ago marked the celebration of the seventy-first anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Unfortunately, 70 years later, we are still reminded of the monumental work that is left for all of us to undertake as we all are witness to the immeasurable atrocities and gross human rights violations still being perpetrated worldwide.

As we are putting forward this motion, I'm deeply concerned about the ongoing situations in Hong Kong and protesters, day in and day out, tirelessly fighting to keep democracy alive and trying to uphold universal freedoms and human rights in that region, jeopardizing their security and lives for the good of humanity.

The Hong Kong protests have been going on for several months now. As we know, the protests started in response to the government of Hong Kong proposing an extradition bill that would have made it possible for people to be extradited to mainland China to be tried, which would have undermined Hong Kong's autonomy and its people's civil liberties. Although the

bill has been withdrawn, the protests have now become a fight for the hundreds of thousands of courageous and fearless protesters for political freedom, democracy, the rule of law and human rights, demanding that China sees to infringe on Hong Kong's autonomy and its citizens' civil liberties.

Unfortunately, this has been met with an excessive use of force and escalating brutality by Hong Kong police and officials. Hong Kong police forces have unscrupulously resorted to using aggressive methods against protesters, such as shooting at point-blank range, firing rubber bullets, tear-gassing, pepper-spraying, persecuting peaceful protesters, arresting on vague charges, not intervening to defend protesters when attacked by pro-Beijing counterparts and the list goes on.

Nonetheless, protesters have not backed down in the face of such oppression and human rights violations. They have fought and are still fighting to uphold fundamental freedoms in Hong Kong. As such, we must stand in solidarity with the protesters of Hong Kong, and condemn the egregious and barbarous actions of Hong Kong and Chinese officials in dealing with and trying to suppress Hong Kong's autonomy and its citizens' liberties.

Furthermore, I am extremely and utterly distraught by the ongoing systematic persecution and gross violation of the human rights of Uighurs and other Muslim minorities in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. I have known for some time now that the People's Republic of China is persecuting ethnic and ethno-religious minorities as well as peaceful political protesters and human rights defenders. The first group that immediately come to mind is the Uighur Muslims. There are also the Buddhist Tibetans, Falun Gong, Falun Dafa, Kazakhs and many others.

[Translation]

In August 2018, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination reported receiving credible information that approximately one million Uighurs and members of other Muslim minorities in Xinjiang were being detained in camps. Esteemed colleagues, several sources now claim between two and three million persecuted individuals. That is absolutely horrible.

[English]

Moreover, in the Xinjiang region, the exponential intensification of persecutions started with the arrival of Chen Quanguo, who has been the Communist Party Secretary of that region since August 2016. He is also the former Communist Party secretary of the Tibetan Autonomous Region. It has been reported by Sophie Richardson, China Director of Human Rights Watch, in January 2017 that the system that was first developed and put in place in the TAR by Chen Quanguo is the same one that is being and has been used in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region since his arrival.

Although he is the mastermind behind this staggering, repressive system, it is important to specify that the person who put it in place in Xinjiang is Zhu Hailun, since he knew that he knew what had to be done on-site, as he knew who would arrest and how to proceed.

This system has been developed to persecute and force the assimilation of ethnic and ethno-religious minorities that have been targeted as enemies of the Chinese state based solely on their ethno-religious identity.

• (1740)

The Uighurs and other ethnic and ethno-religious minorities are targeted by the mass surveillance that is happening by voice recognition, face scanning, iris scanning, et cetera. They are being unlawfully detained in those reeducation camps, tortured, subjected to ill-treatment, abused and persecuted, forced to abandon their culture, religion, language, identity. Some of them are even scattered through prisons and detention centres in mainland China.

To add to these monstrous atrocities, Muslim children are separated from their parents and arbitrarily held in so-called “child welfare” institutions and high security boarding schools in Xinjiang for thought education as was reported in September as by New York-based Human Rights Watch.

Colleagues, after the UN report came out the People’s Republic of China vehemently denied the existence of camps saying there is no arbitrary detention and that the allegations are simply fake news.

They denied the existence of such camps right until they changed the law to legalize them. How convenient.

Last Monday, it was reported that suddenly all of the Uighurs and ethno-religious minorities that were detained in those camps have graduated and they are very happy. Beijing defended its “re-education” camps in the XUAR, adding that China will continue operating those “re-education” camps.

Colleagues, we all know what these camps are all about. They are simply and purely detention indoctrination camps. The sole purpose of their existence is the rapidly effective assimilation of the ethnic and ethno-religious minorities within that region in order to suppress their identity, culture religion and language. As it was reported by Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian, from the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, in her article, Exposed: China’s Operating Manuals For Mass Internment And Arrest By Algorithm, “The China Cables mark a significant advance in the world’s knowledge about the largest mass internment of an ethnic-religious minority since World War II”. With the recent leak of those China Cables, we now have evidence that the international community needs to bring the People’s Republic of China to justice for what China has done. Will the crimes stop if we only resort to dialogue and international diplomacy? I highly doubt it.

The detention, persecution and forced assimilation of the minority Muslim and other ethno-religious minorities has been going on for years, and doesn’t look like it will stop any time soon.

The harvesting of organs and the persecution of the Falun Gong has been going on for years now and it doesn’t seem it will stop.

[Translation]

The Tibetan people have suffered constant oppression and persecution for several years now and, again, there is still no sign that this will stop.

On top of that, there is Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, two Canadians who have been illegally detained for a year now, without any access to legal counsel or family members.

[English]

Then there is the forgotten Canadian detained in China, a Canadian citizen and former Uighur activist who fled China and came here as a refugee. While on the trip to Uzbekistan, he was arrested and handed over to Chinese authorities. Huseyin Celil has been unjustly imprisoned for 13 years now. Thirteen years of dialogue and international diplomacy. I could go on like this for hours and hours.

Colleagues, these are the things that we know of, can you only imagine what else we know nothing about? How many more years should we wait before dialogue in international diplomacy brings real results? Time is of the essence and at some point dialogue in international diplomacy does not advance the cause. Why should the world tolerate such oppression, injustice, inhumanity and cruelty?

[Translation]

Time is running out, and at some point, dialogue and international diplomacy will run into a dead end. Why should the entire world tolerate such oppression, injustice, inhumanity and cruelty?

As a nation, Canada has always been and always will be a champion in the fight for democracy, freedom, basic human rights and the rule of law. As Canadians, we deeply cherish these values and hold them dear. They are deeply entrenched in us, flow through our veins and are part of our DNA.

Why should we part from them? Why should we bury our heads in the sand and pretend that these terrible atrocities will suddenly disappear like magic one day through dialogue and international diplomacy? Incidentally, those things have not achieved anything so far.

[English]

We, as parliamentarians, cannot stand idle on these issues of grave concern. I repeat the statement from Senator Housakos. He said we are either defenders of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, or we are not. It's time for the Government of Canada to take immediate action and stand up to China. Senator Housakos also says Canada imposes sanctions on Russia, Myanmar and so on. Why shouldn't this sanction be imposed upon Chinese and Hong Kong officials? Why should they get a different treatment? There is too much at stake for Canada to continue to be a bystander.

At some point the Government of Canada needs to do the right thing. It's now or never. We need to call on the Government of Canada to impose sanctions against Chinese officials pursuant to the Magnitsky law in light of the violations of human rights, the principles of fundamental justice and the rule of law in relation to the ongoing situation in Hong Kong and systemic persecution of minority Muslims in China. This is what our motion is calling for — imposing sanctions on those who are perpetrating human rights and forcibly detaining human beings in detention camps.

[Translation]

That is exactly what our motion is calling for. We are calling for sanctions against those who repeatedly perpetrate human rights violations and who forcibly and illegally detain human beings in detention camps.

[English]

I hope you will support this extremely important motion. Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Dagenais, debate adjourned.)

• (1750)

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

EXPRESSION OF GOOD WISHES FOR THE SEASON

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, before we adjourn, I'd like to extend my best wishes to all senators, their staff and all Senate employees.

[English]

In many ways, 2019 was an eventful year as we adapted to our new surroundings in the Senate of Canada Building. The work of the Senate continued. I must say what we have accomplished would not have been possible without the selfless dedication and unmatched professionalism of all those who supported us in the preparation of the chamber and our move.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

The Hon. the Speaker: I join my colleagues in thanking everybody for that. No matter how you celebrate this season, I hope you enjoy this time surrounded by friends and family. As we look ahead, the Senate will continue to evolve, no doubt, and the new year will bring new challenges and opportunities for us to learn and grow. I look forward to seeing senators with renewed energy as we start a new decade and delve into the work of the Forty-third Parliament.

[Translation]

Here's to a healthy and safe holiday.

(At 5:51 p.m., the Senate was continued until Tuesday, February 4, 2020, at 2 p.m.)

APPENDIX

SPEECH OF THE HONOURABLE SENATOR JOYAL, GIVEN ON MAY 7, 2019

Hon. Serge Joyal moved second reading of Bill S-260, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (Conversion Therapy).

He said: Honourable senators, Bill S-260 is entitled An Act to amend the Criminal Code, regarding conversion therapy. The summary gives an overview of the objective of the bill, which is to make it an offence to advertise conversion therapy services for consideration and to obtain a financial or other material benefit for the provision of conversion therapy to a person under the age of 18.

Honourable senators can acquaint themselves with the bill's very well-defined objective by reading the preamble. In short, this bill seeks to prohibit the practice known as conversion therapy. What is conversion therapy? The bill defines it as any practice, treatment or service designed to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity or to eliminate or reduce sexual attraction or sexual behaviour between persons of the same sex. In other words, it means any practice that seeks to fundamentally change the identity of a person and turn that person into something he or she is not. Conversion therapy violates people's right to personal autonomy, or the right to be who they are as a person or individual. It also violates the right to physical and psychological integrity. The Criminal Code already prohibits attacks on physical integrity. For example, genital mutilation is prohibited under the Criminal Code. Conversion therapy can be an attack on both physical and psychological integrity, particularly the latter. It seeks to convince individuals that their state of being is not acceptable according to the standards of society, their community or their environment. It seeks to change people's fundamental nature. That is why conversion therapy contravenes fundamental human rights and constitutes an attack on people's right to dignity and equality.

[English]

If you read the bill, honourable senators, you will clearly realize that it is important to protect the human dignity and equality of all Canadians by discouraging these practices and treatments in light of their negative consequences, particularly for young people. This is the preamble of the bill.

You may ask where that comes from. Why are we here tonight in the chamber, trying to understand the objective of this bill and why should we amend the Criminal Code in relation to prohibiting conversion therapy?

Honourable senators, I want to remind you what the Prime Minister stated on November 28, 2017, when he presented the apology of the Government of Canada to the LGBTQ2 community in relation to the discrimination that former public servants, former members of the Canadian Armed Forces and

former members of the diplomatic service of Canada experienced in the 1950s and the 1960s. The sentiment speaks directly to this fundamental issue. I will read the Prime Minister's statement:

[Translation]

While we may view modern Canada as a forward-thinking, progressive nation, we can't forget our past:

— and I really want to emphasize this —

The state orchestrated a culture of stigma and fear around LGBTQ2 communities. And in doing so, destroyed people's lives.

[English]

I want to underline that.

The state orchestrated a culture of stigma and fear around LGBTQ2 communities. And in doing so, destroyed people's lives.

That's what we're dealing with here, destroying people's lives. We're not just preventing someone from crossing a street, stealing or committing any other common offence that we find in the Criminal Code. We are dealing here with initiatives that could destroy people's lives.

In as much as the Criminal Code is committed to protecting the physical integrity of a person if a person is the object of physical violence, as much as we should be mindful of protecting any initiative against psychological violence, both are violence against the same person.

The Prime Minister mentioned later in his speech that Canada needs to work more. I will read his *propos* in French:

[Translation]

And there is still work to do. . . . The Government needs to continue working with our partners to improve policies and programs.

[English]

In other words, when the Prime Minister made his excuse, he also made a commitment, which was to address the other situation in which the members of the LGBTQ2 communities feel that it is dangerous for them to live in our community, our society, our country, by being just what they are.

In the other place, last February, the Member for Saskatoon West, Sheri Benson, introduced a petition of 18,000 names, asking the government to intervene, to prohibit conversion therapy. Here is the answer that was tabled in the other place by the Minister of Justice, on March 18:

Conversion therapies are immoral, painful and do not reflect the values of our government or those of Canadians. Various medical and psychological associations have identified the practice as unethical.

You would have expected that the government would have taken a legislative initiative following the commitment of the Prime Minister to do more in November 2017.

The fact is that this issue of conversion therapy — and I will explain it later — is condemned worldwide, in countries with similar patterns as Canadian society.

Here is how the Minister of Justice concluded his answer to the petition:

We continue to work with provincial and territorial governments to address these practices through the regulation of the health profession.

In other words, the government shifted the focus to the provinces, making it only an issue of health.

That seems to me to be an easy way out. If you look into the capacity of this Parliament to legislate in relation to the Criminal Code and health, the competence of the federal Parliament is well established.

I want to refer you to a decision of the Supreme Court in 2017 in the case of *Canada (Attorney General) v. PHS Community Services Society* in 2011. It's a recent decision. Here's what the Supreme Court states in relation to the power of the federal government in relation to the Criminal Code on the matter of health:

... Parliament has power to legislate with respect to federal matters, notably criminal law, that touch on health. For instance, it has historic jurisdiction to prohibit medical treatments that are dangerous, or that it perceives as "socially undesirable" behaviour: ...

It's quite clear that we have the jurisdiction through the criminal law to prohibit some treatments that are dangerous or that are perceived as socially undesirable behaviour.

I reflected, honourable senators, on how we should approach this issue in the Criminal Code, because if we are to legislate in the Criminal Code, it's a very serious matter, and it has very serious consequences, because as you know, there are fines or even prison terms if the offence is recognized by a competent court to have been committed.

Honourable senators, I want to refer you to the bill that Parliament adopted in 2014 in relation to prostitution. I don't know if you remember, honourable senators, Bill C-36 that was debated and studied at length at the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs.

How did the government of the day address the issue of prostitution? The government didn't ban prostitution, but the government banned and made infractions in relation to offering or obtaining sexual services for consideration; in other words, to receive money.

The other thing the government banned was publicity. In other words, you cannot advertise that you are going to offer your prostitution services, no more than you can draw a material benefit of exercising prostitution.

I look to my colleagues on the other side. You will remember very well we debated and voted on that measure. It's now part of the law of Canada. In other words, we amended the Criminal Code to ban advertising and to ban the opportunity to receive material benefit from prostitution.

I reviewed the Charter rights involved in this legislation and I came to the conclusion that this legislation was in sync with the objective of the freedom of expression of Charter rights. That's why it was limited only to those two segments of prostitution activities, offering and receiving the money. If you engage in prostitution without publicity and without money, that's not prostitution in the sense of a criminal act.

I thought this was the approach to be taken in the bill that I would be drafting. That's why in Bill S-260 it reads that "Everyone who knowingly advertises an offer to provide conversion therapy . . .", and that's why in the following article I make sure that the same elements of material benefit are recognized:

Everyone who receives a financial or other material benefit, knowing that it is obtained by or derived directly . . . from the provision of conversion therapy . . .

In other words, this bill aligns with the precedent of Bill C-36, adopted in 2014, because I thought we were protecting the Charter rights that accompanied Bill C-36, the commitment that was defined according to the Supreme Court of Canada in the *Bedford* case.

Some of you might remember the name of Bedford. She was the lady who challenged the constitutionality of the Criminal Code.

That being said, honourable senators, you might want to ask me how the approach of conversion therapy has been considered in other jurisdictions. I asked myself, where is it? How have other countries similar in stature, experience and commitment to Canada sought to protect individual rights, to protect the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to protect Charter rights, to protect the human rights code of Canada — well, honourable senators, I want to give you a list of international organizations that have banned conversion therapy, and you will be surprised. I was surprised myself when I dug into the research to come to the list of international organizations that have taken a strong stand against conversion therapy and not yesterday or the year before.

[Translation]

The World Health Organization issued a statement in 2012 saying this type of therapy poses a "severe threat to the health and human rights of the affected persons."

[English]

That was the World Health Organization seven years ago. Then there is the United Nations Committee Against Torture, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against

Women, and the Human Rights Committee have already condemned the practice of conversion therapy in several countries.

I look at the European Union, because we draw our common law from the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom has passed legislation condemning conversion therapy. Ireland has legislation presently in their House of Commons to prohibit conversion therapy.

Malta adopted the legislation some years ago against conversion therapy. The European Union last year in a report from last March 2018 — more than a year ago — came out quite strongly against conversion therapy in its annual report on the situation of fundamental rights in the EU. Even in Spain, there are some regions that have banned conversion therapy.

What about the United States? Because it's always, of course, something that we refer to, south of the border. In the United States, honourable senators, 14 states have prohibited conversion therapy. According to the Williams Institute in California, 698 members of the LGBTQ2 communities have been the object of conversion therapy, and more than half, 350,000, were among teenagers.

In other words, half of the victims of conversion therapy in the States were youth; under the age of 18.

I wanted to know more about how the medical profession — or the psychology profession — approached this issue of conversion therapy, because I thought it would be important to know what the perception is in relation to conversion therapy among the most credible medical professions.

Honourable senators, I can report to you — and I'm quoting here a report from the American Academy of Nursing on policy, the Pan American Health Organization, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychoanalytic Association, the American Psychological Association, the International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses, the National Association of Social Workers, the American Medical Association and the Association of American Medical Colleges concludes, and I quote:

... reparative therapies aimed at "curing" or changing same-sex orientation to heterosexual orientation are pseudo-scientific, ineffective, unethical, abusive and harmful practices that pose serious threats to the dignity, autonomy and human rights as well as to the physical and mental health of individuals exposed to them . . . that efforts to "repair" homosexuality, by any means, constitute health hazards to be avoided and are to be condemned as unethical assaults on human rights and individual identity, autonomy, and dignity.

It is difficult to find more professional sources than all those associations that I have just mentioned, but I went further.

I wanted to look into what I called the scientific community to try to find out how they have evaluated conversion therapy. I want to refer you to a study by Cornell University in New York.

Most of you would know about Cornell University, but just to remind you: 58 Nobel Prizes from Cornell University and four Turing Award prizes for mathematics.

Cornell University went through 47 peer-reviewed studies. Of these, they concluded, the majority, that conversion therapy and I quote:

...is ineffective and/or harmful, finding links to depression, suicidality, anxiety, social isolation and decreased capacity for intimacy.

They went on to say:

There is also powerful evidence that trying to change a person's sexual orientation can be extremely harmful.

Honourable senators, if you want to read the cases that they reviewed, there are absolutely horrendous cases of people mutilating their genitals with a razor and pouring Drano on the wounds. When you read this, you have the impression that you are in a torture room, because some people feel so ashamed that they just want to react by mutilating themselves and what is the source of their perception that they are not normal and they have to do anything to try to comply with the norm of their milieu, community, their churches or anyone who has, as I said, a psychological influence on them. Honourable senators, it is appalling when you read that kind of material that those practices can be conducted freely without any kind of prohibition.

Fortunately, even though the federal government has decided not to move for the time being, some provinces have moved. In particular, Ontario. Ontario adopted legislation — and I will quote it here — Ontario adopted legislation in 2015 with respect to services that seek to change the sexual orientation or the gender identity of patients, to prohibit the medical profession, because provinces have the responsibility to rule the professions. The provincial government has the authority to determine what kind of medical practice is admissible, and what kind of medical practice will be covered by health insurance. In other words, the person who provides the medical service could be paid by health insurance funds.

Ontario legislated this in 2015. You will be surprised, honourable senators, to learn that Nova Scotia also moved last year and I will read the purpose of the act:

The purpose of this Act is to protect Nova Scotia youth from damaging efforts to change their sexual orientation or gender identity.

I was also surprised to learn that Manitoba had also taken an initiative in 2015, and I read this in the news at that time:

[Translation]

The province of Manitoba has taken steps to ban conversion therapy in its health care system.

[English]

Even the City of Vancouver moved in June 2018 — a year ago — to take initiatives to make sure that municipal bylaws would prohibit the technique to try to convince people to engage in conversion therapy.

In other words, there has been action at the provincial level, but it is insufficient because it deals only with the medical profession. The provinces don't have the capacity to create criminal offences. As I mentioned earlier on, the Parliament of Canada, according to the Supreme Court in 2011, has the capacity to determine that in the Criminal Code some "medical" practices will be prohibited because of the negative impact that they would have on the individual.

I submit to honourable senators that those are not the only associations that have moved in relation to conversion therapy. The Canadian Psychological Association stated in 2015:

[Translation]

Conversion or reparative therapy can result in negative outcomes, such as distress, anxiety, depression, negative self-image, a feeling of personal failure, difficulty sustaining relationships, and sexual dysfunction.

[English]

In other words, honourable senators, in Canada, at the provincial level, among the Canadian medical profession, among the medical professionals of the psychology community in the United States, in Europe, the World Health Organization, in many international organizations, this practice has to be prohibited.

As I said, it has to be prohibited in our Criminal Code in the manner that we did with prostitution, which is essentially to prevent advertising and to prevent from deriving a material benefit of practising conversion therapies. In so doing, we protect the human rights, the Charter rights that exist in Canada and that we have to make sure we maintain when we legislate in the Criminal Code.

Honourable senators, I strongly invite you to reflect on this issue. It is a bit abhorrent. We don't want to think about those things because they are so horrendous when you look into the details and you think of what it could be for an individual to be told that because he or she is born with a certain characteristic, because he has blue eyes or because he has brown eyes, those with blue eyes are not normal and they should all have brown eyes.

You are born with your brown eyes, you stay with your brown eyes, you value your brown eyes and you live your life happy with your brown eyes. When you're born gay or when you're born with a gender identity of your sort, you live the way you are and you have all the rights to be protected by the government and by society against any attempt to try to instill in you that you are not a normal person and that you have to change.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Senator Joyal: I applauded when the Prime Minister took a formal stand, and that stand was applauded on both sides of the House of Commons. I applauded when we introduced and debated civil marriage in this chamber. Civil marriage is now part of the fabric of Canada. We addressed the fear and the questions around the celebration of marriage.

I thought that society had evolved and adapted itself. Parties have adapted themselves. Society has adapted itself, and the institution of marriage didn't fall down because we allowed two people to commit themselves in front of the public, to support them, and to provide one another the kind of moral and material support that we commit when we marry a person that we love.

That didn't change the institution of marriage. In my opinion, it strengthened the institution of marriage. How can we, as a society that is supposed to be egalitarian, where we value dignity, where we value equality, still tolerate that we would not give a strong signal to everyone in Canada that we have to prohibit conversion therapy in the context of our Criminal Code?

That's why, honourable senators, I took the initiative to bring this forward and have you reflect on it. I think the ideal of this country is to strive for a larger equality, a better equality. We know what we have been doing in relation to equality for men and women. We're not yet there, but at least we have an objective. We know where we are heading as a society. We know what we have to do in the economy. We know what we have to do in politics and what we have to do in our interpersonal relations between men and women. We have an objective. We have an ideal as a society. I think we should have as much an ideal to protect and to respect individuals the way they are.

We are all entitled to the same measure of equality and dignity. That is essentially what this bill tried to achieve.

I commend it to your reflection, honourable senators, and I hope we will continue to have and share those reflections because they are important. As I said, they impact the lives of individuals. We, in this chamber, are here to promote that reflection, to enlarge the conception and the horizon of our freedoms, our respect of others. And in this chamber, we can be the voice of those who don't have a voice, those who could always be pushed behind because they don't carry the vote of the majority.

In my opinion, honourable senators, this is good stuff for the Senate. That's where we are at our best, to reflect on that context as much as our former colleague Senator Pierre Claude Nolin reflected on legalization of marijuana almost 20 years ago. And, well, today we are there.

I hope it won't take 20 years to achieve prohibiting conversion therapy. As I said, it's the Senate that opens the door, and it's the Senate that brings the government to reflect, to take action and to send a strong message that when we legislate in the Criminal Code, we are serious because the rights of Canadians are at stake. We have only one preoccupation in this chamber. It's to make sure that we respect the dignity and equality of each and every Canadian.

Thank you, honourable senators, for your attention, even though I know it's late.

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