



# DEBATES OF THE SENATE

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

Friday, May 1, 2020

The Honourable GEORGE J. FUREY,  
Speaker

This issue contains the latest listing of Senators,  
Officers of the Senate and the Ministry.

## CONTENTS

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

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## THE SENATE

Friday, May 1, 2020

(Pursuant to rule 3-6(1) the Senate was recalled to sit this date, rather than June 2, 2020, as previously ordered.)

The Senate met at 12 p.m., the Speaker in the chair.

Prayers.

### VICTIMS OF TRAGEDY

#### NOVA SCOTIA MASS SHOOTING—HMCS *FREDERICTON* HELICOPTER CRASH—SILENT TRIBUTE

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, let us take a moment to reflect upon the tragic and senseless attacks that took place in Nova Scotia on April 18 and 19, 2020, and that claimed the lives of 22 victims.

I know we all stand together in offering our deepest condolences to the families and friends of those who have died and wish a swift recovery to those who were injured in these atrocities.

Compounding Canada's loss at this very difficult time, on April 29, a CH-148 Cyclone helicopter taking part in a NATO training exercise near Greece, crashed with six members of the Canadian Armed Forces aboard.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the families, friends and colleagues of the HMCS *Fredericton* crew members who lost their lives in this tragedy. Our hearts also go out to the loved ones of those who remain missing.

I now invite all honourable senators to rise and observe one minute of silence in memory of the victims.

*(Honourable senators then stood in silent tribute.)*

[Translation]

### BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

#### MOTION TO EXTEND TODAY'S SITTING AND AUTHORIZE SENATORS TO SPEAK OR VOTE FROM A SEAT OTHER THAN THEIR ASSIGNED PLACES DURING THE SITTING ADOPTED

**Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-5(a), I move:

That, notwithstanding rule 3-4, the sitting continue beyond the ordinary time of adjournment today;

That rule 3-3(1) be suspended today; and

That, notwithstanding rules 6-1 and 9-8(1)(b), senators may speak or vote from a seat other than their assigned places during today's sitting.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

[English]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### DECLARATION OF QUALIFICATION OF SENATORS

#### REPORT TABLED

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 15-6, I have the honour to table the report of the Clerk of the Senate of the list of the names of members of the Senate who have renewed their Declaration of Qualification.

[Translation]

### JUSTICE

#### CHARTER STATEMENT IN RELATION TO BILL C-14— DOCUMENT TABLED

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, a Charter Statement prepared by the Minister of Justice in relation to Bill C-14, A second Act respecting certain measures in response to COVID-19.

#### CHARTER STATEMENT IN RELATION TO BILL C-15— DOCUMENT TABLED

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, a Charter Statement prepared by the Minister of Justice in relation to Bill C-15, An Act respecting Canada emergency student benefits (coronavirus disease 2019).

[English]

## COMMITTEE OF SELECTION

### FIRST REPORT OF COMMITTEE PRESENTED

**Hon. Yuen Pau Woo**, Chair of the Committee of Selection, presented the following report:

Friday, May 1, 2020

The Committee of Selection has the honour to present its

### FIRST REPORT

Your committee wishes to inform the Senate that it nominates the Honourable Senator Ringuette as Speaker pro tempore.

Respectfully submitted,

YUEN PAU WOO  
Chair

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

**Senator Woo:** Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-5(f), I move that the report be adopted now.

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

**Some Hon. Senators:** No.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Leave is not granted.

Honourable senators, when shall this report be taken into consideration?

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

• (1210)

### SECOND REPORT OF COMMITTEE PRESENTED

**Hon. Yuen Pau Woo**, Chair of the Committee of Selection, presented the following report:

Friday, May 1, 2020

The Committee of Selection has the honour to present its

### SECOND REPORT

Pursuant to rule 12-2(2) of the *Rules of the Senate* and the order of the Senate of March 11, 2020, your committee submits below a list of senators nominated by it to serve on committees.

Your committee recommends that the Leader of the Opposition (or designate) name the specified number of senators to the committees listed below, by notice filed with the Clerk of the Senate and that the Clerk of the Senate have the notice recorded in the *Journals of the Senate*.

Your committee further recommends that, unless otherwise ordered by the Senate, and notwithstanding rule 12-13, the committees listed below not meet before the earlier of:

- September 22, 2020, or another later date indicated in a notice signed by the leaders and facilitators of all recognized parties and recognized parliamentary groups and sent to the Clerk of the Senate;
- the third successive sitting of the Senate with a daily attendance of at least 60 senators that follows the adoption of this report and precedes September 22, 2020; or
- a date before September 22, 2020, indicated in a notice signed by the leaders and facilitators of all recognized parties and recognized parliamentary groups and sent to the Clerk of the Senate.

### Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples

#### Independent Senators Group

The Honourable Senators Coyle, Francis, Hartling, McCallum, Pate and Sinclair

#### Conservative Party of Canada

Three senators to be named by the Leader of the Opposition (or designate)

#### Canadian Senators Group

The Honourable Senator Tannas

#### Non-affiliated

The Honourable Senators Dyck and LaBoucane-Benson

### Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry

#### Independent Senators Group

The Honourable Senators Deacon (*Nova Scotia*), Hartling, Klyne, Kutcher, Miville-Dechéne, Petitclerc and Ringuette

#### Conservative Party of Canada

Three senators to be named by the Leader of the Opposition (or designate)

#### Canadian Senators Group

The Honourable Senators Black (*Ontario*) and Griffin

### Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce

#### Independent Senators Group

The Honourable Senators Bellemare, Deacon (*Nova Scotia*), Klyne, Loffreda, Massicotte, Marwah and Wetston

**Conservative Party of Canada**

Three senators to be named by the Leader of the Opposition (or designate)

**Canadian Senators Group**

The Honourable Senator Wallin

**Non-affiliated**

The Honourable Senator Dawson

**Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources****Independent Senators Group**

The Honourable Senators Cotter, Duncan, Galvez, Massicotte, McCallum, Simons and Woo

**Conservative Party of Canada**

Three senators to be named by the Leader of the Opposition (or designate)

**Canadian Senators Group**

The Honourable Senators Black (*Alberta*) and Richards

**Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans****Independent Senators Group**

The Honourable Senators Anderson, Bovey, Busson, Christmas, Cormier and Francis

**Conservative Party of Canada**

Three senators to be named by the Leader of the Opposition (or designate)

**Canadian Senators Group**

The Honourable Senators Black (*Ontario*) and Campbell

**Non-affiliated**

The Honourable Senator Munson

**Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade****Independent Senators Group**

The Honourable Senators Boehm, Bovey, Coyle, Deacon (*Ontario*), Dean, Ravalia and Saint-Germain

**Conservative Party of Canada**

Three senators to be named by the Leader of the Opposition (or designate)

**Canadian Senators Group**

The Honourable Senators Black (*Alberta*) and Greene

**Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights****Independent Senators Group**

The Honourable Senators Bernard, Boyer, Hartling, Miville-Dechéne and Pate

**Conservative Party of Canada**

Three senators to be named by the Leader of the Opposition (or designate)

**Non-affiliated**

The Honourable Senator Cordy

**Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs****Independent Senators Group**

The Honourable Senators Boniface, Cotter, Dalphond, Dupuis, Jaffer, Keating and Sinclair

**Conservative Party of Canada**

Three senators to be named by the Leader of the Opposition (or designate)

**Canadian Senators Group**

The Honourable Senators Campbell and Downe

**Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament****Independent Senators Group**

The Honourable Senators Duffy and Ravalia

**Conservative Party of Canada**

Two senators to be named by the Leader of the Opposition (or designate)

**Canadian Senators Group**

The Honourable Senator Black (*Ontario*)

**Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence****Independent Senators Group**

The Honourable Senators Anderson, Boniface, Busson, Dalphond, Duffy and Moodie

**Conservative Party of Canada**

Three senators to be named by the Leader of the Opposition (or designate)

**Canadian Senators Group**

The Honourable Senators Dagenais and Richards

**Non-affiliated**

The Honourable Senator Harder, P.C.

**Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages****Independent Senators Group**

The Honourable Senators Cormier, Keating, Mégie and Moncion

**Conservative Party of Canada**

Three senators to be named by the Leader of the Opposition (or designate)

**Canadian Senators Group**

One senator to be named by the Leader of the Canadian Senators Group (or designate)

**Non-affiliated**

The Honourable Senator Gagné

**Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament**

**Independent Senators Group**

The Honourable Senators Bellemare, Bovey, Cotter, Dalphond, Dupuis, McPhedran, Moncion and Ringuette

**Conservative Party of Canada**

Four senators to be named by the Leader of the Opposition (or designate)

**Canadian Senators Group**

The Honourable Senators Black (*Ontario*) and McCoy

**Non-affiliated**

The Honourable Senator LaBoucane-Benson

**Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations**

**Independent Senators Group**

The Honourable Senators Boyer and Woo

**Conservative Party of Canada**

Two senators to be named by the Leader of the Opposition (or designate)

**Canadian Senators Group**

The Honourable Senator Greene

**Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications**

**Independent Senators Group**

The Honourable Senators Brazeau, Christmas, Cormier, Dasko, Keating, Miville-Dechéne and Simons

**Conservative Party of Canada**

Three senators to be named by the Leader of the Opposition (or designate)

**Canadian Senators Group**

The Honourable Senators Griffin and Wallin

Pursuant to rule 12-3(3) of the *Rules of the Senate*, the Honourable Senator Gold, P.C. (or Gagné) and the Honourable Senator Plett (or Martin) are *ex officio* members of all committees except the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators, the joint committees and subcommittees.

Respectfully submitted,

YUEN PAU WOO  
*Chair*

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

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

**THE SENATE**

MOTION TO RESOLVE INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE TO CONSIDER SUBJECT MATTER OF BILL C-15 ADOPTED

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-5(j), I move:

That, notwithstanding any provisions of the Rules or usual practice:

1. the Senate resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole at the start of Orders of the Day today to consider the subject matter of Bill C-15, An Act respecting Canada emergency student benefits (coronavirus disease 2019), in advance of the said bill coming before the Senate;
2. the Committee of the Whole on the subject matter of Bill C-15, receive the Honourable Carla Qualtrough, P.C., M.P., Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, accompanied by one official;
3. the Committee of the Whole on the subject matter of Bill C-15 rise no later than 125 minutes after it begins; and
4. the speaking time provided for in rule 12-32(3)(d) be five minutes for the Committee of the Whole today, including the time for both questions and answers.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

MOTION CONCERNING THE ELECTRONIC TABLING OF DOCUMENTS ADOPTED

**Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-5(j), I move:

That until the end of 2020 or the end of the current session, whichever comes first:

- (a) notwithstanding usual practice, any return, report or other paper deposited with the Clerk of the Senate pursuant to rule 14-1(6), may be deposited electronically; and
- (b) notwithstanding rules 4-10(2) and 4-10(3), written replies to oral questions and to written questions may be deposited with the Clerk of the Senate electronically following the process of rule 14-1(6), provided that written replies to oral questions be published as an appendix to the *Debates of the Senate* of the day on which the tabling is recorded in the *Journals of the Senate*.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

## CANADA EMERGENCY STUDENT BENEFIT BILL

### FIRST READING

**The Hon. the Speaker** informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-15, An Act respecting Canada emergency student benefits (coronavirus disease 2019).

(Bill read first time.)

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

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-6(1)(f), I move that the bill be placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading later this day.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(On motion of Senator Gold, bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading later this day.)

[Translation]

## ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR SENATORS

### COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED TO MEET BY VIDEOCONFERENCE OR TELECONFERENCE ADOPTED

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-5(j), I move:

That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules or usual practices, and taking into account the exceptional circumstances of the current pandemic of COVID-19, the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators have the power to meet by videoconference or teleconference, if technically feasible, until the adjournment of the third successive sitting of the Senate with a daily attendance of at least 60 senators that follows the adoption of this order;

That members of the committee, other senators participating in a public meeting of the committee held pursuant to rule 12-28(1), a senator participating in a meeting of the committee pursuant to rule 12-28(2) and witnesses be allowed to participate in meetings of the committee by videoconference or teleconference, with such meetings being considered for all purposes to be meetings of the committee, and senators taking part in such meetings being considered for all purposes to be present at the meeting;

That, for greater certainty, and without limiting the general authority granted by this order, when the committee meets by videoconference or teleconference:

1. members of the committee participating count towards quorum;
2. such meetings be considered to be occurring in the parliamentary precinct, irrespective of where participants may be; and
3. the committee be directed to approach in camera meetings with the utmost caution and all necessary precautions, taking account of the risks to the confidentiality of in camera proceedings inherent in such technologies;

That, if a meeting of the committee by videoconference or teleconference is public, pursuant to rule 12-28(1) or to order of the Senate, the provisions of rule 14-7(2) be applied so as to allow recording or broadcasting through any facilities arranged by the Clerk of the Senate, and, if such a meeting cannot be broadcast live, the committee be considered to have fulfilled any obligations under the Rules relating to public meetings by making any available recording publicly available as soon as possible thereafter; and

That there be a minimum of 72 hours' notice for a meeting of the committee by videoconference or teleconference, subject to technical feasibility.

[English]

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

• (1220)

## THE SENATE

### MOTION CONCERNING SENATORS ON PUBLIC BUSINESS ADOPTED

**Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-5(j), I move:

That, until the end of June 2020 or such later date as may be established by the Speaker after consultation with all leaders and facilitators in the Senate, senators who are not present at a sitting of the Senate be presumed to be on public business unless they advise the Clerk of the Senate otherwise; and

That the Speaker inform the Senate of any decision to extend the period during which this order applies at the first sitting after the decision is made.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

## QUESTION PERIOD

### AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

#### DAIRY INDUSTRY

**Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, my question today is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Leader, it concerns another broken promise by the Liberal government, a promise that was made not only to me but, indeed, to dairy farmers across Canada.

The official opposition in this place agreed to fast-track Bill C-4, the new NAFTA deal, under exceptional circumstances. We had one condition, that the deal would come into force after August 1, the start of the dairy industry's year. This promise was broken, and the deal will come into force on July 1. The Dairy Farmers of Canada and Dairy Processors Association of Canada have confirmed that they were also misled and this means \$100 million in additional losses for this industry.

Senator Gold, your government threw Canada's dairy farmers under the bus. Losing \$100 million would be terrible for them in the best of times. In this global pandemic, it is a catastrophe.

Leader, what will your government do for Canada's dairy industry to right this wrong?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you, senator, for your question. And thank you all for the opportunity to have human interaction in these difficult days.

The implementation, honourable senators, of NAFTA 2.0 through Bill C-4 was the result of significant collaboration and consultation with a broad range of stakeholders, including Canada's very important dairy sector. Through the negotiating process, the government maintained regular communications with the stakeholder community as well as with parliamentarians regarding the implementation of the agreement as the process unfolded.

I commend my counterpart, Senator Plett, for his vigorous advocacy on behalf of this sector. I assure him and all senators that the Government of Canada remains fully behind the dairy sector and, indeed, has successfully, against some skepticism, protected supply management in Canada throughout the negotiations.

I can also assure this chamber that the government remains firmly committed to working with the dairy sector to provide fair and equitable compensation to the sector for the market share that they surrendered in terms of the deal.

The fact, however, is that Canada was able to maintain its supply management system, and it is clear and has always been clear that the dairy sector will be compensated as part of the new NAFTA.



It would be inappropriate for me to comment on any prior discussions that I had with leaders, but I would be remiss if I didn't point out that since the Senate passed the new NAFTA in early March, the world has changed a considerable amount. The global economy has been turned upside down, and the Government of Canada is attempting to steer the economy in a very fast-moving and dynamic, changing context. In the context of this new reality, I don't have to remind senators that maintaining a good, close, collaborative and stable relationship with the United States, our most important trading partner and our neighbour, has become even more important than it already was and it has been for our entire history, especially in the context of this pandemic.

Ensuring that the deal passed when it did and that protectionism didn't take greater hold on this continent, if not beyond, was a major accomplishment of this government for which I believe Canadians, including the dairy sector, should be grateful.

**Senator Plett:** "Fully behind" the dairy industry, I heard in there somewhere. Fully behind the dairy industry. I wish this government would take a lead instead of being "fully behind." They are so far behind the dairy industry we can hardly see them.

## PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

### CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA—COVID-19— EARLY RELEASE

**Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):** My second question, leader, is it's important for Canadians to trust what their government says, whether it's a promise made to an entire industry or information provided to the public by cabinet ministers.

Minister Blair indicated recently that literally hundreds of offenders — hundreds of offenders — have been given early release as a consequence of COVID-19 pandemic. Information provided by CSC officials on a briefing call last weekend indicates that the opposite is true, that as of April 17, the number of offenders being released was actually below the monthly average.

I've been trying repeatedly to get to the bottom of this, as have other senators, to that and other related questions, with no luck. I know our colleague Senator Pate has been trying to get the answers as well, yet Minister Blair has not been heard from at all.

Leader, why is Minister Blair unable to clear up the confusion that he caused? Why is your government keeping the truth from Canadians on this very important matter?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question. I don't accept the premise of your question that the Government of Canada is concealing the truth. The decision to release inmates under different programs, whether through parole or for reasons of health, are taken in large part by the Parole Board, which is organized regionally. As many senators know, there is a process that is ongoing where the health requirements and needs of the inmate population — who are

exceptionally challenged under any circumstances but especially in this particular crisis — have to be balanced against the paramount concern for public safety and security. The Parole Board of Canada and the Government of Canada remain focused on making sure that the appropriate balance between public safety and the health and safety of the inmate population and those who work with them is properly taken care of.

• (1230)

## FINANCE

### COVID-19 ECONOMIC RESPONSE PLAN

**Hon. Thanh Hai Ngo:** Honourable senators, my question is for the government leader in the Senate. The CEBA was first announced on March 27. From the beginning, the initial threshold posed huge problems, as many small businesses were falling through the cracks. The issue was raised by small business owners, other parties and the media.

I posed a question to Minister Morneau on April 11, the last time he appeared in the chamber. Five days later, after my question, the government changed the threshold requirement. As we all know, a lot of damage can be done to small businesses within a few days, let alone weeks.

Even with this new threshold, some businesses still will not be able to qualify. I'm thinking of business owners who pay themselves through dividends, family-run businesses that do not pay themselves a salary but choose to invest in the business, or those who don't have a \$20,000 payroll.

Is the government willing to make additional changes to the program, such as scrapping the payroll requirement completely in order to allow these businesses to qualify?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you very much for your question.

The government continues to work with stakeholders and to be, as we say in French, *à l'écoute*, to determine both how the program is working and where it might be adjusted.

The program is, by all accounts, a success. I have been advised that, as of last night, the government has received over 85,000 applications for the wage subsidy, which is quite a significant take-up. I'm advised that the government expects to receive almost 1 million applicants, each of which will be and must be verified manually by auditors.

To repeat, for a program like this — as well as the others that have been introduced — of such magnitude and introduced with such remarkable speed, it is inevitable that not every particularity of every business will necessarily be fully addressed. The government understands this and, I'm advised, continues to work to determine how these programs can best suit the largest number of Canadian businesses and workers that are affected.

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### TAIWAN—INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION

**Hon. Thanh Hai Ngo:** Honourable senators, during the COVID-19 outbreak, Taiwan has undeniably proven to be a success story in dealing with and containing the spread of the virus. Its response is among the best in the world. Taiwan's involvement is now, more than ever, crucial in international fora such as the World Health Organization and the World Health Assembly, as it can play an essential and critical role in sharing its experience and strategy for the sake of global health and safety.

As we know, Taiwan's participation and membership are denied due to undue political pressure. Further, Taiwan has helped many countries around the world by providing medical supplies and PPE. This week, Taiwan graciously donated 500,000 masks to some provinces in Canada.

Taiwan's collaboration needs to be fully recognized. The one-China policy is flawed and outdated.

Does this government think it is time that Taiwan is finally included as a member of international organizations?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for your question, and for your continued commitment to and advocacy on this issue.

The Government of Canada is grateful not only for the most recent offer of supplies from Taiwan but for the role Taiwan has been playing, meaningfully and importantly, in international multilateral fora. In that regard, the global public good is well served by having Taiwan continue in its role as an observer in the World Health Assembly meetings.

That said, Canada's position has been and remains clear: Canada's one-China policy does not recognize Taiwan as a sovereign state and does not maintain official government-to-government relationships with Taipei. That does not change the fact that Canada is grateful to and *reconnaissant* of the contribution Taiwan is making in this global pandemic.

## FINANCE

### SUPPORT FOR FINTECH SECTOR

**Hon. Peter M. Boehm:** Honourable senators, my question is for the Government Representative in the Senate and I'm asking it on behalf of Senator Colin Deacon, our colleague from Nova Scotia.

On Wednesday evening, the Finance Canada Advisory Committee on Open Banking sent an email to its stakeholders saying that consultations on open banking would not proceed this spring and will be delayed until the fall, at the earliest. The reason given was the current restrictions on public gatherings, despite the explosion of evidence that virtual meetings can proceed quite effectively. As a result, the reason is being interpreted as an excuse.

Our financial technology — or fintech — firms were demonstrating global competitiveness and exciting progress pre-COVID. They have demonstrated the ability to rapidly, accurately and cost-effectively serve under-banked and un-banked segments of the population, as identified in the June 2019 *Open Banking* report from our own Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce. Yet, our fintechs have been barred from being involved in the delivery of any federal financial support to SMEs or other groups. The Business Development Bank of Canada, BDC, and Export Development Canada, EDC, are working with our banks and credit unions but are not working with fintechs, despite solid proposals being presented to Finance Canada.

What can these enormously promising fintech firms do to, first of all, be provided the opportunity to assist under-served Canadians and, second, not to be left at a huge competitive disadvantage relative to their global competitors in the U.S., which have been brought into that government's relief efforts?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Senator, thank you for the question, and thanks for Senator Colin Deacon's ongoing engagement and support of that industry and sector.

The short and best answer I can offer at this point is that I am not aware of the reasons why the fintech industry has not been brought into the current programs whereby banks are the vehicles for the delivery of the benefits. I will certainly make inquiries and be pleased to report back to the chamber. Thank you for the question.

[Translation]

## CANADIAN HERITAGE

### MEDIA SUPPORT

**Hon. Julie Miville-Dechéne:** My question is for the government representative.

This Sunday, we will be celebrating World Press Freedom Day. However, in order to enjoy freedom, one must first survive.

Since the start of the pandemic, 200 Canadian media outlets have had to close their doors, suspend printing their publications, lay people off and release fewer news updates.

Just this week, Postmedia announced that it is permanently closing 15 local papers in Manitoba and Ontario. This despite the government's promise to inject nearly \$600 million into our media outlets. That was announced 18 months ago, but we're still waiting.

Here is my question: Our media outlets are still playing an essential role in informing Canadians, so what emergency measures will the government take given that some \$250 billion has already been pledged under various emergency programs?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you, colleague, for that question.

Clearly, the health of our media, including print and online media, is important for our country and even for our democracy. It's also clear that, even before the crisis, there were pressures and changes in this sector, which make it increasingly susceptible to the global changes that we're all familiar with.

The government is taking the current situation very seriously and is focusing all of its efforts on the health and safety of Canadians, including journalists. This issue is a priority. All of the government's efforts are gradual. We are taking a step-by-step approach. We have no choice because the situation is changing so quickly.

• (1240)

About a month ago, on March 30, the government announced that the CRTC would provide \$30 million in relief to cover broadcasters' licence fees. The government also wants to counter the drop in advertising revenue. It committed to investing \$30 million, which should benefit a great many Canadian media organizations.

**Senator Miville-Dechêne:** If I may, Senator Gold, I have another question. In the middle of the pandemic, the Australian government adopted emergency measures forcing Google and Facebook to pay significant royalties to the Australian media. It is indeed possible to act during the pandemic. There is another solution that I found very innovative. The fast-food chain Mary Brown's Chicken & Taters, which I was unfamiliar with, decided to cover the cost of the payroll put up by the major Postmedia daily newspapers to allow people, in other words its customers, to have access to complete and reliable information. That is the type of solution the federal government could adopt in the short term to give the media a bit of breathing room.

**Senator Gold:** Thank you, Senator Miville-Dechêne for that additional information. I wasn't familiar with that restaurant chain. As you know, the government has long been working with corporations such as Facebook and Google in a number of different contexts. Other companies have done the same to ensure that Canadians have access to essential information.

I will have a look at the issue and come back on this matter. I can assure the chamber that when it comes to the precarious situation of the media, the government is well aware of the issue and will have more to say in due course.

## PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

### BORDER SECURITY

**Hon. Jean-Guy Dagenais:** I have a question for the government leader in the Senate. We now know that the Prime Minister delayed closing our borders in response to the coronavirus crisis, in spite of the information he was receiving from intelligence services, which, I should point out, knew much more than the World Health Organization. The Prime Minister also decided, on March 18, 2020, to turn away illegal migrants who were trying to cross the border in areas such as Roxham

Road, in Lacolle. Despite that decision . . . rather, however, that decision was valid for just 30 days, as though the virus were going to miraculously disappear and Canadians' health would no longer be at risk. Will the Prime Minister keep the border closed to illegal refugees, or will we again start seeing what happened in the past, at the expense of Canadians' health?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for the question. Dear colleagues, the situation is changing so rapidly that all levels of government — federal, municipal and territorial — are having to take action as they receive information. According to my information, the situation regarding irregular border crossings has changed drastically. The government is well aware of this issue and recognizes that we must protect the health and safety of Canadians and ensure that any measures we take are well-founded, fair and achieve their goals. All governments, and in particular the federal government, must monitor this situation, as it develops, to ensure that Canadians are protected.

**Senator Dagenais:** Does the Prime Minister realize that the vast majority of illegal migrants come from New York State, where the epidemic has spiked?

**Senator Gold:** I can't confirm what the Prime Minister knows, but there is no doubt that officials in Quebec, British Columbia and all the provinces are very aware that many states are COVID-19 hot spots. In fact, we just learned that, contrary to what we've been hearing for some time now, the first cases of COVID-19 in Canada did not come from China but rather from an American who travelled from Washington State to British Columbia. I repeat, the government takes its duty to protect our borders and Canadian citizens very seriously. That's why we have restricted cross-border travel between Canada and the United States. That was an extraordinary decision, considering the long history of open borders between our two countries.

[English]

## HEALTH

### TESTING FOR COVID-19

**Hon. Judith G. Seidman:** Honourable senators, my question is for the government leader in the Senate. Dr. David Naylor, who led the SARS review and is a member of the leadership committee of the COVID-19 Immunity Task Force, says he is personally concerned about our diagnostic testing and tracing capacity. Diagnostic testing for COVID-19 in Canada remains focused on symptomatic people, those who have been exposed to the virus and essential workers. We have not yet been able to tackle serological testing because we are still working to assure valid tests. As of yesterday, Dr. Tam indicated that almost 800,000 people have been tested across Canada. Population-based diagnostic testing would provide us with a much more accurate picture, as it would capture asymptomatic people. Understanding the prevalence of COVID-19 at the municipal, provincial and national levels will be especially important as governments move toward restarting our economy.

Senator Gold, does the federal government have an estimate as to how long it will take until we see much greater wide-scale testing in Canada, and when will we be in a position to offer wide-scale testing to Canadians?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** I thank the honourable senator for the question. It goes to the heart of what we need to do both in Canada and beyond, to get the best handle on the nature of this crisis and indeed the best understanding of the nature of this virus, which being so new, may or may not behave in ways that are analogous or perfectly identical to the way we understand other coronaviruses to behave. It is true, and I think Canadians and the Senate need to understand that, according to the information I have, Canada nonetheless has one of the highest testing rates in the world, and the Government of Canada is continuing to work to increase our laboratory capacity to ensure that this remains the case.

It is true, as the senator correctly pointed out, that the initial focus was on treating symptomatic people, in part because we did not know much more about how the virus lodges and may be transmitted without presenting symptoms. But the government is continually assessing its testing strategy so we can get a much better picture, and a more accurate picture of what is happening in our communities. It will be working with the provinces and territories on a national testing strategy to slow the spread of the virus. Indeed I have been advised that in the coming weeks the government will be examining and looking into testing the level of immunity in our communities, which is, I believe, the methodological approach to which your question referred. As you pointed out, and the government agrees, we need this to get a much better idea of the rates of spread and the degree of infection within our communities.

• (1250)

The government is not in a position to give you a timeline of this, but I can give you the assurance of the government that it is working very hard on this. It recognizes, as public health officials recognize, this is a key element if we are going to successfully loosen the restrictions and reopen our economy and our social life without putting us at risk of bouncing back in a serious way.

**Senator Seidman:** We have heard that Health Canada has a backlog of at least 52 companies waiting to hear if their test kits have been approved for use. Some have reportedly been waiting for a response for over a month. How does Health Canada intend to address this backlog quickly, while at the same time ensuring validity of the test kit it approves?

Senator Gold, could you also tell us how many test kits have been approved by Health Canada to date, and are the provinces using the same tests?

**Senator Gold:** Thank you for the question. I don't have the number of test kits, so I will make inquiries and report back.

Nor is the government in a position to tell you how long it will be before Health Canada approves any particular test. As you properly point out, the testing is critically important to make sure that the tests that do emerge, as approved, are reliable. Nothing

could be worse than giving Canadians a false sense of security and false information. I will make the appropriate inquiry, senator, and do my best to report back as quickly as possible.

[Translation]

## FINANCE

### FEDERAL FISCAL DEFICIT—ECONOMY

**Hon. Claude Carignan:** My question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Canadians are increasingly concerned about the growing deficit and debt and about how we are going to repay all of it. Yesterday, the Parliamentary Budget Officer stated that the deficit will hit \$252 billion for the 2020-21 fiscal year. This amount will increase as new programs are announced, and government debt could reach \$1 trillion.

Leader, can you confirm the estimated amount of the deficit? When will the Minister of Finance table his budget?

**Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate):** Thank you for the question. It is very clear that the deficit is growing. Fortunately, we have the capacity to fund measures to protect Canadians and the economy because of the efforts of previous governments. That will ensure that we get through this. When the economy and life get back on track, we will be able to return to a stable fiscal situation.

[English]

## QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE

### SPEAKER'S RULING RESERVED

**Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):** Thank you, Your Honour.

I'm rising on a question of privilege from this morning, Your Honour. This morning the Committee of Selection held a meeting. I submit that the notice of the meeting and the discussions that were held breached the privilege of some senators.

A few of the things that I have issues with include the committee sitting during the adjournment of the Senate, the absence of consent and ability of the vice-chair of a committee to attend, and indeed notifying the chair. Senator Stewart Olsen is the vice-chair of the Committee of Selection. When she was informed of Senator Woo's unilateral decision to call today's meeting, she protested. There was no urgency to have this meeting, she said. To allow this meeting to proceed when the vice-chair did not agree to it and cannot be here because of travel restrictions, and the short notice, are breaches of Senator Stewart Olsen's privilege.

The absence of Senator Seidman, committee member. One of our committee members, Senator Seidman, did not, did not, Your Honour, receive a notice of this meeting. She is clearly a member of this committee as per the membership posted on the website, yet notice was not sent out to her of this meeting. That in itself

should have warranted the meeting of the committee to be adjourned until such a time as proper notice can be given to all members of the committee.

The chair decided to hold a meeting knowing full well that Senator Seidman had not been properly notified. This is a blatant breach of Senator Seidman's privilege.

Third, an incorrect notice of meeting. Your Honour, my third point is that the notice of the meeting did not correctly refer to what would be debated. The notice of meeting sent out on Wednesday, April 29, at 9:08 p.m., stated that the agenda consisted of consideration of a draft agenda and future business. In fact, even after the meeting started, the Senate website still referred to the object of this meeting to be as "Consideration of a draft agenda (future business)". It made no mention of the selection of a Speaker *pro tempore* or the population of various standing committees.

The Chair decided to impose a new agenda on the committee. It then went on to name a Speaker *pro tempore* and appoint members on committees. That is not fair to members of committee and all senators. Given we are currently in the midst of a pandemic, I would imagine that most senators would base their decision to attend a meeting on the basis of the notice of meeting and the business being conducted.

Discussing future business is not the same, Your Honour and honourable senators, as the selection of a Speaker *pro tempore* or the population of committees. I raised that point with the chair, and he did not even bother to acknowledge that the notice was incorrect, and he decided to move ahead and proceed with his agenda.

I would imagine that senators would make more of an effort to attend a meeting if they knew there was important business, like the population of committees or the election of a Speaker *pro tempore*, than they would if there is just simply future business going to be discussed, Your Honour. I submit that is a breach of privileges of members of committee and, indeed, all senators to know in advance what will be debated and voted on during the committee.

So I raise that as a question of privilege, Your Honour, and leave it in your hands.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Did you want to enter debate on the question of privilege, senator?

**Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond:** I have a question for Senator Plett.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Senator Plett, would you take a question?

**Senator Plett:** Certainly.

**Senator Dalphond:** Senator Plett, you said that Senator Seidman, who is present in the chamber today, did not receive a proper notice. Was she notified on April 29 or was she not?

**Senator Plett:** I think I was pretty clear on that, Senator Dalphond, both in my comments now as well as in the meeting earlier; no she was not. She was not notified. I am not sure

whether she has received the notice now this morning at — and I have the notes here somewhere. I won't quote the time. But this morning at around 10 o'clock, we got a notice, that I believe came from the clerk's office, letting us know they had removed my name — which should never have been there and isn't on the website — from the list of senators who are on the committee. They had named me as *ex officio* — which I rightfully am, and that's under the conditions I was there this morning — and had added Senator Seidman's name to the committee list. That was maybe at 10:08 this morning. I have the email here and I can check the exact time, but it was this morning, senator, that we received that notice. Senator Seidman did not get that notice of the meeting.

• (1300)

**Hon. Yuen Pau Woo:** Honourable senators, this point of privilege is unfounded, both in the rules and in the practices of the Senate. I would note that it is a point of privilege, but it is a little unclear from Senator Plett exactly as to whose privilege has been violated. He has mentioned a few different names and he has mentioned the committee as a whole. He seems to be focusing particularly on the privilege of Senator Seidman, who we are told was not informed about this meeting.

I would draw your attention, Your Honour, to the fact that the requirement for notice of meeting is the public notice that is posted, and that was indeed done. Senator Dalphond alluded to it being posted on April 29, barely a few hours after you had recalled the Senate.

That is the only requirement — I should say that is the only requirement in terms of the public notice. Of course, the Senate also has to make sure that other provisions are made for the meeting to be conducted according to our rules, such as the presence of a suitable room and interpretation and so on. All of these requirements, colleagues, were met when the public notice of the meeting went out. That is the narrow technicality of the rule, and that should be sufficient to do away with this frivolous point of privilege.

Let me just go further, because Senator Plett has raised some extraneous issues into this question of privilege.

Colleagues, what the committee did today and which you all heard in my notice of motion — I should say the tabling of the report of the Committee of Selection — is to simply put into effect the allocation of committee seats among various senators across the chamber based on negotiations and based on an agreement that had been reached at least six weeks ago.

It is also based on a signed letter of agreement by all of the leaders and facilitators of recognized groups specifically outlining the distribution of seats, as we see in the report today. And today's Selection Committee report was also validated in some senses by a motion that this very chamber adopted pursuant to the letter of agreement among the leaders and facilitators of recognized groups in this chamber.

The meeting agenda was well-known to all members of the committee, and particularly to the members of the Selection Committee, through a series of emails that I sent to both of my colleagues on the steering committee over a period of about six

weeks. For example, at the end of the previous Committee of Selection meeting, but also through emails stating my intention to call a meeting of Selection the next time we sit for the purpose of dealing with committee memberships and the nomination of the Speaker *pro tempore*.

We constituted this meeting today according to the rules. We gave proper notice through the public announcement of the meeting. Senators were informed through the usual process. There is no breach of privilege. I ask, therefore, Your Honour, that you dispense with this frivolous point of privilege. Thank you.

#### SPEAKER'S RULING RESERVED

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Do any other senators wish to comment on the question of privilege? If not, honourable senators, I will take the matter under advisement.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Pursuant to the order of earlier this day, I leave the chair for the Senate to be put into a Committee of the Whole on the subject matter of Bill C-15, An Act respecting Canada emergency student benefits (coronavirus disease 2019). The Honourable Senator Ringuette will chair the committee.

#### CANADA EMERGENCY STUDENT BENEFIT BILL

##### CONSIDERATION OF SUBJECT MATTER IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

On the Order:

The Senate in Committee of the Whole in order to receive the Honourable Carla Qualtrough, P.C., M.P., Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, accompanied by one official, respecting the subject matter of Bill C-15, An Act respecting Canada emergency student benefits (coronavirus disease 2019).

(The sitting of the Senate was suspended and put into Committee of the Whole, the Honourable Pierrette Ringuette in the chair.)

**The Chair:** Honourable senators, the Senate is resolved into a Committee of the Whole on the subject matter of Bill C-15, An Act respecting Canada emergency student benefits (coronavirus disease 2019).

Honourable senators, in a Committee of the Whole senators shall address the chair but need not stand. As ordered earlier today, the speaking time is five minutes — including questions

and answers. As also ordered by the Senate, the committee will receive the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, and I would invite her to enter, accompanied by her official.

(Pursuant to the Order of the Senate, the Honourable Carla Qualtrough and her official were escorted to seats in the Senate chamber.)

Minister, welcome to the Senate. I would ask you to introduce your official and to make your opening remarks.

**Hon. Carla Qualtrough, P.C., M.P., Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion:** Thank you very much. I have with me here today Deputy Minister Graham Flack, who is here to assist us in answering your questions.

First of all, thank you, honourable senators. I'd like to especially thank Senator Gagné for sponsoring this bill.

[Translation]

I am pleased to come before the Senate today to speak to Bill C-15, An Act respecting Canada emergency student benefits, with regard to coronavirus disease 2019. This bill was tabled and studied on Wednesday.

[English]

Our government has taken extraordinary steps to support Canadians during the COVID-19 pandemic. We implemented the COVID-19 economic response plan with \$146 billion in relief measures. A key element of this plan is the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, which provides income support for workers who have stopped working or who have significantly reduced employment income due to COVID-19.

To give you a sense of the scope of this effort, public servants have handled over 10 million requests from 7.2 million people under the CERB. Many students qualify for the CERB and have been accessing this benefit. This includes international students, but even so, we know that more support for students is needed.

• (1310)

That's why last week we announced a \$9 billion suite of measures to support students in this time of crisis. These include direct income support through the Canada emergency student benefit, job creation, enhancements to the student and loan grant program and a new Canada service grant, which provides up to \$5,000 in the form of a bursary for students who volunteer in the summer months.

As we all know, students are facing a unique set of challenges during this crisis, such as cancelled internships or lost work opportunities. Others have child care responsibilities and are facing a summer without many child care options. Still others are facing increased expenses related to COVID-19.

Many are uncertain about their ability to return to their studies in the fall.

[Translation]

We all know that students contribute in many important and meaningful ways to our society. They are innovative, bold and dedicated, and they want to contribute to their community and to serve their country during this crisis.

[English]

We estimate that approximately 1 million post-secondary students may not be eligible for the CERB, and that's where Bill C-15 comes in. This legislation creates temporary emergency income support for students during the key summer months through the Canada emergency student benefit, worth approximately \$5.2 billion.

Canadian students who are not receiving this CERB will be able to apply for this monthly \$1,250 benefit from May until August. Students with disabilities and students with dependents could also receive an additional \$750 per month for a total of \$2,000 per month.

Just like the CERB, the CESB would not need to be repaid.

The CESB would be available to Canadian students who, due to COVID-19, are unable to work, are looking for work and can't find it or are working and making less than a certain amount of income. Students must be enrolled in a post-secondary education program leading to a degree, diploma or certificate or have ended their post-secondary studies or graduated no earlier than December 2019.

High school graduates who have applied for and will be commencing post-secondary programs in the coming months are also eligible, as are Canadian students studying abroad.

The CESB is structured in such a way that allows students to be working part time. This aligns with our government's priority of keeping Canadians, including young Canadians, connected to the labour force. This puts our businesses and workers in the best possible position to recover once the public health crisis passes.

[Translation]

As I have already stated, students want to help.

[English]

Honourable senators, we would like to help them. This legislation is a key step in the delivery of our support for students. Through Bill C-15, we have the opportunity to support Canada's students in a way that will be felt for years to come. I look forward to your questions. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, minister. The first question is from the Leader of the Opposition, Senator Plett.

**Senator Plett:** Thank you, minister, for being here this afternoon.

Minister, my question about the bill before us today concerns the unintended consequences it could have on our agricultural sector. Farmers facing a shortage of workers due to COVID-19 could be helped by having more of Canada's youth fill vacant jobs in farm operations right across the country.

My concern is that your bill could ultimately discourage students from seeking out this work by making it more financially beneficial to stay at home than taking on these jobs.

Yesterday, *La Presse* calculated that a Quebec student working 35 hours per week on a farm and receiving the bonus from the Government of Quebec would end the summer with \$28 more in their pocket than a student working in a store for 20 hours a week and collecting the Canada emergency student benefit.

Young people know how to count, minister — 35 hours a week under the hot sun and wind, or 20 hours a week in an air conditioned store. Minister, when drafting Bill C-15, did you consider the negative impact this could have on our food supply? How specifically does your government intend to help students find work in our agricultural sector, which is of critical importance to our entire country?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** I thank the honourable senator for his question. We are very aware, as we create these and other benefits and take steps, that we don't want to disincentivize work. At the same time, we know that job prospects are less, so we have to find a balance in our policy and in our programming to ensure that we give people — in this case students — the support they need while at the same time putting in place other measures to ensure that we do incentivize work.

I'll speak directly to the bill, and I am pleased to have worked with opposition parties in the House to enhance the bill on Wednesday so that we make it very clear that we expect students to be seeking work. They will have to attest that if they're getting the benefit because they are looking for work and can't find it, that they are indeed looking for work.

We also have a requirement on the government that they be directed to our Job Bank to ensure that they are working. Coupled with the student benefit is enhanced employment programming through our Youth Employment and Skills Strategy, where we've created, I think by last count, around 116,000 new jobs in the last week, in addition to the Canada Summer Jobs program, which is 70,000 jobs.

Specifically in agriculture, there is a stream under the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy that creates job opportunities in the ag sector. When we put out the CERB, which is now in this form the CESB, we also knew we had to ensure that it wasn't unfair — and it would have been — to have somebody just earning either benefit, quite frankly, and we allowed a certain amount of income threshold so that you could work up to a certain income level. We coupled that with an essential workers' top-up. In the scenario you put forth, once the provinces have finished negotiating with the federal government, the agriculture worker would be entitled to not only the Quebec top-up but also a top-up from the federal government as an essential worker, so that at the end of the month they aren't in the position of having only \$28 left.

I admit, this is not a perfect system. This will incentivize part-time work, but it will also rely on what I know to be the intent and the desire of our students to work. I believe that students, when given the choice, and what I've heard from student organizations, will choose to work and will also choose to serve.

**Senator Plett:** I don't have a lot of time, but I will get the question on the record and maybe can you answer.

Minister, our senior citizens have been dealing with unexpected costs as a result of COVID-19. Seniors need ways to strengthen their financial security by accessing their investments without encouraging huge penalties.

The Conservative Party brought forward two proposals in this regard. One would allow Canadians a special one-time withdrawal of their RRSP in 2020, which, if repaid by December 31, 2023, would be tax-free. The other proposal would waive mandatory Registered Retirement Income Fund withdrawals until December 31, 2020, which are relatively small proposals and could do a world of good for some seniors and could be implemented quickly.

Minister, what do you think of these specific proposals? Do you support them? Is your government open to implementing them?

**The Chair:** We have to move to another question, minister.

**Senator Smith:** Good afternoon, minister. We have seen positive updates across the country with respect to the fight against COVID-19. Infection rates are slowing and hospital capacity has not been overwhelmed. With these updated numbers, provinces are looking at the possibility of slowly reopening their economies in phases.

As a result, many small businesses are concerned that the unintended consequences of the CERB will make it harder for them to re-staff. Simply put, I have a fellow who cuts my grass and he has 100 contracts in our area. He received a call from 10 of his employees, who said, "We are on the new CERB program. We are not going to work for you this year unless you pay us cash."

How did the government account for these possibilities when the Canada Emergency Response Benefit was being drafted and implemented, and how is the government working with small businesses, retail organizations, industry groups et cetera to mitigate the risk of labour shortages in the next few months that could be influenced by manipulation by individuals?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Those are all very important and excellent questions.

When we first developed the CERB, it was targeting workers who had stopped working for COVID reasons. As it evolved, we ended up at a point where workers are permitted to earn up to a certain level of income and still get the benefit. We've included broader groups of workers in the class of workers who can access the benefit. To your point, senator, this absolutely has created the circumstance where, in some cases, people are doing the math and making choices that are creating challenges in the labour market.

• (1320)

We're dealing with that in a number of concrete ways. I would suggest the wage subsidy is the biggest because people are going off of CERB and back on to payrolls as a result of the 75% payroll subsidy. That's certainly what we want to see. In my ideal world, everybody who can go on to the wage subsidy would do so. We're doing other things to help small businesses with cash flow and liquidity and, as I said in my opening remarks, set the system up to reboot as quickly as possible once this ends.

But we're aware that every time you create a line there are people on either side of the line. Sometimes the tools we have to do things quickly are very blunt in government.

**Senator Smith:** To follow up on the question, as you look at the situation in its early stages — and you've done considerable work through the government departments — what type of action plan will you set up in terms of managing the situation to try to minimize this type of potential danger or damage which could influence the work environment?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Thank you, that is an excellent question.

First of all, as we create these measures and benefits and programs to support businesses and workers in particular, we have to understand how they work together and the interplay of them. We don't want people not going back to work because of CERB. We don't want a student to have to choose between a really good full-time job and a benefit. We're working very hard to understand those dynamics and reacting in real time to those situations.

The other thing is we're creating jobs. The Minister of Finance and I are very happy to invest in job creation rather than creating another benefit where people aren't necessarily also working at the same time. We're looking at enhancing more job programs within our youth employment strategy. Quite frankly, if there's a job out there to be paid for, we're very interested in supporting that pursuit.

**The Chair:** One minute.

**Senator Smith:** I have a minute. I'll do it quickly.

Private career colleges — this is new to me and a great educational question. Lighthouse Labs and Juno College of Technology argue that the CESB as it currently stands creates a two-tier system that only benefits students who attended public universities and colleges. Graduates of private career colleges will also need supports as they navigate an uncertain job market. There are 175,000 students attending private career colleges who are ineligible for the 76,000 jobs the government has introduced.

Is there some recognition of these individual private colleges that can be addressed through the program?



**Ms. Qualtrough:** Yes. I'll ask my deputy to respond to the technical side of that. To be clear, those students and private institutions would be eligible for the student benefit. It's my understanding they will also be eligible for these jobs created under the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Minister Qualtrough, but we're out of time.

**Ms. Qualtrough:** I will follow up.

[Translation]

**Senator Saint-Germain:** Minister, deputy minister, welcome to you both.

My question is about international students and follows up on concerns raised by my two colleagues, Senator Wanda Thomas Bernard of Nova Scotia and Senator Mobina Jaffer of British Columbia.

Some international students aren't allowed to work in Canada. I know there are three categories, namely students enrolled in an exchange program lasting six months or more, full-time students, and co-op students. I obviously won't go into detail since time is short.

Most of these students hold a study permit that allows them to work a maximum of 20 hours a week on campus and, in some cases, off campus. I see that, in its economic response plan, the government raised that limit above 20 hours a week.

Still, international students who work have the same financial obligations as any other student who qualifies for the emergency compensation plan. To help me and my colleagues understand this better, could you tell us what reasons led the government to exclude international students from the emergency compensation plan for students?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Thank you for the question. We removed some restrictions to enable international students to work more than 20 hours a week. We made that decision because it is fully in line with the federal government's policy on the financial aid given to students under the Canadian loans and grants system. Under that system, benefits are given only to students who are Canadian citizens or permanent residents.

We made that decision because it follows the same policy as the loans and grants system and because the eligibility criteria for the Canada emergency student benefit are different.

As you know, many international students work. In fact, nearly 81% of students work during the year, and many international students qualify for the emergency benefit because approximately 50% of those students were working in February 2020.

If you are an international student and you lost your job, you are eligible for the Canada emergency student benefit. When it comes to the Canada emergency student benefit and the policy on loans and grants, we thought it was more logical to follow the rules that apply to the Canada student loans and grants program.

[English]

**Senator Saint-Germain:** Thank you for your answer. Since I'm interested in hearing your deputy minister's answers to Senator Smith's questions, I will give him the rest of my time.

**Hon. Graham Flack, Deputy Minister, Employment and Social Development Canada:** The question of which institutions qualify as post-secondary education institutions is something we largely defer to the provinces on. Canada Revenue Agency has standards to evaluate whether an institution is a post-secondary education institution that is qualified.

The legislation, as you will see, provides funding for individuals who are going to post-secondary education; that would be those institutions defined that way. There is regulatory flexibility in the legislation for the minister to designate other entities, but the tradition in Canada has been that student loans and grants, for example, are available to individuals studying in post-secondary institutions. There are private courses and colleges for which individuals are not able to get student loans.

We tried to follow the same regime that we followed in the student loan system more generally.

**Senator Coyle:** Minister Qualtrough, thank you very much for the introduction of this valuable benefit for students, and thank you also for adjusting the benefit amount. We're really pleased to see the adjustment for students with disabilities and for students with dependents. In the third and fourth years of university and through graduate school I had children, so I see how important these measures are.

I'm also happy to see, however imperfect, the incentives for employment. I agree with my colleagues; that's really critical.

Like Senator Saint-Germain, my question is about international students. International students, Canadian students, their host universities and Universities Canada are all very concerned, as you probably are aware, that these very legitimate international students who attend our Canadian universities and are present and potential future contributors to Canadian society have been left out of this very important CESB benefit.

David Dingwall, President of Cape Breton University, has said that in 2020 it's estimated that international students in Canada will stimulate \$22 billion in economic activity.

Could you explain why this exclusionary decision was taken — I know you said it's connected to your criteria for loans and grants — and could you please let us know if you would consider adjusting the eligibility criteria for the CESB to include these important international students who are here in Canada now?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Thank you, senator. Let me begin by saying that we do value the contribution of our international students. We know that contribution goes well beyond the walls of the post-secondary institutions that they attend.

I've also mentioned — which I think is an important piece of this conversation — that they are eligible for the CERB. So the students who were working and whose jobs and income are

impacted by COVID are indeed eligible for the CERB. The international students whose job prospects are for the summer are not. That's a much smaller catchment.

As I said, we mirrored this benefit on our broader student financial aid policy within the Government of Canada.

• (1330)

I apologize, because I wish I had more time to go into this, but there are significant structural and policy differences between these two benefits, whether it be who is eligible, under what circumstances or who we're trying to target with these benefits. For the CERB, it was very much workers who were resident in Canada and whose employment prospects have changed. That includes international students.

There was a triggering event: They lost a job, or their job hours were reduced. For the CESB, it's more anticipatory in that we anticipate fewer job prospects or employment opportunities. It's almost broader eligibility criteria but with a smaller and narrower group of people who could apply.

I'm happy to have a longer conversation, senator; I'm just wary of the time. However, I can assure you that the decision was very much connected to our other student financial aid policy, wherein international students are not eligible for other financial aid given by the Government of Canada.

**Senator Coyle:** Thank you very much, Minister Qualtrough. I hear what you're saying. I don't necessarily like the answer.

I know we're anticipating 1 million possible applicants for the CESB. When I asked during a technical briefing about the CERB and student participation there, they said 800,000. I couldn't get numbers on international students within that, so I don't know how many international students are falling between the cracks.

Do you have any idea?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** I can tell you that about 43% of students in Canada were working. I can't tell you the breakdown among that student population as to whether that's international, Canadian citizens or permanent residents. Statistics Canada does not gather or desegregate that data that way.

**Mr. Flack:** As the benefit moves along, we are going to run the Social Insurance Numbers. International students have a different code associated with them. Working with the CRA, we will be able to unbundle those and get you the statistics. But that data analysis is not yet complete.

[Translation]

**Senator Dagenais:** Madam minister, before getting to the heart of the matter, I'd like to ask you a preliminary question.

Former senator André Pratte has written about the collegiality of his meetings with Minister Bill Morneau. I'd like to know how many meetings there were and for how long you personally discussed the contents of Bill C-15 with the Minister of Finance.

[ Ms. Qualtrough ]

**Ms. Qualtrough:** To be honest, we discussed it for hours and hours. We worked very hard on this and very closely with the Department of Finance. I don't know exactly how many hours, but certainly dozens or a hundred.

**Senator Dagenais:** Now I'd like to ask my main question.

In an interview, the owner of a security company in Quebec City said he had hired 10 students just last Monday. On Wednesday, all 10 students returned their uniforms. They said they no longer needed to work this summer.

I think that, by helping students, you're hurting businesses. This is happening not just in the security sector, but also in agriculture, fisheries and small and medium-sized businesses.

I have nothing against helping students, but, as your title says, you're also the minister of workforce development. Can you explain to us how Bill C-15 is contributing to workforce development if you're giving students a no-strings-attached income over the summer?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Thank you for the question.

I do worry about the things you've mentioned. We included certain measures in the bill, such as the attestation. Students must pursue any job opportunities that arise, and they must look for a job. If they don't look for work or don't accept a job that's offered to them, they are not eligible for the benefit. That is why we created jobs through some of the measures we introduced last week. What you've said really concerns me.

I understand what you're saying, but we need to strike a balance between meeting the students' need for assistance and ensuring that they are not deterred from working.

**Senator Dagenais:** Thank you, minister.

[English]

**Senator Munson:** Minister, thank you for being here.

In your capacity as Disability Inclusion Minister, I'm also pleased to see the monetary benefit for students with disabilities. But a few weeks ago, the COVID-19 Disability Advisory Group was appointed to work with you in the spirit of "Nothing Without Us." Eleven members from various disability communities were included, but there was no representative from the autism community. With the inclusion of the commitment to a national autism strategy in two mandate letters and in the spirit of "Nothing About Us Without Us," would you consider including the autism community on the COVID-19 Disability Advisory Group?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Thank you for the question, senator, and thank you for championing issues related to autism throughout your entire career.

I can assure you that I am confident the voices around that table do reflect the broad spectrum of disability perspectives. We are always happy to have more people at the table. I have regular contact with members of the autism community. I feel as though I'm hearing from them, but if that is not seen to be the case, I would absolutely have that conversation.

**Senator Munson:** It's good to have that commitment.

I have been listening to so many horrible stories about what is taking place in nursing homes, but in the disability community, there are group homes. In this disability community, for those with intellectual disabilities, there are one-on-one workers who have to work each and every day, almost 24 hours a day. This setting is a very unsettling one for many. I worry that such facilities are being overlooked when it comes to personal protective equipment. We have heard of staff shortages and cutbacks to residents' care routines.

Is the federal government stepping up and reaching out to the provinces about these conditions — the availability of personal protective equipment and medical care? I don't want them to be the forgotten.

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Again, thank you for your question. The answer is absolutely yes. The Minister of Health and I have met with our colleagues and raised the specific issues you are talking about. One of the challenges is that, often, these collective living situations are not necessarily tied to health care systems; they are more tied to social service systems in provincial frameworks. We are pointing out those challenges and we are crying out that these workers be recognized as essential.

It is one of my personal passions that the story coming out the pandemic will be that we supported everybody equally.

**Senator Munson:** Do you think this country needs to rethink how it deals with these nursing homes and homes for the disabled? I'm asking that in the sense of full-time employment, not part-time employment; being better trained and fully engaged; having nursing degrees — you name it. Do you think this model is past its time as a result of this pandemic?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Yes, I do.

**Senator Munson:** Thank you very much.

[Translation]

**Senator Dalphond:** Thank you for being here today, minister. I have two questions for you. The first is a question that several of my colleagues have already asked. Senator Massicotte, Senator Loffreda, Senator Miville-Dechêne and I have been asking questions of senior officials in your department.

I would like you to comment on the measures the government is bringing in to encourage students to go to work, as the other place asked you to do in a motion that was adopted on Wednesday.

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Thank you for the question.

The implementation of this benefit is more stringent than the CERB's. If I could change one thing about the CERB it would be to incorporate the same level of stringency as that of the emergency student benefit.

• (1340)

[English]

We should require that students be looking for jobs and that students attest to the fact that they are looking for jobs. And, quite frankly, if students are offered a job, they should take it. I have been very unapologetic about saying that. That's why we put so much effort into creating jobs as part of this big package, because we knew that the challenge would be finding that balance. And we had to create job opportunities so that students would make those choices. But I will reiterate that students want to work.

The other piece of this is the service grant. If you volunteer a certain number of hours — 100 hours, \$1,000; 300 hours, \$3,000. So we ideally will have many students contributing to their communities through service this summer as well.

[Translation]

**Senator Dalphond:** The Government of Quebec has created a program that encourages people to work on farms by providing a financial incentive of \$100 a week. Would it be possible for the department, when drafting the regulations, to ensure that this incentive is not treated as income, but rather as a government benefit that, by definition, would be excluded from the \$1,000 of income? If you earn more than \$1,000, you lose the entire benefit.

[English]

**Ms. Qualtrough:** We started a program called Step Up to the Plate, which is a national awareness program for students, challenging them to step up and work on our farms, and contribute and feed their country. That happened in France and that was successful.

Graham, could you answer the technical part?

[Translation]

**Mr. Flack:** The legislation gives the minister some leeway on how to treat this benefit in the regulations.

Our intention is to work with the provincial government to determine what it intends to do. If the Quebec government treats this incentive as a grant and not as employment income, it will be treated differently. We will adjust our approach to the objectives of the provincial government.

**Senator Dalphond:** If the Government of Quebec announces that the \$100 is a scholarship for students who agree to work on a farm, this amount won't count towards the \$1,000 of income. Thank you.

In my first question I asked about measures to encourage people to work. Will you create a website or any other measures to post available jobs in a given region? For example, fish plants in Gaspésie or New Brunswick needing 200 workers, or 50 workers being needed to pick strawberries near Saint-Jean.

**Ms. Qualtrough:** That's exactly what our Job Bank already accomplishes. You can input a region and see the jobs available in that area. Legislation requires us, as a government, to do so. The Government of Quebec also has a website that does the exact same thing. That means there are two websites: the Job Bank and Quebec's site.

**Senator Dalphond:** Could we ensure that, as soon as students apply for the benefit, they would be given information on the jobs available in their regions?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** That's exactly what we'll do. Once the application has been accepted, we'll direct them to these jobs.

**Senator Boisvenu:** Minister, welcome to the Senate.

I'm going to continue with the same line of questioning as my colleagues, Senators Dagenais and Smith. Of all the measures that the government has enacted, I think this is the one that has drawn the most criticism from private companies, especially in the tourism, hospitality and retail sectors, which employ many minimum-wage workers. This is undoubtedly the most surprising measure for private businesses, and maybe the most disappointing, too.

Earlier we heard about students who would rather apply for benefits than work. I'm also hearing that many students might be willing to go back to work, but only if they're paid under the table.

That's deeply troubling, because we're looking at a social measure that pays students the equivalent of the salary they would have earned. It's a little idealistic to believe that everyone will want to work.

My question is, did you consult private companies before investing \$7.5 billion to benefit students over a long period, as long as four months? Did you take their recommendations into account?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** I know that the Department of Finance team and my team have talked to small and larger businesses. Once again, the challenge is finding a balance. We know full well that there won't be the usual number of jobs for students this summer. Traditional tourism and festival jobs won't exist, nor will jobs at summer camps for children. Even if we do our best, students will need help. We're trying to strike a balance. It's not perfect, but we're doing the best we can right now.

**Senator Boisvenu:** My next question has to do with the CERB. I learned today that a detention centre in Quebec seized CERB cheques that were sent to incarcerated criminals. That's

very surprising. What controls have you put in place to ensure that this doesn't happen again, not only in the case of inmates but also in the case of other types of clients who aren't eligible for these measures? What measures have you put in place to ensure that this money, which comes from Canadian workers who pay high taxes, will be well spent?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** The situation you're talking about is very worrisome, and we know that, in a system where integrity measures are more reactive than preventative, there's a risk that this type of thing could happen again. However, now that we're aware of the situation, we're implementing more rigorous measures regarding social insurance numbers, and we're doing research and comparisons.

**Mr. Flack:** Given the time constraint and the number of claims that were filed under the employment insurance system, it would've taken 15 months to process them using the usual method.

We had to act quickly, which means that initially we verify the claimant's social insurance number and their banking information. If a fraudulent claim is flagged, then we're able to withhold the second cheque. However, our verification system kicks in more downstream at the stage where we cross-check the person's income and their eligibility. We'll recover the money at that point.

**Senator Boisvenu:** Minister, if I may—

**The Chair:** Excuse me, Senator Boisvenu, your time is up.

**Senator Verner:** Thank you for being here with us today.

On April 22, your government announced a series of financial aid measures for students to help them fund their post-secondary education, including some measures that will extend into 2022, such as the Canada Student Loans Program's \$1.9-billion enhancement. You also announced the Canada Student Service Grant in the amount of \$912 million.

Considering that post-secondary financial aid falls under Quebec's jurisdiction, did you consult the Government of Quebec before announcing these measures?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Absolutely. As far as enhancing the Canada Student Loans Program is concerned, the money is simply being transferred to the Government of Quebec so that it can take it from there. We're not dealing directly with Quebec students.

• (1350)

**Mr. Flack:** That's true. We have an agreement with the Government of Quebec and some of the territories whereby we transfer the equivalent amount to them. They manage those envelopes and can use them however they want as long as it fits into that framework.

**Senator Verner:** Does that also apply to the Canada student service grant, which is similar to the 1999 millennium scholarships that Quebec had an agreement for?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** We haven't finalized the details for the service grant yet. We're in talks with the provinces, student associations and the organizations that will be in charge of volunteering, but we won't do anything that's contrary to what Quebec wants.

**Senator Verner:** Thank you.

If I still have a little time, I'd like to ask you a question on behalf of my colleague from Nova Scotia, Senator Greene.

[English]

In 2010, a joint study of the Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training at Dalhousie University confirmed that immigration is emerging as a new economic role for Atlantic universities, and that Atlantic Canada has a disproportionately larger share of universities. Atlantic Canada universities, therefore, have a large reliance on international students. What steps are being taken, either in Bill C-15 or other response measures, to support international students already in Canada and who, due to travel restrictions, were unable to return home and cannot work because of the pandemic, but still have living costs?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Thank you. That is a very important question. From the beginning, we have been working closely with both Universities Canada and Colleges and Institutes Canada to understand the students who are particularly vulnerable in this time of pandemic. There is a cohort of international students stuck here, and we are working to ensure that during this time, they can work as many hours as possible, removing the restriction on how many hours an international student can work while studying, which has been called for for years, quite frankly. We were able to — especially for students working and studying in health care — free them up to work more.

We also understand that many international students — and as was said, we will have more desegregated data on that — are receiving the CERB, many of whom were working and will be able to access that particular benefit. We're looking at other ways right now, working with universities and colleges to figure that out. It should also be said that the provinces and, indeed, universities and colleges themselves are putting in place emergency measures targeting international students.

When we look at what needs to be done, we try to see what other jurisdictions are doing so that we can fill in gaps, so we are not overlapping. We are trying to get everything coordinated, but as was said earlier, this is real time. We are on a train that is moving fast, and we are changing the direction of the train and even the order of the cars as we go along.

**Senator M. Deacon:** Welcome, minister, here, the first day of May. My first question is on behalf of Senator Bellemare regarding the delivery of this benefit.

Looking at this area, how does the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion intend to deliver this benefit to students? Will your team use the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy network and, perhaps, consideration of why the government may not plan to use the provincial employment services, which also can serve as a good link between employers and students?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Thank you, senator. On the second part of your question, absolutely. We are working very closely with provincial employment centres and service providers. The benefit will be delivered in the exact same way that the CERB is delivered. It will be an attestation-based online application delivered through the CRA. Once it is available — which we anticipate to be around mid-May — students will, like with the CERB, attest that certain conditions are being met. Then within hours, if they have direct deposit, and within days, if they need a cheque, they'll get their money.

**Senator M. Deacon:** Thank you. That mid-May goal and telling our young people, if all things work out the way they should, they would receive their first deposit late May.

**Ms. Qualtrough:** No, mid-May as well. Within a day of their application if it is direct deposit.

**Senator M. Deacon:** And a follow-up to a question asked by our colleague earlier. I do want to come back to working with data, and what we will learn through this, because there are some opportunities and collection of data that will help us beyond, certainly, this time of pandemic. This is around students with physical and intellectual disabilities. One of the things that's hard to find out is the number of students in our post-secondary schools that actually have a physical or intellectual disability. Many don't self-identify, and this, hopefully, will be an opportunity to do that.

Will you be working at making it a goal to track and have some numbers at the end of this that tell us more accurately how many young Canadians are in post-secondary with a physical disability?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** It is an important question and goal, and I share it. As we destigmatize self-identification, that's going to go a long way. Absolutely, I know we can tell you, for example, how many students with disabilities access the special grant for Canada student loans that is available, because that's a number that's by application.

We worked with NEADS, which is the National Educational Association of Disabled Students. They can tell you how many members they have, but I can find out, for example, how many students across Canada access disability services in their post-secondary institutions. I cannot tell you globally how many students with a disability are in post-secondary education.

**Senator M. Deacon:** Across Canada there are still a number of students finishing high school who are 17; under the 18 years of age that this relief is providing, I also wonder if we have a sense of how many youth are under 18 that will be going after support through the other benefit that's 15 years old and up. I'm trying to differentiate where the under 18-year-olds may fit.

**Ms. Qualtrough:** I apologize, senator. I don't know that "18 year olds" reference. I don't believe that's an eligibility criteria. It is literally any student who meets the criteria of enrolled in post-secondary, graduated this year. You can be 17 or 16. I don't believe there is a low-age threshold in this one.

**Mr. Flack:** We've left in this piece of legislation that by regulation you can set classes, minister, but it's true that the CERB legislation explicitly put 15 and older. This legislation didn't, but it wasn't your intention, minister, to exclude exceptionally young students who are going on to post-secondary before they are 18.

**Senator M. Deacon:** Thank you. Looking also at other lines that have started this afternoon, around that preference of tying in this benefit to a commitment to a few weeks of participating in community work in the summer, and making that a stipulation or tied in this with bundle. It would certainly allow our students to gain experience. We know across this country some areas where, as you've heard, there are some urgent employment needs right now.

**Ms. Qualtrough:** I agree that we have to be very careful of how this is all playing out together.

**Senator Housakos:** Minister, on two other occasions on which your colleagues have come before us during the pandemic, I have asked straightforward questions about the maintenance of our national medical stockpiles. I didn't get a straight answer either time, but since you were the minister responsible for procurement, perhaps a third try will be the charm.

Minister, who was it, or was it you, who made the decision a couple of years ago to destroy the expired masks in the federal stockpile in Saskatchewan, rather than replenishing them, and why was that decision taken at that time?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** I can tell you, senator, it was not my decision. I don't know who it was, but I can endeavour, as I don't know if my colleagues had, to find that out for you.

**Senator Housakos:** Honourable minister, I think at the end of the day, we live in a system of cabinet responsibility and accountability, so I think the answer "I don't know" isn't sufficient. It is incumbent upon you as minister to get to the bottom of it and let Parliament know.

Minister, it isn't just that China is sending us defective PPE and test kits that is making it very difficult right now.

• (1400)

I can tell you, to add insult to injury, we now know through a Global News report that for weeks, agents on behalf of China around the world have been scooping up and hoarding PPE. We've heard the disturbing information of 2.5 billion pieces of PPE that were hoarded by the Chinese government in January.

We heard of 2 billion masks that had been scooped up off the marketplace by the Chinese government in January, which highlights they actually knew back in December and January that this pandemic is one that is festering and would be problematic.

The cabinet knew in January from military sources and intelligence information that the virus would be coming to our shores. At that time, we also sent them 16 tonnes of our own PPE in good gesture. All we've seen in return from them in our time of need are two empty planes. We've also seen them detain two Canadian citizens without just cause.

My question is simple: Does Prime Minister Trudeau still believe that the Chinese Communist regime is one that deserves admiration? Or will you, on behalf of the cabinet as minister, speak up and condemn the egregious behaviour of the Chinese Communist regime here in a parliamentary chamber?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** That is a very complicated question, sir. I'm not going to purport to speak on behalf of the Prime Minister. He's very capable of doing that himself.

I will tell you that our efforts in January globally were focused toward containment. We sent PPE to China with the hope — and under the very strong advice of both our domestic officials but also international experts — that the singular goal of the planet at that time was to contain the initial outbreak. It was in our collective interests globally to contribute to that effort.

At some point, it became clear that wasn't successful and we turned our attention — as we had been — to PPE securement, but it has highlighted the need for a rethink of how we'll prepare next time and better.

**Senator Housakos:** Minister, in recent weeks we've received test kits and PPE from China that have been defective and had to be sent back. We have also had a number of Canadian companies from our own industrial complex that are ready to shift into action in order to make up for the shortfall to protect our front-line health workers with PPE. They're facing a lot of challenges with delays for the products being approved by Health Canada.

How, on the one hand, can China, which has consistently been sending us faulty PPE, manage to get approval from Health Canada as quickly as they have, yet when we have our Canadian industrial complex ready to shift into action to make up for that shortfall to protect our front-line workers, Health Canada and the government seem to be dragging their feet in giving approval to those Canadian companies?

Can we get your assurance that, in a matter of hours, this problem will be rectified in order to allow Canadian industry to provide proper PPE to our front-line health care workers?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** As you highlighted, senator, our efforts have been twofold, both going around the world looking to acquire as much PPE as we can from international sources, but also building up our domestic capacity. To the best of my recollection, we've gone from an approval process that historically took weeks to a one- to seven-day approval process if all the information that is necessary is in front of Health Canada.

I can assure you that we are doing everything we possibly can to get things approved without compromising the rigour or quality control measures we've put in place to ensure that what is ultimately out there in the market is safe and protective of our health care workers in particular.

**Senator R. Black:** Thank you very much, minister, for being here. Your legislation responds to the needs of students who are unable to find work due to the virus. What it doesn't address and what we haven't seen addressed yet are the needs of the agricultural industry that is struggling and desperate.

We learned this week that CUSMA will now come into force on July 1. The dairy industry was hoping for an implementation date of August 1 so as to accommodate the national dairy year. Consequently, they are on track to lose \$100 million over the course of this current fiscal year.

In recent weeks, various industry organizations — and yesterday, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture — have called for emergency funds for the industry. Further, as a result of COVID-19, the agricultural industry is struggling, and in my conversations with stakeholders, I hear desperation. The Canadian emergency student benefit could actually provide a financial disincentive to students to perform work in the farm and agri-food sector that they would normally undertake during the summer months.

Minister, how was the need to address this serious labour shortage in the agricultural industry considered in crafting this benefit for students? As well, when and in what format might we see other government support for the Canadian agricultural industry?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Thank you, senator, for your question. In fact, I have a number of dairy farms in my own riding and may or may not have a particular calf named after me because of some assistance I gave one farm.

In any event, I digress. I can assure you that we absolutely knew in building this benefit that we would have to, in some way, ensure that agriculture jobs were filled this summer and that we had a willing-to-work population among our student population. So when we put our call to action for students to step up to the plate and feed your country, we are hopeful and we suspect we're going to get a nice uptake from that program. We also have a dedicated enhanced agricultural stream in our Youth Employment and Skills Strategy to create jobs within agriculture. With Canada Summer Jobs, I suspect a significant portion of the jobs will be funded for students, and those jobs are now funded at 100%.

We are looking to create jobs in order to create more jobs, all the while needing to ensure there is some kind of support for students in the event that those jobs didn't materialize for individuals.

**Senator R. Black:** Thank you. I have a second question. The level of support provided to working people under the Canada Emergency Response Benefit is up to \$2,000 a month, while the basic level of support under the Canada student emergency

benefit is \$1,250 per month, only rising to \$2,000 per month if students have dependents or disabilities. Why is the basic level of support less for students than for working people?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Thank you for that question. The student benefit is one of a number of measures within the student package, if you will. If you look at the income support as one tool of support, you also have the potential to earn up to \$5,000 if you volunteer full time. You have the potential to access a doubled student grant of \$6,000 going into the summer. You have the potential to access or work full time in one of the jobs we've created.

When you do the math — and we talked a lot with student associations in creating this package — we felt it was more appropriate to support students completely, not just by an income support measure but by giving them access to other sources of funds in order to help support them.

**Senator R. Black:** I also know that there's a comprehensive review scheduled for the bill by September 2021. What is the estimated cost to the government of administering the Canada student emergency benefit?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Our best estimate at this point, for a million students, is \$5.2 billion.

**Senator Cotter:** I want to thank you, your colleagues and officials for the very good work you've been doing in these uncertain times. I have one question. It is short but has a bit of a long preamble.

In March, we saw the pandemic declared. We saw governments moving to freeze the economy in place. We knew surely then that this was going to have a devastating effect on summer jobs for students. Various of my own colleagues here have adjusted their own small Senate budgets to create opportunities for summer students to work. I'm sure many in the other place have done the same. That's a small drop in the bucket, though, in terms of job creation.

By a rough calculation, \$5.2 billion could create 600,000 jobs or so. It's not the million that might not be there, but it's an awful lot of jobs. You can't do that personally. But my guess is that through institutions like universities and post-secondary educations, rather than sending cheques to the students, if you had phoned up the presidents of universities and said, "I've got a cheque for \$20 million here. It's coming your way on condition that you create 2,500 jobs for your students through research that the professors and instructors might do, such as help at the university legal clinic, outreach, you name it," I suggest to you that every single university and post-secondary president in the country would have said yes and they would have created new jobs. You could have put conditions on that: jobs available by May 15; jobs for researchers who have good projects but no money. You could have phoned Senator Munson, and in five minutes he could have given you the names of 500 institutions and organizations that provide support to and work with people with disabilities, who constantly have ideas to strengthen the Best Buddies programs that universities run with students to write a handbook for the rights of people with disabilities. You didn't have to think up the jobs; the ideas are out there, everywhere.

• (1410)

There are individuals and organizations that have the need. You have the money. The students could be the bridge over troubled water, if I might say, to achieve that. It strikes me that would be a powerfully more attractive approach than the approach you've taken.

My question is this: Why didn't we go down that road?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** I thank you and share your view that there's a lot of creativity out there and a lot of good ideas. I would suggest that the package we put together reflects much of that. I'll point to the 40,000 student researchers and post-doctoral fellows that we're creating as part of this, which is exactly what you're suggesting.

We had to find the balance. We know there will be students who are unable to work. We know there will be students whose initial work plans are completely changed. We also wanted to emphasize service, getting out and volunteering in your community to find the skills you are seeking in different ways, to help your community in a different way.

If you're prepared, as a student, to volunteer for 500 hours over the summer, which is effectively a full-time job, you can get a \$5,000 bursary at the end of the summer. On top of the \$5,000 student benefit, that is not insignificant and will hopefully contribute to not having more debt, if you will, because of this pandemic.

There were a bunch of different paths we could have taken. We tried to strike the balance between income security for students and job creation. We are open, of course, to creating more jobs, and any creative partnerships you want to send my way, I'm happy to hear about them. At the end of the day, first and foremost, we wanted to ensure basic support for our students.

**Senator Cotter:** I'm in agreement with your observation that students want to work. It benefits them in all kinds of ways. It seems to me the first approach should have been to provide opportunities for them to work, and that would have been more effective as a choice. We're always going to have students who won't find work in the summer, but if we could have addressed the million-student gap with 600,000 jobs, that would have been a terrific outcome and we'd be celebrating your 600,000 job achievement in a year's time.

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Thank you very much, senator.

[Translation]

**Senator Carignan:** My question is for you, minister, and has to do with the Canada emergency student benefit. This program will have rather adverse consequences for the job market, especially for the businesses, plants and offices that will be reopening over the next few weeks. As many others have pointed out, students are telling employers that they'd rather get the benefit than take what is often a minimum-wage job.

Who did you consult before creating this program? Did you consult the provinces? In Quebec, for instance, did you consult the Quebec Employers Council, the Fédération des chambres de

commerce or the Union des producteurs agricoles? Who did you consult? This initiative seems so out of touch to me that it looks like it was drafted in an office or ivory tower somewhere.

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Thank you for the question. We want students to work; that is our starting point. We expect students to take the job when a job is available. In the attestation, students must promise to look for work and to not refuse work.

In the development of this benefit, I did speak with my provincial colleagues. We consulted chambers of commerce and many labour associations. I can't name them off the top of my head, but the Minister of Finance and I, and our teams, spoke with many people and organizations.

**Senator Carignan:** You say that all students will be eligible for this benefit, even those who are well off. Minister Morneau even mentioned that his two children would be eligible. I imagine he has the means to help his children financially with their education.

Your mandate letter states that you are responsible for reviewing the government's contribution to the student loans and grants program. Why did you not take this opportunity to strengthen the loans and grants program or the 2020 program to ensure that students who truly need it receive government assistance without impacting jobs? This benefit that you will be providing during the summer could have been included in the loans and grants system and enhanced that assistance instead of taking these essential workers out of the labour market.

**Ms. Qualtrough:** That is an excellent question. We had several discussions with student associations before deciding on the changes to the Canada Student Loans and Grants system. We doubled the dollar amount of grants, which will rise from \$3,000 to \$6,000. These amounts do not have to be paid back. That is also the case for special grants and grants for students with disabilities, which have doubled from \$2,000 to \$4,000. Loans have increased from \$2,010 per week to \$3,050 per week.

We made real changes to this program. Naturally, we can always do more. However, in my opinion, this is a step in the right direction.

**Senator Carignan:** You said that you consulted with chambers of commerce. What did they have to say?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** I don't remember the exact words, but we heard that there must be a balance between any assistance provided to students and the unintended consequences of that assistance, like the ones you mentioned, on the market. Above all, we knew that it would be difficult for students to find work, and we needed to help them.

**Senator Carignan:** If I understand correctly, the chambers of commerce are saying that you did not find that balance.

**Ms. Qualtrough:** I'm sorry, I didn't hear your question.

[ Senator Cotter ]



**Senator Carignan:** If I understand those who have been critical of this bill, you weren't able to find that balance.

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Many people think we haven't found a balance, while others think that we have. There are a lot of different opinions.

[English]

**Senator White:** Thank you for being here, minister. On March 25, when Minister Morneau first appeared in this chamber to answer questions on COVID-related supports, he promised support for Canada's hard-hit energy industry. He stated that it was hours or days away.

Senator Doug Black asked me to bring forward a question asking for timelines in relation to that support, in particular, support for mid-sized companies producing about 100,000 barrels per day, which have still not received liquidity support that the government has been promising.

We're looking for a timeline and for confirmation that the intent is still there for the government to step in and assist those companies.

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Senator, as this is not my file, I can't give you a ton of detail. I apologize. However, having sat around the table and listened to, participated in and weighed in on the discussion, I can say that our commitment to the oil and gas sector is unwavering. These companies have access to the broader measures we've put forth for all companies. Depending on their size, of course, the tools are different.

With respect to specific announcements around oil and gas, whether it be to deal with the dormant wells or other situations, I don't have the timelines in my head. I apologize. I can certainly provide that information.

**Senator White:** Please, if you don't mind. Thank you very much.

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Absolutely.

**Senator White:** My colleague Senator Doug Black, also on April 2, wrote to the Prime Minister regarding his proposal for a Canadian economic recovery council. Since he wrote that letter, there's been significant support for this idea, as expressed in numerous editorials written by Canadian thought leaders in the *National Post*, *The Globe and Mail*, *Toronto Star* and others. Minister, could you please indicate whether it is the government's intention to accept the proposal and convene an economic recovery council that will assist Canada as they prepare for Canada's post-COVID future?

• (1420)

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Thank you for the question. How we come out and how we recover from this is top of mind and, I would say, obsessively talked about around the cabinet table. We always have to focus on the immediate, this benefit being a perfect example where we had to help people immediately. But looking forward, no idea is off the table. I know that particular

idea has been talked about. I'm not aware a decision has been made. I certainly haven't been part of a decision that has been made in that regard.

We collectively as a cabinet are absolutely turning our minds to how, within our own departments and portfolios, we can contribute creatively to any recovery plan, both in the immediate but also in the mid- to long-term future. It also involves the discussion of the things we're doing now and whether we keep doing them in the longer term, but also what we do differently, what we have learned from this and how we can do things better in the future.

**Senator White:** But minister, respectfully, all the successes cannot possibly come from the cabinet table. They're going to have to come from somewhere else. I think what the Canadian economic recovery council would bring is actually ideas from outside of that small room. I think the challenge many Canadians are seeing right now is the fact that the responses, although specific and appreciated, are still not broad enough to touch on some of those areas that we believe a Canadian economic recovery council would bring. Respectfully to the cabinet table — and I do appreciate the work they've been doing — I don't think it's actually hitting some of those other areas that I think a broader spectrum would bring.

**Ms. Qualtrough:** I appreciate that feedback. I can tell you that we are not in any way averse to having experts. There are people who spend their entire days and lives thinking about these things. We will definitely draw on those individuals and that expertise. We know enough to know that we don't know everything, I can tell you that. Most importantly, we know that there is a lot of creative thinking going on about this. We are looking around the world and at home to see the best way forward for Canadians. That will include leaning very heavily on external experts in this. I just can't give you any concrete decisions at this point.

**Senator White:** Thank you for being here, minister.

**Senator Boehm:** Minister, I'm over here to your right and behind.

Thank you very much for joining us today and thank you very much for bringing my very capable former colleague Graham Flack with you.

**Ms. Qualtrough:** My secret weapon.

**Senator Boehm:** I wanted to follow up a little bit along the lines that Senator Marty Deacon had set out earlier about students with disabilities and those with dependents. Of course, all students are looking for much-needed support. They're looking for summer jobs. They're looking for ways to pay their tuition. And I would argue that the need among those with dependents and those who are disabled is probably more acute, and, in addition, there is always the question of what is at the end of the rainbow in terms of eventually finding work in the field of study.

Under the original form of the CESB, students with dependents and those with permanent disabilities would have received \$1,750 per month from May through August. It was great that these students were included but students with dependents were

initially to receive less under the program. That's all been rectified, I think, on Wednesday night. The opposition — in this case, the NDP — worked hard, I think.

This all leads to the question: As you're taking decisions with your very capable officials on the fly and you need to act with alacrity, it underscores that having multiple targeted programs creates a certain inefficiency in the system. And yes, we're in a grave crisis; you have to move quickly, but people are still falling through the cracks. Is it time, as you look at this and plan ahead, to consider a guaranteed liveable income instead? Thank you.

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Thank you for the question. It's one that I get often. The pivotal decision I think that we took from the beginning was that we wanted to support workers. The first group that we wanted to turn our minds to were the most significantly and immediately impacted, those workers whom we were either asking to go off work because we were needing them to be healthy and safe or who had lost their jobs or lost income. That was the birth of the CERB, if you will.

We decided very consciously that we could give more to the people who needed it instead of giving less to everyone because, in reality, not everyone needed it. I don't mean to sound crass. I hear myself, but the reality is that there were people in more dire circumstances and those were workers we wanted to help.

As we progressed, we obviously didn't get it perfect. Nothing that we've done is perfect, and that's okay because we're working in an urgent emergency situation. We recognized that there were people earning a little bit of income that we should include. There were seasonal workers. There were EI exhaustees. There were categories of income that we had to include that we hadn't contemplated. We are not going down that path of giving something to everyone. We feel that a more targeted approach allows us to give more to identified groups who need a little more.

**Senator Boehm:** Thank you.

**Senator Seidman:** Thank you very much, minister, for being with us today.

My questions for you concern your work as minister responsible for disability inclusion. The Canadian Association for Community Living has noted that COVID-19 has created unique hardships for people with an intellectual disability, their families and supporters.

The association has highlighted many areas where the federal government could help these Canadians and their families. For example, the requirement of \$5,000 of income in 2019 to qualify for CERB is a barrier for many people with disabilities. They've also asked for a disability-related top-up to the CERB to help offset the additional cost of living with a disabled child during the pandemic. I note that your government agreed on Wednesday to top up the Canada emergency student benefit by \$250 for students with disabilities.

Minister, I know you've appointed the vice-president of the Canadian Association for Community Living to your COVID-19 disability advisory group, but what is your response to their specific policy recommendations?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Thank you, senator, for raising those really important questions. I cannot emphasize enough the vulnerability that's being experienced within the disability community during this pandemic and the gaps and cracks in our existing systems that have been highlighted in ways that we could never have imagined before this.

The CACL is such an important partner in this as we move forward, and a lot of the things we're currently looking at are direct results. We're working primarily on the health care system concerns that the disability community has highlighted, which isn't to say we're not working on other things. The unanimous consent motion on Wednesday clearly tasked us with providing some kind of direct support to seniors and people with disabilities, so we're on that. At the advice of the advisory committee, we have to be very cautious as we create any kind of support that isn't clawed back by provinces because of people being on disability supports provincially; provinces, as we've seen with CERB and I expect will see with the CESB, will choose to claw that back from people with disabilities. It greatly concerns me working on that one.

There are a number of things we're working on with and for the disability community, but we're not done and we haven't done everything we need to.

**Senator Seidman:** Thank you for that. Minister, many Canadians with disabilities live in group homes or other long-term care facilities. These facilities tend to be smaller than seniors' residences but they have in common a shared living space for those Canadians who are more susceptible to contracting COVID-19.

An outbreak in Participation House in Markham, Ontario, has seen 40 of the 42 residents with intellectual or physical disabilities test positive for COVID-19, and 38 health care workers at Participation House have also tested positive.

Minister, do you know exactly how many facilities for people with disabilities across Canada have experienced COVID-19 outbreaks, and is it something that you're tracking? As well, are you working with the disability community and the provinces to ensure support workers for Canadians with disabilities have the support and the protective equipment they need to do their jobs safely?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** As we work as a federal government on our coordinated effort to acquire PPE, we are absolutely including personal support workers, and individuals who work beyond long-term care facilities but also work in other collective living facilities like residences and group homes for people with intellectual disabilities are absolutely included in those conversations. We're making sure that, as we work our way through how PPE — once we acquire it — will be distributed, there's an equitable distribution of that PPE.

As I said, previously one of the challenges we faced is the reality that a lot of these collective living environments are not necessarily attached to provincial health care systems. They are more with the provincial social security systems. We are working through that and it is a massive gap in the system, but yes, we are definitely on that.

• (1430)

In terms of tracking, unfortunately, no, I couldn't tell you with any certainty. I could tell you anecdotally, but there is no rigour attached to the numbers I would give you. I have heard some horrible stories. As with our long-term care facilities, this has highlighted the need for a very frank conversation about how we value certain types of work and not others and how we treat the people we love who are the most vulnerable. I look forward to it being a legacy of this that we do better by all of them. That's a personal goal of mine.

**Senator Dasko:** Thank you, minister. I've over here in this corner. Welcome back to the Senate. I think this is the third time that you've been here since I've been here, so this is your second home. Thanks for being here and thanks for all your work.

I have a couple of questions, to start off, from Senator Mary Jane McCallum, who is not here today. She is a Manitoba senator. The first question from Senator McCallum is as follows: In Finance Canada's background on this benefit, dated April 22, it specified post-secondary working students aged 15 to 29. With that qualification, the first question is with respect to adult or mature students who are over 30 years old.

Will the bill and will the support apply to post-secondary students regardless of age, or is there an age cap on it?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** To the best of my knowledge, senator, as was referenced earlier, we can set that by regulation. I personally have no intention of — is there an age restriction? I don't know; no, there isn't; over 30, absolutely. The connection to post-secondary education is what's important, not the age of the individual.

**Senator Dasko:** So that's not a —

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Sorry, when people ask questions to which I thought I was very certain of the answer, it makes me wonder if I had got the answer wrong, but no.

**Senator Dasko:** So there is no age cap on that as long as it is a post-secondary connection?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Right.

**Senator Dasko:** All right. Thank you.

The second question from Senator McCallum is as follows: Apprenticeships were not mentioned in the bill, but they are an important part of educational requirements for many students. When they receive their diplomas, they are required to get hands-on training for further certification. Many students are having difficulty landing apprenticeships in the current climate due to COVID-19 restrictions on these types of opportunities. Are students also eligible to apply for the benefit if they have earned their diploma and are now doing an apprenticeship?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** The answer is that it depends, quite frankly, and that will be determined by the definition of "post-secondary institution." My intention is to be very broad. I have a personal soft spot for apprenticeship and supporting apprentices in their training. I know that when we made the announcement of doing a moratorium on Canada Student Loans payments, we also did it on Canada Apprentice Loan payments so that there would be equity there.

I think it will depend on the length and duration of the education they are seeking in the fall more than where they are seeking it. There is no exclusion. It will depend more on the type of certification, diploma or degree the individual is seeking and where they are seeking it from than whether it is classified as an apprenticeship or not. I apologize for the murkiness of that answer.

**Senator Dasko:** Here is another question. This refers to the Canada student service grant and with respect to national service and serving their communities. I know you said this is yet to be determined, but I'm just, first of all, seeking examples of what national service and service to communities might be. I know you don't have it nailed down yet, but what is it? How is it going to be administered? Are these going to be opportunities that are coming through organizations, or is this young people themselves saying, "I'm going to get out and help my neighbour," or whatever and then apply for this? Have you figured out how that will be worked out and what is involved with this?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** We're launching a platform called "I Want to Help" and it will be effectively like the job bank. Organizations will be able to post volunteer opportunities in communities and students will be able to seek out opportunities through this platform, this national database of service opportunities, if you will. We are saying it's a national service experience, but it is very much a local opportunity to serve. It's a national program with local opportunities in reach. You can imagine a food bank or Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada or the United Way. There are really big national organizations that can plug into this, but in my riding, BC and Alberta Guide Dogs, for example, might want volunteers and need people to help with the puppies while their own volunteers, who are usually seniors, can't do it. I can think of 15 in my own riding who would love the opportunity for students to serve with them and they can plug that information into this platform.

[Translation]

**Senator Ngo:** Minister, during his daily press briefing on Monday, the Prime Minister said, and I quote:

We're in lockdown . . . There aren't enough jobs right now for Canadians across the country. . . . there aren't enough jobs for students.

However, Quebec and Ontario have asked the federal government to send in the army to help out at nursing homes and long-term care homes, which are grossly understaffed. The agriculture, fish and seafood sectors are also in dire need of workers. Foreign workers are being brought in during this crisis through the Temporary Foreign Workers Program. Canadians who have lost their jobs want to work, and so do students. They could be filling those jobs.

Apart from putting students in touch with local employers, as you mentioned, why doesn't Bill C-15 contain much more concrete, tangible measures that would encourage them to work in those sectors, instead of waiting for foreign workers who have to be quarantined for 14 days when they arrive in Canada?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Thank you for your many-pronged question. I will begin with foreign workers.

Of course, we know that there are some Canadians, particularly students, who are looking for work, but our country will always need foreign workers. The pandemic has not changed that. Obviously, we can work harder at directing students toward job opportunities, and we must continue those efforts, but that doesn't necessarily have to be set out in the legislation. We have very good student employment programs. I am committed to creating opportunities for students through those programs.

[English]

**Senator Ngo:** Thank you, minister, for your answer. I'm not very happy with that, but it's okay, I can live with that.

My second question to you is this: The government says Canadians who are receiving the CERB and the wage subsidy will have to give back one or the other. If the students are getting the CERB because they are eligible and they are also getting the CESB at the same time, will they have to give back one or the other just like Canadians who are getting the CERB and the wage subsidy and who are required to do so?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** The short answer to that, senator, is yes. You cannot get both of these benefits at the time. You may be eligible for both. We are putting a limit of 16 weeks' duration total for the amount of benefits that you can tap into, if you will, as either a CERB or a CESB recipient. We have, through CRA, some concrete ways that we can require people who are paid both benefits at the same time, but that would have required them to not be truthful on their attestation. One of the things they are going to have to attest to is that they are not currently receiving the CERB if they apply for the CESB. They would have had to fraudulently attest that they are not in receipt of the CERB. There is a small likelihood that it was by accident, and in that case we will work with the individual to make sure that we find a fair way for them to repay.

[ Senator Ngo ]

• (1440)

**Senator Ngo:** Canadians who apply through the CRA are required to reapply in each four-week period, and those who apply through Service Canada have to reapply every two weeks. So students will have to apply to get CESB, they can apply for any four-week period that falls in the months May to August; however, Bill C-15 does not mention if the student needs to reapply in each of the four-week periods. Will there be a requirement for students to reapply?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Yes, there would, absolutely. Through Service Canada, if you are a CERB recipient in the EI system, you have the option of applying every two weeks or four weeks. There are situations where Service Canada applicants can only do it for four weeks, but because they were in the EI system, there is a little more flexibility for us to allow them to apply more frequently, but students will be asked to apply every four weeks.

**Senator Galvez:** Thank you for being here this afternoon, Minister Qualtrough.

I have two questions, one regarding research funding and the second on municipal affairs coming from colleagues interested in that subject. I'm sure you know that foreign or Canadian graduate students work inside the campus and outside the campus, but most of the time their work is related to research work at the graduate or undergraduate level. Universities account for more than 40% of all Canadian research and development in Canada, and we work on training highly qualified professionals that are needed right now in researching medical issues with respect to COVID-19. However, many of these research projects were stopped because universities are closed.

Some of the solutions on the work for students and paying students is through research projects. Are you considering additional funding to restart these research projects that have been stopped because of the pandemic?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Thank you for that important question. I will read this in order to not to get it wrong. As part of our student package, we are creating and supporting up to 40,000 student researcher and post-doctoral fellows through the federal granting councils, and that's a \$300 million investment. We are also giving an additional \$8 million to the National Research Council for students and post-doctoral research placements.

In addition, we're creating 5,000 jobs through Mitacs and the Business/Higher Education Roundtable is creating 5,000 to 10,000 new student jobs. That doesn't answer your question about the research projects, but I wanted to give you a bit of flavour that we are with you on how important these jobs are.

With respect to specific research projects, my understanding is it's on a project-by-project basis, depending on the particular circumstances in the post-secondary institute around whether we can continue the work. As I've been briefed — I apologize; I only have a high-level understanding of this. I can get more information — it really will be on a case-by-case basis as soon as possible.

We remain committed to this research. It's more practical, how quickly we can get back to doing it, but we will get back to doing it.

**Senator Galvez:** Thank you.

In recent weeks, local governments have had to lay off tens of thousands of employees across the country. Surrey, British Columbia; Quebec City; Mississauga; and Edmonton, they have laid off 2,000 or more employees.

Current federal government programs include wage subsidies, rent assistance and other help to business, but do not extend the same help to local governments. Aid is needed for municipalities so they can continue to offer essential services to their residents such as water, waste water and public transportation.

Minister Qualtrough, why the discrepancy between public and private sector treatment and how is the government planning to address this issue of employment in local governments?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Thank you for that important question. Cities and municipalities across the country are indeed struggling.

I will share with you that part of the thinking around a hesitancy to use federal taxpayer dollars to supplement jobs and systems that are municipally taxpayer dollar-funded is the duplication of the individual taxpayer to be paying twice with their tax dollar towards one particular circumstance. I apologize if that doesn't make sense. The reality is that municipalities and cities are struggling, and I know that both the Minister of Infrastructure and the Minister of Finance are turning their minds to how we can creatively support our cities and municipalities through this. The Prime Minister is working with premiers directly on how we can do the same through provincial and territorial governments.

**Senator Galvez:** Thank you very much.

**Senator Loffreda:** Good afternoon, minister, and thank you for being here.

Youth empowerment is important. We want all Canadians to remain healthy through this crisis, including our students. Can you elaborate a bit on how the eligible amounts per student were derived, the rationale behind it? Was there any comparative, qualitative or quantitative analysis done? I would be curious about knowing how those amounts were derived.

**Ms. Qualtrough:** I will pass this to my deputy because we have talked a lot about this.

**Mr. Flack:** We did analysis of labour force market data, the Labour Force Survey, to look at full-time students and what their average incomes were. The attempt in the package the minister has constructed is to put all those elements together to roughly match that.

If you go to the Labour Force Survey, the average income that students would have is \$12,500 for a full-time student. And to give you sense of bands, the twentieth percentile would be \$4,000 and eightieth percentile would be \$18,000. It is relatively well constrained within that period. The \$12,500 was the target we were establishing as to what was there for a typical student.

As the minister indicated, were one to be receiving the student benefit, you are looking at \$5,000 in the summer. If you had the student grant, which is double, it's an additional \$3,000. If you look at the increase in the student loan over an eight-month period, it would amount to another \$5,000. It is approximately the \$13,000 range.

In addition, the incentive to work, where students are able to earn amount, as yet undetermined in the regulations, would be on top of that. And were the students to have a volunteer opportunity for which they were able to get a bursary, it could be on top of that as well. We tried to roughly calibrate, as the minister indicated. In both programs, the CERB and the student benefit, there is an attempt to replace income that otherwise would have been in place. In the case of the student benefit, we had a wider suite of tools we could use to do that, and if you look at that suite of tools, we tried to come to that in roughly the comparable range; \$12,500 is the average, \$13,000 is where we have landed.

**Senator Loffreda:** Thank you for the answer. There has been a lot of concern with keeping our students motivated and having incentive to work. Can you elaborate on the website that will be available for business owners and businesses to post employment opportunities?

Second, I would like to know which programs are being considered for students. Are there any specific industries that are being targeted more than others for student employment? It's a positive, because if we are creating student employment, I think we can do that on an annual and continuous basis.

Last but not least, the students have to attest that they are seeking employment, that you provide them with employment opportunities. How will we administer that? It is a qualitative criteria. How do we ascertain that the proper efforts are being made by our students?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Again, those are really important questions. The Job Bank we have for the federal government is quite robust. Employers regularly post opportunities. We drive students to those opportunities in a variety of ways. We have social media campaigns to tell students to go here for these jobs available in your region. Quebec has a complementary or parallel job bank database.

• (1450)

We have consolidated all of our youth employment programs into our Youth Employment and Skills Strategy, or YESS, and within that there are a number of types of youth employment jobs. We have a Student Work Placement Program; we have a Supports for Student Learning Program; we have Canada Summer Jobs; and we have a more general YESS stream.

We also have specific streams within different departments, and the Department of Agriculture is one where we fund student placements and student jobs in particular sectors like agriculture. As we designed the Canada Summer Jobs program, this year, for example, we put in certain priorities for employers to look at when they are creating these jobs, and if you have a job in a priority area, you get more points, and then you are more likely to get a job funded by us.

[Translation]

**Senator Miville-Dechêne:** Thank you, minister. Like many of my colleagues, I'm worried these benefits may actually discourage some students from seeking work. You yourself admitted that was a possibility.

You mentioned that the attestation will enable us to make sure the students are serious about seeking employment. I'd like you to explain how that will work. I've spoken to some of your officials, and they said the form won't require students to write down what kind of jobs they've been applying for. They said that asking a question like that would slow down the process.

I don't understand how it could slow down the process, given that asking a student where he or she has been applying could reinforce the seriousness of the process and give you something to check up on six months later if you need to.

Instead, you're just relying on the honour system. I know plenty of students will do the honourable thing, but I can't understand why the attestation isn't more serious.

**Ms. Qualtrough:** That's a great question. The criteria and requirements of the attestation have yet to be determined.

[English]

Everything we have to confirm slows down the delivery of the benefit. If I have to confirm you've said you've applied for these five jobs, I have to check if you have applied for the five jobs, but I can't get that student that money in the same day. I don't have all the human resources to check five jobs for a million students and be able to give them that money within any reasonable time frame.

I hear you, and it might be an excellent idea that we could spot-check students if we had that information, so I'll take that back. But the challenge for us is always at the forefront putting in enough integrity measures so that people don't take advantage, but at the same time desperately wanting to get people their money as soon as possible. Thank you for that suggestion.

[ Ms. Qualtrough ]

[Translation]

**Senator Miville-Dechêne:** I understand. Obviously, I'm not asking the government to immediately check whether students did indeed apply for jobs, but that information should at least remain on file. It seems to me that that provides some extra insurance.

My second question has to do with part-time work. As you mentioned, the student benefit allows for approximately 19 to 21 hours of part-time work. However, in Quebec, labour shortages are being felt most keenly in the health and agricultural sectors, but employers in those two sectors are saying that they don't want part-time workers, that that doesn't help them. Employers in the health sector want full-time workers to reduce the risk of contamination for seniors, and employers in the agricultural industry don't want to spend the summer training and retraining students who will come to work for a few hours and then leave. Do you see this other problem with the benefit?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** I understand that part-time work doesn't work very well for some sectors. I understand that it isn't ideal in the health and agricultural sectors. That's why we're working harder to create full-time jobs in those sectors in particular. We're creating full-time jobs for students in essential sectors, but that will prevent them from receiving benefits because they'll be working too many hours to be eligible.

There is also the wage subsidy. I heard many employers say that, thanks to the subsidy, they'll be able to pay students a higher hourly wage. What is more, our subsidy that covers 75% of employees' wages might encourage employers to offer more full-time positions.

**Senator Miville-Dechêne:** Thank you, minister.

[English]

**Senator Pate:** Thank you, minister, for joining us. This pandemic has made two things clear, first, in ways that exacerbate and entrench existing inequalities, particularly when it comes to income, class, sex, race and ability. Canada's health, employment, housing and social supports have left far too many people behind in times of need.

Second, we know that we cannot return to the status quo. This is the reason why, earlier this month, 50 senators sent an open letter to the government encouraging consideration, as a next step in the evolution of income support, of the restructuring of CERB as a crisis minimum income not, as your response to Senator Boehm would indicate, a universal basic income, but a means-tested approach that would allow us to ensure there is greater social and economic equity as well as greater efficiency in reaching those in need.

What measures are being taken to consider this option, and, second, what measures are the government taking to ensure ongoing oversight of its pandemic response by independent human rights and substantive equality experts? How will such input be incorporated to ensure that the lessons learned and the post-pandemic processes include examinations of and steps to remedy the inequalities exposed by both the pandemic and the gaps in current government responses?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Those are very thoughtful and important questions, thank you.

As I said, when we made the pivotal decision to focus on workers, as opposed to anyone with low income, that was — pardon my sports background — a bit of a TSN turning point for how our response has played out. We decided to focus on people who had attachments to the workforce that were either completely gone or so minimized that, in practicality, they weren't working.

Once that decision was made, the other decisions followed. We focused on workers and businesses. We changed the CERB to include more worker employment situations. The decision was not to look at people who were low-income prior to but whose employment had not been impacted by COVID. We focused on people whose working situation had been impacted. As we have gone forward, we have then had to address the other realities of the pandemic: Things are costing more, services that were free are no longer free and support networks have completely disintegrated in some situations, and we are desperately trying to respond to those situations. Looking forward, I think we all need to do a hard look, and I think an important legacy of this will be bravely and boldly rethinking our systems, and we don't have to go back to the way it was.

I don't know what that will look like, but I think this has given us a real impetus in Canada to bravely redesign the way we help and support people.

**Senator Pate:** Thank you for that response, minister, and I thank you also for the work you have been taking on to try to ensure that provinces and territories aren't clawing back resources that are being made available to those who are in receipt of social assistance.

Are there ways that senators interested in this issue could work with the government to ensure that all people are included and have their place on your team Canada?

**Ms. Qualtrough:** Thank you, and, of course, please reach out to me. The more brains the better, as far as I'm concerned. I'm very passionate about conveying strong messages to my provincial and territorial colleagues that, in this time of crisis, we shouldn't be taking things away from the people who need them the most, and I'll continue with that effort; I'm pretty unapologetic about it.

Perhaps we can talk offline how senators can support me in that effort. I would greatly appreciate it.

**The Chair:** Honourable senators, the committee has been sitting for 125 minutes. In conformity with the order of the Senate of earlier this day, I am obliged to interrupt proceedings so that the committee can report to the Senate.

Minister, on behalf of all senators, thank you for joining us today to assist us with our work on the bill. I would also like to thank your official.

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

**The Chair:** Honourable senators, is it agreed that the Committee rise and that I report to the Senate that the witnesses have been heard?

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

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

• (1500)

[Translation]

#### REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Hon. Pierrette Ringuette (The Hon. the Acting Speaker pro tempore):** Honourable senators, the Committee of the Whole, authorized by the Senate to examine the subject matter of Bill C-15, An Act respecting Canada emergency student benefits (coronavirus disease 2019), reports that it has heard from the said witnesses.

#### CANADA EMERGENCY STUDENT BENEFIT BILL

##### SECOND READING

**Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate)** moved second reading of Bill C-15, An Act respecting Canada emergency student benefits (coronavirus disease 2019).

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and bill read second time.)

##### THIRD READING

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

**Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-5(b), I move that the bill be read the third time now.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**Senator Gagné:** Honourable senators, I rise today to speak at third reading of Bill C-15, An Act respecting Canada emergency student benefits as regards coronavirus disease 2019. I'm pleased to be sponsoring this needed legislation. It will go a long way toward helping our young people pursue their educations and protecting their futures by ensuring that they can meet their day-to-day needs during this unprecedented crisis.

Before becoming a senator, I worked in education for over 35 years. I have to say that, deep down, I am still a teacher. Throughout my career, I worked with committed, conscientious students who were driven to succeed so they could pursue their post-secondary studies.

I was also aware of their living conditions and the difficulty they had making ends meet. Being in school or a post-secondary institution confers no protection whatsoever from any number of difficulties. I can easily imagine how stressed these young people are about their future in the context of this pandemic.

[English]

Colleagues, chances are that, at some point in our collective past, many of us were in the very same position as these tens of thousands of young people. These are university and college students, or recent high school graduates, who are trying to figure out how to juggle their studies and meet their financial obligations. Maybe some of us were fortunate enough to receive support from family, but we also relied on our summer employment and/or part-time employment during the school year to cover some, if not all, of the fees associated with education and the costs that come with day-to-day living.

[Translation]

Today, many thousands of young people see little or no immediate way forward. Jobs that were lined up no longer exist. Promised employment contracts have been rescinded. This is not their fault. COVID-19 has interrupted and threatened the lives and livelihoods of millions.

[English]

The bill before us today, Bill C-15, will authorize the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion to provide payment of a Canada Emergency Student Benefit to students who lost existing employment, are seeking work but are unable to find the work they're looking for, are working but are paid less than the amount determined under the regulation, or have little or no prospect of employment opportunities because of the pandemic.

To meet eligibility for the CESB, Bill C-15 requires that a student be a Canadian citizen, a person registered as an Indian under the Indian Act, a permanent resident as defined in subsection 2(1) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, or a protected person within the meaning of subsection 95(2) of that act. He or she must be or have been enrolled at any time between December 1, 2019, and October 31, 2020, in a post-secondary educational program that leads to a degree, diploma or certificate.

Those who have graduated from secondary school in 2020, applied for enrollment in a post-secondary program scheduled to begin before February 1, 2021, and will attend if their application is accepted, are also eligible. The CESB is also available to recent graduates who completed a college or university program in December 2019 or the spring, and are unable to find work due to COVID-19.

[ Senator Gagné ]

Post-secondary students, whether employed or unemployed prior to the pandemic, are eligible for the CESB, if conditions are met. Canadian students studying abroad are also eligible if they meet one of the above criteria.

The benefit will begin now and last until August of this year.

Like the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, the CERB, a student may apply for the CESB for any four-week period falling within the timeframe prescribed by regulation. However, the financial benefits of the CESB will apply only to those students and recent graduates who are not eligible for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit or Employment Insurance.

[Translation]

During the four-week period for which students submit an application, they must confirm that they're not receiving income from employment or self-employment; they're not receiving employment insurance; and they're not receiving allowances, money or other benefits that are paid under a provincial plan or the CERB.

Students must also demonstrate that they're actively seeking employment. To assist with this process, the government will make available a government-managed job posting system about employment opportunities through the Canada Job Bank website. Financial incentives and support measures will be implemented in order to connect Canadians, particularly students, to the various jobs available, especially in the agriculture and agri-food sector. This will also help ensure regional economic stability and food production during this crisis.

[English]

Students who qualify for the CESB could receive \$1,250 per month from May to August. Also, those eligible students with permanent disabilities, or who are responsible for dependents, could receive an additional \$750 a month beyond the \$1,250, equalling \$2,000; the same amount as the CERB. Students will not be able to apply for the CESB after September 30, 2020, and will not receive the benefit if they apply after this date.

• (1510)

[Translation]

Once enacted, this legislation will be in effect for a limited time. In most cases, the authority to make regulations would require the Minister of Finance's approval. Like the CERB, the Canada emergency student benefit will be administered by the Canada Revenue Agency, which will be responsible for post-audit integrity measures, such as recovering overpayments and payments made in error.



This legislation must be subjected to a thorough review of its provisions and its application. The review will be conducted by the House of Commons, by the Senate, by both Houses of Parliament, or by a committee established for that purpose. The review must be completed by September 30, 2021.

[English]

Honourable colleagues, Bill C-15 was crafted with the advice and input of all parties. It was a cooperative effort, and excellent suggestions were made by all involved. This bill is an example of what can be accomplished when working together and when the benefit of those in need is the priority.

We are talking about the sons and daughters of Canada, who are eager and anxious to accomplish their goals. Honourable senators, we can all relate to the situation in which these students find themselves. Maybe it wasn't you personally. Maybe it was your son or daughter or a grandchild or the child of a friend. These young people must succeed educationally in order to get admittance into a college or university program, but that is only a small part of the battle. They also have the burden of fees, books, rent, groceries, everything required of them to live and learn. But now, in the midst of this pandemic, they are worried for their futures.

[Translation]

Many of them had found jobs, some of them right here on Parliament Hill, but we do not need parliamentary guides at the moment. There's no work for the enthusiastic students who work near here selling tickets for guided tours of the Rideau Canal or the city of Ottawa. Hotels don't need doormen, and restaurants aren't looking for extra wait staff for peak season.

[English]

I am asking all of my honourable colleagues to pass Bill C-15 quickly, for all the students you know personally and for the tens of thousands of others who very much want to get back to their studies as soon as possible. After all, they are the ones who will be making an impact going forward.

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

[Translation]

**Hon. Claude Carignan:** Honourable colleagues, I am pleased to be with you today for this special sitting, and to see that you all seem to be healthy and doing well.

I think we can all agree that we're in the middle of an extraordinary crisis that is devastating Canadians. The year 2020 will go down in history. The coronavirus, the invisible enemy, has infiltrated every society in the world, and Canada has not been immune to this pandemic. The virus has caused thousands of deaths in this country to date. The number of people infected continues to rise, and every sector in our society has been hit hard.

Canadians have been forced into isolation like never before. I am confident that this is the right approach. The provinces are saying that restrictions will be lifted gradually, but we must

acknowledge that we'll have to move forward by trial and error. We have never experienced this type of situation before, and as many like to say, it's like building an airplane in mid-flight.

The primary concern of governments, naturally, is public health. Decisions have to be made based on scientific evidence, even though very little is known about this new virus. Canada has already dealt with viral outbreaks, but never to the extent we are seeing right now. There was the Spanish flu that hit several countries in 1918-19, including Canada, but never in living memory have we experienced a phenomenon like COVID-19.

People are worried and rightly so. They are worried for the seniors in their lives who are particularly affected by COVID-19, worried also about not being able to help them and reassure them in this difficult time. People are also worried about their personal finances — I will come back to that — and increasingly worried about the government's finances.

This week, the Parliamentary Budget Officer indicated that Canada's projected deficit for 2020-21 will be as high as \$252 billion. That is unheard of. The government, together with the opposition parties, urgently adopted several aid programs for individuals and businesses. The government opened its coffers and allocated tens of billions of dollars to help Canadians get through this crisis relatively unscathed.

However, when you act too quickly and hastily, some decisions, though made in good faith, can cause problems that will affect our economy or undermine our social structures.

Take, for example, the program that offers up to \$40,000 in loans to businesses. This loan, if repaid on time, will become a \$30,000 loan with a \$10,000 subsidy. Are we sure that all of the businesses using this program truly need it? I personally know of companies that have taken advantage of this program and that truly needed it, but I also know there are some businesses that received the loan but didn't really need it.

Furthermore, the government has created the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, through which it is providing \$2,000 a month for individuals who lose their jobs as a result of the coronavirus crisis. Several billion dollars are being injected into this exceptional measure. Are there enough safeguards to ensure that people with bad intentions do not take advantage of this new program to unfairly take money they are not entitled to?

I am certain that there will be fraudulent claims under these new programs, and I am very concerned about the government's ability to detect them, fix the flaws and, ultimately, recover the money lost. Moreover, I anticipate that this will be such a colossal task that the government will instead resign itself to absorbing the losses, because it will be too costly to recover any misappropriated amounts.

I'm clearly among those who believe that the government must take action to support Canadians and our economy during this crisis. However, I am deeply concerned about what will happen afterwards. I believe that the challenges we are now facing are immense, but I also believe that we will face even greater challenges post-crisis.

At some point in the coming months, researchers will come up with a vaccine and medicine to treat this devastating virus. The public health crisis created by the coronavirus will then disappear.

Dear colleagues, what medicine will help us treat the looming economic crisis, which I fear will be just as devastating as COVID-19? I am more than convinced that we must begin now to think seriously about the post-crisis period.

I mentioned that people are worried about their personal finances. Everyone has personal and family obligations and it goes without saying that when we suddenly find ourselves without any income the pressure becomes unbearable. Students aren't exempt from that reality and that's why the government introduced Bill C-15, An Act respecting Canada emergency student benefits.

On Wednesday, the House of Commons passed the bill with amendments proposed by the opposition parties. However, before going straight into the content of this bill, I lament the fact that once again the government acted without really consulting the provinces.

• (1520)

For instance, the week before this bill was introduced, the Government of Quebec issued an appeal to all the students in Quebec who were unemployed because of COVID-19, calling on them to help farmers who are having a hard time filling labour shortages, because fewer temporary foreign workers are coming to work on farms in this country. To support this appeal to young people, the Government of Quebec announced additional financial compensation worth up to \$100 per week for future seasonal farm workers.

The federal government's announcement clearly doesn't align with the provinces' objectives, which is really unfortunate. I think the two programs could have been better aligned, in order to better incentivize more students to choose the path of helping out in our farmlands.

Canada's fishing industry is facing the same problem, from coast to coast, as is the tourism industry. Here is some relevant information concerning Bill C-15 that helps to identify the bill's limitations. This benefit will provide \$1,250 a month for eligible students or \$2,000 a month for eligible students with dependants or disabilities from May to August 2020. Students can therefore obtain up to \$5,000 in benefits over the next four months without having to work.

However, in the regulations, the government is looking at how students can earn a maximum amount without penalty, but nothing is official yet. The government is working on the regulations. We have here a bill that authorizes the minister to give an amount that has yet to be determined to an undefined group of people for a duration that is still uncertain but that will not go beyond September 30, based on conditions that have yet to be determined. The unintended, negative effects of these measures are fairly predictable.

To illustrate them, let's assume that some students would prefer to collect the Canada Emergency Response Benefit without having to work. Human nature being what it is, this is a likely scenario.

Say there's a student who lost their job in March because of COVID-19. They qualify for the regular CERB, which provides \$2,000 a month. Obviously, this student wouldn't be eligible to receive the CESB, too. The student is offered a 40-hour-a-week minimum-wage job. Effective today, May 1, the minimum wage in Quebec goes up to \$13.10 an hour. If we multiply 40 hours by the minimum wage and then multiply that by four weeks, we get a total of \$2,096 per month. For this person, it's a choice between working 40 hours a week to earn \$2,096 a month, and just staying home, or presumably at their parents' home, to hang out by the pool while collecting the \$2,000 CERB.

Now let's run the numbers for a student who qualifies for the CESB, which provides \$1,250 a month. Over a four-month period, the student will collect a total of \$5,000. If that student works 40 hours a week for minimum wage from mid-May to the end of August, a period of three months, they will earn a total of \$6,288. That person will have to choose between working 40 hours a week for three months to earn \$6,288, and hanging out by the pool, most likely at their parents' house, while collecting a total of \$5,000 over four months.

Here's one last example of the unintended consequences of these measures, consequences that I feel the government did not adequately take into account. As I said earlier, the government is considering allowing students to earn a certain amount of money without having their CESB clawed back. Rumour has it that the magic number could be about \$1,000 a month. If that's the case, a student earning minimum wage could work 19 hours per week and collect the \$1,250 Canada emergency student benefit. Let's do the math: 19 hours per week at \$13.10 an hour is \$995.60 per month on top of the monthly \$1,250 benefit. That means a student working just 19 hours a week would pocket \$2,245.60 per month, which is \$149.60 more than a student working 40 hours a week and not collecting the CESB.

These three examples are precisely why I am concerned that we'll see a very serious labour shortage this summer when the economy picks up again. Frankly, I would like the government to tell us if it ran the numbers like I did and, if so, what measures it plans to implement to avoid such a labour shortage.

The Conservatives' priority is to help Canadians during this crisis. That is why, when we received the government's bill, we rolled up our sleeves, studied it and made constructive suggestions to improve it for Canadians. The House of Commons caucus in particular negotiated many changes to the bill, such as:

Requiring that the government connect all applicants to the Canada Job Bank and provide them with job availability information before applying;

Requiring parliamentary review of the legislation and benefit; and

Instituting a sunset clause so the benefit could not be extended through regulation.

No government program should be a disincentive to work for Canadians. However, we recognize that in many parts of our country the unemployment rate is extremely high because of the pandemic and a large number of jobs are just not available. Canadians, as well as students, need real help right now.

We need to be clear: The government must, to the extent possible, provide students with job opportunities and not just government assistance.

That is why we suggested that the government create a new program to match students and young workers with jobs in the agriculture and agri-food sector, as well as in the fish and seafood sectors. Much like the Canada Summer Jobs program, this program would cover minimum wage for a new student or young worker. This wage could then be topped up by the employer. Businesses that want to hire more workers this year would be able to apply for this program immediately. Employers would also be required to enforce proper workplace safety measures in order to protect all workers.

A number of businesses in the agriculture, fishing and seafood sectors rely on the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, these essential sectors are facing a significant shortage of workers this year, as I mentioned earlier. If local workers can fill some of these shortages without support, Canadian producers and processors across the country will have a hard time maintaining our food supply, which is essential.

Businesses and charities are also having a hard time finding workers. The government's programs should match Canadians with available jobs and should not simply be offering billions of dollars in assistance. Our proposal gives students the opportunity to earn money and contribute to COVID-19 response efforts.

• (1530)

We also took steps to ensure that Parliament conducts a thorough review of the program and included a strict deadline. We think it's crucial that Parliament retain its role as watchdog. We need innovative ways to help our students find work and to support our food supply chain and essential services.

I'm disappointed that the government didn't consider other ways to support our students. It would have been easy to temporarily increase funding for the Canada Summer Jobs program. This would have allowed more businesses and community organizations to benefit. More students could have earned income during the crisis while also gaining valuable work experience. We heard from organizations across the country that are saying they would like to hire students but cannot access the program.

This could have been done through loans and grants programs. With support from the provinces, the amounts available to students could have been increased for the 2020-21 school year. That would have prevented the government from giving money to the children of millionaires. Unfortunately, the government made the easiest decision it knew how, which was to throw money at the problem without considering other avenues or the consequences of the program. It could have invested in training young people, in their skills, while promoting an enriching experience that would have helped them advance in their career.

That being said, Bill C-15 is before us and the official opposition in the Senate will duly play its role and facilitate its timely passing.

Thank you.

[English]

**Hon. Yuen Pau Woo:** Honourable senators, this bill is ostensibly about the present plight of students, but it is really about the future of our country.

It is a cliché to talk about young people as the future, but as far as clichés go, this one is hard to refute. The fact is that the cohort affected by this bill will be among the people who will rise to leadership positions across Canada in the next few decades. That is why it is so important that the current generation of future leaders emerge from the COVID-19 crisis with a renewed belief in the institutions and shared values of our country, with optimism and confidence in the future, and with the skills, experiences and aptitudes that will be needed to navigate the challenges of their lifetimes.

[Translation]

As our young people get ready to enter adulthood, leave school and join the workforce, Bill C-15 and all the measures taken in response to COVID-19 will shape the way they perceive their country.

[English]

They will, I hope, remember the lockdown of 2020 as a time when the country decided that science trumps politics; when collective interest supersedes self-interest; when we were aligned

in our effort to not leave anyone behind; when essential workers were truly recognized as essential; and when the potential of young people was not sacrificed because of short-term economic calculation.

It is probably fitting that the young people who are experiencing their formative and pre-adult years, during COVID-19 and its aftermath, are referred to as post-Generation Z. They are also, by the way, seen as the children of Generation X or the grandchildren of Boomers, to use terminology that might resonate better with the demographic in this chamber.

If there is a term for post-Generation Z, I suppose it would be “Generation A,” which is quite appropriate if you believe that the world after COVID-19 will involve starting again from the beginning of the alphabet. Indeed, many of that generation have been calling for a reset of societal priorities even before the health crisis. But the reset that many are expecting to take place in our understanding of health and welfare, of politics, economics, the environment and international relations, may be less profound than we presume, and could be more malignant than we are hoping for. All of that will depend on how we respond to COVID-19 in the present and in the months and years ahead, and especially on how well our young people come out of this crisis.

Eschewing the normative connotations of alphabetical order, let me instead call the cohort targeted by Bill C-15 “Generation COVID,” or “GenCo,” if you like. By providing them with the means to enrol in a post-secondary educational program or to simply stay in one, we are saying to GenCo that investing in your future is an investment in Canada’s future.

It is useful that the bill requires an attestation on the part of students to declare that they are unable to find work, and that they are in fact seeking work. In this regard, the provision in the bill, whereby the minister must make available to students information about employment opportunities is helpful, as is the motion adopted in the other place, calling on the government to implement new incentives to connect students and youth to jobs in the agriculture and agri-food sector. Likewise, the yet-to-be-announced program to support volunteer activities related to COVID-19 could be an important outlet for students who receive the Canada Emergency Student Benefit, or CESB.

While not part of Bill C-15 as such, the new Canada Student Service Grant will help students gain valuable work experience and skills while they assist their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. For students who choose to do national service in their communities, the new Canada Student Service Grant will provide up to \$5,000 for their education in the fall.

I am intrigued by the reference to “national service.” This is a term that has gone out of fashion in these more individualistic and cynical times. But why not? Will 2020 be the year when the idea of service to the nation regains favour? And if it took a wretched virus to bring that about, so what? We’ll take it.

It will, of course, be up to our young people to decide if they want to perform national service. And it will be up to them to rise to the challenge of imposed lockdown and shortage of employment opportunities by finding creative ways to stay busy, through paid or unpaid work and self-improvement activities.

Let me open a parenthesis to say that as I was listening to the Committee of the Whole and other comments made in this chamber, it struck me that there is a lot of concern across this chamber about the potential disincentive effects of the grant on students, and almost a presumption or insinuation that students will do their best to take advantage of it and not seek work, perhaps out of some kind of desire to be by the swimming pool or through sheer slothfulness.

I can tell you that as the Committee of the Whole was proceeding, I received feedback from one person in this demographic, who sent me the following email in response to what she heard in many of the questions: “Wow! Really? I feel that that’s a bit insulting to students. Is the argument that students are inherently lazy and would rather sit at home and play video games than contribute to society? They are bored and lonely and scared and looking for meaning in their lives. Surely the bigger issue is that there isn’t going to be enough work for them. Young people are dismayed that their normal summer jobs are not happening, not just because of the lack of income but because they really enjoy those jobs.”

• (1540)

I hope the coming summer will be one that defines Generation COVID-19 as the savvy, determined, resilient and innovative young adults who lead the longer-term recovery of Canada. *How I Spent the Summer of 2020* will not be a blockbuster movie, but it could be the basis on which there is a renewed national spirit of youth-led optimism and hope for the future of this country.

I must say, however, that it is hard to be optimistic at the present time. While most of us on the Hill have been focusing on this important piece of legislation, perhaps the more illuminating parliamentary document that came out in the last 48 hours is the Parliamentary Budget Officer’s updated scenario analysis of the COVID-19 pandemic and oil price shocks. The report significantly revises downwards the PBO’s assumption regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and oil price shocks on the Canadian economy. To wit:

In our updated economic scenario, real GDP is assumed to decline by 2.5 per cent in the first quarter and then again by 20.0 per cent in the second quarter (both rates not annualized).

Let that sink in for a minute.

Real GDP is then assumed to rebound modestly in the third and fourth quarters as epidemic control measures begin to be gradually relaxed.

The PBO’S real GDP forecast for 2020 as a whole is a decline of -12%, which would be by far the weakest on record since the current GDP series started in 1961. To put this in historical

perspective, the weakest growth in real GDP on record, that is to say -3.2%, was observed in 1982, and that was roughly just one quarter of the PBO's projected decline.

Colleagues, it is important to recognize that the decline in economic output is created by the coronavirus, and not because of prior weakness in the Canadian economy, except in the case of the oil and gas sector, which was already facing pressure from a glut of global oil. The economic downturn would be much worse if Parliament did not respond with such aggressive measures as were contained in Bill C-13, Bill C-14 and now in Bill C-15.

But if the PBO is correct, we ain't seen nothing yet. The reason is that even after the economy begins to rebound, the lagged effects of an economic downturn on business activity — especially large-scale insolvencies — will continue to be felt. Colleagues, we are nowhere near the end of the kind of government intervention that will be needed for the Canadian economy to stabilize, let alone to begin a sustainable recovery.

Many of us in this chamber have been focused on affected groups that have been neglected in the current suite of COVID-19 relief programs, and there is yet more work that needs to be done and perhaps more program fixes in the offing, but the next big thing will be industry and corporate bailouts. We have only seen the tip of the iceberg in terms of programs such as the orphan oil well cleanup, which is of modest help to our fossil fuel energy sector, but not nearly enough to combat the twin crises of virus and virulent price wars in that sector.

It is only a matter of time before we have to turn our attention to proposed bailouts for the transportation, entertainment and hospitality, commercial real estate and agri-food sectors, among others. In this regard, the role of parliamentarians, especially senators, in thinking about the principles and objectives of corporate rescue packages will be crucial. While we need to consider first and foremost the livelihoods affected by major corporate failures, we also need to reflect on the distribution of losses among shareholders, bondholders, executives, and not least workers. We also need to think about the kind of economy we want to have in the decades ahead, and not create moral hazards for ourselves as so many industrialized economies have done in times of financial crisis.

Alas, it is not only corporate bailouts that will occupy our attention in the months ahead. Based on the PBO's latest scenario outlook, we can expect a moderate recovery in the third and fourth quarters of 2020, based on the assumption of a gradual relaxation of social distancing measures. The PBO declined to offer an economic outlook beyond December 2020 because of the extreme uncertainty we are currently facing, but it is my best guess that 2021 will not see the economy roaring back to pre-crisis levels. I hope I am wrong, but even if I am half right, it is highly likely we will need income support for Canadians well into next year. The problem, of course, is that the legal authorities for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, which is the primary mechanism for income support currently, will expire on October 2. Other COVID-19 relief programs also have best before dates in the fall, including the CESB, which is part of the bill we are considering today.

The point, colleagues, is that the Government of Canada is almost certainly going to have to come up with income support programs that extend beyond October 2020, possibly through all of 2021 and maybe even spilling into 2022. In looking at how we might address income support on the expiry of current programs, my strong belief is that the government should design a program that commits to a minimum 12 months of support rather than, say, to extend CERB for another three or six months, subject to repeated reviews. The benefit of a 12-month time frame for income support is that it provides certainty to households and businesses in terms of their personal and corporate planning, and would therefore aid the recovery process. I would, however, redesign and indeed simplify income support so that the rebooted programs capture all of the vulnerable groups that need to be captured, rather than making ad hoc patches to a disparate set of programs as and when new groups are identified. Let's call this new mechanism the "12-month COVID recovery income support plan."

I believe some version of a guaranteed livable income should be at the heart of a "12-month COVID income support plan." The reason is not because I am fully persuaded of the merits of a guaranteed livable income vis-à-vis pre-COVID social assistance, but it is because I believe GLI is a more efficient way of distributing income support in the very context of the massive transfers that I believe will, one way or another, have to be provided to Canadians in the year ahead.

We have before us, colleagues, an opportunity to provide income support through a temporary guaranteed livable income and to test its efficacy through rigorous measurement and evaluation of the impacts on a range of health, economic, fiscal, education and social indicators. I am not so naive to think that a national GLI can be instituted by the fall of 2020, but even if one or two provinces opt for GLI as a preferred approach to income support, that will provide a basis for comparing and contrasting results in those provinces with the more so-called bespoke income support approaches taken in the rest of the country.

Which brings me back to Bill C-15 and the plight of students in the current health crisis. The CESB will come to an end in the middle of September, and we, of course, hope that the crisis will also have come to an end and classes can resume in the normal fashion. If that is not the case, however, we will surely need some form of further support for this cohort of Canadians. In that scenario, the CESB will essentially blend into a form of CERB, which again invites the possibility of a merger of the two programs by way of a GLI of some sort.

Colleagues, we have now been called back for three emergency sittings, each time to deal with bills which offer bespoke relief to individual Canadians and businesses on a temporary basis. I fully appreciate the reasons why the programs have been developed in this way, and do not fault the government for its focus on immediate solutions that are premised on short-term outlooks.

• (1550)

It is looking increasingly clear, however, that the fallout from COVID-19 is not going to go away quickly and that we need programs not only to help us get through the so-called flattening

of the coronavirus curve, but that can also help us to bend economic recovery upwards. I hope the next round of COVID-19 legislation is about flattening as well as bending. Thank you.

**Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, before I begin my speech on the bill, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the unspeakable tragedy that unfolded earlier this month in Nova Scotia.

The nation was horrified as the extent of the killer's violent rampage across the province became apparent. Twenty-two victims over 16 crime scenes. It was an utterly senseless act of violence. These people were mothers, fathers, sons and daughters, friends and neighbours. They were loved and they will be missed.

On behalf of the Senate Conservative caucus, I would like to extend our deepest sympathies to the families and friends who are grieving. Our words will never restore what has been stolen, but in them, we hope you will feel our embrace and know that you are not alone. We hold you in our hearts and in our prayers during this unspeakable loss.

I would also like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the RCMP and other first responders who did their jobs in the most dire of circumstances. I cannot imagine the horror that these brave men and women faced as they trailed this killer, looking for somebody that looked just like they did and finding more victims left in his path of destruction across this beautiful province. Your courage in the face of danger and your compassion in the midst of heartless destruction give us strength to believe that the good in this world is greater than the evil. Thank you for your selfless service.

I would also like to take a moment to offer our condolences to the family and friends of the six members of the Canadian Armed Forces who were lost in Wednesday's helicopter crash off the coast of Greece. We just found out a few minutes ago that this is now a recovery project. This is an unbelievable tragedy and our thoughts and prayers are with all who were impacted.

Today, colleagues, I'm also thinking of all those Canadians who have lost their lives due to this pandemic and want to ensure all victims' families that our thoughts and prayers are with you as well. We know how devastating it is to lose a loved one, but not to be with them in their final moments is so much worse.

Last, colleagues, I would like to take a moment to wish my premier, Brian Pallister, well as he mourns the loss of his beloved sister, even while he is in the very throes of dealing with this pandemic.

Colleagues, it is always an honour to stand here and one that I never take lightly. But in these extremely challenging times, I find myself asking God to give us wisdom now more than ever. However, it is the mandate of the official opposition in the House of Commons and the Senate to make sure that we keep the government's feet to the fire at all times and point out any discrepancies and any flaws that we find in legislation.

As former Liberal prime minister, the Honourable Jean Chrétien, always said, the word "opposition" means "to oppose." This pandemic itself is a great challenge, but the truth of the matter is how the pandemic is being handled by Parliament. This can either soften the blow or sharpen its edge. Today I stand here with a great deal of concern about how the government is handling this crisis, that this has sharpened its edge for many.

We have been called back to this chamber to consider Bill C-15, An Act respecting Canada emergency student benefits (coronavirus disease 2019). This is the government's third piece of legislation, as Senator Woo just pointed out, in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

I must say that I find this to be an unusual way of dealing with what the government itself has called an "emergency." We are six weeks into the virtual shutdown of our economy and the government is still meandering along, taking a piecemeal approach to the crisis by dribbling out patchwork measures that leave gaping holes.

They call it an emergency, but they don't act like it is one. The Prime Minister himself has been snugly holed up in his cottage for weeks, while front-line workers put their health, lives and families at risk in order to protect our most vulnerable.

Every morning, colleagues, people across the country leave the safety of their homes to ensure that Canadians can continue to be supplied with essential tools and services. They include supermarkets, grocery stores, gas stations, laundromats, postal services, funeral services, financial services, telecommunications, transportation, agriculture, health care, social services, the list goes on and on. But for weeks, while Canadians were courageously showing up for work every day, our Prime Minister took a pass and stayed home.

Political leaders around the world have been working from their offices. Even British Prime Minister Boris Johnson returned to his office after being in a hospital for a week. Why was Canada's Prime Minister at home for so long? He says we are in an emergency but he doesn't act like it. Colleagues, this pandemic is an emergency, but it is an emergency handled so badly by this government that the human cost and the economic costs are already much higher than necessary.

You might think I'm being unfair or maybe I'm just trying to score political points, but I assure you that I am doing neither. This government may not be responsible for the global pandemic — and indeed they are not responsible for the global pandemic — but they are absolutely responsible for the fact that they could see it coming down the road and did nothing to steer us out of its path.

We don't have time to go through the entire timeline. That would be a good job for national inquiry at a later date. But let me point out a couple of things. First, this government badly mishandled its preparation prior to the pandemic.

In 2014, the Public Health Agency of Canada established guidelines for dealing with the Ebola virus. This included designating 28 Ebola hospitals across the country, pre-positioning the necessary supplies, establishing procedures for transporting Ebola patients to those hospitals and proactively assessing the needs of the provinces and territories in order to either provide support from the public, from the Public Health Agency of Canada's National Emergency Strategic Stockpile or facilitate bulk purchasing.

Five Ebola virus disease Rapid Response Teams were established, each consisted of seven subject matter experts, including a team lead, a field epidemiologist, an infection control expert, a biosafety expert, a laboratory expert, a communicator and a logistics expert. These teams were ready to be deployed upon request, to work with provincial, territorial and local health authorities. They would assist with providing public health surge capacity, additional resources and complementary expertise to prevent any further spread of the disease.

All of this was put in place before a single case of Ebola had been detected in Canada. How could we have been so well prepared in 2014 and so ill-prepared now? But it didn't stop there. The Public Health Agency also had the foresight to establish Ebola quarantine measures for international arrivals. They said:

• (1600)

All travellers coming into Canada with a travel history from the outbreak regions will need to be monitored for up to 21 days. Quarantine Officers will require these travellers to report to a local public health authority in Canada and will provide travellers with instructions on how to report and an information kit. The kit includes a thermometer to check their temperature twice daily for up to 21 days.

These, colleagues, were not suggestions for self-isolation. This was not a mere pamphlet. Travellers were required to take action and monitored to ensure that they did so. If travellers showed up at the border with symptoms, the guidance went even further:

Travellers. . . who are presenting symptoms will be immediately isolated, and sent to a hospital for a medical examination. The Quarantine Officer will coordinate patient transfers with provincial and local public health authorities.

The hospital would then determine what further measures are required.

If travellers did not have symptoms but may have come in contact with someone who did, they were given an information package, ordered to report to a public health authority immediately and required to self-isolate for 21 days.

If travellers were considered low risk and had no known exposure to the Ebola virus, they were also given an information package, ordered to report to a public health authority within 24

hours and monitored every day for 21 days. They were required to check their temperature twice daily and report any symptoms they developed.

Remember, colleagues, this was in 2014. Without wanting to get on to my political stand, does anyone recall who was in government in 2014?

Six years later, we had a new prime minister. On January 25, as the coronavirus was spreading like wildfire around the world, our Health Minister, Patty Hajdu, assured Canadians that the government was taking all necessary precautions with international travellers by putting messages on arrival screens in the airports, placing an additional health screening questionnaire on electronic kiosks used by international travellers and handing out a brochure.

I wish I was joking, colleagues.

There was no effective screening, no quarantining of international travellers, even if they were flying from Wuhan, China, the epicentre of the outbreak. Instead, we were told that the virus does not respect borders.

This is strange, because as far as back as 2003, the National Advisory Committee on SARS and Public Health was warning that:

Human migration has been a key means for infectious disease transmission throughout recorded history. However, the volume, speed, and reach of travel today have accelerated the spread of infectious diseases.

The report continued:

SARS has illustrated that we are constantly a short flight away from serious epidemics.

This, colleagues, is from a public document. It was not some briefing note buried under 17 years of dust and government inaction only to be unearthed through an access-to-information request. It was in plain sight, and I have no doubt that the Prime Minister and Health Minister were aware of its contents.

Yet, on February 17, almost a month after COVID-19 had arrived in Canada via an international flight, our Health Minister stood up and insisted that the closing of the borders was "not effective at all."

A few weeks later, on March 5, when asked if Canada would take steps similar to Australia and require international arrivals to self-isolate for two weeks, the Prime Minister repeated that our open borders were the right approach. He said the following:

We recognize there are countries that make different decisions. The decisions we make are based on the best recommendations of the World Health Organization and the tremendous health experts who work within Canada and around the world. . . . We know that keeping Canadians safe needs to be done in the right way and we're going to keep doing things that actually keep Canadians safe.

“Doing things that actually keep Canadians safe.” I have some difficulty with that comment. I suspect the families of the more than 3,000 Canadians who have passed away due to this pandemic might feel the same.

But what is most troubling about all of this is that the government not only ignored the advice given to previous governments but it ignored the advice given to its own. In August 2018, the Public Health Agency of Canada released a publication entitled *Canadian Pandemic Influenza Preparedness: Planning Guidance for the Health Sector*.

It contained the following observation:

The federal government is responsible for:

. . . exercising powers under the Quarantine Act to protect public health by taking comprehensive measures to help prevent the introduction and spread of communicable diseases in Canada. Such measures may include, but are not limited to, the screening, examining and detaining of arriving and departing international travellers, conveyances. . . and their goods and cargo.

So, on the one hand, this government was told in 2018 that it was responsible to do whatever was necessary to slam the door on a potential pandemic, and yet, as late as March 11, Minister Hajdu was still scolding Canadians that a virus does not know borders.

If this inconsistency doesn't bother you, you should know that it does bother a great deal of Canadians.

It's interesting that this line didn't originate with Minister Hajdu, though. It was first voiced by the director of the World Health Organization on February 27, 2020. It didn't take Canadians long to notice that this parroting of WHO lines wasn't an isolated incident. Much of what was coming from the government was an echo of the WHO.

In fact, when asked about this at the Parliamentary Health Committee on January 29, Dr. Theresa Tam said:

Right now, let's say, WHO does not recommend travel bans, and any measures that a country is to take must not be out of proportion to the risk and must not inappropriately impact travel and trade. We are a signatory to the international health regulations and we'll be called to account if we do anything different.

This suggested that, in no uncertain terms, Canada should follow the directions of the World Health Organization, even at the expense of the lives and the well-being of Canadians. Incredible, colleagues.

And yet, this policy was in direct conflict with the government's own guidance in its 2018 *Canadian Pandemic Influenza Preparedness* publication, which stated the following:

As pandemic viruses emerge, countries face different risks at different times and should therefore rely on their own risk assessments, informed by the global phases, to guide their

actions. The uncoupling of national actions from global phases is necessary since the global risk assessment, by definition, will not represent the situation in each country.

In other words, colleagues, Canada should have been paying attention to what was happening around the world and then made its own decisions according to what was best for Canada, not the WHO.

The suggestion that we had to be in lockstep with the WHO was directly contradictory to Canada's own health policy and has led to significant harm to Canadians. It is one of the many failures of this government in its management of the coronavirus pandemic.

If you are going to steer your country straight into the face of an oncoming crisis, the least you could do is prepare for it. But the Liberal government could not be bothered.

Instead, they not only ignored two decades of advice regarding international travel, quarantines and mandatory screening, they also cut funding for pandemic preparedness, destroyed millions of masks and other medical equipment and did not bother to replace them.

• (1610)

As the pandemic was breaking out globally in February, they added insult to injury by shipping 16,000 kilograms of personal protective equipment to China that had been set aside to protect the lives of Canadians.

Global News reported yesterday that this shipment was sent even though senior Canadian bureaucrats had been alerted in January that China was hoarding personal protective equipment and ended up importing more than 2 billion safety masks. This created a critical shortage of PPE around the world and right here at home.

When hospitals and care homes had to later scramble to find supplies, our government told us everything was fine. China was going to send us a fresh supply. Sure enough, true to their word, China sent us two empty plane loads and then a shipment of a million defective masks.

You can't help but wonder how long it will take this Prime Minister to realize that the communist government of China is not Canada's friend.

Colleagues, for a government that claims to be led by science, the Liberals couldn't have gotten it more wrong. They could see the pandemic coming down the road toward us and they did nothing to adjust our course. I have said it before and I will say it again: While the virus walked, flew and drove across our borders, this government was asleep at the wheel.



Regrettably, the government's incompetence did not end there. Not only did they mishandle the preparation prior to the pandemic, but they are now leaving a swath of unnecessary damage as they bungle their response to it.

Instead of taking clear, consistent and transparent decisions, the Prime Minister has established a troubling pattern of announcing programs before he knows how they are going to work, followed by furious backtracking. He then consistently changes the eligibility criteria, causing additional anxiety for Canadians who are trying their best to cope with a situation that is already extremely stressful.

Almost every day the government has a new announcement. But when you get on the daily technical briefing call at 4:30 in the afternoon, departmental officials struggle to answer questions about how the program will be delivered.

Many of us have been on the calls, and you know this to be a fact. After CERB was announced, public service employees were thrown out front to address questions they had no answers to. They had to keep saying "the policy is under development and we'll get back to you on that."

This, colleagues, is not the fault of the public service employees. They are doing an incredible job under the circumstances. It's like they've been tasked with building a plane that the government has already launched into flight. I think any successes that can be pointed to are undoubtedly due to our incredible public sector employees who have responded to this crisis admirably. I cannot say the same about this government.

Pick any one of the programs they have launched and you'll find the same thing. Either they are hastily cobbled together and full of holes or they are riddled with variables that are intentionally left to be determined by regulation at some later date.

You don't have to go far to see this. Just take a look at the bill before us today. It is full of wild cards which can be determined by regulation, including who can receive the benefit — Senator Carignan already alluded to this — how much they can earn and still be eligible for the benefit, what income makes them ineligible for the benefit, how long can they receive the benefit and even the amount of the benefit.

I understand the need for some flexibility, but this seems excessive. There is no doubt that our students need help. That is not the question. We will, as Senator Carignan has said, later today pass this bill. We will not stand in the way of this bill being passed.

The question is this: Why does this government insist on drafting legislation that gives itself sweeping powers without adequate oversight by Parliament?

I must admit, as bad as the draft of this bill was, it came nowhere near the draft version of Bill C-13. Before being amended, the bill proposed to give the government extensive power to tax and spend without parliamentary approval until December 31, 2021.

If they had succeeded in ramming that through, they may as well have prorogued Parliament for a year and a half after that because we wouldn't be needed. Only a government that has a level of admiration for China's basic dictatorship would think of a thing like that.

Colleagues, without fail, you hear the same concern every day on the technical briefing calls: The programs are not working. Too many people are falling through the cracks. This, colleagues, is true.

Take the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy. The economy has now been shut down for six weeks, and it was only four days ago that businesses were able to apply for this program. The government has been warned over and over that it is taking too long to get assistance out to businesses, but it seems to fall on deaf ears.

After they announced the shutdown without having a plan in place, businesses didn't know what to do. Many concerned employers felt they had no option but to lay off their employees so that they would at least be eligible to claim EI benefits.

Then the government suddenly did an about-face and announced that they were going to implement a 10% wage subsidy. Two weeks later, after we told them repeatedly that was not going to be sufficient, they announced the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, which would cover 75% of wages.

Colleagues, you will recall me asking the Minister of Finance, Minister Morneau, during our Committee of the Whole about that and he said, no, they were not going to do that.

Obviously that was better, but what about the people already laid off? What about the one million people who already applied for EI? What about employers' salaries? What happens if they are paid by dividends instead of a salary? What about front-line health workers who work multiple part-time jobs? What about, what about, what about?

Some of these questions still aren't answered.

Then there is the Canada Emergency Business Account. That's where the government will loan up to \$40,000 to businesses. The problem is it's only available to some businesses, those with at least \$20,000 in payroll.

This is a problem. Newer family-run businesses typically have no payroll because family members do all the work without a salary so they can pay off debt and build up the business instead.

What about the sole proprietorships? Sorry, you don't qualify.

What about business owners who pay themselves by dividends? Sorry, you don't qualify.

What if you're a sole proprietor with one employee that earned less than \$20,000 last year? Sorry, they don't qualify.

What if you launched your business late last year and although you have a number of employees, the total payroll didn't reach \$20,000? Sorry, we can't help you.

The program is supposed to be a safety net, but it has holes so big that you could fly a government plane loaded with PPE headed to China right through it.

But that's not the only hole. Under the government's criteria, small businesses must have a pre-existing business account to qualify for CEBA. This is problematic because sole proprietors typically use personal chequing accounts rather than a business account. Governments should not be punishing business owners because they have the wrong type of bank account or because they put their revenues into the company instead of paying themselves or because they have fought through the COVID-19 lockdown to keep serving customers and employing workers.

No matter which program you look at, it's the same thing, hastily cobbled together and full of holes. Consider the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance Program. It was rolled out with great fanfare after business owners had been pleading for help from the government for over a month. But it didn't take long to realize that it was also full of holes, and that for many business owners, it was going to be too little, too late.

• (1620)

For starters, a business has to be able to show that they have had a 70% decline in revenue. Any business that has not lost that amount gets nothing, including those whose revenues have fallen by 50% or 60% while they struggled to stay open during COVID-19.

This means that to get rental assistance, some businesses will need to shut down completely in order to drop their revenue by 70%. How does that help anyone? It's a design flaw that will force some businesses that have remained open to close or grind their operations to a halt in order to qualify.

But even if you have had a 70% drop in income, business owners still cannot apply for the assistance. It's entirely dependent on whether their landlord wants to make use of the program or not. For many businesses, their second rent payment since the beginning of the shutdown is due today, and they have no idea whether they will be able to access the rent assistance or not.

But it's not just the business owners that are trying to figure out this program; the landlords are as well. The program requires landlords to reduce their rent by 25% for April, May and June. And in Ontario, they have to agree to forego any profit during that period. Furthermore, if your commercial property is not mortgaged, it's unclear if you even qualify for the program. Those landlords are being asked to contact CMHC to discuss the possibility of other options.

In a word, it's a mess. Of course, you won't hear that from the government. All we get from them is fanfare and hoopla. But whenever you scratch the surface, you find a different story.

Take agriculture, for example. Agriculture is taking a huge hit right now. What has the government done? Well, two things: First of all, they reneged on a promise to put off the implementation of Bill C-4, the act to implement the agreement between Canada, the United States of America and the United Mexican States.

If you recall, this legislation was fast-tracked in this Senate because the government felt the legislation had to receive Royal Assent prior to the adjournment of the House of Commons and the Senate due to COVID-19 global pandemic.

Conservatives agreed — we all agreed — to move forward on this legislation based on one important condition: that the new deal come into force only after August 1, 2020. This date marks the beginning of the dairy calendar year. Had this date been respected, it would have allowed the dairy industry to save about \$100 million.

Seven weeks ago, this government looked us straight in the eye and said they would not ratify this deal early. Then, on April 3, Minister Freeland went back on her promise, and the treaty will now come into force on July 1; \$100 million that would have remained in the Canadian economy and strengthened the economic resilience of our dairy farmers, flushed down the drain. Don't forget; this is in addition to \$330 million in perpetual annual losses to the industry as a result of the CUSMA agreement.

At a time when the nation is reeling under the impact of the economic shutdown, the Trudeau government decided that they wouldn't keep their promise and wouldn't stand up to protect Canada's dairy industry.

You don't have to take my word for it, colleagues. Let me quote to you from the Dairy Farmers of Canada press release:

The Dairy Farmers of Canada and the Dairy Processors Association of Canada confirm today that, not only were parliamentarians misled by the Trudeau Government, but they too were misled on the date of implementation of Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA). As such, they echo the concerns expressed by the Honourable Don Plett, Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, who indicated he had a commitment from the government on the date.

The dairy sector had secured the support of parliamentarians to have the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement . . . come into force in conjunction with the beginning of the dairy year (August 1, 2020). This would have allowed the sector a full 12-months of exports per the negotiated concession for year-one threshold limit on key dairy products, before being constrained by the significant reduction conceded in year two of the agreement. As part of CUSMA, Canada not only transferred to the US part of our domestic dairy production, but it also agreed to self imposed limits on exports of key dairy products.

“Our government was first out of the gate to give notice to the other parties that it was ready to implement CUSMA. The dairy sector was informed at the last minute and judging by the reaction from the opposition parties, we weren’t alone in this being a complete surprise,” said Jacques Lefebvre, CEO of Dairy Farmers of Canada.

Colleagues, this is a serious breach trust that I find outrageous and we should all find outrageous.

The Prime Minister has been preaching, from Rideau Cottage hideaway, that all of us need to take a Team Canada approach, and then he stabs the dairy industry in the back. It’s unbelievable.

It is regrettable that although the Prime Minister likes to talk about a Team Canada approach, he doesn’t actually walk the walk. At a time like this, all parties should be at the table offering their ideas and input, rather than wrestling with the Prime Minister just to get him to show up at Parliament and show up for Question Period.

If he needs some ideas on how this works, I suggest he reach out to Premier Legault in Quebec or to Premier Higgs in New Brunswick. Premier Legault is meeting twice a week to consult with the leaders of the three opposition parties. Premier Higgs struck a special cabinet committee on COVID-19 and included all three leaders of the opposition parties in its membership.

Our Prime Minister, when he meets with the opposition leaders, he clearly leaves out the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Why is that such a difficult thing for the Prime Minister? Canadians are all pulling together to defeat this virus, and it is beyond me why the Prime Minister insists on being partisan and exclusionary during this critical time.

I must say I find this government’s attitude quite disturbing.

The second thing this government has done to help agriculture with the impact of the coronavirus might surprise you. Last month, they made a big show of announcing that they were increasing the lending capacity of the Farm Credit Corporation by an additional \$5 billion.

What they did not say was that this program wasn’t going to cost the government a nickel. In fact, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, the government will extract an additional \$96 million out of the agriculture industry through it. In other words, the government’s assistance to agriculture so far has cost the industry close to \$200 million.

That’s the kind of help our farmers could do without. For producers who are being choked by supply chain issues, declining revenue and uncertain markets, the government is just tightening the rope a little further.

They don’t seem to understand what farmers need. They don’t seem to understand what businesses need. They don’t seem to understand what Canadians need.

Just look at the track record: Every piece of legislation they introduce to address the coronavirus crisis disincentivizes people from working, even if there is a critical need for essential services.

The rent assistance encourages business owners to cut their business back to hit the 70% loss-of-income target. The CERB program makes it more attractive for people to stay home and collect a cheque, rather than take a paying job that is as an essential service. The legislation before us today did nothing to encourage students to work when work is available, until the Conservatives insisted on it.

• (1630)

Colleagues, I am not criticizing our students. We have thousands of students who want to work, without question. We have students who are afraid to go back to work, without question. But programs that encourage people to stay home rather than work does not help our economy.

There are businesses across the country that would jump at the chance to hire a student, yet instead of figuring out how to connect students with jobs and get valuable job experience along with a paycheque, the government comes up with a program focused only on putting cheques in the mail. Is that valuable? Yes, but it is also short-sighted.

So Conservatives insisted on several changes to the legislation, including requiring the government to connect all applicants to the Canada Job Bank and provide them with job availability information before applying. Measures like this should be automatic, not something the opposition has to push for. Jobs are valuable, not just because they provide an income but because they keep the economy running, provide untold spinoff benefits and provide students with invaluable work experience. We recognize that, in much of the country, unemployment rates are extremely high due to the pandemic and a great many jobs are simply not available.

Canadians, including students, need real help right now. But no government program should be a government program that encourages Canadians not to go to work. We need to be clear that, wherever possible, the government needs to provide students with employment opportunities and not just government aid. That is why the Conservatives proposed that the government create a program to match students and youth employment with jobs in the agriculture and agri-food sector, including fish and seafood.

Like the Canada Summer Jobs program, this program would cover the minimum wage of a new student or youth employee. This wage could then be supplemented by an additional stipend paid by the employer. Businesses looking to augment their existing workforce this year would have an opportunity to apply immediately. Employers would be required to ensure that proper workplace safety measures are in place to protect all employees.

Many agriculture, fish and seafood businesses rely on the Temporary Foreign Worker or Seasonal Agriculture Worker Programs. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year, these vital sectors are facing significant labour shortages. While local labour can fill some of the gaps without support, Canadian producers and processors from coast to coast will struggle to maintain essential food supply chains.

The question I have is: Why isn't this just instinctive for the Liberals? Why are they happier to leave people idle even when work is available and needed? Do they not understand how the economy works? Do they not realize that there are employers and businesses who desperately need workers, even in the midst of the pandemic? Why are we subsidizing temporary foreign workers while at the same time encouraging our own students to stay home so that they can get a cheque from the government? This makes no sense.

Colleagues, the government's mismanagement during this crisis is concerning. They have done what few people could have imagined; they have taken an extremely difficult situation and made it even worse. Rather than softening the blow, they have sharpened its edge through inadequate preparation and a patchwork of poorly planned responses. Not only has this raised the level of anxiety and stress for Canadians, but it leaves us wondering where things go next.

After steering us straight into the path of the pandemic and fumbling their way through it, how are Canadians supposed to have any confidence in this government or, indeed, parliamentarians, that they can now steer us out of it?

Colleagues, the COVID-19 pandemic will soon be added to the history books, along with other very difficult times, such as the Great Depression. There is no question that historians will review the government's handling of this crisis with a very thorough and critical eye. At this point, it does not look like the judgment will be very rosy, but for the sake of all Canadians, I hope this changes soon.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer is now telling us that the deficit is going to be \$252 billion. I think that bears repeating. The Parliamentary Budget Officer is telling us that the deficit this year is going to be \$252 billion. And we are not finished yet. We are hearing that the government is going to come forward with another package to help large businesses and industry, which will probably be the biggest package we have seen yet during this pandemic. As we have always feared, colleagues, the cure seems to be far worse than the disease.

[Translation]

**Hon. Claude Carignan:** Would the Leader of the Opposition take a question?

[English]

**Senator Plett:** Yes.

[ Senator Plett ]

[Translation]

**Senator Carignan:** You very clearly and realistically described the current state of affairs. I am very impressed by your speech. Could you explain how it came to be that one disaster was created to respond to another?

[English]

**Senator Plett:** Thank you very much, colleague. Well, listen, as I said at the start, the government was asked over and over, "Are we doing this right? Should we close the borders?" Our Prime Minister said, "No, we don't need to close the borders. We don't need to stop Asian and European flights. We don't need to stop any of these flights from coming into Canada."

We see that when other countries took those decisions — the countries that came through this the best — the first thing they did was close their borders, and we were told that the borders do not stop this virus from coming across. The fact of the matter is, if people are not coming across, they are not bringing the virus across.

My personal opinion, Senator Carignan, is that should have been number one: That our Prime Minister should have, first of all, been in his office engaging with his cabinet and making the right decisions. To me, that would have been the first decision that I would have thought was very realistic and certainly the right one to take.

[Translation]

**Senator Carignan:** Leader, do you believe that the man at the helm of the current government, Mr. Trudeau, is the right man to fix this disaster?

[English]

**Senator Plett:** Of course, Senator Carignan, far be it from me to be partisan on a comment like that, but let me tell you, I had somebody from the Canadian Press ask me a similar question earlier today — and it might be in the newspaper tomorrow, I'm not sure — but no, my answer is that our Prime Minister was not qualified to do this. He was not interested in doing this. That is my opinion. And I think he has shown his lack of interest in the fact that he has not been in the office doing the job.

**Hon. Peter Harder:** Honourable colleagues, it's an honour for me to rise to speak on Bill C-15. First of all, I want to congratulate Senator Gagné on her sponsorship for the first time, I believe, of a government bill. I wish her all the best on this bill and going forward.

Second, I want to thank Minister Qualtrough and her excellent deputy minister, Graham Flack, for their impressive testimony this afternoon, and more importantly, the diligent work that she, her officials and their department are doing in the face of this circumstance.

Before I begin my brief remarks — and they will be brief, Senator Plett — I want to be very clear that I do not view the students of Canada as being lazy cheats sitting on their butts waiting for a government handout. That image is one that doesn't correspond to my understanding and experience with students.

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

**Senator Harder:** Let me say at the start of my remarks that I support this bill and urge all senators to do likewise. It is important that our students, who are our collective future, remain focused on their studies and continue to pursue higher education to better equip them in the innovative economy of the future, which is their future.

• (1640)

However, I would like to focus my remarks on what I believe is a significant and unaddressed gap in our post-secondary support measures. The absence of a comprehensive approach to foreign students is a major shortfall, and I would like to speak about this and propose a solution for the government to consider.

I understand the political reasons the House of Commons might not think it prudent to include all foreign students, but I do not understand a public policy reason. The test that we should have before us as we look at the various measures government is undertaking is the following: Are we investing to make Canada a stronger player in the global economy after COVID-19?

Warren Buffett had a great line. He said, "You never know who's swimming naked until the tide goes out." Without taking that image too literally, I suggest that our post-secondary funding model is unsustainable, and COVID-19 is the receding tide that is exposing major sustainability challenges to our colleges and universities across Canada. Canada has one of the most diverse international student populations, with 146 nations represented in 2017. While this diversity has declined somewhat in recent years, 65% of all students originate from the following five countries: China, India, South Korea, France and Vietnam. The majority of international students — 84% — are enrolled in Ontario, British Columbia and Quebec, and these three provinces have consistently hosted the largest number of inbound students.

In 2017, 75% of international students in Canada were pursuing post-secondary studies, of which 57% were studying university programs, 41% were studying at the college level and 2% at CEGEP. Students at the primary and secondary levels made up 15% of all international students in Canada, while 10% were pursuing other studies.

In 2017, the Government of Canada's International Education Strategy goal of receiving 450,000 international students by 2022 was surpassed five years earlier than anticipated. This is an achievement that brings with it great opportunities but also great challenges. In 2018, more than 721,000 international students studied in Canada.

Canada is a destination of choice for international students. Strong schools and programs of study in English and French; a welcoming and diverse community to host students; an enviable quality of life; a reputation as a safe country; opportunities to

work and start careers; and pursue permanent residency, which is an option for international students. In 2018, 24,000 former students became permanent residents.

International education makes a large and growing contribution to Canada's prosperity. In 2018, the last year for which there are figures, international students in Canada contributed an estimated \$21.6 billion to Canada's GDP and, in 2016, supported almost 170,000 jobs. Educational expenditures by international students have a greater impact on Canada's economy than exports of auto parts, lumber or aircraft.

This is a significant business sector.

Between 2014 and 2018, the number of international students in Canada increased by 68%. In 2018, as I said, a total 721,000 international students studied in Canada.

In addition to sparking new ideas and increasing Canada's innovation capacity, international education fuels the people-to-people ties crucial to international trade in an increasingly connected global economy. As I stated earlier, international students contribute significantly to the Canadian economy.

A good chunk of that goes directly to the educational institution in terms of fees. While it is true that a truly great or even good institution in Canada cannot exist without international students, researchers or faculties, we have used this virtue almost as a narcotic in our post-secondary funding model. At my alma mater, the University of Waterloo, 21% of the undergraduates are international students. Their higher fees contribute an oversized proportion of university revenue. The same is true across the university and college landscape. At UBC, for example, international student tuition ranges from \$39,000 to \$50,000, depending on the program, compared to around \$5,000 to \$8,000 for domestic students.

My point is that without stable and significant international enrolment, our institutions will be facing huge funding gaps, with the most perilous situations in a few of our colleges and universities.

Here is a proposal: I'm informed that at the end of March, there were about 565,000 international students in Canada. Given the imposition of travel restrictions, it is believed that about 80% of this number remains in Canada. Experts tell me that about half or 50% will be experiencing some financial shortfall and not be eligible for CERB measures already announced. Let's say that's roughly 300,000. It is estimated that about 50% of this group are attending universities, 40% are at colleges and 10% at other post-secondary institutions. If we use the figure of \$5,000 per student, which this bill provides a Canadian or landed immigrant, and multiply it by the 300,000 uncovered international student population already in Canada, that's roughly \$1.5 billion.

I would urge the government to consider taking this amount and, working with national post-secondary associations, provide funding to financial aid offices of our educational institutions, which in turn will provide support to those identified as requiring some degree of financial assistance to continue studying in Canada. These offices are best able to determine the need. They are trained, experienced, and have the credibility and integrity to administer such assistance.

Of course, no individual international student ought to receive more than the \$5,000 available to a Canadian student, and some may not need all of the \$5,000. This program, if implemented, would ensure some degree of stability to our colleges and universities, but more important, it would differentiate Canada from those countries with which we have competed for world-class students; namely, the United States, Australia and the U.K.

Calling young people “vermin” is not a recruitment strategy, and Prime Minister Morrison of Australia, who issued a statement to the international students to “make your way home,” will long be remembered for that short-sighted and rather xenophobic comment. In the longer term, we need to begin to reform our university and college funding, but in the short term, let’s act to save the benefits we have achieved thus far with this proposal.

**Hon. Robert Black:** Honourable senators, I rise today to speak at third reading of Bill C-15, An Act respecting Canada emergency student benefits (coronavirus disease 2019).

I have agreed with many of the points made today, and I will briefly add my voice to the debate.

Let me be clear: I’m very glad support is coming for post-secondary students who are mostly left out of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit. Unfortunately, student education has been greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, with the closing of college and university campuses. Additionally, many students have lost part-time jobs due to the crisis, and many will have difficulty finding work this summer.

This legislation will allocate \$1,250 a month to each student and \$2,000 for those with dependents or with disabilities, over a period of four months. This funding will be very helpful for many students, and it is a step in the right direction.

This program will be especially beneficial for students in rural communities, where there will be fewer grocery stores and essential businesses that will be hiring and where distance makes it harder to travel.

Nonetheless, I do have some concerns. I know that it will be very difficult for students to find jobs this year, given the situation. However, many sectors will still be hiring. In fact, some are crying for help; for instance, the agricultural industry needs workers. No word can describe what I’ve been hearing from the industry and from stakeholders more than “desperation.”

Even though the government has allowed temporary foreign workers to enter the country and is providing them with accommodations during their 14-day quarantine period upon their arrival in Canada, there will still be fewer now than in other years.

• (1650)

Producers are in need of employees now for help with harvesting crops, planting crops and other work. The processing sector needs people as well. We’ve all heard that meat-processing plants have had to close or reduce capacity because of a decrease in staff.

Food security is a major concern throughout this pandemic. The agricultural sector needs to remain strong in order to maintain the security of the supply chain. Therefore, we need to keep agricultural jobs filled so that the work necessary to keep our industry afloat can get done.

The Government of Quebec has offered students an incentive of \$100 per week to help farmers, but will the Canada emergency student benefit prevent them from doing so? Will this benefit remove their motivation to find summer employment?

This is a question that concerns many of my colleagues from Quebec, including the Honourable Senators Verner and Dagenais. I hope that the availability of this emergency student benefit will not discourage students from applying for jobs that are available and that the labour shortages in many sectors were considered when drafting this legislation.

The bill, as drafted, outlines that students are eligible only if they are unable to work due to the coronavirus, are looking for work but can’t find it, or are working but making less money than the benefit would provide. I am certain that most Canadian students will honour these eligibility requirements and will still work if they are able to, but we must expect that there will be some who will not search for jobs, knowing they have this benefit coming.

In fact, my colleague the Honourable Jean-Guy Dagenais shared with Minister Qualtrough earlier today that employers who had received summer employment applications and subsequently offered jobs then heard back from these individuals, saying they were withdrawing their applications. This leaves these potential employers now scrambling to find new applicants.

The government is also expanding federal job opportunities for students. I hope this will encourage more students to apply for summer jobs, which, apart from allowing them to earn income, also provides students with experience in their fields and better prepares them for life after graduation.

I’m also slightly confused as to why the benefit for students is less than that for other Canadians who have lost work. Students still have to pay rent and utility bills, cover groceries and other costs, yet this benefit only provides students with \$1,250 per month, compared to \$2,000 per month for persons receiving support under the Canada Emergency Response Benefit.

The initial legislation also allocated \$1,750 for students with dependants and students with disabilities. That was increased to \$2,000 each with an amendment in the other place earlier this week. I'm glad the amendment was passed, but I still wonder whether \$1,250 will be enough for students who are unable to find work.

Another concern raised by my colleagues today is the impingement on provincial jurisdiction. However, following Senator Verner's question earlier today, we did hear that the federal government will keep consulting with provinces and territories.

Overall, I'm happy that this legislation will address the needs of Canada's post-secondary students. They should not be punished for their choice to pursue higher education and for this crisis that none of us could have predicted or prevented.

I will vote in favour of the passage of this bill, and I hope it will do what needs to be done to help our students. I do, however, think more needs to be done for other Canadians, including the agricultural sector, which is struggling. I hope we will be back here soon debating a bill for emergency relief for farmers. That is my true hope. I know that others in this chamber — my CSG colleagues have discussed it and I'm sure we're not the only group to do so — are supporting funding for agricultural workers as well.

Honourable senators, the important issues I have raised about the measures proposed in Bill C-15 will need to be carefully reviewed in the long term in order to assess their impacts resulting from the implementation of the bill. In this regard, I want to remind you that this chamber approved, on April 11, 2020, the establishment of a special committee on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. This committee was proposed by the Canadian Senators Group and agreed to unanimously. I remind you that its mandate includes an assessment of the various impacts caused by the pandemic, Canada's level of preparedness, as well as initiatives that have been undertaken to address this crisis. The committee will also carry out a broad consultation of Canadians to determine the challenges and specific needs of various regions and communities.

The Canadian Senators Group is looking forward to this review to be carried out by a special committee, which is expected to commence in the fall of 2020. Like I said, I hope we're back here in very short order to do something for agriculture going forward.

Thank you. *Meegwetich*.

**Hon. Raymonde Saint-Germain:** Honourable senators, the bill we have before us today is of great importance for students across the country, for whom the COVID-19 pandemic has also brought its share of constraints. It is part of a series of extraordinary measures and complements those that have been more urgently needed for other citizens and businesses due to the loss of income caused by this pandemic.

From the outset, I would like to highlight the great collaboration, since the beginning of this extraordinary crisis, between the federal government and the various levels of government of the country, as well as with the four opposition

parties in the House of Commons. In a federation like ours, with multiple orders of government, it is often complex to work in harmony. Yet, we stand in solidarity during this crisis and we are uniting our efforts to counter this pandemic. I therefore wish to congratulate all the different governmental actors for their sustained work.

This collaboration is not only that of the federal, provincial and territorial governments, but it is also that of the provinces among themselves. I'm thinking in particular of Quebec, Ontario and New Brunswick, which share common borders and have been able, from the first moments of this crisis, to coordinate and properly anchor the application of their preventive measures in order to better protect their respective populations. Beyond the immediate neighbours, I also think of Alberta, which has shown altruism and generosity by donating a large amount of medical equipment to other provinces, including Quebec.

I am very aware of the great complexity of these coordination efforts, as well as the anchoring of all these measures. It is important for me to underline the need to stay the course on consultation with the provinces and territories.

[*Translation*]

Reading this bill, I noticed several harmonization issues. In particular, I noticed an inconsistency between the measures it proposes and Quebec's initiative regarding temporary work, and I wholeheartedly agree with what Senator Robert Black and the Canadian Senators Group have said about the lack of harmonization with Quebec's proposed measures.

On April 17, the Quebec government announced that it would be implementing an incentive program for temporary workers who are willing to help farmers. This program offers a \$100 weekly top-up to workers who take jobs in the agriculture sector for the planting and harvesting seasons. The goal is to recruit students who need to work over the summer to support themselves and, among other things, pay for the next year's tuition.

It is important to implement financial measures to support students, because many of them are in a tough spot right now.

I share the Premier of Quebec's concern that the measures proposed in this bill could inadvertently have a negative impact on recruitment in the agriculture sector, a sector that, I would remind you, is an essential service and is being severely tested by the labour shortage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It therefore seems obvious to me that, for this particular aspect, the federal and provincial measures have not been harmonized as well as they could be. I think it would have been a good idea to base this bill on incentives to access the labour market rather than on financial compensation alone.

Let me be perfectly clear. In saying that, I am not implying that this bill fails to meet its objective or that it wrongly assumes that students will act in good faith. On the contrary, I echo the sentiments of the Prime Minister of Canada by recognizing the hard work, good will and honesty of students.

• (1700)

However, I think that the bill could have been improved by including work incentives, which would have also helped vulnerable economic sectors such as agriculture as well as the service economy, in particular health care services. We all recognize that these sectors have been particularly affected during this time of economic uncertainty. I do want to acknowledge that the bill contains significant measures to protect these programs from fraud and abuse. These measures must absolutely be monitored throughout their implementation. That is very important. We don't want to end up seeing fraudsters who were not eligible for the program being later required to refund the money they took.

We cannot study this bill without considering its impact on vulnerable groups, such as students with a disability, as Senator Munson mentioned earlier, students with dependents, First Nations students, and some international students. Students with a disability and students with dependents are offered an additional \$500, yet some international students are left out of the bill.

Although I understand the need to impose limits on such compensation and that not all international students can be eligible for this type of program, the fact remains that many are in a precarious situation because it is difficult to continue earning an income during this crisis. In this regard, I commend the government for removing the restriction that allows international students to work a maximum of 20 hours a week during the school term in essential sectors, as part of its economic action plan to respond to COVID-19. However, this does not offset the negative impact of excluding international students, which is underestimated. I will shorten my speech because I wholeheartedly support the comments Senator Harder made in his speech a few minutes ago.

I would like to remind senators of the considerable and positive contributions of international students to universities and Canadian society. They make very positive contributions across the country.

Furthermore, once they complete their studies, many of these students choose to start the process of becoming permanent residents. They will therefore continue to enrich our country as full members of our society.

Dear colleagues, some who came to our country as students now serve Canada in our Parliament, in the House of Commons and in this chamber. They came from other countries and found a home here.

[English]

They came from elsewhere. Canada is now their home.

[Translation]

Creating the Canada Emergency Response Benefit for those who have a right to work and who pay taxes, both federally and in their province or territory, could have been and should have been a wise investment.

[ Senator Saint-Germain ]

To conclude, I would argue that, when it comes time to draft the regulations to implement this bill, more consultation and better harmonization with the provinces and territories are needed in order to take all of their specific circumstances into account.

That said, overall, this bill does include some positive measures for both students and the Canadian economy.

In these uncertain times, the positive impact of these measures largely outweighs the counterproductive effects of their flaws, which is why I will be supporting Bill C-15. Thank you.

**Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu:** Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Bill C-15, An Act respecting Canada emergency student benefits, for students who have lost and will lose income for reasons related to the pandemic.

First I want to pay tribute to the Canadian Forces members of NATO who recently lost their lives in Nova Scotia. As a member of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association, I am very saddened by this incident.

I also want to pay tribute to all the victims who sadly were not spared by this COVID-19 crisis and to offer by sincerest thoughts to all the families who are grieving the untimely death of one or more of their loved ones.

I want to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all those who continue to work courageously, often under difficult and sometimes inhumane conditions, to ensure that Canadians get the essential services they need, and to acknowledge the arrival of our soldiers who are now working in seniors' residences in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada.

Honourable colleagues, as I mentioned in my previous speech in this chamber, I am once again very concerned about the government's ability to manage our economy and our safety in these times of crisis. The choices the Liberal government has made with respect to safety, health and the economy raise many questions that remain unanswered.

Esteemed colleagues, I too have been wondering about the government's response to what were very clear signals and intel about a pandemic emerging in China. As early as mid-January, the Government of Canada was alerted to the potential threat of a looming public health crisis by its own intelligence agencies and the WHO. Why did the government choose to send part of our stockpile of PPE to China? A few years ago, a Senate committee produced a report in which it expressed serious concerns about the significant level of risk this kind of pandemic could pose to Canada.

By choosing to send our medical equipment to China, the government undermined our ability to protect our health care workers and jeopardized the safety of all Canadians because of a medical equipment shortage. Was that the government's only option? We have a minority government; why wasn't the opposition consulted about this?



In mid-March, when we began imposing comprehensive social distancing measures across the country, the government announced a 10% wage subsidy for businesses. Those businesses immediately criticized the measure, which they felt was a totally inadequate response given the magnitude of the crisis.

As a result, Parliament had to be recalled a few weeks later to approve the creation of a wage subsidy that was five times bigger. The new version boosted the subsidy to 75% and required companies to hire back their staff. This exercise provided a swift and blatant demonstration of the government's failure to consult with businesses.

Another topical issue that all of my colleagues who are here today should be worried about is the haphazard management of our borders. In early March, when the crisis was already raging around the world and many countries were closing their borders, the government stubbornly insisted on keeping our borders open, despite sustained calls from the official opposition.

Under public pressure, the government finally decided to shut down our borders, but far too much time had already passed. Here was another questionable decision that came under heavy criticism, given that the first cases of COVID-19 were known to have come from abroad.

Again, Canada could have been a leader under the circumstances. Instead, once again, this government's bad decisions will cost us dearly, both in terms of money and, sadly, of lives lost.

I brought up these facts in this chamber because, one week ago, the government issued an order-in-council allowing more asylum seekers to cross into Canada. This means that a number of asylum seekers have already come to the Canada-U.S. border and we are therefore at risk of welcoming people infected with COVID-19 to Canada. One example is the Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle border crossing, not far from Roxham Road, on the border of New York State, a state that has been hit very hard by the virus.

Jean-Pierre Fortin, the national president of the Customs and Immigration Union said, and I quote:

Our officers have a lot of questions about their health and safety. These people have travelled through several countries before arriving at the border, and they are at greater risk of being infected.

Why is the government in such a rush to reopen our borders? Why would it willingly take the chance of putting its own population at risk when we're still having trouble containing the pandemic here, when our health care workers are exhausted and when too many lives already hang in the balance?

• (1710)

Colleagues, we should question the government on the choices it makes that may compromise the health and safety of Canadians, including members of your own families, your spouses, children and grandchildren. Protecting our population's

health and safety is not only our shared duty and desire, but it is also part of the honour and privilege of having a seat in the upper chamber.

Again with regard to public safety, I want to come back to a subject that I've already spoken about. I've yet to receive any answers to my questions about how the Parole Board is freeing inmates and the supervisory role it plays in our communities.

In my last speech, I talked about a victim who felt they had been wronged by our justice system when they learned that observers were no longer allowed to participate in Parole Board hearings. Victims and their loved ones have a fundamental right to participate in parole hearings, and that right is being denied because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A few days ago, Lisa Freeman, an Oshawa resident whose father was murdered, contacted me to tell me about the injustice that she'd suffered. Despite her insistence and in violation of her rights, she was denied the opportunity to attend her father's murderer's parole hearing on the grounds that the board no longer allows observers because of the pandemic. Oddly enough, the recording that the Parole Board supplied to her shows that two observers were present. One of them was the murderer's parole officer.

The Canadian Victims Bill of Rights gives victims a number of basic rights, including the right of participation. The Parole Board is not honouring the principles in the bill of rights, which, I should note, supersedes the board's rules because it is a supra-constitutional statute. Paradoxically, the Minister of Public Safety is invoking the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to justify releasing incarcerated criminals early because of the very same public health crisis.

However, what concerns me the most, honourable senators, is the response given by Minister Blair to the MP representing Ms. Freeman's riding, Colin Carrie, who was telling the minister about the Parole Board infringing on the rights of victims. The minister said he had issued a directive for victims to be able to attend hearings remotely online. Just yesterday morning, the Ombudsman for Victims of Crime confirmed that no minister's directives were received by her office. However, for several weeks now, victims have been complaining that they're being excluded from Parole Board hearings. Someone lied to Ms. Freeman: either Minister Blair or his officials. One thing is certain: Under this minister, ignoring victims' rights has become the norm.

Another troubling issue, which I read about recently in *La Presse*, is that some penitentiaries in Canada are experiencing COVID-19 outbreaks. At this time, we have no information on the number of people or the kind of offenders who have been released. We have no information on the measures the government has brought in to supervise any offenders who might present an immediate danger to the safety of Canadians.

As of April 25, Correctional Service Canada reported 244 COVID-19 cases in correctional institutions across Canada and, fortunately, only one death out of nearly 14,000 incarcerated offenders.

Correctional Service Canada personnel are front-line workers and, like other front-line workers, they also deserve our recognition and our respect for their tireless work and dedication in a dangerous field.

However, the question of why the minister was so quick to opt for a solution based on releasing offenders that he identifies as non-violent offenders remains unanswered, while three quarters of infected Canadian inmates are in Quebec and almost every single Canadian penitentiary has had no pandemic-related issues.

Colleagues, let's not forget that when we talk about federal offenders, we're not talking about petty offenders. A quarter of them are serving a life sentence or an indeterminate sentence. For the most part, the rest are serving sentences for crimes involving firearms, sexual assault, serious drug trafficking crimes, including crimes such as theft and breaking and entering.

How can a minister of public safety be so sure that offenders incarcerated for having seriously violated the rules of society would suddenly be compelled to follow them, if only to respect the rules of social distancing, once they are released into the community?

How can a minister of public safety believe that inmates who are released early without job prospects will safely reintegrate into communities? Is it a question of being illogical or incompetent?

Consequently, it is important that we caution this minister and the government.

The Parole Board of Canada is an independent administrative tribunal that is legally authorized to exercise its mandate without political interference. These powers are granted under the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and the minister does not have the authority to give orders to the board or the board chairperson. If he did or were to do so, these conditional releases would become political.

Dear colleagues, the Liberal government promised that it would be transparent from the start of this pandemic. It is concerning to note the great lack of information and transparency on issues as important as public safety. The evasive answers to the questions I put to the Minister of Public Safety during our previous exchange were not convincing and, above all, far from reassuring.

In a crisis such as this, there is nothing worse than a lack of transparency. I doubt that Minister Blair can take up this challenge.

Why didn't the government listen to the opposition's recommendations, like its suggestion of giving our correctional system adequate resources and means to keep the penitentiaries safe and limit the release of inmates?

In an article I read this week, I was dismayed, but not surprised, to learn that several inmates had managed to fraudulently obtain the Canada Emergency Response Benefit. Correctional officers at the detention centre in Trois-Rivières intercepted CERB cheques addressed to inmates. That is quite

troubling when we know that law-abiding workers are still waiting for their CERB cheques. This too goes to show how unprepared our leaders are.

As parliamentarians, we need to stay vigilant. The authority and powers we are entrusting to the government must have time limits. I am satisfied with the sunset clause that was included in Bill C-15, at the urging of the official opposition in the other place.

As parliamentarians, we certainly should not be encouraging the government to prematurely embark on inappropriate ventures.

As the crisis evolves, the government has less and less reason to cite an urgent need to act. Canadians have a right to get answers to their questions, to require their government to be responsible, thorough, and as transparent as it is accountable. I know that all senators will be vigilant and diligent about making that happen.

Thank you.

[English]

**Hon. Jim Munson:** Honourable senators, May 1, and here we are approaching almost day 50 of this lockdown — May 1.

The COVID-19 crisis is now in its second season in this country. For most of us, this started when snow was in the air. Many Canadians were planning late winter getaways, and some were still wearing toques. There is still snow on the ground in some parts of this country, but the changes of spring are happening all around us. Like nature, we have adapted and changed to stay healthy.

As the seasons change, so does Canada's labour force. With summer just around the corner, today's legislation addresses the youngest of our workers — students.

The progressive senate group supports Bill C-15, an Act dealing with the emergency student benefits. I want to see our students secure the funds they need to live, eat and continue their education next year. Students needed help and the government has responded.

• (1720)

Even with this financial aid, students will still need opportunities for work experience to help them plan their futures. Student jobs are essential, not just because they pay for student books and cheap beer nights, but because they provide young people with an opportunity to better understand their strengths and abilities.

A number of senators aren't here, but they have been listening to our debates. I do want to quote Senator Lillian Dyck from Saskatchewan, a former university professor emeritus. She wants to make sure this is on the record. She says: Some senators are worried that students will misuse the CESB to stay at home and turn down jobs if they can earn a bit more than through the CESB. However, this assumes that students aren't smart enough to recognize accepting a job provides work experience and potential letters of reference for future employment. If they do

get a job this summer, it would be a great accomplishment that future employers would recognize and they could very well rate those students higher.

Those are the words from Senator Lillian Dyck, listening in Saskatchewan. I have to echo those sentiments. I'm sure that students would absolutely rather work.

I hope, senators, we will not lose sight of the fact that this is not just about replacing income. We will need to seek creative solutions to help students get the work experience they want and need once these social-distancing restrictions are lifted.

In the meantime, I really appreciate the comments of Senator Cotter and Senator Harder. If you go back and listen to what the two senators had to say, they have ideas in real time worth pursuing. I do hope the government is paying attention to these innovative ideas from the two senators.

Unfortunately, it is not only students who are missing out on opportunities during this time. Many of the one in five Canadians who live with a disability are also suffering from isolation, lack of resources and mental health issues.

I am encouraged by the amendments accepted to Bill C-15 in the other place, which gives students with a disability additional monetary support, to the full \$2,000 monthly. It also commits to future support and solutions for persons with a disability, and seniors, for extraordinary expenses incurred due to the COVID-19 crisis. However, monetary relief is just one part of the puzzle.

Before the pandemic, we knew that 45% of people with an intellectual disability felt lonely, compared to 10.5% of Canadians generally.

For Canadians living with disabilities, social distancing means less specialized services and care. High-needs individuals are worried as health care resources are rationed and stretched throughout our system. Their social outings and work opportunities are gone because drop-in centres, family respite and day programs are closed. They are feeling desperate for something to look forward to, and their families are feeling the stress of more responsibility and 24-hour care.

People with disabilities who live in long-term care and group homes are equally feeling the strain of dwindling health care resources and loneliness, making do with minimal care, not able to leave their rooms, and scared of getting sick from COVID-19 because the risk of infection is so much higher in these facilities.

I visited many of these in the last many years. When you're in some of these facilities — long-term care — in terms of people with autism, you could be in a suburban home in Orleans, in a suburb of Ottawa, you could be in Aurora, Ontario, and what you have inside that home is one-on-one help in that home; one-on-one. You're dealing with somebody who is non-verbal, somebody who has anxiety, somebody who has depression. All of that is happening within a very small space. Can you imagine today living and working in that space and feeling protected?

Jonathan Marchand, a Quebec long-term care resident who has muscular dystrophy said, "Currently, we live in total isolation, extreme isolation."

Jonathan fears that even as the government begins lifting restrictions, long-term care homes will be the last ones to go back to the way things were before the pandemic.

He says, "There's no end in sight."

I was just thinking in the words of Minister Qualtrough, who is a champion in dealing with those with disabilities, and the disability community will tell you that. The Accessibility Act, Bill C-81, which we passed here — it will be a beacon, I hope, and during this time it will serve as a template for the future in dealing with all of those with disabilities. But I was struck by her words when she talked about the massive gaps in this country in long-term care homes; the massive gaps that are taking place and the lack of regulation. To me, sometimes it's deregulation and privatization. I heard her talk about the horrible stories that she's heard. So this has to be, to me, a real rethink of how we're going to deal with those with disabilities, from now and into the future.

This crisis has given us an opportunity to see where we have failed. Let's use this awareness to do better. In my view, workers at long-term care facilities must be better trained and qualified, and deserving of full-time positions with higher pay. Full-time positions, working and caring in one home, not going from one home to the other. We know what has happened in nursing homes, with minimal pay and having people move from home to home, and thus infection occurs. This is the same thing happening in hundreds and hundreds of care homes across the country with persons with disabilities.

They need — now and forever — enough personal protective equipment to keep themselves safe. We have failed our workers and, therefore, the people who rely on them. This has been a tragedy waiting to happen.

I would also like to thank Senator Deacon and Senator St. Germain and Senator Seidman for their words and support today in talking about not losing sight of the fact of people with disabilities in our country. We really have to keep a focus on those with disabilities.

Long-term care workers do more than provide personal care, medical services and feeding. They also fill the roles of companions, family liaisons and community access for individuals with disabilities. They are the lifelines for the people they serve.

Today, in a very public forum, I thank every long-term care and personal care worker for their commitment and care for the people we love. Thank you.

But I know the best way for us to show our gratitude is to push for change.

In Ontario, about 3,000 people live in long-term care homes because of their disability needs. It is estimated that over half of them are under the age of 65. Many, like Jonathan in Quebec, would rather have assistance to live at home with their families, where they feel included and can fully participate in their communities. We should listen to their voices.

Honourable senators, in closing, I'm looking forward. We need to change how we care for Canadians with intellectual and physical disabilities. We have to have a total rethink. We have to look at Canada's most vulnerable citizens, especially in these long-term care settings.

Canada needs a wake-up call, a wake-up call in caring for those with lifelong disabilities. This is not about the forgotten few but the forgotten many. Thank you.

**Hon. Marty Deacon:** Honourable senators, today I rise to speak to Bill C-15, an Act respecting Canada Emergency Student Benefits (coronavirus disease 2019).

While I'm grateful for this federal plan to help our young Canadians, this benefit also exposes and opens a must-have conversation about our students and their families.

What does the world like for our students these past two months? A pandemic. An unknown virus. Schools being closed. Routines being turned up on their heads.

This is a time of year when students are wrapping up. Our post-secondary students should be winding down their studies, celebrating the finish of the academic year and preparing for their summer jobs. For our high school students who are graduating, it's a time of year when they are usually embracing traditions such as athletic and award banquets, graduations and end of high school celebrations. Instead, there is social, physical and emotional isolation away from friends and social supports. It might seem trivial in light of what is going on, but it is a rite of passage they won't get back.

• (1730)

Graduating high school students are stressed. They are not completing their final courses with rigour, are unsure of what marks are being used, and many are waiting for university, college, apprentice and other program acceptances and trying to sort this out.

This will impact them in ways we cannot yet comprehend. Any young person who is contemplating or building for their entry into post-secondary life must have a profusion of uncertainties running through their mind. They are asking themselves, "How can I pay for tuition and living costs without going into debt, without being buried in student loans? How will this impact my future? Is it worth it? My planned summer job is gone. How do I possibly find some sort of income over the next four months? My

parents have lost income. They are supporting my grandparents and siblings. How can I expect any help? Whom can I talk to? Where can I get face-to-face support in time of isolation?"

These questions, they are for those who find themselves in a favourable position in all of this. For other students, school is and was an escape from an unsafe household. It was a support system. It was a way for them to ask for help, for their educators to pick up on warning signs. With domestic abuse rates rising as society is forced to stay at home, I continually think about the lasting damage this will do to these young people.

I have had the opportunity to speak to advocates, parents, student and university administrators. I have learned that everybody is adapting to an unknown finish line. These conversations have taught me that the financial and emotional pressures are diverse and complex. They include single-income, single-parent families; recent migrants who are only starting to learn the ropes of Canada; families who are supporting children with intellectual, social or physical challenges, who have come to rely on schools as the bedrock of their daily lives. These are only some of the factors that limit full and equitable access and participation to secondary and post-secondary learning.

We also know that we need more youth engaged in training for careers in areas with anticipated labour shortages. This includes skilled trades, information and environmental technologies and artificial intelligence. It is critical that we see students continue their education if we want to avoid falling further behind. What we need are students who have confidence in their future, the ability to find and build a career, start a family and own a home. COVID-19 has caused so many of them to question these deep aspirations.

The legislation before us provides hope for our students. It's estimated that 2.4 million young Canadians will benefit from this. The Canadian Federation of Students has thanked the government for listening to the dire needs of students, saying they have been patient and are glad the government is taking this step to provide some much-needed relief.

That being said, they are hopeful that international students will soon see support in some way. Many of these international students have not been able to return home. They have lost their jobs and have limited access to other financial supports, all while being so far away from their families. International students contribute to Canada's economy, and they would like to be included in these emergency relief measures.

I was pleased to see that the negotiations in the other place resulted in an increase in monthly payments for students with a disability, as well as those with a dependent, to match that of CERB. I still worry, though, that many students who would qualify for this increased payment because of disability will not receive it. We have many Canadian students — it's a reality — who don't come forward and who don't self-identify with a disability. I encourage them to take this opportunity for extra help. The money is here for them.

Hopefully, as I mentioned to the minister earlier, this process will also assist the government in getting more accurate information on exactly how many Canadian students have a physical or intellectual disability. We do need that information.

Beyond the immediate financial relief this legislation will bring, it's important to note that the government has also committed to creating tens of thousands of jobs that will contribute to our recovery. It will extend existing scholarships and grants and is launching a new Canada Student Service Grant.

At the urging of the opposition parties, the government also committed to implementing incentives to connect students to available work. This is very important. I want to ensure we all understand that given the opportunity — you may have heard it once or twice here — most students want to work for their pay. They don't want to lie around and simply collect a monthly cheque. They are motivated, they like to work and they want to build their work experience. Thirty-five years in elementary, secondary and post-secondary education tells me they are not lazy.

For an individual graduating from high school, the economic repercussions of COVID-19 will have brought about the second financial catastrophe in their young lives; our memories are long. I support the steps that we are taking to help Canadians — I don't see any other choice — but the debt that will result will be placed squarely on the youth of today just as they are setting off on their careers.

From a health perspective, as I speak, labs all over the world are racing to find a vaccine for COVID-19. This is not the only medical emergency our young people face. In recent years we have seen the rise of anti-vaccination movements as well as the emergence of antimicrobial resistance to common treatments, a result of decades of abuse of antibiotics in our food chain and in our medical system. A post-antibiotic world possibly means foregoing life-changing surgeries, like organ transplants, for fear of infection. It means a mother having to weigh her health against that of her baby for a routine caesarean section. It means a return to a time when a cut or scrape could be much worse.

And, of course, we all know there is climate change. We have seen a disruption of seven weeks can do to our economy. Millions of Canadians have lost their jobs; businesses have closed their doors, and some will never open again.

Let this crisis shake us out of our complacency and misplaced belief that we can simply work our way around the dramatic effects climate change will bring. We will find a vaccine for COVID-19 and we can get back to business in a newer normal, but there will be no such fix for the changes brought by a warming climate. Relative to a human lifetime, those changes will be permanent. What we do today will determine just how devastating those changes will be. This is an opportunity for us to do the right thing collectively. We must reset our country now; we must serve nationally.

I say this, colleagues, because these and other looming crises are still facing down our young Canadians. While we often pay lip service to them, we have been slow to act. For many of us, we will not see the full effects, but what COVID-19 has shown us is that our way of life is fragile and that the course of human history is not guaranteed to be one of ever-increasing health and prosperity. We are here today to help our students. Let's not forget them when we return to our new normal, whatever that may look like. If we are serious about making a better future for

our young people — every one of them — we need to step up and take on these challenges. If we do not, by the time they are able to take them on themselves, it just might be too late.

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

**Hon. Leo Housakos:** Honourable senators, I rise to speak on Bill C-15, An Act respecting Canada emergency student benefits. I would like to use my time today to comment somewhat less on the bill itself and more on some of the broader elements of the government's response to the current crisis.

What concerns me is much of the government's response has retreated toward what is most familiar: spending vast sums of money; providing officials and ministers with broad, even unparalleled, authority not only to spend that money but to decide exactly who gets it and in what amounts; and toward familiar mantras in relation to where we go in the future, seemingly toward even greater globalism, bigger government and, by implication, toward less democratic and parliamentary oversight as government grows ever larger.

[Translation]

These approaches are reflected, at least in part, in the bill before us today. For example, these measures will certainly involve considerable expenditures. We do not know exactly how much they will cost because the amount of the benefit and the number of recipients are not yet known. However, we can expect at least \$9 billion in additional spending.

The bill also gives the minister considerable power in determining who the recipients will be. The amount of the benefit will be set by regulation. Recipient post-secondary institutions will be prescribed by regulation and the amount that an individual can earn while remaining eligible for the benefit will be prescribed by regulation. All of these issues will be the sole responsibility of the minister and his officials.

• (1740)

[English]

I am pleased that my Conservative colleagues in the other House were at least partially successful in placing some limited parameters around the government's request for wide regulatory discretion.

Specifically, the legislation now at least incorporates a requirement that the government connect all applicants to the Canada Job Bank, it mandates a parliamentary review and institutes a sunset clause. These provisions provide at least some limitations on the government's authority.

As I have stated before, I do not object to helping those who are in need during the current crisis. That is necessary and legitimate.

[Translation]

What worries me is the tendency to do as much as possible by regulation with a minimum amount of oversight and a rather cavalier attitude toward spending, which is typical of this government's approach. That is why I suspect that the government believes it can get us out of this tight spot simply by increasing spending during the crisis. To date, I have not seen anything that would lead me to believe that the government is seriously trying to understand how we got here and how to prevent such a terrible crisis from happening again.

Over the past five years, the government increased the federal debt by over \$100 billion. That means that we were in a more precarious situation at the beginning of the crisis than we were in 2015. What is more, the Parliamentary Budget Officer indicated that another quarter of a billion dollars will be added to the federal debt in the coming years.

[English]

This is why I'm suspicious that the government believes it has to do little more than spend its way out of the current crisis. I see little sign so far that serious questions are being asked about how we got here and how we avoid such a terrible crisis in the future.

Instead, what I see is a government and its supporters retreating to what is familiar. For instance, what does the current crisis tell us about the failings of the globalist agenda of the current government? About how it has approached relations with regimes that have been less than forthcoming with necessary information during this crisis? Do we see any willingness on the part of the government and its supporters to even ask such questions? Because, make no mistake, Canadians will certainly be asking such questions very soon.

We do know that there were some serious failures on the part of the World Health Organization during this crisis. Certainly we know that many prominent figures, including immunologist Maria Van Kerkhove and, of course, Dr. Li Wenliang, who tragically died from the virus, tried to give clear warnings concerning the rapid spread of the virus. Yet in mid-January, the WHO put out a tweet, citing Chinese studies that there is "no clear evidence of human-to-human transmission." Boy, do we know that is wrong.

We also know that on January 22, the World Health Organization Emergency Committee, which included Canada, was divided on whether to declare a public health emergency of international concern. We know that this decision of the committee on January 22 was at least heavily influenced by China, which was firmly against declaring a public health emergency.

[ Senator Housakos ]

Professor Wesley Wark, a noted Canadian security and intelligence expert, who has testified before the Senate's National Defence and Security Committee on several occasions, has commented that:

When we began to get information coming out of China about the outbreak in Wuhan, we were entirely dependent on one stream of open source reporting, basically, and that reporting was coming from the Chinese authorities, controlled by the state, through the World Health Organization (WHO).

I am not saying that this should lead us to stark solutions related to Canada's relationship with the WHO, but it should at least require us to be open to the organization's shortcomings and about the political realities that have governed how that organization has been operating.

However, I don't see such honesty and frankness from the government. We saw that in a simple question I asked of the minister earlier today; all I got was basically pushing it to the side, there wasn't need, I don't know, so on and so forth. We simply don't know why, despite its shortcomings, the WHO seems to have entirely framed the timing and nature of Canada's response.

Some states — Taiwan, for example — adopted their own national approaches based on their own analysis that did not rely solely on the WHO pronouncements, as did a few other countries. These were subsequently proven to have been much more reliable.

Israel also took firm national measures early on, weeks before the first Israeli COVID-19 patient was diagnosed. These measures included strict border controls in place in late January, social distancing in February and measures to stock up on the required medical and protective supplies. A country like Greece, right next to the epicentre in Europe of Italy, took similar measures. All of these countries have been lightly hit compared to us and others.

Canada didn't take any of these measures. We didn't build in a bias toward multinational analysis through the WHO. I think it is a question that we need to ask, colleagues.

I recently read a comment by Senator Harder in an article on multilateralism in which he lamented, "We are suffering from a collective breakdown of multilateralism."

I would submit that there is good reason for that. Multilateralism, in its current form and through current institutions, quite simply failed us in this current crisis. I would argue that the Senate should now be in the forefront of asking the hard questions that are becoming increasingly evident as a result of this crisis.

They include: How will we protect ourselves against a similar global health crisis in the future? What steps do we need to take to ensure that we have a higher level of emergency preparedness in Canada than we've seen over the last few months? What steps do we need to take to improve our border security and to ensure that we are able to respond with flexibility and rapidity in a future crisis that emanates from outside this country? What steps

do we need to take to identify goods vital for our national security and ensure that we have secure national or regional supply chains to meet those requirements? What lessons must we take from the current crisis to reduce our vulnerability in the face of global security threats and challenges? And how will we accomplish all of these objectives and restore our economy, which is in miserable shape right now, given more restricted and finite national revenues?

Colleagues, these are important questions that we all need to reflect on and come up with solutions for Canadians.

[Translation]

Some people might find it hard to accept that incomes will be lower for the next few years, but I think we all need to start facing the reality of the tough financial times that lie ahead. I would add that we need to realize that we're entering a new era in which decisions will be harder to make than they might have been in the past. As I said, I think the Senate should be at the forefront when it comes to studying these issues, and this study must be done in a realistic, prudent manner.

[English]

That examination must bring in a cross-section of Canadian opinion. That is the role of a national Parliament and certainly the role of this upper chamber.

In this respect, I would like to quote from a recent article by Carleton University professor Philippe Lagassé, who stated:

. . . the pandemic has made room for an elusive ideal of democracy, one where ideas, not factions, compete to shape government policy and evidence adjudicates between them. . . .

The emphasis is less on government by the people than by the knowledgeable. . . . a fair number of voices insist that this is not the time for Parliament to sit or for political parties to play their usual role. . . . this view . . . should make us a bit uncomfortable . . . The speed with which popular politics and Parliament can be silenced should give us pause. Partisan politics and representative institutions remain the bedrock of Canadian democracy.

Naturally, colleagues, you all know that I agree with that perspective. The Senate must take the lead in examining the issues arising from this crisis that now confronts us, and many of these challenges will only become more difficult as we go forward. But it must do so in a manner where Canadians of all political perspectives are fully participating in this national discourse and that we work diligently, like I said, to come to conclusions to some of these difficult questions.

[Translation]

**Hon. Julie Miville-Dechéne:** First of all, I firmly believe that we need to help students during the COVID-19 crisis. However, I also believe that the government has a duty to prioritize support for students from more modest backgrounds and students who are living with a disability or who have family responsibilities.

• (1750)

Even now, far fewer students from disadvantaged backgrounds pursue their studies compared to students from more affluent families. In Quebec, 179,000 students, or one third of all college and university students, received financial assistance in 2016-17. Clearly, they are the ones most in need of help. Doubling scholarship and grant funding is therefore an excellent idea.

What worries me about these new support measures is the fundamental difference between the Canada Emergency Response Benefit for workers who have lost their jobs because of the pandemic, which is conditional and can be checked against T4s, and the Canada emergency student benefit, which is available to all students who claim they have looked for work, regardless of their previous income or eligibility for loans and scholarships.

In Quebec in 2016, the employment rate for students aged 15 to 24 during the school year was 45%, one of the highest in the country. The employment rate rose to 52% in the summer. This means that thousands of Quebec students who have never worked in the summer can expect to receive the benefit if they attest they looked for work.

I realize that in an emergency situation it is harder to target certain categories of students. How do we minimize the indisputable economic impact of the CESB, which disincentivizes students from working?

According to the disposable income calculations of two economists at the Université de Sherbrooke, Luc Godbout and Suzie St-Cerny, that were published yesterday, a Quebec student who works 21 hours a week this summer would earn \$336 less a month than a student who receives the benefit. What is more, it is more advantageous for a student to get the benefit while earning less than \$1,000 a month than to work full time at minimum wage, 35 hours a week.

That is certainly not to say that students would necessarily choose the easy route, but that is the risk. According to a Canada-wide survey commissioned in 2014 by Senator Diane Bellemare, 61% of respondents aged 18 to 34 said they would like to live without having to work. The results of this survey seem to indicate that the desire to work often develops with age.

I would like to briefly respond to my colleagues, Senator Harder and Senator Woo. Having concerns about the terms and conditions of the student benefit does not mean, at least in my case, that I have a superficial and negative view of the work ethic of all students. It depends on the student. They are not a monolithic group where everyone acts in the same way. Unfortunately, there are some troubling indicators, and we cannot delude ourselves.

In Quebec, the government and employers have sounded the alarm because they are already having problems hiring as a result of the announcement of the Canada emergency student benefit. Waterwell, a Montreal irrigation company, stated the following:

The recruitment of workers has always been difficult, we work in a sector that is very physical. But this year, the response rate, it is almost zero! It is said that there are more jobs, but this is not true.

Sylvain Terrault, president of the Quebec Produce Growers Association, is very concerned because, in his opinion, it makes no sense to train students throughout the summer when they will only work part time to keep their benefit.

Quebec's health sector has a serious shortage of workers in seniors' homes and hospitals. Students who want to work part time so that they do not lose their benefit won't be hired, since these places are looking for full-time workers to avoid too much turnover and increased risk of contamination.

To send a clear message to students, the federal government made an addition to the second version of its bill, requiring that students attest to the fact that they are seeking work. I asked for clarification on the scope of this attestation from the federal Department of Employment, and I was told that the program works on the honour system and has no other requirements. I was told that students will not be asked to state in their application for benefits the specific employers to which they have applied for work.

I was encouraged by Minister Carla Qualtrough's comments earlier, when she said she'd look into requiring that students indicate which jobs they've applied for on the form. I hope that the government can fix some shortcomings in the bill and tweak it through regulation to limit any negative impacts.

The situation is completely different for students who live in regions in which there are no available jobs. For them, the Canada emergency student benefit will be a lifeline and will also allow for money to be reinjected into the economy. For the others, I hope that my concerns will prove to be unwarranted and that students will heed the call of employers. Quebec has chosen to reopen part of the economy in May, labour needs are picking up and we need young people to participate in the recovery. It is not just a matter of finances, but of civic duty. Thank you.

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

[English]

**Hon. Mary Coyle:** Honourable senators, today we gather a third time in this chamber to consider and debate another bill designed to support Canadians as they deal with the unprecedented and wide-reaching impacts of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic.

Previously, we came together to pass legislation in order to support people in Canada who had lost their jobs and to support Canadian businesses that had lost significant income and couldn't pay their workers. Today we are considering Bill C-15, a bill designed to provide income support to students, our young people, those who are unable to find work due to COVID-19.

Colleagues, this new bill is the latest effort by our federal government to meet the needs of those left vulnerable by the pandemic. The pandemic has laid bare the situations of many vulnerable groups in our society and around the world: those in long-term care homes, accounting for a tragic and shocking 79% of COVID-19 deaths in Canada; people with disabilities requiring home care; Indigenous and remote populations; our incarcerated citizens; women and children at risk of abuse trapped in unsafe homes; and people living in poverty in Canada and the global south.

Vulnerable groups are the ones we need to pay special attention to and provide extra care, supports and protection. This is what enlightened and humane societies do.

The success of our overall pandemic response will be judged on how well we did in caring for these groups. While we may not think of students as necessarily being a vulnerable group they, like the other workers, supported through the two previous emergency response benefits, are vulnerable economically and their overall sense of well-being is very much at risk.

Our economy and society are also at risk if these important present day and future contributors do not receive the timely and adequate supports they need now.

The support provided through Bill C-15 is designed to help students pay for their food, their rent and fall tuition expenses, and also to put their minds at ease.

Exactly four years ago today, I had just returned from taking four St. Francis Xavier University students on a trip of a lifetime to Haiti. What different times we were living in then. One of the student leaders, Rebecca Mesay from Calgary, was scheduled to walk across the stage at the convocation this Sunday. She invited me to attend. She became president of the student union and is one of the brightest and most dedicated students I have ever met. She told me that, given the uncertainty and the contraction of the summer job market, she needs and will apply for the new Canadian emergency student benefit. The CESB will provide much-needed support to her and many Canadians. She is one of up to 1 million students and recent graduates who are expected to apply for this very important benefit.

A further 800,000 are deemed eligible for the CERB. The projected 1.8 million students are a significant proportion of the estimated 2.1 million post-secondary students in Canada.

• (1800)

In addition to the new CESB, the government has: increased its Canada Summer Jobs program; introduced the new voluntary service grants; doubled grants for the fall for low- and middle-income students; increased loan amounts available; reduced to zero the student contribution amounts for eligibility; and provided significant and much-welcomed extra funding supports for student research. An additional \$75 million investment has been pledged to the Post-Secondary Student Support Program, Métis Nation Post-Secondary Education Strategy and the National Strategy on Inuit Education.



These wraparound complementary supports will provide important incentives for students to continue or commence their studies this fall. That's what this is about: encouraging them to continue.

When seeking feedback on the CESB from students and their representatives, the overall response was positive, and in fact, many of these groups had vigorously lobbied the government for this critical support. The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations said "CASA was pleased to see that an investment was made to capture students not covered by the CERB. This is going to be a difficult summer for students, with many struggling to find the work necessary to pay for their tuition in the fall."

Adam Brown, Chair of CASA, said:

\$9 billion in aid is a great sign that the federal government cares, and is listening to the needs and concerns of students during this unprecedented time.

Later he added:

... key to ensuring that all Canadian students and recent graduates are protected during this pandemic, ready to return to classes and the workplace once physical distancing measures are reduced.

Clancy McDaniel, Executive Director of StudentsNS, said, "Overall, this is an incredible and welcome initiative. We are a province where many of the jobs in tourism, hospitality and food service have dried up as a result of COVID-19. Therefore, the CESB will go far here."

Positive improvements to the original CESB program include incentives for students to seek employment where possible and also a higher level of funding — \$250 more per month than had originally been announced — for students with disabilities and those with dependents.

The main concerns expressed by students about the CESB are that the benefit is lower than the \$2,000 CERB and that international students have been left ineligible for this benefit. Sofia Descalzi, National Chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students, said it's a myth that all international students are wealthy, and many of them are now in a precarious position without a source of income.

I can certainly verify her point. Many international students I have known over the years, particularly those from Africa and other regions in the global South, work long hours throughout the school year and then through the summer, without getting to go home, to be able to pay for their highly prized university education.

Many universities, like Cape Breton University, also rely on international students as an important source of tuition revenue for their own financial stability. These students also enrich the campus experience for Canadian students, and many stay on to become important members of our communities. As Cape Breton University President David Dingwall, recently pointed out, it is estimated that in 2020, international students will stimulate

\$22 billion in annual economic activity in Canada. This was further reinforced by my colleague Senator Harder in his remarks earlier.

We don't know how many international students stayed in Canada due to the pandemic, but we do know that many of those who did will need support. Some international students may be eligible for the CERB, but many will not be. Honourable senators, this is a significant and disappointing gap in this highly valued package of student supports.

Related to student support is the issue of the financial vulnerability of the universities and colleges they attend. We still don't know whether students will be able to attend face-to-face classes again in the fall. Many of the smaller residential universities, where the advantage of the educational model includes close relationships with professors and living on campus, are at particular risk. Kevin Wamsley, President of St. Francis Xavier University, is projecting millions of dollars in lost tuition, residence and food service revenues if the university is compelled to continue with the online learning platform that had been quickly put in place to enable students to finish the current academic year.

Although most universities receive funding from their provincial governments, well over half of their funding can be generated through these other private sources. For the moment, universities, which are non-profit charitable organizations, have not been deemed eligible for the new wage subsidy. However, this and other possible supports can be revisited if the pandemic continues to cause severe disruptions for this highly valuable sector.

Just as Canada will need its dynamic and innovative students to rebuild post-pandemic, we will also need these important educational and research institutions to reboot our knowledge economy and help us find our way toward our new normal.

In closing, I am supportive of Bill C-15 and the income support it provides for our students. I hope many students will manage to find jobs and be able to help out in critical areas such as agriculture and, where safe, the COVID response. But realistically, this significant investment in our next generation is absolutely crucial.

As many students across Canada are finishing up their academic year and looking into the future — especially those who are disappointed to be missing out on the immediate celebration of their hard-earned accomplishments at convocation this spring — let's demonstrate to them that they matter and that we are here for them.

[Translation]

Honourable colleagues, let us pass this important bill. Thank you. *Wela'liog.*

**Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond:** Before I speak to Bill C-15, which we are studying today, I'd like to extend my deepest condolences to the Quebec families who are witnessing more and more long-term care home residents succumb to the pandemic every day. Yesterday alone, we lost 92 residents. To make matters worse, this trend will continue for several more days, or maybe weeks, because more than 4,000 care home residents have contracted COVID-19.

In January, I lost my own father, who lived in an excellent long-term care home. Despite his failing faculties, he was still a big part of the lives of his wife, children and grandchildren. Unlike all the families currently mourning the loss of a mother or father, we got to say goodbye to him one last time. Today, not only is the pandemic claiming parents' lives, sometimes under appalling conditions, but it is also depriving families of the chance to say their last goodbyes and arrange a proper funeral.

To all those going through such a tragedy, I hope you don't lose heart, but look ahead to better days. To all those taking care of residents in long-term care homes, you have my utmost admiration and my sincerest thanks.

I will now move on to the substance of Bill C-15.

There's no doubt that the pandemic justifies the implementation of unprecedented health measures in order to protect not only our health system but also the most human lives possible. These measures have largely paralyzed the Canadian economy; are throwing us into a recession; have disrupted the normal functioning of society, cities and regions; and have thrown the daily lives of families, sick people and those living alone into upheaval.

Millions of jobs have been lost, millions of families are worried about their future, millions of people are understandably anxious, millions of students are unable to go to school and learn, and who knows how many women and children are being exposed to domestic violence that has been exacerbated by being confined to small spaces.

Many of the harmful effects of this pandemic will not be remedied quickly or easily. One of these will be felt this summer, when hundreds of thousands of students across the country will be unable to get summer jobs that will help them to earn money to pay for their education and meet their needs.

• (1810)

In the interest of social justice, it is therefore only natural that our country seek to compensate for the disadvantages these young people are experiencing as they're temporarily deprived of work opportunities through no fault of their own. This is a short-term measure whose objective is not to replace our current social programs, nor is it meant to establish a minimum basic income. That is an extremely complex issue that should be addressed by the elected officials in the other place and in provincial legislatures.

[ Senator Coyle ]

Parenthetically, I would note that section 53 of the Constitution Act, 1867, clearly states that money bills must be introduced in the House of Commons, not the Senate. If there is to be any debate on a guaranteed minimum income, it must take place among elected officials. The potential financial consequences are far too serious and too huge. That said, I think the purpose of Bill C-15, which is a temporary measure, is entirely appropriate, and I wholeheartedly support it.

Even so, we have to make sure that this new support program, no matter how worthy its goal, has no unintended consequences. My colleague, Senator Miville-Dechéne, talked about this earlier. Any regulations the government makes regarding this program must ensure that claimants are encouraged to consider employment opportunities first, even employment opportunities they weren't aware of. I'm therefore pleased that the government is planning to let people know about available positions and direct claimants to the list of available jobs in their area.

I would also encourage the government to ensure that this program complements provincial programs. This new student benefit program must not invalidate provincial incentive programs, such as the Government of Quebec's push to support people in the agri-food industry, which my colleague, Senator Saint-Germain, mentioned earlier.

More specifically, as I did during question period with the minister, I urge the government to ensure that the \$100 a week that the Quebec government is offering to anyone who agrees to become a temporary farm worker is considered not as a salary under the regulations, but as a separate provincial benefit that doesn't count towards the \$1,000 that a person can earn per month without being penalized.

I would also ask the minister to reconsider the "all or nothing" model proposed for the \$1,000 income. Wouldn't it be better to adopt a percentage-based system that would encourage people to earn more and that would allow for a total of \$2,000, like the Canada Emergency Response Benefit? Then a student could earn \$1,500 and also receive \$500 through the student benefit.

Lastly, I think the government should reconsider the possibility of including international students, like those who worked in Canada perfectly legally last summer, are still living in Canada and are enrolled in a university program that starts in September 2020. These people live here, work here alongside us, and should be eligible for this program because they are still pursuing their studies in Canada.

In closing, I thank the minister and the government in advance for considering these elements when they finalize this temporary but very important program.

Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

[English]

**Hon. Rosa Galvez:** Honourable senators, I rise today to speak in support of Bill C-15 and make comments in relation to the overall economic response measures launched by the government to attenuate the impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bill C-15 is another emergency financial aid package aiming to help Canadian students. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, right or wrong, has defended his decision not to create a universal basic income for all Canadians. He said his government's approach has been to try to target its emergency financial assistance in stages to those who need it the most, rather than to everyone at once. Indeed, workers, students and small- and medium-sized enterprises fall into this category. They are among those who need urgent help.

But because of the compartmental nature of the economic assistance, on the one hand, there are still Canadians affected by the COVID-19 crisis who have fallen through the cracks, and, on the other hand, it is important to make sure that the measures are applied in fairness and with transparency.

[Translation]

This week in the House of Commons, the Prime Minister flip-flopped on the issue of support for companies involved in tax avoidance and tax evasion. I urge the government to commit during this crisis to take practical measures to close the tax loopholes and, more broadly, to ensure tax fairness to fairly fund the economic recovery following COVID-19. That is all the more necessary given that the Parliamentary Budget Officer estimated in the report he published yesterday that, even though the federal aid is necessary, it could cause Canada's debt-to-GDP ratio to balloon to more than 48%. The generation of students that we have decided to help today are the ones who will be paying off that debt.

The governments of France, Denmark and Poland banned companies doing business in tax havens from receiving COVID-19 bailouts. France and Denmark are also preventing recipients of government aid from using those funds to pay dividends to shareholders or to buy back their own shares. These conditions are completely necessary to avoid the mistakes made in previous corporate bailouts.

We're all aware of the debt we're racking up to provide this aid, and we need to find solutions for recovering the lost revenue.

Canadians for Tax Fairness estimates that Canada loses at least \$8 billion every year to corporate offshore tax evasion. Simply put, recovering that money could have almost fully funded the much-needed student support measures in the legislation being adopted today.

While we must support all Canadians through this crisis, the government must take steps to ensure that federal funding does not boost the profits of companies and CEOs that have avoided paying their fair share.

[English]

We can be reassured by Minister LeBouthillier's statement that corporations with revenues over \$5 million asking for wage subsidy support would have to go through additional checks from the Canada Revenue Agency. However, will the same happen with the corporations that will be supported by Export Development Canada, Business Development Bank of Canada and the Canada Account? Will the Canada Revenue Agency

share information about the hundreds of individuals and corporations under investigation with those entities? What are the conditions attached to corporate support?

During the Forty-second Parliament, Senator Percy Downe proposed Bill S-243, An Act to amend the Canada Revenue Agency Act (reporting on unpaid income tax), a small yet highly efficient and prominent action that can assist with mapping, monitoring and assessing chronic fiscal imbalances, an initiative that I wholeheartedly supported.

The fact that such action has not been taken voluntarily by Minister LeBouthillier is more than disappointing to all Canadians.

Responsible financial experts' advice is that there should also be prohibitions on corporate stock buybacks, executive bonuses, golden parachutes and shareholder dividend payouts for at least a couple of years.

Further, companies that receive support should limit total executive compensation for any manager or executive to \$1 million.

• (1820)

Earlier this year, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives highlighted that Canada's 100 highest-paid CEOs made 227 times more than the average worker in 2018, surpassing all previous records and contributing to growing wealth inequality in our country of Canada.

Honourable colleagues, the emergency response to this crisis must support people, not elitist privilege. We have seen this practice in the recent past; we must put mechanisms in place to avoid them.

The need for strict conditions and transparency, I am afraid to say, honourable colleagues, is not provided for in the current legislative framework. Well before this crisis, Export Development Canada, a major conduit for COVID corporate support, was heavily criticized, including by none other than the former minister of trade Jim Carr, who pointed out mistakes and urged the institution to "improve its human-rights, transparency and anti-corruption practices" in an interview with *The Globe and Mail* in September 2019.

Beyond EDC, Canada has among the weakest corporate transparency rules in the G20. We must change that. We have a very steep governance-transparency hill to climb, and I hope this crisis gives us the motivation to do so. I look forward to working with the government and my colleagues on the National Finance Committee on these very important issues.

I am also concerned that low-income and vulnerable people relying on the dozens of support programs will not get their support if they cannot file their taxes on time, a task which is made almost impossible with the closure of volunteer tax clinics due to the pandemic. I implore the government to waive the tax-filing conditions for those programs or to further delay the tax-filing deadline.

I would like to end this intervention by quoting an April 27 article by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, IPBES.

The article in its reflection on COVID-19 response measures states:

It may be politically expedient at this time to relax environmental standards and to prop up industries such as intensive [mechanized] agriculture, long-distance transportation such as the airlines, and fossil-fuel-dependent energy sectors, but doing so without requiring urgent and fundamental change essentially subsidizes the emergence of future pandemics.

Dear colleagues, let's support the reset of a more inclusive, equal, cleaner and sustainable society and economy.

**Hon. Donna Dasko:** Honourable senators, I'm pleased to rise today to speak in support of Bill C-15, An Act respecting Canada emergency student benefits (coronavirus disease 2019). And also it's wonderful to see all of you. I'm really happy to see you all today.

The emergency benefit for students will allocate \$5.2 billion from May through August, which according to an agreement between the parties in the other place, translates into \$1,250 per month for eligible students and \$2,000 for eligible students with dependents or disabilities.

The spending included in this legislation is accompanied by promises of another \$3.8 billion in grants, research funding and interest-free loan deferrals that are not included here today.

I thank the minister for being here today. I thank her for her comments, and although it's clear that the legislation has flaws and that there are aspects that are still not known, I think it's a piece of legislation that we must support today.

The legislation is an important step toward providing young people with financial confidence in these challenging times.

Senators, I recall when my children graduated high school and university just a few years ago, and how memorable these events were. The transition from post-secondary to the workplace is particularly important and should be an exciting transition for young people. However, research has shown that if graduating students enter a labour market and an economy that is failing or in recession, the negative effects can last a lifetime. I have been thinking about that a lot when considering this legislation.

We have asked so much of young people these last few months as we have focused on the health crisis and the more vulnerable, older populations. We have asked young people to put their aspirations aside, to put their lives on hold and to stay at home. Imagine how hard it would be at the age of 18 to do all of those things. While we must financially support students at this time, we must also rebuild the Canadian economy to give our younger generations the opportunities that they have worked so hard for and that they deserve.

This support package today reminds us that the COVID-19 crisis has impacted almost every segment and every layer of Canadian society. The federal government has now allocated almost \$150 billion for direct supports for individuals and businesses across many sectors. Also \$85 billion is going to income and sales tax deferrals, and liquidity supports will be about \$500 billion.

The costs are enormous. I am encouraged, however, by new projections from the Public Health Agency of Canada, and I'm encouraged not just because I love algorithms. The research shows that Canadians have, by and large, taken appropriate actions to mitigate the COVID-19 crisis, and there is certainly some cause for optimism.

Like other world crises, this one has produced its share of prognosticators. Some futurists look down the road to the next decade or even the next century and predict the end of globalization, the end of multilateralism, as nations circle the wagons and look inward as a result of the crisis. Others see the greater rise of authoritarianism as a result of the crisis. Other futurists predict the opposite, seeing the crisis as a catalyst for a new era of sustainable development and more equitable societies, where poverty and inequality are reduced.

While I find these predictions either disturbing or fascinating, when I look ahead I see neither a dystopia nor a utopia in our future. Rather, as a practical person, I see this as a chance for this country to make some real improvements in the way we work as we move forward. As we rebuild our economy and fill in the cracks of our health care system, let's also deal with three areas where I think we can make positive change, areas which have been exposed during these months of the pandemic.

First, the pandemic has exposed, in the worst possible way, the disheartening conditions in Canada's senior care sector. We've learned, for example, in the new report from the Public Health Agency, that 79% of all deaths from COVID-19 are connected to the long-term care sector. We've heard from experts that when it comes to senior living facilities, it's the conditions of work that create the conditions of care. Poor conditions of work create poor care. Good conditions create good care. We need improved training, better salaries, more staff, and better monitoring and oversight in senior care facilities across Canada.

While the sector is under provincial jurisdiction, the federal government, if it wanted to be bold, could play a major role here by using its spending power — just like it does with the Canada Health Act — to create the conditions for improved regulations, better oversight, more information-sharing, and more and stable funding. That is something we should consider.

A second area which has been exposed in this crisis is the way we deal with health data. Yes, data. It's as simple as that. We need to improve data collection, data sharing and data use.

• (1830)

Let's start with some data gaps and missing data. For example, we do not collect race-based data on incidence or any other aspects of the health crisis. Research in other countries has revealed differences and inequities based on ethnic and racial background, but we can't assess that here. As well, how about low-income workers or those in certain occupations? Are they at greater risk, or are some people more likely to recover? We are missing a great deal of information that we really do need.

Another issue coming from the data world is the difficulty in comparing data across provinces. According to Michael Wolfson, former assistant chief statistician for Canada, the lack of comparable data is hindering our ability to deal with the current crisis. If we had such data, we would have the ability to better inform decisions about when to open businesses, when to return to work and school, when we can get our economy going again, how and where we might move away from physical distancing and many other important decisions.

Mr. Wolfson attributes the problem to a fear of transparency on the part of all governments, as well as the fact that provincial governments especially guard their jurisdictions in health, holding on to their silos of data. Canadian federalism is a beautiful thing except when it's not. Canada is blessed with talented, world-class researchers, research institutes, universities and epidemiologists who can do the research and provide sophisticated analysis and recommendations that we need, but they don't have the right data.

Honourable senators, these data issues are not expensive to fix; and really, does it take a crisis to move us to fix them?

My third area for improvement as we go forward is that Canada should adopt a universal basic income, as Senator Woo so eloquently spoke of earlier. The federal government should join with the provinces to build upon the lessons learned from programs like the Canada Emergency Response Benefit to craft an efficient and accessible minimum basic income for all Canadians.

I have been looking at the public opinion research and I see there is actually a good deal of support for various aspects of this program, so I think it would gain public support.

Universal programs eliminate application processes and reduce administration costs. They can be easily distributed and taxed back. They will save us money. And a universal basic income will advance social equity and will help create a better quality of life.

I am impressed by the work that my colleagues Senators Kim Pate and Frances Lankin have devoted to this. I fully support these efforts, as do many of us in this chamber.

Senators, equity is at the heart of the legislation we are considering today; and given that we do not have a basic income program here in Canada, we must continue to fill the gaps left by the newly created CERB program and our other support programs.

To conclude, in my view, the Canada Emergency Student Benefit program deserves our support, but let's not stop there. Thank you very much.

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

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

**Hon. Senators:** Question!

**The Hon. the Speaker:** It was moved by the Honourable Senator Gagné, seconded by the Honourable Senator Miville-Dechéne, that the bill be read a third time.

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

**Some Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**An Hon. Senator:** On division.

(Motion agreed to and bill read third time and passed, on division.)

#### BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

**Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-5(j), I move:

That the sitting be suspended to the call of the chair, with the bells to ring for five minutes before the sitting resumes.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** It was moved by the Honourable Senator Gagné, seconded by the Honourable Senator Boehm — may I dispense?

**Hon. Senators:** Dispense.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

(The sitting of the Senate was suspended.)

[Translation]

(The sitting of the Senate was resumed.)

• (1910)

### ROYAL ASSENT

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

#### RIDEAU HALL

May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020

Mr. Speaker:

I have the honour to inform you that the Right Honourable Julie Payette, Governor General of Canada, signified royal assent by written declaration to the bill listed in the Schedule to this letter on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of May, 2020, at 6:50 p.m.

Yours sincerely,

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

The Honourable  
The Speaker of the Senate  
Ottawa

Bill Assented to Friday, May 1, 2020:

An Act respecting Canada emergency student benefits (coronavirus disease 2019) (*Bill C-15, Chapter 7, 2020*)

### ADJOURNMENT

#### MOTION ADOPTED

**Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-5(g), I move:

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

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

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

**Hon. Senators:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

[*English*]

### BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, before calling upon Senator Gagné to move adjournment, I would like once again to take this opportunity to thank you all for your patience, your openness and your collaboration as we continue to operate under very, very demanding circumstances. I commend you for your unwavering dedication to serving Canadians while fostering a healthy and safe environment for those who facilitate our work.

[*Translation*]

I would also like to thank the exceptional employees who continue to work tirelessly behind the scenes, in our offices, in the Senate Administration, at the Library of Parliament and in the Parliamentary Protective Service. Their commitment to advancing the work of the Senate is a true testament to the resilience of our institution.

[*English*]

Whether you are working on-site, remotely or otherwise doing your part by practising physical distancing, we truly value your contribution.

I would be remiss if I did not once again express my deepest appreciation to our health care professionals, our first responders, all of our essential workers and all those others who are on the front line. I know I speak on behalf of all senators and all Canadians when I say how grateful we all are for their heroic efforts. These are indeed, colleagues, extremely difficult and trying times, but I remain optimistic, as I'm sure you all do, that we will rise to the challenge together with courage and with solidarity. Colleagues, stay safe.

**Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate):** Your Honour, I would like to thank you for your leadership. It is greatly appreciated.

(*At 7:14 p.m., the Senate was continued until Tuesday, June 2, 2020, at 2 p.m.*)

**THE SPEAKER**

The Honourable George J. Furey

**THE GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE IN THE SENATE**

The Honourable Marc Gold

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION**

The Honourable Donald Neil Plett

**FACILITATOR OF THE INDEPENDENT SENATORS GROUP**

The Honourable Yuen Pau Woo

**THE INTERIM LEADER OF THE CANADIAN SENATORS GROUP**

The Honourable Scott Tannas

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**OFFICERS OF THE SENATE**

**INTERIM CLERK OF THE SENATE AND CLERK OF THE PARLIAMENTS**

Richard Denis

**LAW CLERK AND PARLIAMENTARY COUNSEL**

Philippe Hallée

**USHER OF THE BLACK ROD**

J. Greg Peters

## THE MINISTRY

(In order of precedence)

(May 1, 2020)

The Right Hon. Justin P. J. Trudeau	Prime Minister
The Hon. Chrystia Freeland	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs
	Deputy Prime Minister
The Hon. Lawrence MacAulay	Minister of Veterans Affairs
	Associate Minister of National Defence
The Hon. Carolyn Bennett	Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations
The Hon. Dominic LeBlanc	President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada
The Hon. Navdeep Bains	Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development
The Hon. Bill Morneau	Minister of Finance
The Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos	President of the Treasury Board
The Hon. Marc Garneau	Minister of Transport
The Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau	Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
The Hon. Mélanie Joly	Minister of Economic Development
	Minister of Official Languages
The Hon. Diane LeBouthillier	Minister of National Revenue
The Hon. Catherine McKenna	Minister of Infrastructure and Communities
The Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan	Minister of National Defence
The Hon. Maryam Monsef	Minister for Women and Gender Equality
	Minister of Rural Economic Development
The Hon. Carla Qualtrough	Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Accessibility
	Minister of Health
The Hon. Patty Hajdu	Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Youth
The Hon. Bardish Chagger	Minister of Foreign Affairs
The Hon. François-Philippe Champagne	Minister of International Development
The Hon. Karina Gould	Minister of Families, Children and Social Development
The Hon. Ahmed Hussen	Minister of Natural Resources
The Hon. Seamus O'Regan	Leader of the Government in the House of Commons
The Hon. Pablo Rodriguez	Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness
The Hon. Bill Blair	Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade
The Hon. Mary Ng	Minister of Labour
The Hon. Filomena Tassi	Minister of Environment and Climate Change
The Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson	Minister of Justice
The Hon. David Lametti	Attorney General of Canada
The Hon. Bernadette Jordan	Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard
The Hon. Joyce Murray	Minister of Digital Government
The Hon. Anita Anand	Minister of Public Services and Procurement
The Hon. Mona Fortier	Minister of Middle-Class Prosperity
	Associate Minister of Finance
The Hon. Steven Guilbeault	Minister of Canadian Heritage
The Hon. Marco Mendicino	Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
The Hon. Marc Miller	Minister of Indigenous Services
The Hon. Deb Schulte	Minister of Seniors
The Hon. Dan Vandal	Minister of Northern Affairs



# SENATORS OF CANADA

## ACCORDING TO SENIORITY

(May 1, 2020)

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
George J. Furey, <i>Speaker</i>	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John's, Nfld. & Lab.
Jane Cordy	Nova Scotia	Dartmouth, N.S.
Mobina S. B. Jaffer	British Columbia	North Vancouver, B.C.
Pierrette Ringuette	New Brunswick	Edmundston, N.B.
Percy E. Downe	Charlottetown	Charlottetown, P.E.I.
Paul J. Massicotte	De Lanaudière	Mont-Saint-Hilaire, Que.
Terry M. Mercer	Northend Halifax	Caribou River, N.S.
Jim Munson	Ottawa/Rideau Canal	Ottawa, Ont.
Elaine McCoy	Alberta	Calgary, Alta.
Lillian Eva Dyck	Saskatchewan	Saskatoon, Sask.
Larry W. Campbell	British Columbia	Vancouver, B.C.
Dennis Dawson	Lauzon	Sainte-Foy, Que.
Sandra M. Lovelace Nicholas	New Brunswick	Tobique First Nations, N.B.
Stephen Greene	Halifax - The Citadel	Halifax, N.S.
Michael L. MacDonald	Cape Breton	Dartmouth, N.S.
Michael Duffy	Prince Edward Island	Cavendish, P.E.I.
Percy Mockler	New Brunswick	St. Leonard, N.B.
Pamela Wallin	Saskatchewan	Wadena, Sask.
Yonah Martin	British Columbia	Vancouver, B.C.
Patrick Brazeau	Repentigny	Maniwaki, Que.
Leo Housakos	Wellington	Laval, Que.
Donald Neil Plett	Landmark	Landmark, Man.
Linda Frum	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.
Claude Carignan, P.C.	Mille Isles	Saint-Eustache, Que.
Carolyn Stewart Olsen	New Brunswick	Sackville, N.B.
Dennis Glen Patterson	Nunavut	Iqaluit, Nunavut
Elizabeth Marshall	Newfoundland and Labrador	Paradise, Nfld. & Lab.
Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu	La Salle	Sherbrooke, Que.
Judith G. Seidman	De la Durantaye	Saint-Raphaël, Que.
Rose-May Poirier	New Brunswick—Saint-Louis-de-Kent	Saint-Louis-de-Kent, N.B.
Salma Ataullahjan	Ontario (Toronto)	Toronto, Ont.
Fabian Manning	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. Bride's, Nfld. & Lab.
Larry W. Smith	Saurel	Hudson, Que.
Josée Verner, P.C.	Montarville	Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures, Que.
Norman E. Doyle	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John's, Nfld. & Lab.
Jean-Guy Dagenais	Victoria	Blainville, Que.
Vernon White	Ontario	Ottawa, Ont.
Thanh Hai Ngo	Ontario	Orleans, Ont.
Diane Bellemare	Alma	Outremont, Que.
Douglas Black	Alberta	Canmore, Alta.
David M. Wells	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John's, Nfld. & Lab.
Lynn Beyak	Ontario	Dryden, Ont.
Victor Oh	Mississauga	Mississauga, Ont.
Denise Batters	Saskatchewan	Regina, Sask.
Scott Tannas	Alberta	High River, Alta.
Peter Harder, P.C.	Ottawa	Manotick, Ont.
Raymonde Gagné	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.
Frances Lankin, P.C.	Ontario	Restoule, Ont.
Ratna Omidvar	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.
Chantal Petitclerc	Grandville	Montreal, Que.
Murray Sinclair	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.
Yuen Pau Woo	British Columbia	North Vancouver, B.C.
Patricia Bovey	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.
René Cormier	New Brunswick	Caraquet, N.B.
Nancy J. Hartling	New Brunswick	Riverview, N.B.
Kim Pate	Ontario	Ottawa, Ont.
Tony Dean	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.
Diane F. Griffin	Prince Edward Island	Stratford, P.E.I.
Wanda Elaine Thomas Bernard	Nova Scotia (East Preston)	East Preston, N.S.

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
Sabi Marwah . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Toronto, Ont.
Howard Wetston . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Toronto, Ont.
Lucie Moncion . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	North Bay, Ont.
Renée Dupuis . . . . .	The Laurentides . . . . .	Sainte-Pétronille, Que.
Marilou McPhedran . . . . .	Manitoba . . . . .	Winnipeg, Man.
Gwen Boniface . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Orillia, Ont.
Eric Forest . . . . .	Gulf . . . . .	Rimouski, Que.
Marc Gold . . . . .	Stadacona . . . . .	Westmount, Que.
Marie-Françoise Mégie . . . . .	Rougemont . . . . .	Montreal, Que.
Raymonde Saint-Germain . . . . .	De la Vallière . . . . .	Quebec City, Que.
Dan Christmas . . . . .	Nova Scotia . . . . .	Membertou, N.S.
Rosa Galvez . . . . .	Bedford . . . . .	Lévis, Que.
David Richards . . . . .	New Brunswick . . . . .	Fredericton, N.B.
Mary Coyle . . . . .	Nova Scotia . . . . .	Antigonish, N.S.
Mary Jane McCallum . . . . .	Manitoba . . . . .	Winnipeg, Man.
Robert Black . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Centre Wellington, Ont.
Marty Deacon . . . . .	Waterloo Region . . . . .	Waterloo, Ont.
Yvonne Boyer . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Merrickville-Wolford, Ont.
Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia . . . . .	Newfoundland and Labrador . . . . .	Twillingate, Nfld. & Lab.
Pierre J. Dalphond . . . . .	De Lorimier . . . . .	Montreal, Que.
Donna Dasko . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Toronto, Ont.
Colin Deacon . . . . .	Nova Scotia . . . . .	Halifax, N.S.
Julie Miville-Dechêne . . . . .	Inkerman . . . . .	Mont-Royal, Que.
Bev Busson . . . . .	British Columbia . . . . .	North Okanagan Region, B.C.
Marty Klyne . . . . .	Saskatchewan . . . . .	White City, Sask.
Patti LaBoucane-Benson . . . . .	Alberta . . . . .	Spruce Grove, Alta.
Paula Simons . . . . .	Alberta . . . . .	Edmonton, Alta.
Peter M. Boehm . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Ottawa, Ont.
Josée Forest-Niesing . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Sudbury, Ont.
Brian Francis . . . . .	Prince Edward Island . . . . .	Rocky Point, P.E.I.
Margaret Dawn Anderson . . . . .	Northwest Territories . . . . .	Yellowknife, N.W.T.
Pat Duncan . . . . .	Yukon . . . . .	Whitehorse, Yukon
Rosemary Moodie . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Toronto, Ont.
Stan Kutcher . . . . .	Nova Scotia . . . . .	Halifax, N.S.
Tony Loffreda . . . . .	Shawinigan . . . . .	
Judith Keating . . . . .	New Brunswick . . . . .	Fredericton, N.B.
Brent Cotter . . . . .	Saskatchewan . . . . .	Saskatoon, Sask.

# SENATORS OF CANADA

## ALPHABETICAL LIST

(May 1, 2020)

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address	Political Affiliation
The Honourable			
Anderson, Margaret Dawn	Northwest Territories	Yellowknife, N.W.T.	Independent Senators Group
Ataullahjan, Salma	Ontario (Toronto)	Toronto, Ont.	Conservative
Batters, Denise	Saskatchewan	Regina, Sask.	Conservative
Bellemare, Diane	Alma	Outremont, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Bernard, Wanda Elaine Thomas	Nova Scotia (East Preston)	East Preston, N.S.	Independent Senators Group
Beyak, Lynn	Ontario	Dryden, Ont.	Independent
Black, Douglas	Alberta	Canmore, Alta.	Canadian Senators Group
Black, Robert	Ontario	Centre Wellington, Ont.	Canadian Senators Group
Boehm, Peter M.	Ontario	Ottawa, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Boisvenu, Pierre-Hugues	La Salle	Sherbrooke, Que.	Conservative
Boniface, Gwen	Ontario	Orillia, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Bovey, Patricia	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.	Independent Senators Group
Boyer, Yvonne	Ontario	Merrickville-Wolford, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Brazeau, Patrick	Repentigny	Maniwaki, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Busson, Bev	British Columbia	North Okanagan Region, B.C.	Independent Senators Group
Campbell, Larry W.	British Columbia	Vancouver, B.C.	Canadian Senators Group
Carignan, Claude, P.C.	Mille Isles	Saint-Eustache, Que.	Conservative
Christmas, Dan	Nova Scotia	Membertou, N.S.	Independent Senators Group
Cordy, Jane	Nova Scotia	Dartmouth, N.S.	Non-affiliated
Cormier, René	New Brunswick	Caraquet, N.B.	Independent Senators Group
Cotter, Brent	Saskatchewan	Saskatoon, Sask.	Independent Senators Group
Coyle, Mary	Nova Scotia	Antigonish, N.S.	Independent Senators Group
Dagenais, Jean-Guy	Victoria	Blainville, Que.	Canadian Senators Group
Dalphond, Pierre J.	De Lorimier	Montreal, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Dasko, Donna	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Dawson, Dennis	Lauzon	Ste-Foy, Que.	Non-affiliated
Deacon, Colin	Nova Scotia	Halifax, N.S.	Independent Senators Group
Deacon, Marty	Waterloo Region	Waterloo, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Dean, Tony	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Downe, Percy E.	Charlottetown	Charlottetown, P.E.I.	Canadian Senators Group
Doyle, Norman E.	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John's, Nfld. & Lab.	Conservative
Duffy, Michael	Prince Edward Island	Cavendish, P.E.I.	Independent Senators Group
Duncan, Pat	Yukon	Whitehorse, Yukon	Independent Senators Group
Dupuis, Renée	The Laurentides	Sainte-Pétronille, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Dyck, Lillian Eva	Saskatchewan	Saskatoon, Sask.	Non-affiliated
Forest, Éric	Gulf	Rimouski, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Forest-Niesing, Josée	Ontario	Sudbury, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Francis, Brian	Prince Edward Island	Rocky Point, P.E.I.	Independent Senators Group
Frum, Linda	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Conservative
Furey, George J., <i>Speaker</i>	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John's, Nfld. & Lab.	Independent
Gagné, Raymonde	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.	Non-affiliated
Galvez, Rosa	Bedford	Lévis, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Gold, Marc	Stadacona	Westmount, Que.	Non-affiliated
Greene, Stephen	Halifax - The Citadel	Halifax, N.S.	Canadian Senators Group
Griffin, Diane F.	Prince Edward Island	Stratford, P.E.I.	Canadian Senators Group
Harder, Peter, P.C.	Ottawa	Manotick, Ont.	Non-affiliated
Hartling, Nancy J.	New Brunswick	Riverview, N.B.	Independent Senators Group
Housakos, Leo	Wellington	Laval, Que.	Conservative
Jaffer, Mobina S.B.	British Columbia	North Vancouver, B.C.	Independent Senators Group
Keating, Judith	New Brunswick	Fredericton, N.B.	Independent Senators Group
Klyne, Marty	Saskatchewan	White City, Sask.	Independent Senators Group
Kutcher, Stan	Nova Scotia	Halifax, N.S.	Independent Senators Group
LaBoucane-Benson, Patti	Alberta	Spruce Grove, Alta.	Non-affiliated
Lankin, Frances	Ontario	Restoule, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Loffreda, Tony	Shawinigan		Independent Senators Group
Lovelace Nicholas, Sandra M.	New Brunswick	Tobique First Nations, N.B.	Non-affiliated
MacDonald, Michael L.	Cape Breton	Dartmouth, N.S.	Conservative

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address	Political Affiliation
Manning, Fabian	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. Bride's, Nfld. & Lab.	Conservative
Marshall, Elizabeth	Newfoundland and Labrador	Paradise, Nfld. & Lab.	Conservative
Martin, Yonah	British Columbia	Vancouver, B.C.	Conservative
Marwah, Sabi	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Massicotte, Paul J.	De Lanaudière	Mont-Saint-Hilaire, Que.	Independent Senators Group
McCallum, Mary Jane	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.	Independent Senators Group
McCoy, Elaine	Alberta	Calgary, Alta.	Canadian Senators Group
McPhedran, Marilou	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.	Independent Senators Group
Mégie, Marie-Françoise	Rougemont	Montreal, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Mercer, Terry M.	Northend Halifax	Caribou River, N.S.	Non-affiliated
Miville-Dechéne, Julie	Inkerman	Mont-Royal, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Mockler, Percy	New Brunswick	St. Leonard, N.B.	Conservative
Moncion, Lucie	Ontario	North Bay, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Moodie, Rosemary	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Munson, Jim	Ottawa/Rideau Canal	Ottawa, Ont.	Non-affiliated
Ngo, Thanh Hai	Ontario	Orleans, Ont.	Conservative
Oh, Victor	Mississauga	Mississauga, Ont.	Conservative
Omidvar, Ratna	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Pate, Kim	Ontario	Ottawa, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
Patterson, Dennis Glen	Nunavut	Iqaluit, Nunavut	Conservative
Petitclerc, Chantal	Grandville	Montreal, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Plett, Donald Neil	Landmark	Landmark, Man.	Conservative
Poirier, Rose-May	New Brunswick—Saint-Louis-de-Kent	Saint-Louis-de-Kent, N.B.	Conservative
Ravalia, Mohamed-Iqbal	Newfoundland and Labrador	Twillingate, Nfld. & Lab.	Independent Senators Group
Richards, David	New Brunswick	Fredericton, N.B.	Canadian Senators Group
Ringuette, Pierrette	New Brunswick	Edmundston, N.B.	Independent Senators Group
Saint-Germain, Raymonde	De la Vallière	Quebec City, Que.	Independent Senators Group
Seidman, Judith G.	De la Durantaye	Saint-Raphaël, Que.	Conservative
Simons, Paula	Alberta	Edmonton, Alta.	Independent Senators Group
Sinclair, Murray	Manitoba	Winnipeg, Man.	Independent Senators Group
Smith, Larry W.	Saurel	Hudson, Que.	Conservative
Stewart Olsen, Carolyn	New Brunswick	Sackville, N.B.	Conservative
Tannas, Scott	Alberta	High River, Alta.	Canadian Senators Group
Verner, Josée, P.C.	Montarville	Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures, Que.	Canadian Senators Group
Wallin, Pamela	Saskatchewan	Wadena, Sask.	Canadian Senators Group
Wells, David M.	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John's, Nfld. & Lab.	Conservative
Wetston, Howard	Ontario	Toronto, Ont.	Independent Senators Group
White, Vernon	Ontario	Ottawa, Ont.	Canadian Senators Group
Woo, Yuen Pau	British Columbia	North Vancouver, B.C.	Independent Senators Group

# SENATORS OF CANADA

## BY PROVINCE AND TERRITORY

(May 1, 2020)

### ONTARIO—24

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Jim Munson . . . . .	Ottawa/Rideau Canal . . . . .	Ottawa
2 Linda Frum . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Toronto
3 Salma Ataullahjan . . . . .	Ontario (Toronto) . . . . .	Toronto
4 Vernon White . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Ottawa
5 Thanh Hai Ngo . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Orleans
6 Lynn Beyak . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Dryden
7 Victor Oh . . . . .	Mississauga . . . . .	Mississauga
8 Peter Harder, P.C. . . . .	Ottawa . . . . .	Manotick
9 Frances Lankin, P.C. . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Restoule
10 Ratna Omidvar . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Toronto
11 Kim Pate . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Ottawa
12 Tony Dean . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Toronto
13 Sabi Marwah . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Toronto
14 Howard Wetston . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Toronto
15 Lucie Moncion . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	North Bay
16 Gwen Boniface . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Orillia
17 Robert Black . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Centre Wellington
18 Marty Deacon . . . . .	Waterloo Region . . . . .	Waterloo
19 Yvonne Boyer . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Merrickville-Wolford
20 Donna Dasko . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Toronto
21 Peter M. Boehm . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Ottawa
22 Josée Forest-Niesing . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Sudbury
23 Rosemary Moodie . . . . .	Ontario . . . . .	Toronto
24 . . . . .	. . . . .	

# SENATORS BY PROVINCE AND TERRITORY

## QUEBEC—24

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Paul J. Massicotte . . . . .	De Lanaudière . . . . .	Mont-Saint-Hilaire
2 Dennis Dawson . . . . .	Lauzon . . . . .	Ste-Foy
3 Patrick Brazeau . . . . .	Repentigny . . . . .	Maniwaki
4 Leo Housakos . . . . .	Wellington . . . . .	Laval
5 Claude Carignan, P.C. . . . .	Mille Isles . . . . .	Saint-Eustache
6 Judith G. Seidman . . . . .	De la Durantaye . . . . .	Saint-Raphaël
7 Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu . . . . .	La Salle . . . . .	Sherbrooke
8 Larry W. Smith . . . . .	Saurel . . . . .	Hudson
9 Josée Verner, P.C. . . . .	Montarville . . . . .	Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures
10 Jean-Guy Dagenais . . . . .	Victoria . . . . .	Blainville
11 Diane Bellemare . . . . .	Alma . . . . .	Outremont
12 Chantal Petitclerc . . . . .	Grandville . . . . .	Montreal
13 Renée Dupuis . . . . .	The Laurentides . . . . .	Sainte-Pétronille
14 Éric Forest . . . . .	Gulf . . . . .	Rimouski
15 Marc Gold . . . . .	Stadacona . . . . .	Westmount
16 Marie-Françoise Mégie . . . . .	Rougemont . . . . .	Montreal
17 Raymonde Saint-Germain . . . . .	De la Vallière . . . . .	Quebec City
18 Rosa Galvez . . . . .	Bedford . . . . .	Lévis
19 Pierre J. Dalfond . . . . .	De Lorimier . . . . .	Montreal
20 Julie Miville-Dechéne . . . . .	Inkerman . . . . .	Mont-Royal
21 Tony Loffreda . . . . .	Shawinigan . . . . .	
22 . . . . .		
23 . . . . .		
24 . . . . .		

## SENATORS BY PROVINCE—MARITIME DIVISION

### NOVA SCOTIA—10

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Jane Cordy . . . . .	Nova Scotia . . . . .	Dartmouth
2 Terry M. Mercer . . . . .	Northend Halifax . . . . .	Caribou River
3 Stephen Greene . . . . .	Halifax - The Citadel . . . . .	Halifax
4 Michael L. MacDonald . . . . .	Cape Breton . . . . .	Dartmouth
5 Wanda Elaine Thomas Bernard . . . . .	Nova Scotia (East Preston) . . . . .	East Preston
6 Dan Christmas . . . . .	Nova Scotia . . . . .	Membertou
7 Mary Coyle . . . . .	Nova Scotia . . . . .	Antigonish
8 Colin Deacon . . . . .	Nova Scotia . . . . .	Halifax
9 Stan Kutcher . . . . .	Nova Scotia . . . . .	Halifax
10 . . . . .		

### NEW BRUNSWICK—10

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Pierrette Ringuette . . . . .	New Brunswick . . . . .	Edmundston
2 Sandra M. Lovelace Nicholas . . . . .	New Brunswick . . . . .	Tobique First Nations
3 Percy Mockler . . . . .	New Brunswick . . . . .	St. Leonard
4 Carolyn Stewart Olsen . . . . .	New Brunswick . . . . .	Sackville
5 Rose-May Poirier . . . . .	New Brunswick—Saint-Louis-de-Kent . . . . .	Saint-Louis-de-Kent
6 René Cormier . . . . .	New Brunswick . . . . .	Caraquet
7 Nancy J. Hartling . . . . .	New Brunswick . . . . .	Riverview
8 David Richards . . . . .	New Brunswick . . . . .	Fredericton
9 Judith Keating . . . . .	New Brunswick . . . . .	Fredericton
10 . . . . .		

### PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND—4

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Percy E. Downe . . . . .	Charlottetown . . . . .	Charlottetown
2 Michael Duffy . . . . .	Prince Edward Island . . . . .	Cavendish
3 Diane F. Griffin . . . . .	Prince Edward Island . . . . .	Stratford
4 Brian Francis . . . . .	Prince Edward Island . . . . .	Rocky Point

## SENATORS BY PROVINCE—WESTERN DIVISION

### MANITOBA—6

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Donald Neil Plett . . . . .	Landmark . . . . .	Landmark
2 Raymonde Gagné . . . . .	Manitoba . . . . .	Winnipeg
3 Murray Sinclair . . . . .	Manitoba . . . . .	Winnipeg
4 Patricia Bovey . . . . .	Manitoba . . . . .	Winnipeg
5 Marilou McPhedran . . . . .	Manitoba . . . . .	Winnipeg
6 Mary Jane McCallum . . . . .	Manitoba . . . . .	Winnipeg

### BRITISH COLUMBIA—6

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Mobina S. B. Jaffer . . . . .	British Columbia . . . . .	North Vancouver
2 Larry W. Campbell . . . . .	British Columbia . . . . .	Vancouver
3 Yonah Martin . . . . .	British Columbia . . . . .	Vancouver
4 Yuen Pau Woo . . . . .	British Columbia . . . . .	North Vancouver
5 Bev Busson . . . . .	British Columbia . . . . .	North Okanagan Region
6 . . . . .	. . . . .	

### SASKATCHEWAN—6

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Lillian Eva Dyck . . . . .	Saskatchewan . . . . .	Saskatoon
2 Pamela Wallin . . . . .	Saskatchewan . . . . .	Wadena
3 Denise Batters . . . . .	Saskatchewan . . . . .	Regina
4 Marty Klyne . . . . .	Saskatchewan . . . . .	White City
5 Brent Cotter . . . . .	Saskatchewan . . . . .	Saskatoon
6 . . . . .	. . . . .	

### ALBERTA—6

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Elaine McCoy . . . . .	Alberta . . . . .	Calgary
2 Douglas Black . . . . .	Alberta . . . . .	Canmore
3 Scott Tannas . . . . .	Alberta . . . . .	High River
4 Patti LaBoucane-Benson . . . . .	Alberta . . . . .	Spruce Grove
5 Paula Simons . . . . .	Alberta . . . . .	Edmonton
6 . . . . .	. . . . .	



## SENATORS BY PROVINCE AND TERRITORY

### NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR—6

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 George J. Furey, <i>Speaker</i> . . . . .	Newfoundland and Labrador. . . . .	St. John's
2 Elizabeth Marshall. . . . .	Newfoundland and Labrador. . . . .	Paradise
3 Fabian Manning . . . . .	Newfoundland and Labrador. . . . .	St. Bride's
4 Norman E. Doyle . . . . .	Newfoundland and Labrador. . . . .	St. John's
5 David M. Wells . . . . .	Newfoundland and Labrador. . . . .	St. John's
6 Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia. . . . .	Newfoundland and Labrador. . . . .	Twillingate

### NORTHWEST TERRITORIES—1

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Margaret Dawn Anderson . . . . .	Northwest Territories . . . . .	Yellowknife

### NUNAVUT—1

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Dennis Glen Patterson . . . . .	Nunavut. . . . .	Iqaluit

### YUKON—1

Senator	Designation	Post Office Address
The Honourable		
1 Pat Duncan . . . . .	Yukon . . . . .	Whitehorse

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