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The Honourable GEORGE J. FUREY,
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Thursday, June 18, 2020

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

[*English*]

Prayers.

Hon. Rosemary Moodie: Your Honour, on June 4, 2020, Chantel Moore was shot and killed by police in New Brunswick. She was from the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation in British Columbia.

THE SENATE

D'ARCY MCPHERSON—TRIBUTE ON DEPARTURE

On May 27, Regis Korchinski-Paquet died in Toronto following an encounter with the police. She was a black woman.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I wish to inform you that one of our managers will soon be leaving the Senate to take on new challenges. D'Arcy McPherson began his career in the Senate 24 years ago as a parliamentary reporter. In the ensuing years he took on positions of increasing responsibility, and for the last 11 years has served as Editor in Chief and Manager of Debates and Publications.

Both women were under the age of 30.

On May 6, the Vancouver Police stated that there had been 20 incidents of anti-Asian hate crimes so far in 2020, surging sharply from the 12 reported in total for 2019.

He will be taking this experience to British Columbia, where he will serve as Director of Hansard Services with their Legislative Assembly. Our loss is their gain.

These sad stories point to the racism that explicitly and systematically exists in our country. The COVID-19 crisis has shaken our country to its core, acutely unmasking an ugliness and surging brutality, unmasking the insidious disease called racism that many of us have known but has been ignored for far too long.

The Debates are a fundamental tool in communicating our work publicly, and preserving it for history. As this is the last week for which D'Arcy will be responsible for the production of our Debates, I would like to thank him for his devotion to this institution.

According to rule 8-3(2), I need to prove two things to make this argument to you. First, that the matter concerns the administrative responsibilities of the government or could come within the scope of departmental action. Second, that it is unlikely that the Senate will have another opportunity to consider this matter within a reasonable period of time.

On behalf of all senators and staff, I thank you for your professionalism, your dedication and your many years of service to the Senate, and I wish you the best of luck in all your future endeavours.

Your Honour, on the first criteria, the government has failed to act on the issue of racism. There have been no meaningful actions on the recommendation of the 2018 report from the House of Commons Heritage Committee on systemic discrimination. Similarly, the government has recently announced it no longer intends to produce an action plan this month to implement the recommendations of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

• (1340)

RACISM

LEAVE GRANTED TO CONSIDER MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC INTEREST PURSUANT TO RULE 8

The government has also fallen short on its promise to reform the public service, to put in place stronger policies to promote economic prosperity, to reform criminal justice and public safety and to provide race-based data that will guide policy decision making. All of these areas fall within the scope and authority of various government departments that have failed to act in the best interest of racialized Canadians.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, earlier today the Clerk received a request from the Honourable Senator Moodie for an emergency debate about the rise in reports of acts of racism against Afro-Canadians, Indigenous Canadians and Asian Canadians. Copies of the request are available at your desks.

On the second criteria, Your Honour, the pandemic has critically reduced our time in this chamber. We are all aware that this is the third regular sitting day we have had since March 13. Over the next few weeks, we may unfortunately continue to face uncertainty and severe restrictions around our time together to address this critical issue, in the interest of all Canadians.

When a request for an emergency debate is received, Senators' Statements are replaced by consideration of the request. The time for consideration of the request is a maximum of 15 minutes, and interventions are limited to five minutes. At the end of the 15 minutes, I must determine whether, in light of the criteria set out in rules 8-2(1) and 8-3(2), the request can be granted.

Those reasons being presented, I would also state, Your Honour, that this places the Senate in a position where it will not be able to have this debate in a reasonable period of time and I feel that this debate is already overdue.

I will now recognize Senator Moodie.

Your Honour, it is clear to me the *Rules of the Senate* endorse this debate. I hope you rule in its favour. Thank you.

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Your Honour, let me start by thanking Senator Moodie for raising this very important issue. I agree with Senator Moodie that there is indeed an urgency in addressing and debating racism and discrimination. It is for that reason that I have given notice, on Tuesday, for the Senate to have an inquiry on the presence of racism and discrimination within Canadian institutions.

I do not believe an emergency debate is the best mechanism for this debate for the following reasons:

Four hours of debate are clearly not sufficient to properly address an issue of this importance.

Not all senators can be in the chamber today due to the measures in place because of public health guidelines for COVID-19.

Many senators from the Atlantic region — New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador — aren't here to take part in this debate because of travel restrictions and COVID-19.

Indeed, if there are discussions about the RCMP I believe senators from Nova Scotia, the province recently hit by a mass killing attack, should very much be part of this debate.

Your Honour and colleagues, I believe the proper mechanism for an important debate such as this is via an inquiry. An inquiry will allow more time for all senators to speak on this very important issue.

This discussion has indeed been evolving and I believe our debates will also progress. An open-ended debate provides time for proper reflection and sober second thought. We can continue to have this dialogue into the fall, if that would be our desire. I would certainly hope that it would be. I don't think anything can be solved here over the next day — or days, even.

However, Your Honour, we will defer to your wisdom and to your judgment. I want to assure all colleagues and I want to assure Senator Moodie that should you rule in favour of an emergency debate and that is the way to go, the Conservative caucus will fully cooperate and take part in that debate if you would so rule. Thank you.

Hon. Scott Tannas: On behalf of our group, let me reiterate what has been our position throughout.

First, I want to commend Senator Moodie for her initiative. It's so worthy and so important.

We have senators who would like to participate and cannot. Their feelings are of great frustration, and I spoke of it yesterday. Therefore our position is similar to what Senator Plett said. We will defer to the wisdom of the Speaker and if the debate goes forward we will not challenge or in any way be uncooperative. Thank you.

Hon. Peter M. Boehm: I rise to support my colleague Senator Moodie in calling for an emergency debate. I am of the view that we are at an inflection point in our country. This particular issue does not just require an emergency debate, it also requires a special committee, ideally a Committee of the Whole, and ongoing work into the fall and beyond.

We have seen from various reports, including the report provided by the Parliamentary Black Caucus, that there are many prescriptions out there, and many proposed solutions. It's not a matter of coming up with new ones. We know what is on the record and what is out there, and it's for us to debate and to look ahead.

I'm very supportive of the proposal made by Senator Moodie. Thank you.

Hon. Jim Munson: On behalf of the progressive Senate caucus, we fully support Senator Moodie's call for an emergency debate. It's interesting that we have to wait for a chief to get injured, somebody to get killed, to get our attention, as I said in a statement earlier.

It has been a bit of a scramble putting all of these notes together in supporting the call for this debate. Senator Plett talked about four hours; well, four hours is a good start.

In your ruling, Your Honour, in reference to Senator Tkachuk, when he called for an emergency debate on February 6, 2018, you ruled in favour. It was a debate on expanding the Trans Mountain Pipeline. You said in your ruling that, of course, having a debate would not preclude an inquiry. I think that's an important point to make.

When it comes to systemic racism or institutionalized racism, we know in this country that it's very prevalent everywhere: hiring in the public service, hiring in the private sector, in the arts, in sports, in institutions perhaps like this. I believe we have to deal with this directly.

I find it interesting that, as we start off this argument to have this debate, it's fitting that 30 years ago, on June 18, 1990, Nelson Mandela stood in the other place and spoke to a joint parliamentary sitting and he spoke of a free and inclusive South Africa. Today we need to speak about a free and inclusive Canada. There have been recent polls that have shown 61% of Canadians are certain or almost certain that there is systemic racism in this country. I worry about and I am concerned what the other 39% are thinking at this time.

If we want to look at systemic racism, and if you agree to a debate on systemic racism, Your Honour, I'm sure I have lots of notes to talk about this, but when we talk about other senators not being here, we have been able to speak for other senators. I know other senators have spoken for absent senators in other groups. There's a good 35 or 40 of us here today, and, as I said at the beginning of my arguments, it's a really good start. We have to get at this and look at this seriously.

Just think about it. Systemic racism is about white superiority and power in all aspects of our lives. It's what prevents anyone who is not white from having equal access to a successful life. We are most often not really aware of our racist behaviour, which is called "unconscious bias."

With that, Your Honour, I leave it with you to make your decision, but if it's not now, when? Thank you very much.

• (1350)

Hon. Kim Pate: Honourable senators, I rise in support of the call for an emergency debate brought forward by Senator Moodie, and I thank her for bringing it forward.

Colleagues, in this moment, as we are hearing the cries of Canadians calling for a systemic change, calling for an end to systemic racism, it is our responsibility, as those in positions of power and privilege, to demand a new reality that eradicates the discrimination and historical injustices of the past.

Systemic discrimination is most clearly evidenced in our prisons. My friends, those of you who have been to prisons with me with committees have witnessed first-hand who fills those cells. It is the result of the systemic failure and discrimination of every other system.

Racialized Canadians are over-represented in prison: 9% of men and 11% of women in federal penitentiaries are black; 30% of men and 42% of women are Indigenous. These realities are the product and the result of decades — indeed, centuries — of inequality in every part of our systems. Now is the time when everybody is out in the streets, when people are calling for the systemic change to happen, for us to entertain this debate in this place at this time.

The emergency debate proposed by Senator Moodie will allow us to discuss urgently needed measures informed by decades of past reports and recommendations to eradicate systemic racism in the criminal legal system and beyond. We are currently witnessing the consequences of historic inaction.

Now, I would suggest, honourable colleagues and Your Honour, is very much the time for us to act.

The Hon. the Speaker: The time for considering the request for an emergency debate has expired. In order to prepare the ruling, the sitting will be suspended briefly, and will resume after a five-minute bell.

(The sitting of the Senate was suspended.)

• (1420)

(The sitting of the Senate was resumed.)

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Hon. the Speaker: In reaching a determination on the request for an emergency debate, the Speaker must make reference to the criteria in rules 8-2(1) and 8-3(2). Senators are apprised of, and recognize, the critical importance of the issues raised in the request. The request addresses the rise in acts of

racism against Afro-Canadians, Indigenous Canadians and Asian Canadians, and specifically draws attention to the rapid changes since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is obviously a field involving federal action. It may not be perfectly clear how the request meets the specific requirement of rule 8-3(2)(b), which is that "the Senate is unlikely to have another opportunity to debate the matter within a reasonable period of time."

However, as Speaker, the Rules give me some latitude with respect to determining what constitutes an emergency, a responsibility I take seriously. I recognize that this is a grey zone. Of course, having a debate would not preclude an inquiry, a Committee of the Whole or a special committee, which are options that have been raised. Given the particular circumstances of this case, I am prepared to allow the emergency debate to proceed.

Honourable senators, the emergency debate will take place at the earlier of 8 p.m. or the end of the Orders of the Day. At that time, Senator Moodie will move that the Senate do now adjourn — this is the procedure that is normally used in these circumstances — and we will debate the emergency matter for up to four hours. Each senator has only 15 minutes to speak, and no motion, except that a senator be now heard, can be moved during the debate.

What happens after the emergency debate will depend on when the debate actually started and the time it concludes, but no items on the Notice Paper will be called today.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR SENATORS

SECOND REPORT OF COMMITTEE PRESENTED

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson, Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators, presented the following report:

Thursday, June 18, 2020

The Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators has the honour to present its

SECOND REPORT

Your committee, which has taken into consideration the Senate Ethics Officer's Inquiry Report under the Ethics and Conflict of Interest Code for Senators concerning Senator Victor Oh, dated February 18, 2020, in accordance with section 49 of the Ethics and Conflict of Interest Code for Senators, herewith presents its report.

Respectfully submitted,

DENNIS PATTERSON
Deputy Chair

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

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

[Translation]

APPROPRIATION BILL NO. 2, 2020–21

FIRST READING

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-18, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021.

(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?

Some Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Some Hon. Senators: No.

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

APPROPRIATION BILL NO. 3, 2020–21

FIRST READING

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-19, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021.

(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?

Some Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Some Hon. Senators: No.

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

[English]

QUESTION PERIOD

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Leader and colleagues, let me quote our former colleague Senator Grant Mitchell from October 2010:

Honourable senators, the loss of the United Nations Security Council seat . . . indicate[s] one irrefutable conclusion, which is that this government is incompetent in its conduct of foreign relations and that it has squandered Canada's once sterling international image and international credibility.

It's hard to know what's worse about the Trudeau government's failed UN Security Council bid. Perhaps it is the millions of Canadian taxpayers' dollars that have been wasted over the past four years; perhaps it is the fact that the Prime Minister recently found time to call 50 world leaders to campaign for this seat during a national health crisis in which millions of Canadians have lost their jobs; or perhaps it is the hypocrisy of criticizing the 2010 loss, when the previous Conservative government won more support than this Prime Minister did yesterday.

• (1430)

“Canada is back” indeed.

Leader, I suspect the worst part of this fiasco has been selling out our principled foreign policy and failing to defend our allies while trying to win favour with despots and human rights violators to get their vote.

What do you think, leader? Do you agree, or is it all of the above?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. I don't agree, and it's actually none of the above.

First of all, on behalf of the Government of Canada, I want to congratulate Norway and Ireland, as well as India, Mexico and Kenya, on their elections.

This government is disappointed, to be sure, by the outcome, but I'm advised that the government has no regrets. The relationships and conversations that emerged and flowed from the engagement and the campaign have opened doors for Canada to continue to engage with our allies and, indeed, with the world to address the global challenges, which will serve Canada and Canadians well moving forward. Canada will continue to be a champion of the values that define us — values of diversity and inclusion, our commitment to address climate change, to lead peace and security efforts, and to assist the most vulnerable. Canada will continue, notwithstanding the outcome, to be a champion and a supporter of our multilateral institutions so under attack these days from too many quarters.

Canada will also continue work constructively within the United Nations and to be actively engaged on the world stage.

Senator Plett: Leader, last week, as part of this government's failed quest for a UN Security Council seat, the office of Canada's UN ambassador sent a letter highlighting its support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. The previous Conservative government withdrew funding from this agency in 2010 due to its ties to Hamas, a listed terrorist entity in Canada. The letter noted that the Trudeau government:

. . . re-engaged with UNRWA in 2015 and maintained our engagement with UNRWA even while it was subject to a UN internal investigation related to alleged mismanagement.

In fact, this review found “. . . sexual misconduct, nepotism, retaliation, discrimination and other abuses of authority.”

Senator Gold, last year, your government said it was concerned by these allegations of wrongdoing. Either this was never true, or your government abandoned every principle in pursuit of the Security Council seat. Which is it?

Senator Gold: At the risk of repeating myself, it's actually none of the above. This government is committed to the United Nations and the institutions that it works with, notwithstanding that in such a broad array of agencies, there are challenges and deficiencies that need to be addressed.

This government, through its work with and in international and multilateral institutions, contributes significantly to life-saving work to support vulnerable communities and populations around the world, whether that's life-saving support to the Rohingya, or other educational and social services provided to those most in need. The government remains committed to working within the United Nations and with its democratic allies to effect reforms and to improve the situation within organizations, where warranted.

[Senator Gold]

FINANCE

COVID-19 ECONOMIC RESPONSE PLAN

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: My question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

Senator Gold, when Minister Morneau was before this chamber recently, Senator Plett graciously asked a question on my behalf. That question was about the lack of support afforded to non-revenue-generating companies, such as mining, junior mining and exploration companies, in federal wage-subsidy relief efforts related to COVID-19.

In response here in the chamber on April 11, 2020, Minister Morneau stated:

If there are specific sectoral issues that we need to consider, we will be looking at those

Yet here we are, two months later, and the issue is still not addressed. When will the government address these stated outstanding concerns of non-revenue-generating or pre-revenue businesses throughout the North and, indeed, all of Canada?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question, senator.

In general terms, the government has listened and continues to listen to the stakeholders throughout the country and fine-tune the measures that are being developed to address needs as the circumstances evolve. The government is also aware of the specific challenges faced by businesses from region to region, especially in the North.

That's why northern businesses have been given access to funds through a number of programs. The \$34 million distributed through the regional development agency CanNor, which is part of the Regional Relief and Recovery Fund, specifically targets small- and medium-sized businesses that didn't have access to earlier programs under the COVID relief measures. There is a total of \$287 million in relief funding through the Community Futures Network of Canada, again supporting small businesses in rural communities, including in the North. There is also \$15 million to the Northern Business Relief Fund, again supporting small- and medium-sized territorial businesses, including those in the North.

So the government is doing what it can, and it continues to be engaged to finding solutions for those businesses in need.

Senator Patterson: I appreciate the answer, as far as it went. I'm well aware of the funds that have been made available, as you outlined, through CanNor to small- and medium-sized businesses, the Community Futures Network and the Northern Business Relief Fund.

Unfortunately, my understanding is that the junior mining companies and exploration companies, not to mention other seasonally operating companies, are not able to fit the criteria of the programs that have been announced.

I understand that Minister Morneau has led a review of the wage subsidy program. There was a deadline roughly a week ago for submissions into that review, so I am hoping that this review will address the issue of concern.

I would like to ask Senator Gold if, in light of the dwindling season in the North for exploration in particular, he undertakes to follow up on this specific concern as it might be reflected in the wage subsidy legislation review that I understand is currently going on.

Senator Gold: Senator, thank you for your question. The answer is a very quick and easy “yes.” Of course I will follow up, as I have done with your requests in the past. I’ll do my very best to advise you of the results of that.

[Translation]

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

STATISTICS CANADA—CENSUS

Hon. René Cormier: Honourable senators, my question is for the Government Representative in the Senate. It’s about including questions relating to the enumeration of rights holders in Statistics Canada’s short-form census.

For months now, the government has been claiming Statistics Canada is responsible for deciding whether to include questions to enumerate rights holders in the short-form census. However, in an appearance before the Standing Committee on Official Languages in March 2020, the Chief Statistician said that the final decision was up to cabinet. It seems to me that everyone is passing the buck.

Given that Statistics Canada is a federal agency, that it is vital to include these questions in the short-form census so that these communities can fully exercise their constitutional rights, that a decision is imminent, and that this request from official language minority communities has gone unanswered for too long, my question is as follows. If the government is “there” for our communities, as the Prime Minister said on June 12, will we see quick and decisive action to make sure that questions enumerating rights holders are on the short census form, as requested? If not, will there be some explanation for this failure to take action for official language minority communities?

• (1440)

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. Our two official languages remain a priority for this government. The Prime Minister and Minister Joly are very pleased with last week’s Supreme Court of Canada decision about British Columbia’s French-language school board. Furthermore, as you know, the Minister of Official Languages’ mandate includes an enumeration of rights holders and a thorough post-census survey.

However, Statistics Canada is responsible for developing and administering the census in accordance with standardized methodological principles.

This isn’t the first time this issue has come up here. In February, my office sent the senator’s related question to the government. We followed up yesterday, but, unfortunately, we have not yet received a response.

I will therefore reiterate my request for a detailed response in hopes of receiving it very shortly.

Senator Cormier: Thank you for that answer. Could I also ask you to remind the Government of Canada that the inclusion of specific questions in the short-form census is fundamental for gathering information that makes it possible to enumerate rights holders?

For the information of my colleagues, the short-form census is given out to more Canadians than the long-form census, and it is used to collect necessary information.

Could I ask you to remind the Government of Canada about that and to ensure that we get a positive response as soon as possible?

Thank you.

Senator Gold: Certainly.

[English]

TRANSPORT

COVID-19 PANDEMIC—REGIONAL AIRPORTS

Hon. Josée Forest-Niesing: Thank you, Your Honour. My question is for the Representative of the Government in the Senate.

In a report prepared by RCAC, the Regional Community Airports of Canada — an organization that represents more than 55 regional airports across Canada, dedicated to promoting the viability of regional and community airports across the country — key messages are being communicated about the urgent need for support for regional airports that have been hit hard by COVID-19.

In fact, many of our regional airports face the risk of bankruptcy and permanent closure in the face of losses of 90% of their revenues in too many cases.

[Translation]

Although emergency measures were put in place to help businesses through the COVID-19 pandemic, most regional airports run by municipalities are not eligible for them.

Given the key role that regional airports play on an economic, social and medical level, both in providing transportation for passengers and in the delivery of critical supplies to many remote

communities in Canada, how does the government intend to respond to the repeated and urgent calls for help it has been receiving from this organization since April?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. The government recognizes the importance of the services provided by all airports to ensure that people can continue to travel and essential supplies can continue to be delivered. The government is therefore waiving rent for 21 major airports in Canada and for the Billy Bishop airport in Toronto from March to December 2020.

[English]

As for smaller regional airports that are owned by municipalities, over 50 of which are members of the Regional Community Airports of Canada. Thank you for the advanced warning of this. It gave us an opportunity to make inquiries with representatives in several government departments over the last days, but regrettably I've not yet received the information back to respond to your concerns. I'll make further inquiries.

[Translation]

Senator Forest-Niesing: Thank you.

[English]

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

RELIABLE HIGH-SPEED INTERNET ACCESS

Hon. Robert Black: Thank you, Your Honour. My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate.

Senator Gold, we all know that the current COVID-19 pandemic is illuminating existing gaps and challenges in various areas. One of these is internet access. I've written to the Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development on this topic and am awaiting a response.

The Canadian Internet Registration Authority reported that in the month of April 2020, the median download speed for rural Canadians was 3.78 megabits per second, compared with 44.09 megabits per second in urban Canada.

Without fast and reliable internet access, people in rural and remote communities face a major disadvantage, especially in this new reality that requires us to work, study and communicate using the internet. Students can't be guaranteed a reliable connection. Youth are prevented from participating in extracurricular groups and leadership programs like 4-H. I, myself, regularly experienced difficulty connecting for Senate committee meetings.

The government has made several commitments on this issue, including in last year's election campaign. They've announced and reannounced funds through the Connect to Innovate program and the Strategic Innovation Fund. Now is the time to act on those commitments. We simply cannot wait until 2030 for a large section of our population to have reliable internet access.

[Senator Forest-Niesing]

Does your government have plans to immediately address this unacceptable disparity?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question and for raising an important issue which is experienced by Canadians across this country and in many areas.

It's clear that, if it wasn't before, that high-speed connectivity is a necessity for people to do their work and indeed to even stay connected with their loved ones and friends from whom they may be separated for reasons of public health.

The government has made major investments since 2015 in this area. It's invested almost half a billion dollars and helped connect nearly a million households across 900 communities to high-speed broadband, and it's working with, obviously, the industry and the companies, and in combination with those efforts more than \$1 billion has been invested in providing Canadians with high-speed internet. And there is more money on the table for the years to come.

All of that said, the problem still remains for far too many people and far too many communities, and the government is actively exploring options to try to address this as quickly as it can, given the geographical, technological and other constraints that impose themselves in this area. Thank you for the question.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

HUAWEI—5G TECHNOLOGY

Hon. Leo Housakos: My question is for the government leader. Senator Gold, yesterday you admitted that your government is still "grappling with a decision" of whether to ban Huawei from being part of our 5G network. Of course we now know they're already part of our 4G network with TELUS network, although we didn't find that out from your government.

Senator Gold, our Five Eyes allies have made it clear where they stand. What exactly is it that your leader is grappling with? What is so difficult with this decision? Is there an outstanding IOU on this failed bid to get the UN Security Council by your government?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. I'm going to try to address the question of substance and resist, as I've tried to do in my brief time in this role, getting sidetracked by questions that I think do not merit a response.

If the honourable senator has an interest in the answer, I'll proceed. The intelligence agencies, our community's security establishment and CSIS, regularly provide our government with information as to the security needs and imperatives to protect our telecommunications network. The government listens carefully to that and bases its decisions upon the best advice and evidence it receives from its experts, and it will make its decision with regard to Huawei in exactly that manner.

• (1450)

Senator Housakos: Senator Gold, if there's ever a question that merits an answer, it's this question. It calls into question right now the security of our country. It calls into question our foreign policy in dealing with a country that has an egregious record on human rights and the rule of law. This government has to understand that the Canadian public are calling for answers.

Senator Gold, you talked about our relationship with the Communist China regime many times in this place as being a complicated one. Now Mr. Trudeau has fully compromised, on the world stage for all to see, our values of freedom, democracy and human rights, and now that the cornerstone of his entire foreign policy — coying up to tyrants and despots — has backfired in the abject failure of securing the UN Security Council seat, we know that the Prime Minister has kowtowed to the Chinese. We know he has bowed before the Iranians. He refuses to recognize the IRGC, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, on the list of terrorist organizations.

Will your government finally simplify that relationship and take a new direction, not only with China but with our foreign policy altogether? Will your government finally take Canada back and start being a beacon of freedom and democracy in the rule of law?

Senator Gold, wouldn't you agree that it's time that we simplify the way we see our relationship with the Communist Party in China and finally stand up and start taking action, starting with Huawei?

Senator Gold: Thank you for the question. Were the world a simple place and we could answer foreign policy issues, which, as I described yesterday, are complicated. We have Canadians who are being held arbitrarily and unfairly, and are at great risk in China. We have supply chains, Canadian businesses, Canadian consumers, Canadian farmers also dependent in so many complex ways on our relationships. We have allies with whom we are working.

Canada will continue to pursue a responsible, progressive foreign policy in the world through the United Nations and other multinational institutions, and will continue to deal with a complex world and relationships in the best interests of Canadians.

TRANSPORT

COVID-19 PANDEMIC—PASSENGER REFUNDS

Hon. Judith G. Seidman: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate on behalf of my colleague Senator Ataullahjan.

While Canada's airlines have been hit hard by COVID-19, so have Canadians who bought tickets they cannot use and are frustrated they can only obtain a voucher, not a refund.

In recent days, WestJet has said it will provide cash refunds for some cancelled international flights. It has been speculated this change is a direct result of pressure from airline regulators in the U.S. and Europe.

Back on April 3, the U.S. Department of Transportation issued an enforcement notice to remind U.S. and foreign carriers that passengers should be promptly refunded when flights are cancelled.

Leader, Senator Ataullahjan would like to know what your government will do to ensure Canadian air passengers are given the same respect as those in other countries and are provided a refund.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question. I certainly understand the frustration of Canadian consumers whose flights were cancelled and who are seeking refunds and who have not received them from airlines.

I believe Minister Garneau, when recently confronted with that question, explained the challenge that this government is facing in balancing some very tough competing interests, including, obviously, the interest in providing redress to Canadians. We are all affected by this. Some suffered losses because they couldn't travel and the costs were already expended.

Equally challenging is the importance of maintaining the viability of our airlines and our airline industry, as we are challenged to do with respect to all businesses struggling through this pandemic. It is sometimes necessary to defer certain measures in order to make sure that the industry can survive. The government is working very closely with the airline industry. It takes very seriously the challenges and losses that Canadian consumers have suffered. It's trying to find the best solution to make sure we can all come out of this whole. Thank you for the question.

Senator Seidman: Senator Ataullahjan is concerned that when customers can use their vouchers to rebook their flights, the cost of those same cancelled trips will most likely increase, resulting in some not being able to afford to travel. Additionally, vouchers will most likely have an expiry date or blackout dates, resulting in some customers losing their money altogether.

Leadership from the Government of Canada is necessary now as this will be an ongoing problem for many years. The International Air Transportation Association has stated it believes passenger air traffic won't return to pre-crisis levels until at least 2023.

Senator Gold, does the Government of Canada commit to ensuring any future negotiations on airline bailouts will include passenger refunds?

Senator Gold: Thank you for the question. I'm not in a position to answer that question. You'll understand that the government, as I best understand it, is in discussions regularly with the airline industry. As I said, it is seeking to find a solution that works not only for the survival of the industry but, of course, for the well-being and fair redress for Canadians.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I also have a question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Last month, a NAFTA panel ruled against Canada and upheld a U.S. International Trade Commission decision that the American lumber industry is injured by Canadian lumber imports. I remind the leader and all honourable senators that in March 2016, four years ago, the Prime Minister promised a softwood lumber deal with the United States within 100 days.

Four years later, Senator Gold, could you tell us if any discussions have taken place recently between Canada and the American officials regarding the softwood lumber duties? When was the last time Minister Freeland or any other minister met with their counterparts about softwood lumber?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you. I can't answer specifically. I can't give you dates nor the frequency, but I can reassure this chamber that the government is in regular contact. The minister, her staff and other relevant ministers are in regular contact with their counterparts in the United States. It's the most important trading relationship for us in Canada. The softwood lumber issue is hardly a new issue. We've been struggling with it in Canada, largely successfully, throughout the history of our relationship with the United States. I can endeavour to find out more details. I am advised, however, that the government is in regular contact with its counterparts on all of the economic issues that concern our two countries.

Senator Martin: It has been four years since the Prime Minister promised a softwood lumber deal. I, and this chamber, would like to know when these discussions specifically have taken place in recent weeks or months.

The forestry sector in my province of British Columbia has gone through a terrible period over the last number of years, well before the advent of COVID-19. The global pandemic and its resulting economic downturn made an already bad situation worse for our forestry companies and their workers. For instance, Canfor recently announced that the Isle Pierre sawmill would be permanently closed by mid-August. Production will be curtailed at the Prince George Pulp and Paper and Intercontinental Pulp Mill. Last week, Paper Excellence Canada said its operations in Mackenzie will also be curtailed.

Leader, what is the government doing specifically to help the B.C. forestry sector survive this period of significant job losses and economic instability? I know other sectors are still waiting

for help, such as our oil and gas sector, but in terms of the forestry sector, can they expect support from this government any time soon?

The Hon. the Speaker: I'm sorry, senators, but the time for Question Period has expired.

• (1500)

[Translation]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Hon. the Speaker: I am prepared to rule on Senator Wallin's question of privilege from June 16, 2020, which raised concerns about the right of senators to participate in proceedings of the Senate during the current pandemic.

This question of privilege was raised under rule 13-4. Chapter 13 of the Rules contains precise requirements for raising questions of privilege in order for them to be considered under the special processes of that chapter. In general, except for a matter to be raised on a Friday, written notice must be provided at least three hours before the Senate sits. Rule 13-4 is an exception to this notice requirement, and it exists to allow senators to raise questions of privilege if they become aware of a concern either after the time for giving written notice or during the sitting itself. The issues identified by Senator Wallin related to the fact that the Senate sat on June 16 and dealt with its business. This had been known since May 29, 2020, and there was no explanation to explain why recourse was made to the exceptional provisions of rule 13-4.

Rule 13-2(2) deals with cases where a question of privilege is neither raised at the first opportunity, nor covered by rule 13-4. Rule 13-2(2) states that in such situations:

... a Senator may still raise the matter on a substantive motion following notice, but the matter cannot be proceeded with under the terms of this chapter.

Our Rules do not, therefore, allow Senator Wallin's question of privilege to be considered under the procedures of Chapter 13 of the Rules, although Senator Wallin remains free to raise the matter as a substantive motion after the required notice.

[English]

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

MOTION FOR ADDRESS IN REPLY—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Gold, P.C., seconded by the Honourable Senator LaBoucane-Benson:

That the following Address be presented to Her Excellency the Governor General of Canada:

To Her Excellency the Right Honourable Julie Payette, Chancellor and Principal Companion of the Order of Canada, Chancellor and Commander of the Order of Military Merit, Chancellor and Commander of the Order of Merit of the Police Forces, Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY:

We, Her Majesty's most loyal and dutiful subjects, the Senate of Canada in Parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Excellency for the gracious Speech which Your Excellency has addressed to both Houses of Parliament.

Hon. David M. Wells: Honourable senators, we often use the responses to the Speech from the Throne to talk about things that are important to us. Senator Patterson has often spoken about the North, and we have had other excellent speeches.

Colleagues, in my response to the Speech from the Throne, I would like to speak about something that's important to me, and that is a very important initiative, the Canadian Cancer Society's Plaid for Dad campaign. The most common form of cancer in men is prostate cancer, and this important initiative, the Plaid for Dad campaign, is raising funds for prostate cancer research. The Canadian Cancer Society is counting on thousands of individuals in workplaces across Canada to go plaid through donations, other fundraising activities and events.

The Friday before Father's Day, June 19, 2020, is officially designated as the day to wear plaid for dad. Participants will show photos online using #PlaidForDad! to show their support and help spread the word.

Since 2015, the Plaid for Dad campaign has continued to solidify itself as the way Canadians choose to give back each Father's Day weekend. The number of Canadians who wear plaid raise awareness of prostate cancer and raise funds for prostate cancer research. That keeps growing.

To show the significance of this initiative, I would like to share with colleagues the results of a survey conducted last year by the Canadian Cancer Society: Half of Canadians know someone who has been diagnosed with prostate cancer, be it a family member, a friend or a colleague. One in five has been closely affected by prostate cancer, meaning they have been diagnosed or have a

father or a brother who has been diagnosed. Three quarters know that prostate cancer is the most common cancer among men. One third know that 50 to 59 years old is the recommended age for the first PSA test, and the survival rate, colleagues, is close to 100% if there is early diagnosis.

Canadian workplaces and individuals will continue this year to designate the Friday before Father's Day as the day to wear plaid for dad in support of one in seven Canadian men who will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime. Friday is that day.

Given our new reality caused by COVID-19, our places of work look different this year, but Canadians across the country, including us, honourable colleagues, can still go plaid together on Friday. Now more than ever, the Plaid for Dad campaign provides a meaningful way to connect with Canadians over an important cause.

The event has been updated to work for those who are working remotely, and the Canadian Cancer Society is providing all the tools Canadians need to run a fun and easy campaign. I encourage all of you, and indeed all Canadians, to get inspired alongside our plaid for dad ambassadors, fellow Newfoundlander and Labradorian and friend Mark Critch and Canadian actor Eric McCormack and to join in this important initiative.

Honourable colleagues, I urge all of you, as well as all Canadians, to wear plaid for dad tomorrow, June 19, and share photos online using #PlaidForDad! to show your support and help spread the word. Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Gagné, debate adjourned.)

[Translation]

THE SENATE

MOTION TO RESOLVE INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
TO CONSIDER THE 2020-21 MAIN ESTIMATES AND
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (A)—DEBATE

Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate), pursuant to notice of June 17, 2020, moved:

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 on Monday, June 22, 2020, to consider the expenditures set out in the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021, and in the Supplementary Estimates (A) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021;
2. the Committee of the Whole receive the Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, P.C., M.P., President of the Treasury Board, accompanied by one official;

3. the Committee of the Whole rise no later than 125 minutes after it begins;
4. the witnesses' introductory remarks last a maximum total of five minutes; and
5. if a senator does not use the entire period of 10 minutes for debate provided under rule 12-32(3)(d), including the responses of the witnesses, that senator may yield the balance of time to another senator.

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

[English]

Hon. Ratna Omidvar: Honourable senators, we are debating a motion by Senator Gagné to convene a Committee of the Whole to examine the expenditures contained in the estimates. I take this opportunity to amend this motion to examine the estimates as they pertain to the individual and collective responsibility of ministers to combat systemic racism. Just as we are calling on a minister of the government to explain and clarify the estimates, we must also call on ministers to provide detailed explanations for the items contained in the estimates as they pertain to issues of racism, in particular, actions that the government is planning or implementing on addressing anti-black and anti-Indigenous racism.

A Committee of the Whole with ministers in this chamber is the beginning of such an effort. It is not the end and will be followed, I hope, by many other efforts that have been mentioned here. The Committee of the Whole is an important tool in our senatorial tool box to consider matters of the day that are urgent, that require sober second thought in a chamber that is less partisan and takes the long view.

I commend my colleagues and other groups, in particular, the Conservative Party of Canada, on insisting that a Committee of the Whole examine these estimates in parallel to the work of National Finance. I have the approval and enthusiasm of Senator Mégie for this amendment. As someone has said, if you want answers, follow the money.

MOTION IN AMENDMENT—POINT OF ORDER—
SPEAKER'S RULING RESERVED

Hon. Ratna Omidvar: Therefore, honourable senators, in amendment, I move:

That the motion be not now adopted, but that it be amended:

1. by adding the following new paragraphs 3 and 4:

“3. the Committee of the Whole separately receive one or more ministers of the Crown, to be determined by the government, accompanied by one official each, to examine the estimates as they pertain to the individual and collective responsibility of ministers to combat systemic racism;

4. proceedings of the Committee of the Whole not be suspended at 6 p.m., with the committee continuing to meet until it has completed its business, and going beyond the ordinary hour of adjournment if required;”;

2. by renumbering current paragraphs 3 to 5 as paragraphs 5 to 7;
3. by changing the words “125 minutes” to “250 minutes”; and
4. by changing the words “witnesses' introductory remarks last a maximum total” to “introductory remarks for each witness last a maximum”.

• (1510)

Hon. Pierrette Ringuette (The Hon. the Acting Speaker): In amendment, it was moved by Senator Omidvar, seconded by Senator Woo, that — shall I dispense?

Some Hon. Senators: Dispense.

Some Hon. Senators: No.

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: I shall read it:

That the motion be not now adopted, but that it be amended:

1. by adding the following new paragraphs 3 and 4:

“3. the Committee of the Whole separately receive one or more ministers of the Crown, to be determined by the government, accompanied by one official each, to examine the estimates as they pertain to the individual and collective responsibility of ministers to combat systemic racism;

4. proceedings of the Committee of the Whole not be suspended at 6 p.m., with the committee continuing to meet until it has completed its business, and going beyond the ordinary hour of adjournment if required;”;

2. by renumbering current paragraphs 3 to 5 as paragraphs 5 to 7;
3. by changing the words “125 minutes” to “250 minutes”; and
4. by changing the words “witnesses' introductory remarks last a maximum total” to “introductory remarks for each witness last a maximum”.

On debate.

Hon. Pierre J. Dalfond: Honourable senators, this amendment goes against the spirit of the motion before us. I don't think it is receivable to just transform a motion — which is to have present the President of the Treasury Board to come

and answer questions about the estimates in a Committee of the Whole — to speak about racism. I'm not opposed to a Committee of the Whole about racism, but let's call a cat a cat.

What we're trying to do here is transform a motion about estimates into a motion on racism. Unfortunately, it's against the rules. That's my point of order, Your Honour.

Hon. Yuen Pau Woo: Honourable senators, the most fundamental point of accountability is the money; the way in which budgets are spent. It is the way in which ministers — through their ministries and through the appropriations given to their ministries — spend their money. And if they are ministers, and they are surely ministers responsible for dealing with systemic racism, they have to account for how they spend the money in dealing with systemic racism. So there is nothing out of order, nothing whatsoever about a Committee of the Whole to examine the estimates and to have ministers questioned on the way in which their budgets are deployed, in order to deal with this issue.

Your Honour, with respect, I ask you to dismiss this point of order out of hand, not only because it has no basis whatsoever, but because if you don't, you will deprive us of the opportunity to question ministers on systemic racism, but also ministers on the estimates themselves. Thank you.

Hon. Leo Housakos: Honourable senators, very briefly on the point of order. I disagree with Senator Dalphond. At the end of the day, this institution and this chamber is a master of its own destiny. At the end of the day, if we have a motion right now that wants to broaden the parameters of a Committee of the Whole, it is well within this chamber's destiny, if they choose it to be its destiny, to broaden that parameter.

Now, if members of the government like to narrow parameters when we have Committee of the Whole and when we have senators before us, that's their prerogative, but the prerogative of this chamber certainly has the obligation within the rules to put forward a motion as Senator Omidvar has done. What we do with it, of course, is our decision.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I'm actually not sure whether I am supporting or disputing the point of order except to say, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, this morning we did have our daily scroll. Senator Omidvar was part of the discussions, and I'm surprised on such a substantive amendment it wasn't even mentioned.

On that front, I would simply say if this was going to be discussed, we should have had the leaders discuss it, the caucuses discuss it and the groups discuss it, rather than have it right now in this chamber on a motion that I thought we had agreed, because it's important. We have to examine the supply bill.

This is important information that the honourable senators should be aware of and for you to also have in your ruling. Thank you.

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, further to what my colleague and our deputy leader has said, of course, Senator Woo is very well

aware, he was part of every leaders' call that we had. We discussed the procedures of how we are going to move forward with government legislation, and we have had numerous meetings. On that call, it was decided we would have a Committee of the Whole which would be, in fact, 125 minutes, not whatever this motion now reads. We would have the minister, the President of the Treasury Board, come here and that was going to be the substance of our Committee of the Whole on Monday.

Now, the leader of, I don't know, whatever group he is, has decided that he clearly — again deals that are made in good faith don't need to be honoured.

Your Honour, I'm not a legal scholar. I will yield to my colleague across the way here, who very clearly is more knowledgeable about those issues than I am, but I do know that we had a deal that we were going to have something, and now the leader of that group is somehow supporting this point of order. And you have debated already, Senator Woo.

Senator Woo: Am I allowed to rejoin? I believe I am.

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Yes.

Senator Woo: Thank you. Honourable senators. Just to clarify, Senator Plett. You said I support the point of order. I do not support the point of order. You and all senators know very well that the previous two interventions have nothing to do with the point of order. I'm sure you will be able to judge the merits of the point of order based on the rules that govern the point of order.

As I argued previously already, there is nothing more germane to a Committee of the Whole studying estimates than to ask ministers responsible for portfolios that have to do with a variety of issues that are covered in the budget — to have them come and to ask them questions on those issues.

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: Honourable senators, I don't have the text of the motion in front of me, although I listened carefully to it being read.

Of course, it's very difficult to appear in any way to be opposed to discussing the critical and current issue of systemic racism in the country, but I would just like to say what came to my mind when I heard Senator Omidvar's motion, and that is how is this actually —

Hon. Lucie Moncion: Point of order.

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: It's not a point of order.

Senator Moncion: I know, but he's not speaking on a point of order.

Senator Patterson: Actually, I am speaking to the point of order if you will let me continue.

• (1520)

How is this actually going to work? When the Senate calls for a Committee of the Whole, there are witnesses identified and we have clearly signalled to the government that Minister Duclos

will represent the Treasury Board. That is the source of all the money. Any questions can be asked of Minister Duclos, including questions about this very issue of systemic racism. But the motion, as I understand it, seemed to talk about separately examining other ministers. I don't know who those ministers are, and I wonder if the government knows who those ministers are to be, because, of course, systemic racism covers a very large —

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Senator Patterson, you are debating on the motion in amendment *per se*, and we are now debating on a point of order. I will take issues on the point of order.

Senator Patterson: The point of order is one I agree with. I believe that the amendment will cause confusion in the Committee of the Whole on Monday, because it will not be clear which ministers are accountable for the new subject that has been introduced to the amendment. I don't think it is going to work. Therefore, I think the amendment is, in fact, out of order because it is contrary to the spirit of the motion and contrary to the substance of the motion. I think it is going to be very confusing for all concerned. If we accept this amendment, which is in conflict with the plan for the Committee of the Whole, it is going to cause confusion.

The other problem is that the Committee of the Whole is to discuss a staggering amount of expenditures. I think there is over \$80 billion. I am concerned that we may well lose focus on our important responsibility to demand accountability for how that money is being spent if we engage in a subject that is broad and covers a vast number of federal departments and ministries.

Hon. Raymonde Saint-Germain: Senator Housakos is not a legal scholar. He was the former Speaker of the Senate, and he is very savvy with the *Rules of the Senate*. This is why I concur with him.

I would like to make some additional points. First, the discussions within the leaders' meetings are not eligible to a point of order, and the scroll is not binding on the Senate. It is the government who determines who speaks for it, not the Senate. This is why the amendment allows for some flexibility for whose minister may come here.

I will conclude by stating that the amendment is in order because it concerns the agenda of the Committee of the Whole, which is the subject of Senator Gagné's motion. It is within the scope of the original motion, so it is in order.

Senator Martin: I have a question that is relevant at this time. I thought of it as Senator Patterson was speaking to the substantive motion, which we do not have copies of in either language. I am wondering: Should we have a copy of this motion? There is quite a bit in it; is that forthcoming?

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: We will make more copies immediately, senator. Copies of the amendment will be distributed to everyone in both official languages.

Senator Housakos: On the point of order, I will reiterate what Senator Saint-Germain has said. Agreements between leadership caucuses are guidelines for this chamber. They don't supersede any senator's right to dole in on the scroll at any time. It would

be setting a terrible precedent to hinder any senator's ability, at any given time, to put forward an amendment to a motion, or a new motion regarding any issue. I concur with Senator Saint-Germain. It's up to the government whether they want to accept the invitation or not. We can't be binding any ministers of the Crown or the government to come before us. It's just an invitation.

Senator Omidvar: I would like to respond to a few statements that have been made; I hope they pertain to the point of order.

Senator Martin referred to the collegiality at the scrolls, and yes there is collegiality, but there have been moments that I can remember when that collegiality has been set aside for motions and amendments on the floor. I think she knows what we are talking about.

Senator Patterson talked about confusion. Sir, if you are confused, I ask you to look into the lives of —

Senator Martin: We are on a point of order.

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: We are on a point of order.

Senator Martin: Senator Omidvar is refuting me, saying something unparliamentary to a colleague rather than talking about the point of order itself. I would ask Senator Omidvar to speak to the point of order.

Senator Omidvar: I was referring to statements made here during the discussion on the point of order. If my comments are not appropriate, then those comments should also have not been appropriate during the discussion on the point of order.

Senator Plett: This is clearly an attempt by Trudeau appointees to work against other Trudeau appointees to debate the supplementary estimates — this is speaking to the point of order — the finances of the nation, by restricting the topic to racism as opposed to the bill. Will that mean that we cannot question — when the ministers are here, the focus will be on racism and not the supplementary estimates.

The Committee of the Whole is for study of Bill C-18 and Bill C-19. That is the reason for the Committee of the Whole. This is not amending it. This is going against it and saying we will now discuss racism. We have a motion dealing with a Committee of the Whole on racism. We have an emergency debate and an inquiry. Now they are trying to somehow supersede Senator Mégie's motion on a Committee of the Whole by bringing that topic into discussing supply, and this completely takes us away from the topic that we need to discuss on Monday in Committee of the Whole.

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: I think I have heard most of the arguments on this issue, and we will come back on a decision on the point of order that was raised.

[*Translation*]

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION ADOPTED

Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate), pursuant to notice of June 17, 2020, moved:

That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Monday, June 22, 2020, at 6 p.m.;

That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules, if a vote is deferred to that day, the bells for the vote ring at the start of Orders of the Day, for 15 minutes, with the vote to be held thereafter; and

That rule 3-3(1) be suspended on that day.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

• (1530)

[*English*]

CONSTITUTION ACT, 1867

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—
DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson moved second reading of Bill S-218, An Act to amend the Constitution Act, 1867 (property qualifications of Senators).

He said: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to my bill, An Act to amend the Constitution Act, 1867 (property qualifications of Senators).

This bill is significant. It seeks to amend the Constitution of Canada by removing the clauses that state that senators should have a net worth of \$4,000 and own property in their region valued at \$4,000 in order to qualify for appointment.

Colleagues, I stood in this chamber and spoke to this bill when I first introduced it in 2016. The words I said then are true to this day: These antiquated and elitist provisions create a barrier for almost half of all Canadian households to fully participate in the governance of this country. They are requirements put in at a time when the landed gentry were given a means to keep the great unwashed in line should their elected officials in the other place become too overzealous in their legislative roles. Clearly, this is inconsistent with modern democratic values.

The passage of this bill would end the need for a minimum net worth of \$4,000 to qualify to become a senator. This measure was imposed at a time when the Senate was meant to temper the will of the masses, considered to be less educated and, overall, less pragmatic than wealthy landowners. That reasoning, of course, is no longer valid, and the requirement of a net worth fails to acknowledge the fact that the rate of pay for many Canadians does not keep pace with the rising cost of living.

In 2017, 85% of tax filers reported an income below \$100,000; 65% reported an income below \$50,000. Sadly, 1.7 million Canadians reported an income of less than \$5,000. We can no longer build a democratic chamber using elitist and discriminatory rules. This data on income has significant bearing on the issue of property requirements currently necessary to qualify to sit in the Senate.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, in their socio-economic analysis published in March 2019, stated that, “Unsurprisingly, higher-income households tend to access homeownership.”

Their research showed that for those earning above \$100,000 per annum, the rate of home ownership was above 80%, and in the \$200,000 per annum and above range it was in the high 90s. Conversely, those in the \$50,000 to \$99,999 salary range have a percentage of home ownership in the high 60s, which is reflective of the national average of 67%, while roughly 50% of those making less than \$50,000 were homeowners.

Based on the previously reported numbers, that means that almost 10 million of the approximately 21.8 million Canadians who are between the ages of 30 and 75 automatically do not qualify, regardless of experience or qualification. Ten million Canadians probably don’t qualify to sit in this chamber.

According to the 2016 census, just shy of 4.5 million households in Canada are renter-occupied.

A CBC article posted online on August 12, 2016, entitled, “Senate criteria angers potential Island candidate” tells the story of P.E.I. resident Kelly Robinson. Ms. Robinson, known for her community work, did not possess the \$4,000 in property required. In the article, she stated:

It felt like it was going back to when only landowners could vote, only landowners could be certain things. And I just thought that is not the Canada that I’m in or that I thought I was in. I think it’s a very old rule that hasn’t been properly confronted yet. . . . We’re coming into a time when many, especially young Canadians, do not have land and may never have land because of the state of the economy.

We have in front of us, colleagues, an opportunity to confront this antiquated rule. We have the opportunity to ensure that the Senate is a more inclusive space that includes voices reflective of the same kind of diversity we see in Canada. This exclusion of otherwise competent, intelligent and dedicated Canadians from being appointed to the upper chamber must end.

Colleagues, this is not the first time that a bill like this has been proposed. Our late former colleague the Honourable Tommy Banks tried three times to remove these provisions. Once, the bill was referred to committee but in all three instances died on the Order Paper.

Former Senator Banks also believed that these provisions were outdated. This is what he said:

This bill seeks to redress that shortfall, which I think everyone would agree is antediluvian. . . . The provision made a lot of sense, I suspect, in 1867. Putting aside, however, the purposes for which it was put in place, the amount of real property that is required in this part of the constitution would be inappropriate today if it were intended as a roadblock or as a criterion for membership.

Former senators Di Nino, Carstairs, Fraser and Tkachuk all voiced their support for the various iterations of then Senator Banks' bill, but the one critique that continually arose was the question of the constitutionality of such legislation. That bill also came at a time when it was yet unclear if broader, more sweeping changes could be enacted by Parliament alone.

I'm happy to note and emphasize today that that question has now been answered.

On April 25, 2014, on the question of Senate reform, the Supreme Court ruled:

We conclude that the net worth requirement (s. 23(4)) can be repealed by Parliament under the unilateral federal amending procedure. However, a full repeal of the real property requirement (s. 23(3)) requires the consent of Quebec's legislative assembly, under the special arrangements procedure. Indeed, a full repeal of that provision would also constitute an amendment in relation to s. 23(6), which contains a special arrangement applicable only to the province of Quebec.

This "special arrangements procedure" consisted of me introducing a motion at the same time as this bill in our chamber, seeking to remove the property requirements for Quebec senators. I intend to introduce such a motion again. If adopted, the motion would need to be adopted in the House of Commons and again in the National Assembly of Quebec. It is the procedure outlined in section 46(1) of the Constitution and states that:

The procedures for amendment under sections 38, 41, 42 and 43 may be initiated either by the Senate or the House of Commons or by the legislative assembly of a province.

• (1540)

Honourable senators, it is true that what originally drove my desire to bring this bill forward is the reality of Nunavummiut. The reality is that, outside of a very small amount of grandfathered land, real property ownership — that is, the transfer of land and title — is not allowed in Nunavut. The Inuit decided in three separate referenda that such ownership was contrary to their cultural beliefs and practices.

[Senator Patterson]

But let me assure you, colleagues, that this is not just a Nunavut issue. This is about the millions of Canadians who deserve a chance to represent their communities in the Senate, including First Nations homeowners who live on reserve and have land they don't own under ministerial special permit. This is about striking down an archaic provision that the Supreme Court has ruled is within our jurisdiction to strike down. This is about modernization of this institution, starting with the dismantling of barriers to entry for future senators.

I want to emphasize, in talking about amending our Constitution, that my intention is in no way to restrict, limit or change the requirement that a senator should reside in the region that they represent in this chamber. But shouldn't they be able to reside in a rented apartment? Shouldn't they be able to reside on ministerial title on a First Nation reserve? Shouldn't they be able to reside in a condominium, which I'm not sure falls within the archaic definition of "property" in the Constitution Act, 1867? This is about modernization of this institution.

I'm available to discuss this with every senator. I am open to your feedback and very hopeful that I have your support in creating change. I will be sending a package of information to all honourable senators to outline, in a little more detail, the points I've made in this address.

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond: The \$4,000 issue goes back a very long time — too long, sadly. As our colleague said, it represents an aristocratic position with regard to the prevailing notion of the country's upper chamber. At the time, the objective was to have important people, landowners, sit in the Senate.

When I was asked to sit in the Senate, I calculated what that \$4,000 might be worth in today's dollars. Depending on the rates that are used, and they vary a lot — the Canadian dollar did not exist in 1867 and banknotes were issued by certain banks — the money needed to be converted into pounds sterling and then reconverted according to the conversion rate of the time. Based on the rates, today that amount represents between \$2 million and \$3 million. That is a significant amount of money and very few Canadians, not even me, would have the opportunity to sit here today if they were required to have that much money.

This measure was founded not on a democratic spirit, but at the behest of John A. Macdonald, who wanted to have a chamber that controlled democracy and tempered the will of elected members, who perhaps didn't adequately represent the interests of landowners in the country. At the time, members of Parliament were elected by men only. What's more, they may have been perceived as people who weren't to be trusted.

I'm pleased that our colleague, Senator Patterson, is proposing eliminating this measure, which was essentially undemocratic. The measure's intent was to make this chamber off limits to everyone except landowners or people with property interests to protect.

The time has come to address this issue. Unfortunately, senators from Quebec must not only own property worth \$4,000, but they must also have land holdings in certain divisions. This also involves the province.

Senator Patterson, I invite you to move your motion and I thank you for your interest in this matter.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[*English*]

Hon. Marilou McPhedran: Thank you very much, Senator Patterson, for once again taking this initiative. I will speak briefly, but enthusiastically, in support of what you are proposing we look at. I also want to thank you, Senator Dalphond, for taking a progressive and inclusive approach to the changes we need to look at.

Yes, there are obviously challenges that our colleagues from Quebec, hopefully in alliance, will take on and find a way through. What I would like to speak to today is more anecdotal in nature. I want to place on the record an emphasis on some of the points that Senator Patterson made about the impact on Indigenous communities and individuals.

The anecdote I wish to share is that in the initial round of applications for applicants to be considered for nomination as senators in this country, I was very deeply involved in several. All of those nominations were for Indigenous colleagues whom I knew well and respected enormously, and I was convinced that they would bring tremendous added value to this august chamber. At the final stages of those applications, some people had to say — and I have to say that there was a certain degree of embarrassment on the part of these candidates — “I don’t have that much money and I don’t have that property.”

We went ahead and made the applications. I included a note that brought this to the attention of the review process. In one case, I know some transfers were made to make it possible to get past that initial threshold.

None of those candidates ended up being recommended for appointment. We have very accomplished, dignified and enormously valuable colleagues who are of Indigenous origin and made it through that process, and I’m very grateful for each of them being with us. What I think is a big part of what Senator Patterson is inviting us all to think about is the loss to our institution, the loss to our democracy and the loss to effective, inclusive and modern governance, when we allow an antiquated law like this to stop so many highly accomplished individuals from being among us when they really should be. This is not just today, but to be able to go forward into the future and make this change. Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

(On motion of Senator Omidvar, debate adjourned.)

SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE FUTURE OF WORKERS—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Lankin, P.C., seconded by the Honourable Senator Gagné:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, when and if it is formed, be authorized to examine and report on the future of workers in order to evaluate:

- (a) how data and information on the gig economy in Canada is being collected and potential gaps in knowledge;
- (b) the effectiveness of current labour protections for people who work through digital platforms and temporary foreign workers programs;
- (c) the negative impacts of precarious work and the gig economy on benefits, pensions and other government services relating to employment; and
- (d) the accessibility of retraining and skills development programs for workers;

That in conducting this evaluation the committee pay particular attention to the negative effects of precarious employment being disproportionately felt by workers of colour, new immigrant and indigenous workers; and

That the committee submit its final report on this study to the Senate no later than April 7, 2022.

Hon. René Cormier: Honourable senators, I rise today to address the motion moved by Senator Lankin, who is proposing that the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology study the future of workers in Canada especially in the context of the gig economy or the on-demand economy.

Three months ago I wrote a speech on this subject when COVID-19 was not part of our lives. At the time, we could not have imagined the upheaval that this virus would cause in our personal lives, work, institutions and what we consider to be a “normal life”.

In light of what has happened over the past few months, I believe it is more important than ever that real action be taken to respond to the growing concerns of labour and precarious workers.

I will address these concerns from the point of view of an economic sector for which there are few platforms left in the Senate, namely, the arts, culture and cultural industries sector.

This sector includes artists of colour, new immigrants and self-employed workers, categories of citizens that the senator would like to pay particular attention to in this study.

Over the course of my career as an artist and cultural manager, I've always been interested in topics connected to status of the artists and the precarious working conditions that artists and many cultural managers live with. Within New Brunswick's Association acadienne des artistes professionnels, where I had the pleasure of working for over a decade, I focused on developing public policy models that enable artists and cultural workers to be fully recognized.

Furthermore, in my decades as a professional musician, I was very familiar with the reality of living contract to contract or, as we say in the business, living from gig to gig.

You may already know this, but the expression "gig economy" originates from the music industry. According to Oxford Music Online:

[*English*]

"Gig" refers to: "A term commonly applied to a musical engagement of one night's duration only . . ."

[*Translation*]

When I read that definition, I obviously recognized myself in it, but I also recognized in it most of my former artist and cultural worker colleagues from here and elsewhere who make a living from their art and their passion, even though it may not be a stable job.

I would like to remind honourable senators that, in Canada, there are over 158,000 artists and 726,000 cultural workers. This category includes those who hold occupations in the heritage and cultural fields and professional artists themselves. Although I do not have any specific data for workers in the gig economy, according to the 2016 census, 52% of artists were self-employed.

Here is what I want to tell you about their job security. In 2016, the median income of artists was \$24,300, while the median income of the workforce in general was \$43,500. That means that the median income of artists is 44% lower than that of the general workforce in Canada.

There are a number of reasons for this reality, including the lack of recognition of the invisible work of workers in the arts and culture sector. In this sector, that notion applies to all of the research, preparation, exploration, artistic development, ideation and design that is done early on in an artistic project. Unfortunately, that work is overlooked and unpaid. This situation no doubt also occurs in other types of jobs, but it clearly illustrates the problems with adapting our public policies to the evolving realities of the labour market in the cultural sector.

Workers in this sector have unusual jobs, of course, but their jobs should be protected just like jobs in other sectors in Canada.

[Senator Cormier]

Here's an overview of the challenges that arts and culture workers identified during a 2013 forum on the professional status of artists. The same challenges were reported in the Cultural Human Resources Council's report entitled *Labour Market Information Study of the Cultural Labour Force 2019*.

The challenges are as follows: no benefits, unstable earnings, lack of training, the expectation that artists should volunteer, the need to multi-task, and low job security. Technological progress has also been very hard on the cultural sector. According to the recent Yale report, the labour shortage and globalization have had a definite impact on this category of workers.

Businesses in the arts and culture sector also pointed to many of these challenges as having a significant impact on their ability to attract workers. Esteemed colleagues, this excerpt from the Cultural Human Resources Council report about consultations with key arts and culture partners really resonated with me. I would like to quote it, if I may.

Nearly every interviewee mentioned that a "poverty mentality" is pervasive in Canada's cultural sector; the poverty mentality manifests itself in low wages (offered by organizations, and expected by funders), lack of benefits for most employees (e.g., no pension plans, no additional healthcare coverage), and limited interest among Canadians in paying artists for the full extent of their work (e.g., people might complain about paying for the preparation an artist has to undertake before a performance). These issues affect all dimensions of an artist's life, including but not limited to income and food insecurity, their ability to access affordable housing, and their physical and mental well-being.

Today, as we begin the reopening process, we are discovering little by little the harmful effects of the pandemic on society as a whole, including the arts and culture sector and especially the performing arts, theatre, music and dance. The COVID-19 crisis has made real many of these concerns. It has become impossible to ignore the importance of the need to reflect and to take concrete action to ensure that workers in the gig economy are protected.

Since the pandemic started, the notion of precarious employment has taken on new meaning. It is no longer just a risk or an abstract concept. On the contrary, this pandemic has been devastating for all of the workers in the cultural sector. They are all dealing with the consequences of having no benefits, no job security and an inadequate income. No worker has been left unscathed.

We acknowledge that, from the beginning of this crisis, the federal government has been making efforts to listen to cultural sector workers. The CERB extension announced a few days ago is one example, and the Prime Minister's announcements this morning are another. But we all know that these are short-term emergency measures and that we will have to keep supporting this sector by fully understanding and appreciating the issues faced by Canada's arts and culture sector.

These past few months, we have often heard federal and provincial elected officials, among others, say that artists need to reinvent themselves in response to the pandemic. I have to say that such statements are extremely troubling, because they make certain elected officials seem like they have no concept of the very nature of art.

Honourable senators, artists are, by nature, reinventing themselves every day, in the way they take in and portray the world. Although artists and cultural workers are creative, resilient and able to reinvent themselves, they cannot bear alone the brunt of the pandemic's impact on the sector. They need concrete support from us.

The study proposed by Senator Lankin will be an opportunity for us to reflect on the future of our workers and identify measures that will provide decent working conditions for all Canadians. This study gives us an opportunity to propose legislation to change the social safety net for all workers with precarious jobs.

Of course, this study will likely not provide answers to all of our questions, but we will be able to help strengthen workers' rights, create a better future and put an end to this "poverty mentality" that permeates our perceptions of the cultural sector.

In closing, I want to take this opportunity to commend our colleagues for their leadership on this matter. Since my arrival in the Senate, I've been delighted to hear the debates on Senator Bellemare's inquiry about full employment in the 21st century in a globalized economy and Senator Poirier's inquiry into seasonal work and to hear Senator Lankin's recent speech, just to name a few of the many interventions that have drawn our attention to these crucial issues. On behalf of workers across the country, I want to thank you. Thank you for your attention, esteemed colleagues.

(On motion of Senator Martin, debate adjourned.)

• (1600)

[English]

INTERNAL ECONOMY, BUDGETS AND ADMINISTRATION

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO REFER WORKPLACE
ASSESSMENT REPORT COMMISSIONED BY THE COMMITTEE
DURING THE SECOND SESSION OF FORTY-FIRST
PARLIAMENT TO CURRENT SESSION—
DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Housakos, seconded by the Honourable Senator Mockler:

That the workplace assessment report commissioned by the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration during the second session of the Forty-first Parliament, entitled *Report of Evidence Relating to the Workplace in the Office of Senator Don Meredith*, dated

July 13, 2015, be referred to the committee during the current session for the purposes of its work on related issues, subject to normal practices relating to confidential documents.

Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond: Honourable senators, on February 27, 2020, Senator Housakos made an important motion before this house, in order to provide the Internal Economy Committee, Budgets and Administration with access to a previous report that is important in the consideration of the consequences and the potential indemnification of the victims of Senator Meredith. I think time has come for that motion to be adopted, in order for Internal Economy to complete its work as soon as possible and get full access to the report in order to have closure on this unfortunate chapter of our history.

An Hon. Senator: Hear, hear.

Senator Dalphond: That report goes back to 2015. That's already five years ago, and the current Internal Economy Committee has been prevented from having access to it. Victims have been waiting for years for indemnification, and they have been very patient. I appreciate the fact that we are a big institution and that we work at a pace that is not necessarily the pace of the private sector, and that we have to face COVID and postpone the debate on some issues, including some routine business, but that should not delay important business, like indemnifying the victims of Senator Meredith.

[Translation]

I believe that the time has come to bring this terrible matter to a close.

There were several victims, and the report from the Senate Ethics Officer documents the circumstances in detail. However, what we still have not been apprised of is the other report on these issues, which also identified some victims and unacceptable conduct.

To bring this terrible matter to a close, the time has come for the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration to have all the information it needs, for discussions with victims and their representatives to come to an end and for them to be given a copy of this report, as Senator Housakos himself mentioned during the debate. He wanted the document to be made available to everyone to whom CIBA made it available, and it is time that it happened. Therefore, I invite all my colleagues to vote in favour of this motion today.

(On motion of Senator Moncion, debate adjourned.)

THE SENATE

MOTION TO FILL ANY VACANCY IN THE POSITION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE BY SECRET BALLOT FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE CURRENT SESSION AND TO DISCHARGE THE FIRST REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF SELECTION FROM THE ORDER PAPER—MOTION IN AMENDMENT—
DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Dalphond, seconded by the Honourable Senator Boniface:

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

1. for the remainder of the session, any vacancy in the position of Speaker pro tempore be filled by means of a secret ballot, using a process to be established by the Speaker after consulting with the Leader of the Government, the Leader of the Opposition, and the leader or facilitator of any other recognized party or recognized parliamentary group; and
2. the first report of the Committee of Selection, if not disposed of before the adoption of this order, be discharged from the Order Paper.

And on the motion in amendment of the Honourable Senator Saint-Germain, seconded by the Honourable Senator Moncion:

That the motion be not now adopted, but that it be amended:

1. by adding the following before the last paragraph:

“2. the senator elected to serve as Speaker pro tempore shall be required to possess the full and practical knowledge of the official language which is not that of the Speaker for the time being;” and
2. by renumbering the final paragraph as number 3.

Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to the amendment that Senator Saint-Germain proposed yesterday to my motion to fill any vacancy in the position of the Speaker pro tempore by secret ballot by all senators.

[*English*]

I remind you that this motion establishes an important principle that the next Speaker pro tempore should be elected by all of us through a secret ballot. It will make us all equal and allow us the opportunity to decide who should be the next Speaker pro tempore.

I am speaking now to the amendment. First, I would like to thank Senators Saint-Germain and Omidvar, two members of the ISG leadership, for having expressed their strong support for the

motion and principles that the next Speaker pro tempore should be elected by a secret vote of all senators. I think this is an important point, and this is the main point of my motion.

[*Translation*]

My motion also calls for the process for selecting the next Speaker pro tempore to be established by the Speaker of the Senate, a neutral person, in consultation with the leaders and facilitators of all Senate groups, which naturally includes Senator Saint-Germain, who is a co-facilitator of the Independent Senators Group. It could be done during the summer break, which would allow us to hold this election when we come back in September.

In my speech, I referred to the House of Commons' current practice for electing its Speaker, which is set out in the House of Commons Standing Order 7. That process could easily be adapted for September's election.

The other place's Standing Order 7(2) states, and I quote:

The member elected to serve as Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole shall be required to possess the full and practical knowledge of the official language which is not that of the Speaker for the time being.

In other words, the rules in effect in the House of Commons, which we would be well advised to emulate, outline a procedure that recognizes both official languages, or at least the ability to understand both official languages.

This is, I admit, one way to implement the principle and the election of the Speaker pro tempore by senators using secret ballot voting, and I'm sure the leaders of the various groups, including the progressives, won't hesitate to make suggestions to the Speaker of the Senate. Senator Saint-Germain will therefore also be able to make her position clear to the Speaker of the Senate as part of the consultations.

I have no doubt that the Speaker would have considered this important aspect of the Standing Orders of the House of Commons.

That said, and assuming that the proposed amendment isn't intended to prevent us from adopting the principle of electing the next Speaker pro tempore by secret ballot and therefore rejecting the agreement reached in favour of the Independent Senators Group that allowed us to designate a Speaker pro tempore, I'm prepared to say that this amendment shouldn't pass. We should leave it up to the Speaker to make the temporary rules.

When the Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament meets to establish the permanent rules, we can then draft the appropriate rule. At this point, however, time is of the essence, and we need to make sure that we create a flexible rule that will allow us to select the Speaker pro tempore in September. In the interim, our facilitators and leaders can discuss and come up with the rules.

I invite all my colleagues to reject the amendment and then adopt the motion in the few hours that remain today or on Monday so that in September we will be able to participate in the

first reform to our rules, an important reform, that of the election of the Speaker pro tempore. This is an important issue for the progressive group and for all those who believe in Senate reform. I am certain that Senator Tannas shares my opinion, and I understand that Senator Plett also agrees with the principle of electing the Speaker pro tempore by secret ballot. We must seize this opportunity. Thank you.

• (1610)

Hon. Raymonde Saint-Germain: Senator Dalphond, I reiterate my support for your motion on a secret ballot and I would like to ask you the following question: Did you perceive in the substance of my amendment, which is modelled after the Standing Orders of the House of Commons, the desire to include people who are neither anglophone nor francophone, that is, Indigenous peoples whose mother tongue is neither French nor English and allophones whose mother tongue is neither French nor English, and do you still consider this to be a procedural issue?

Senator Dalphond: If I understand correctly, the proposal reads as follows:

“2. the senator elected to serve as Speaker pro tempore shall be required to possess the full and practical knowledge of the official language which is not that of the Speaker for the time being;”

The question that I asked myself — and you gave an excellent example, Senator St-Germain — is this: If, and I hope that this will happen one day, the person who is elected to serve as Speaker is a member of the First Nations whose mother tongue is not French or English, how would this provision be applied, since the person must have a full and practical knowledge of the official language that is not that of the Speaker at that time? I don't know. Would the person have to undergo language testing to find out which official language he or she learned first, French or English? I think we need to discuss how this principle would be applied. It is not a bad principle in and of itself, but applying it is another thing. Will the Speaker make the potential candidates undergo language testing in September? I don't know. I understand that this is essentially a technical issue and that it is not the principle of the motion. The principle of the motion is that the Senate will elect its Speaker pro tempore by secret ballot. That will not work if we start deciding on terms and conditions with 104 or 96 people. Thank you.

(On motion of Senator Miville-Dechéne, debate adjourned.)

[English]

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Yuen Pau Woo: Your Honour, I wonder if you would indulge me to make a suggestion and to seek the view of the chamber. It has to do with the next item that is coming up and, of course, the point of order raised by Senator Dalphond a few minutes ago concerning the Committee of the Whole on estimates.

I fully appreciate that the Acting Speaker pro tempore had to take this under advisement. However, we are all aware that this is a matter of urgency, because the plan is to have Committee of the Whole with the President of the Treasury Board, as well as other ministers relevant to the issue of systemic racism, to take place on Monday, and we are not planning to sit on Friday.

I just want to make a suggestion — and, of course, it would require the other leaders and senators to consider — that if it were your interest and desire to suspend for a while to consider the point of order so that you could make a decision today, it would help us move things along. I think it's in all of our interests to have a Committee of the Whole to review the estimates in their totality, in the way that the original motion that Senator Gagné had proposed and in the way Senator Omidvar has amended.

If I could add this, because the next motion touches on the same issue, Senator Omidvar has said to me that if, in fact, we go through this next motion from Senator Mégie, all senators have spoken and we get to a vote which, in fact, accepts the motion and agrees to a Committee of the Whole, as proposed by Senator Mégie, then Senator Omidvar would gladly withdraw the amendment she previously put forward.

The Hon. the Speaker: Do any honourable senators wish to speak to Senator Woo's observation?

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): I will say this: I don't think we should be subject to Senator Woo negotiating which motions they will withdraw and which motions they will leave; and that if Senator Omidvar gets her way, she is going to withdraw her amendment. That is what Senator Woo said at the end. If Senator Omidvar gets her way and has a Committee of the Whole on racism, then she is prepared to withdraw her motion. She is clearly obstructing government business by what she has done.

As far as I'm concerned, if this would require leave, Your Honour, we are not prepared to give leave. We are prepared to move along with the Order Paper.

The Hon. the Speaker: The matter has been taken under advisement. To move further, I would, of course, call on the unanimous consent of the house, which is not possible.

As well, I should point out that, yesterday, Senator Tannas spoke to Senator Mégie about a motion to move the Committee of the Whole to next week. It's my understanding that, before he left for the day, he was going to move that amendment. When we move to No. 56, I will call upon Senator Black (Ontario), who is replacing Senator Tannas.

THE SENATE

MOTION TO RESOLVE INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE TO
RECEIVE A MINISTER OR MINISTERS TO DISCUSS THE ROLE OF
THE GOVERNMENT IN COMBATTING RACISM—DEBATE

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Mégie, seconded by the Honourable Senator Anderson:

That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules or usual practice, at the start of the Orders of the Day on the sitting day following the adoption of this order, the Senate resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole in order to receive a minister or ministers of the Crown to discuss the role of the Government of Canada in combatting anti-Black racism and anti-Indigenous racism, and ending systemic racism;

That the committee report to the Senate no later than 120 minutes after it begins;

That the provisions of rule 3-3(1) be suspended while the committee is meeting;

That the application of any provision of the Rules or previous order concerning the time of adjournment be suspended until the committee has completed its work; and

That the ringing of the bells for any deferred vote that would conflict with the committee be deferred until the committee has completed its work.

Hon. Robert Black: Honourable senators, I rise on behalf of my colleague Senator Tannas, who has had to leave the chamber, to speak about Senator Mégie's motion. He notes that he personally supports the motion, as I do. He also notes that this is an important motion, which proposes a Committee of the Whole whereby senators would pose questions to ministers on their response to systemic and, indeed, other issues of racism in Canada.

These are his words:

As an Alberta senator, I have some questions I would like to ask about the treatment of Chief Allan Adam, as documented in that video that has outraged Canadians. I want to participate in a Committee of the Whole, and so do many of you here today, and so do many of our colleagues not here today.

He goes on to say that we must insist that all senators be able to participate. Very shortly, I will table on his behalf an amendment to the motion that proposes we conduct the Committee of the Whole as soon as the technology can be delivered for us to do so.

MOTION IN AMENDMENT

Hon. Robert Black: Therefore, honourable senators, in amendment, I move:

That the motion be not now adopted, but that it be amended:

1. by replacing the words "following the adoption of" with "provided for in"; and
2. by adding, after the words "systemic racism;," the following new paragraph:

"That the sitting day provided for in this order be the earlier of the following:

- (a) the first sitting day that follows 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; or
- (b) the first sitting day on which senators are permitted to participate in the proceedings of the Senate by video or teleconference;"

The Hon. the Speaker: It was moved by the Honourable Senator R. Black (Ontario), seconded by the Honourable Senator Verner, that the motion be not now adopted but that it be amended — may I dispense?

Hon. Senators: Dispense.

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

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I would like to take adjournment of debate.

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

Some Hon. Senators: No.

Some Hon. Senators: Yes.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Yea.

The Hon. the Speaker: All those opposed, please say "nay."

Some Hon. Senators: Nay.

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

And two honourable senators having risen:

The Hon. the Speaker: Do we have agreement on the bell?

An Hon. Senator: One hour.

The Hon. the Speaker: The vote will take place at 5:18. Call in the senators.

• (1710)

Motion negatived on the following division:

YEAS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Batters	Patterson
Campbell	Plett
Housakos	Seidman
Martin	Wells—9
Moncion	

NAYS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Anderson	Lankin
Black (<i>Ontario</i>)	McPhedran
Boehm	Mégie
Boniface	Miville-Dechêne
Cormier	Moodie
Cotter	Pate
Forest-Niesing	Ringuette
Gagné	Saint-Germain
Galvez	Verner
Gold	Woo—21
LaBoucane-Benson	

ABSTENTIONS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Dalphond	Munson—3
Harder	

• (1720)

MOTION TO RESOLVE INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE TO
RECEIVE A MINISTER OR MINISTERS TO DISCUSS THE
ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN COMBATTING RACISM—
MOTION IN AMENDMENT—DEBATE

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Mégie, seconded by the Honourable Senator Anderson:

That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules or usual practice, at the start of the Orders of the Day on the sitting day following the adoption of this order, the Senate resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole in order to receive a minister or ministers of the Crown to discuss the role of the Government of Canada in combatting anti-Black racism and anti-Indigenous racism, and ending systemic racism;

That the committee report to the Senate no later than 120 minutes after it begins;

That the provisions of rule 3-3(1) be suspended while the committee is meeting;

That the application of any provision of the Rules or previous order concerning the time of adjournment be suspended until the committee has completed its work; and

That the ringing of the bells for any deferred vote that would conflict with the committee be deferred until the committee has completed its work.

And on the motion in amendment of the Honourable Senator Black (*Ontario*), seconded by the Honourable Senator Verner, P.C.:

That the motion be not now adopted, but that it be amended

1. by replacing the words “following the adoption of” with “provided for in”; and
2. by adding, after the words “systemic racism;”, the following new paragraph:

“That the sitting day provided for in this order be the earlier of the following:

- (a) the first sitting day that follows 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; or
- (b) the first sitting day on which senators are permitted to participate in the proceedings of the Senate by video or teleconference;”.

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Your Honour, clearly we believe that people need to be in this chamber in order to deal with these issues, and we don’t have that. I expressed that earlier today in my comments to Senator Moodie’s emergency debate. And I still believe what I said at that point, even though this is a very serious issue and needs to be debated. We support that.

We are also not entirely in favour of virtual sittings. And so I have a bit of a problem with the amendment as it was presented by Senator Black with the virtual sittings. So in light of that, Your Honour, I will move a subamendment.

MOTION IN SUBAMENDMENT

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Therefore, honourable senators, in amendment, I move:

That the motion in amendment be not now adopted, but that it be amended by deleting:

1. the words “the earlier of the following: (a)”; and
2. the words “; or (b) the first sitting day on which senators are permitted to participate in the proceedings of the Senate by video or teleconference”.

The Hon. the Speaker: In amendment, it was moved by the Honourable Senator Plett, seconded by the Honourable Senator Martin:

That the motion in amendment be not now adopted, but that it be amended by deleting —

Shall I dispense?

Some Hon. Senators: Dispense.

Some Hon. Senators: No.

The Hon. the Speaker: Do you want me to read the whole thing?

That the motion in amendment be not now adopted, but that it be amended by deleting:

1. the words “the earlier of the following: (a)”; and
2. the words “; or (b) the first sitting day on which senators are permitted to participate in the proceedings of the Senate by video or teleconference”.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I move the adjournment of the debate.

The Hon. the Speaker: It is moved by the Honourable Senator Martin, seconded by the Honourable Senator Plett, that further debate be adjourned until the next sitting of Senate. Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Senators: Yes.

Some Hon. Senators: No.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Yea.

The Hon. the Speaker: All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

Some Hon. Senators: Nay.

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

And two honourable senators having risen:

The Hon. the Speaker: I see two senators rising. Do we have agreement on a bell?

An Hon. Senator: Until 5:58.

The Hon. the Speaker: The vote will take place at 5:58. Call in the senators.

• (1750)

Motion agreed to on the following division:

YEAS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Batters	Moncion
Boehm	Omidvar
Campbell	Patterson
Housakos	Plett
Martin	Seidman
McPhedran	Wells
Mégie	Woo—14

NAYS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Black (<i>Ontario</i>)	LaBoucane-Benson
Boniface	Lankin
Forest-Niesing	Pate
Gagné	Ringuette
Gold	Verner—10

ABSTENTIONS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Anderson	Harder
Cormier	Miville-Dechéne
Cotter	Moodie
Dalphond	Munson—8

• (1800)

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, it is now six o'clock. Pursuant to rule 3-3 (1), I'm obliged to leave the chair until eight o'clock when we will resume, unless it is the wish of the chamber that we not see the clock. Is it your wish that we not see the clock, honourable senators?

Some Hon. Senators: No.

The Hon. the Speaker: I hear a no. The sitting stands suspended until 8 p.m.

(The sitting of the Senate was suspended.)

• (2000)

(The sitting of the Senate was resumed.)

RACISM

CONSIDERATION OF MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC INTEREST PURSUANT TO RULE 8

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, we've now reached time for the emergency debate. We will debate the emergency matter for up to four hours. Each senator has no more than 15 minutes to speak and no motion except that of a senator being now heard can be moved during the debate. However, we have a long list of senators who wish to participate in the debate, so if senators can keep their remarks a little briefer than the 15 minutes that you are allowed, you will allow other colleagues to participate in the debate and it will be very much appreciated. I now call on Senator Moodie to move that the Senate do now adjourn.

Hon. Rosemary Moodie moved:

That the Senate do now adjourn.

She said: Honourable senators, it is with a heavy heart that I rise to speak at the start of this emergency debate. I would like to thank the Speaker for allowing this debate, and I would like to thank you all in advance for your participation.

Senators, as a Canadian, and as a black woman, this is personal. I know that many of us in this chamber have no idea what it is like to live as a black person in this country, so let me tell you.

As a black child, you are far more likely to be suspended or expelled from school, even for minor actions. Your history class will not include heroes who look like you, so it is hard to believe you could ever make history yourself. Your school may even set rules against wearing your hair naturally. Without it being said explicitly, you will be taught to believe that being white is the desired norm and the only way to be accepted.

Growing up, you will be told every day that you have to work harder than anyone else, be better than anyone else, perform better, run faster to achieve your goals and to receive what you indisputably deserve.

As parents, you make sure to have those tough conversations with your black sons and daughters on how to protect themselves from the police, what to say and what not to do, actions that you hope may save them from misunderstanding, from abuse, even from death.

Finding a job seems like an unsurmountable challenge. You breathe a sigh of relief when you learn that there is a phone interview or a written test. Your heart sinks and you are overcome with dread when you learn that instead it will be a face-to-face encounter, because you know what the outcome will be and because time after time you get the disappointing news, knowing that the outcome might have been different if you had not been seen.

And when you finally get there, there will be no mentors to guide you or pull you along. Upward mobility will seem impossible. And if you do succeed and if you get hired into the C-suite, you will be the only person who looks like you turning up every day. You will sit alone at that board table and you will be treated differently, normal exchanges forever uncomfortable, exclusion a certainty.

When you are an Afro-Canadian, the odds are stacked against you. And the real problem is that you can't even quantify just how badly because our government does not collect race-based data. We don't gather information to understand how badly things really are and how we can fix them.

Senators, all of what I have spoken to so far you know, but is understood only by a few of you.

The success of a black Canadian is frequently marred by disparaging comments like, "You may have got that job because you are black."

The colour of your skin and pervasive stereotypes guide how you are judged and the opinion folks have of you well before they even get to know you. You are made to feel out of place. You expect to be asked, "Why are you here?"

You even get asked for a drink from time to time. If you are black, how do you respond? You make efforts never to seem like a threat, never to speak too loudly, never to show anger; your goal is to fit in, no matter how much you end up suppressing who you are and your own identity. When you seek to make your own culture, it is often appropriated.

Having a nice car or home means that you face questions about how you could possibly afford them, questions from the customs officer on how you can afford the trip you are just returning from and police officers who assume that you have stolen the car that you are driving — daily microaggressions that black people must live with.

You have all seen police brutality gone unchecked. Young boys and girls, parents and grandparents are attacked by those who are supposed to protect them, and you know very well it could be you. You know it could be your child and you wait for that dreaded day when violence may come, praying and hoping that it never will. You can no longer bear the images in the media of body after body, murdered; lifeless.

You have dealt with all these things for so long it has taken your health. You have seen others die well before their time because racism has eaten away at them; because they have no hope of being able to live and prosper in a just and equitable

society; because no matter how hard they worked, how smart they were, they could never escape the skin they were in and the label that was handed to them.

You struggle to believe that this democracy is for you, that the people in Ottawa or any other government care about you. Few who are supposed to represent you actually look like you. Few give you the voice you deserve. Your issues become promises, never actions. And whatever is done falls short of making a real difference; it's hollow, shallow, insignificant and, in the end, serves a different purpose — not usually yours.

Colleagues, this is the experience of black Canadians. This is the experience shared by other Canadians who experience systemic racism. It is their reality. It is our reality. They are born into it, it shapes our lives, and for some, it ends our lives. For them, this country is set up against them.

• (2010)

That's the case for my two sons. They were born to a black woman and an Asian father, and I have lived with the consequences of racism, as have my family members. And despite the fact that I have attained this chamber and my family has known many successes, I continue to endure common experiences with all other black Canadians.

Senators, we have a crisis in this country. It may have recently shown itself in clearer ways than before, but it has always been there silently killing, traumatizing and dehumanizing Canadians. Racism is a threat to Canada and the stability of our society. If we do not act, we are willfully leaving our children with a crisis. To that end, senators, there are two areas that I want to highlight for change, both of which relate to the way we create policy in this country. In so doing, I plan to quote directly from the Parliamentary Black Caucus recent statement. First:

The federal government must immediately lead in the collection and stewardship of disaggregated data.

Statistics Canada should be made the repository for disaggregated data given its legal mandate to ensure that this data is publicly available for study and analysis.

And, senators, Indigenous people need data sovereignty.

We need to collect disaggregated race-based data, intersecting with gender and other identity factors. We need to collect disaggregated data within the public sector. We need race-based data on police interventions. And I will quote from the document once more here:

It is hard to change what one cannot measure . . . the socio-economic realities faced by Black communities are invisible because of a comprehensive lack of data.

This is systemic discrimination. Without data we are willingly blinding ourselves to the inequities that exist in Canada, and we are therefore unwilling to address them.

Colleagues, black people in Canada have requested this for too long, and frankly, we are tired of requesting it. And so to the Prime Minister and to the minister and to public servants, including the Chief Statistician of Canada, the Chief Science

Officer, the Deputy Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development — we in the Senate are calling on you to make change.

We need diversity in our leadership. Black Canadians are often an afterthought or are overlooked in consideration for leadership, with the result that the lack of diversity in the ranks of policy-makers demonstrates every day that our democracy is broken. How effective can our leadership really be if we ignore the voices of so many citizens? I quote again, we must:

Make our public administration more effective and resilient by ensuring that it reflects the diversity of the public it serves.

If we reflect on our own institution, the Senate, we see that across the spectrum of our offices and the broader administration, there is a remarkable lack of diversity. Colleagues, we have a role to play in this and I would urge you to make efforts in your future hiring decisions to work towards making all our offices diverse.

Your Honour and colleagues who sit on the Standing Senate Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration, I urge you to make diversity in the Senate administration, especially among our senior ranks, an immediate priority. We will need to effectively work towards a more just and equitable Canada, and as a Senate we need to reflect the diversity of the country that we serve.

To that end, I call on the presidents of the Liberal Party of Canada, the Conservative Party, the New Democratic Party, and the presidents and leadership of all Canadian parties to move to action. I call on you to prioritize diversity within your ranks, including candidates in your ridings — even in the ridings that are strongholds. Make sure that Indigenous, Asian and black Canadians and all other racialized communities are represented in your staff. And when you're forming government when you win, make it a priority that you ensure diversity among the chiefs of staff and other senior advisory roles.

Colleagues, I would urge us to seek to move forward in a spirit of collaboration that would lead to viable and sustainable actions. I know that across all our groups here in the Senate, we all agree on this, for thousands of Canadians are watching our actions. It will be nothing but politics as usual, disheartening and pointless if we do not act. They're not interested in the fights or name-calling that have been going on for decades in our midst and haven't gotten us anywhere. They're asking for something deeper, different, something more than rhetoric. Will we give it do them?

I have proposed this debate to drive action. I know that my community in Toronto frankly doesn't care how I feel about this. They want to know that I will do something about it and that I will move forward to action.

As I conclude, I want to thank and acknowledge my fellow senators who, I deeply regret, cannot be here today to speak with us. I look forward to hearing from them and what they have to say. I also regret that a number of our Indigenous colleagues could not join us today. I want to recognize their hard work and passion and thank them for their leadership.

I encourage us to read Senator Francis's words on the toll of microaggressions, and I wholeheartedly endorse Senator Sinclair's proposal for a pre-study on Bill C-3. I want to recognize Senator Ataullahjan, who is not here today to speak. We look forward to hearing your voice.

Finally, I want to recognize Senators Mégie, Ravalia, Jaffer and Bernard for their collaboration and hard work. African Canadians are fortunate to have you as their representatives.

Senators, this is a moment for unity. I choose to believe that we must give everyone a chance to take the right actions, so that we can move forward together. On an issue as poisonous as racism, we need all hands on deck. If there was ever a time to embrace a spirit of humility and work towards our ideals and values, it is now.

I want history to look back and see that in this moment we did everything we could to ensure meaningful and sustainable change, that we collaborated, we set aside our agendas and we listened to Canadians. We made the ballot box less of a priority and we decided to fight for the soul of our country. Some may call me naive or idealistic. In that case, I welcome you to join me in being naive and idealistic.

Honourable senators and fellow Canadians, this is too important to get wrong. When children's lives are at risk because of the colour of their skin, there is no margin for error — there is no other option. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I would like to begin by thanking Senator Moodie for her initiative in bringing this emergency debate to the floor of the Senate Chamber.

I will be brief tonight, as I will be speaking to the presence of racism within the Canadian institutions during the inquiry to which I have given notice for next week. Today I would like to allow more time for other senators to have the opportunity to speak in this time-limited forum. However, I do want to make a few comments.

It has been 57 years since Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech, and while we have made significant progress, it saddens me that we are still not there. In 2020, even here in Canada, racism is real. It is lived every day and it is painful. Racism and race-based discrimination, whether subtle or overt, is unacceptable and must be called out at every turn by those with a platform, like those of us in this chamber.

• (2020)

The history of racism faced by Canada's Indigenous population is horrendous and indisputable, yet it continues in various forms to this day through poorly conceived policies and inadequate action on files that are most important to the community.

Historically, many of our ancestors suffered persecution in various parts of the world, which is one of the most common reasons they chose to move to Canada. It was in hopes of starting a better life for them and their families; a new start, and for

many, that is the beauty of what this country has represented. As a result, we have a wonderful, thriving, multicultural country that so many of us are proud to call home.

While there are many things we can acknowledge with pride in our history, Canada has its own dark history of racism and discrimination that cannot be ignored, and it lingers today. On June 11, 2008, 12 years ago, Prime Minister Harper, on behalf of the Government of Canada, recognized, apologized and asked for forgiveness for the sad chapter in our history which is the legacy of Indian residential schools.

In 2006, that same government also apologized for the unjust treatment that resulted from the head tax and other racist immigration policies aimed at Canadians of Chinese heritage. I was proud then, and I remain proud today, to have been part of a party that took meaningful and concrete actions to address these stains on our history. As others have said before me, those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it.

I must admit, I find it difficult to take this Prime Minister and his government seriously on issues like racism and discrimination. The Prime Minister — the man who cannot recall how many times he has dressed up in blackface for kicks — is happy to scold us from the steps of his cottage every day, yet has failed to bring any meaningful action forward. Not to mention, his Minister of Public Safety, Bill Blair, was responsible for bringing in the practice of carding in Toronto while he was the Chief of Police. The practice of carding has been described by Global News as a police practice of randomly stopping people and collecting information without arresting them, which has been the target of scrutiny and blistering criticism from Black Lives Matter protesters and Ontario's corrections and community service minister alike.

The Prime Minister cannot continue to preach to Canadians that, as a society, we need to do better. The role of the Prime Minister is to lead our country while also being accountable to Canadians. Unfortunately, we have not seen much of that lately.

As parliamentarians, we are afforded a platform, and most importantly, we are given a responsibility, and that responsibility does not include speaking platitudes, offering condescending lectures or striking up another committee to produce a report that will sit on an already overstocked shelf.

However, we do have examples to draw from on how to use this platform to effect change. As mentioned, I believe it has a tremendous impact when we make a national apology and acknowledge historic wrongs. Similarly, we need to look no further than to our colleague Senator Patterson; he is a strong voice in this chamber, protecting the best interests of the people he represents. This includes his most recent initiative of hosting a roundtable to explore the use of body cameras worn by police in light of recent events in his community.

As he said, people from Nunavut should not fear the police. I agree wholeheartedly, and I would add that any law-abiding citizen in this country has the right to expect fair and equal treatment from those entrusted with ensuring law and order. Visible minorities should not be faced with the additional burden of considering their race when interacting with police.

While these conversations around police brutality have been front and centre, we also need to consider the treatment of Canadians of Asian heritage in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is hard to comprehend that this level of ignorance and narrow-mindedness exists within our borders. However, this too is a topic we need to discuss within the scope of this and other debates.

Colleagues, we need to commit and actively engage to do better, and this begins by having an empathetic mindset and a willingness to learn. I believe education and compassion are two of the most essential elements needed to crystallize the growing momentum of progress towards the elimination of racism and discrimination in Canada. We need to put our ears to the ground, listen, reflect and understand the problem in order to look into meaningful remedies. I believe this chamber is perfectly equipped for such an exercise.

Let's bring voices to those impacted by race and racial discrimination to the forefront. It is time for us to listen.

Hon. Jim Munson: Thank you, Your Honour, and thank you to Senator Moodie for bringing this whole debate up. It's long overdue. It's so important in our lives.

I was thinking tonight; I was brought up in northern New Brunswick, and in the 1950s, I was a child, 12 or 13 years of age and you have all these heroes in your heart.. We didn't have television in those days but we had heroes in the National Hockey League. It's interesting how people talk about Gordie Howe and Rocket Richard, but in New Brunswick we had a hero, and it just came to me tonight during our two-hour break. I was thinking of Willie O'Ree. I don't know how many senators here remember Willie O'Ree. Now, that's a sports name. How can you not be in sports with a name like that?

Willie was from Fredericton, and he was black. Who cares when you're a kid? He was a player who was in the National Hockey League. He makes it, with one eye, into playing for the Boston Bruins in 1957-58. He scores two goals, and he's good. He's a great hockey player.

Then all of a sudden he wasn't in the National Hockey League any longer. He came back four years later. I want to have it on the record that he was considered the Jackie Robinson of the NHL because he made it. My goodness, in terms of systemic racism and overt racism and racism in hockey rinks, primarily, as he said, in American cities and not so much in Montreal and Toronto, but it was a six-team league. He didn't get as much grief in the Canadian centres, but in the boardrooms of the National Hockey League, Willie somehow didn't make it longer than two seasons. He scored goals. He played for the Quebec Aces, the same team that Jean Beliveau played on. But then Willie was gone.

Today, at 84, Willie O'Ree is an ambassador for diversity in the National Hockey League. Today in the NHL, there have been many stories of what happens in that — maybe it's not an unconscious bias but it is a bias — where coaches have sometimes suppressed the ideal of a black kid making it in the NHL. Remember, that kid has to go through many different levels, all the way from peewee, bantam, junior, all the way up.

There have been some serious stories; when I talked earlier today about arguing for this debate, I talked about the whole principle of what takes place, but you don't see it happening.

Somehow Willie has persevered, and I hope that by telling his story tonight, it echoes out there in the sports world again of what we have seen in terms of systemic racism, which began a long time ago. Everybody thinks they are doing well with a quota system or so. It's not about that. It's much more important than that. When you have the imagination of a child and you hear a name like Willie O'Ree, you didn't see black or white: You just saw a hockey player. He should have played in the National Hockey League for 15 seasons, but it didn't happen. Check our history.

• (2030)

I want to start off by thanking Senator Moodie for her leadership. As she correctly points out, and it's worth highlighting again, it is in the public interest that this discussion takes place. Canadians will continue to suffer if this is not given immediate attention.

Racism is very intersectional in this country, and it's one of the reasons COVID has exposed the abundance of critical deficiencies in the way Canada operates. We are still waiting for complete statistics on the intensified effects of the pandemic in real time on racialized communities, the loss of income, the increase in domestic abuse and lack of access to medical care. This is something we need to consider, moving forward.

There will be a need to continue action after COVID. It's clear that racialized Canadians are disproportionately affected during the pandemic and many more lives have already been lost. Racism toward African Canadians, Asian Canadians and Indigenous Canadians has increased. Yes, COVID made things worse, but it's important to remind ourselves that inequalities were striking before the pandemic.

Let's take a look at the data that we have available to develop solutions. Black Canadians are more likely than any other racialized group to fall victim to a hate crime. This is coming from data reported by the police in 2018. Remember, these are only the crimes that were reported. It is also more often than not harmful for racialized groups to call the police. We've seen that.

If you are able, imagine what it would be like to be scared to call the police, just terrified to call the police, or it makes you uncomfortable to think about it, and then we're on the right track. We need to get into the realities of what is going on in this country. This is what black people are dealing with every day, and they do not have the privilege of only imagining it.

Honourable senators, systemic racism intersects with gender, religion, age, disability and even the labour market. Census data from 2016 reports the unemployment rate of black Canadians is 12.5% compared to 7.3% unemployment of non-visible minorities. This equates to thousands of jobs — high-paying jobs, too.

I would also point to the report last year in 2019, *Canada's Colour Coded Income Inequality*, released by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Severe gaps in employment and income remain in place.

Honourable senators, additional discrimination faced by racialized women also continues. Racialized women earned just \$0.59 for every dollar non-racialized men did, while racialized men earned \$0.78 compared to non-racialized men, according to this study.

The example of racism in the labour market is one tip of the iceberg in the sea of racism that we have to address. As I mentioned earlier in support of this debate, what we are doing today in the chamber is a good place to start. We are only at the beginning of a solutions-based approach to systemic racism. We have lots of work to do.

Also, I know we are in this chamber, but there was something about the other chamber, the historic chamber in Centre Block. I will never get back there, but maybe some of you will. I hope you do. I hope you will listen to the echoes of senators from long ago — for me not so long ago — who spoke about racism yet weren't heard enough.

One is my Conservative friend Don Oliver. Don Oliver, another name to be thought of in the same vein in terms of politics from Nova Scotia as Willie O'Ree is from New Brunswick. When you listened to Don Oliver in the chamber just across the way talking about systemic racism, his reports and his passionate discussion in committees I was a member of, he talked about the public service in this country as he took on high-ranking public servants, take a look back at our own history in the Senate of what Don Oliver said. It is important to read. He was fighting the good fight. I sometimes thought he must have felt very alone. As the picture of this chamber changes and we take a look at it, there is a picture of, I hope, more equality. I want you to think back and perhaps take a look at what former senator Don Oliver tried to do and attempted to do. In that respect that we have to move on and keep fighting the good fight.

In closing, earlier this week the Parliamentary Black Caucus released a statement that goes into initial steps we're able to take right now, this minute. The government can take them. We can't put this thing off. I was very upset earlier this week about Indigenous Canadians and other minorities and what is happening. But when you stand up and see what has taken place in this country for a long time, we have a rich black history. They are the fabric of this country, as Asian Canadians are the fabric of this country, as everybody else who has come to this country through the Underground Railroad. It is so important to remember our black history. I don't think we study it enough. We knew it in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia because it was there in front of us, at least it was at my dinner table growing up in Campbellton, New Brunswick.

In the statement by the Parliamentary Black Caucus, here are the steps they've talked about. I'll just repeat them one more time so they all sink in for us and for those who work with us: make the collection of race-based data mandatory, seek out and support proposals from black business associations, invest in programs rooted in community-based initiatives, ensure black Canadians

have equal opportunity to work in the public sector and implement unconscious-bias training programs throughout all government institutions.

Honourable senators, this is how we get the ball rolling on real change. As senators, we have a commitment to make Canada a better place and a safer place. Thank you.

Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I would also like to thank Senator Moodie for this initiative, and I rise today to add my voice to this important debate.

We, in this chamber, are but a handful of individuals who are today joining with millions of people around the world. While this movement began because of 8 minutes and 46 seconds of grainy footage taken on a street in Minneapolis, the assault on the collective human conscience has spread to dozens of countries and brought out millions of people of all races, creeds and histories who just want to be able to breathe freely and without fear.

[*Translation*]

I truly believe we are witnessing history. This isn't the first time there have been struggles for equality and equal treatment, but it is the first time we've witnessed the struggle in real time thanks to 24-hour cable news and social media. The message spread like wildfire, and the streets in major centres and small communities all over the world filled with people who are demanding an end to racism, violence and marginalization.

I remember the coverage of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. I remember civil rights leaders eulogizing him. I remember watching the footage of Selma and the March on Washington. Those were all powerful moments in history, but Reverend King's dream was laid out nearly 60 years ago. The planet is insisting that it is time to make the dream real.

• (2040)

[*English*]

Over time, we have all seen the reactions to reports of injustices or violence toward visible minorities and racialized people. There is always outrage. There is always condemnation. Investigations are undertaken and reports issued. And unfortunately, little of substance has come from them.

Today is palpably different. A perfect storm has flipped a switch in the human consciousness. Offering sympathy, claiming empathy and paying lip service to an endemic problem is not good enough anymore. Promising change in policing, hiring practices or school admission requirements; modifying laws to ensure inclusion; and releasing report after report proposing recommendations that are praised and promptly ignored are no longer good enough.

[*Translation*]

Canadians have looked to our southern neighbour and counted ourselves lucky that we don't have the same problems here. We smugly tell ourselves that, yes, there have been instances when our Indigenous brothers and sisters have been targeted, newcomers to Canada may have been treated differently and, in some cases, overtly racist people may have verbally and even physically attacked those they see as "others." We tell ourselves that these displays are rare. We want to believe that Canadians are tolerant and welcoming. However, as many of my colleagues here in this chamber can tell us, Canada is far, and I repeat, far from being immune to racism.

[*English*]

The racialization of Indigenous people is as old as the discovery of land beyond the water, when Europe first sought an eastern route to Asia. I do not pretend to understand the struggles of my First Nations brothers and sisters. I cannot pretend to offer solutions, but this is an opportunity we cannot pass up.

The mood is different. This moment in time is not to be ignored. This past week, we in Canada have once again seen shocking and unsettling violence from police forces and have been reminded of a pattern of violence and racism endured by Indigenous peoples across the country. Recognizing and calling out systemic racism is not a sign of weakness; it is a sign of maturity as a country.

For centuries, Indigenous peoples have been subjected to systemic racism and injustice from law enforcement and other government institutions. We cannot shy away from the reality that Indigenous peoples have been and are still being treated unfairly by Canada's institutions.

[*Translation*]

As the Parliamentary Black Caucus reiterated in a statement on Tuesday, black Canadians face insidious acts of racism on a daily basis, ranging from subtle words and gestures to violent acts that can lead to dramatic consequences such as those found in the countless videos circulating on the internet. The violent videos of the past few weeks were hard to watch.

The scale and scope of the global protests against the violence are inspiring.

Colleagues, we have all witnessed decades of protesting, marching, begging, talking, studying and advocating for basic human rights and equality for all. We have all heard the demands to put an end to the injustice, racism and bigotry in all its forms.

[*English*]

As a civilized society, we have a shared responsibility to make sure everyone feels safe in their communities, no matter where they live, the colour of their skin or their country of ancestral origin.

Colleagues, it took only 8 minutes and 43 seconds to mobilize the world. We've reached the tipping point, and we need to seize the moment as individuals and as a collective.

[Senator Gagné]

Everyone should be able to breathe.

Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

Hon. Judith G. Seidman: Honourable senators, first, thank you, Senator Moodie for proposing this emergency debate.

Canada is a vast land, a mosaic of identities, languages and cultures, and the pattern of that mosaic varies from coast to coast to coast. Often we and others hold our country up as an outstanding example of multiculturalism, with a heritage of inclusion. The roots of our multiculturalism predate Confederation. Indigenous communities, speaking a multitude of languages and embodying a great diversity of cultures and traditions, were joined by immigrants from across the world. All have shaped Canada into the strong and diverse nation that it is today.

As Canadians, we pride ourselves on being a part of a welcoming and compassionate society. Our values of democracy, freedom and inclusion enshrined in our constitution bind us as a nation.

Yet, our narrative of diversity and tolerance does not hide the sad and painful periods of cruel racism in our history. The challenge of our reality is that, despite our benevolence as a people, we still have deep issues of systemic racism that we must address as a society.

One only needs to look at our history books to learn about the many accounts of racial discrimination within our institutions. For example, during World War I, the Canadian army turned away many young black men intending to enlist, until the creation of the No. 2 Construction Battalion in 1916, a military unit specifically formed for black men.

Several provinces, including Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia, established and operated legally segregated schools for Catholics, Protestants and blacks. It was only by the strong efforts of advocacy that racially segregated schools were gradually abolished, with the last segregated school closing in Ontario in 1965 and in Nova Scotia in 1983.

Not only did racial segregation occur in elementary schools but also in some universities, including McGill University, Queen's University and the University of Toronto. For example, Queen's University banned black students from its medical program from 1918 through 1965, while the University of Toronto denied admission to black applicants in the 1920s.

There are many other dark and tragic parts of our history, including government-sponsored residential schools established to assimilate Indigenous children; the internment of over 21,000 Japanese Canadians in 1942; the destruction of Africville by the City of Halifax in the 1960s; and the enactment of the Chinese head tax, intended to slow down Chinese immigration in 1885, to name just a few examples.

Unfortunately, these instances are not lost to the past; echoes of these difficult periods of history are still heard today. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the high level of inequality that still exists in Canada today. A report released by Public Health Ontario on June 1, 2020, found that:

The most ethno-culturally diverse neighbourhoods in Ontario, primarily those concentrated in large urban areas, are experiencing disproportionately higher rates of COVID-19 and related deaths compared to neighbourhoods that are the less diverse.

The same is true for Montreal.

The recent global outcry demanding change from every part of our society has forced discussion about the means by which we can address systemic racism. For example, on June 15, 2020, the Ottawa Board of Health voted unanimously on a motion that states that:

Racism, discrimination and stigma are associated with poorer physical, mental and emotional health and a greater risk of death — making racism and anti-Black racism an important health issue.

On the same day, *L'Office de consultation publique de Montréal*, the OCMP, released a report on the systemic racism and discrimination that exists in my home city of Montreal. The report found that the city has neglected the fight against racism and discrimination and, as a response, presented 30 recommended measures that can be implemented.

• (2050)

Honourable colleagues, although recent events in the United States have resulted in a kind of global awakening, we must be reminded that the issue of racism, especially in Canada, is not new.

The question remains: How can this renewed commitment to the global fight against racism and discrimination result in tangible, systemic change? How can we, as legislators, help advance these important conversations and build inclusive policies that better our society?

We must first understand Canada's history in order to be able to build a relationship with our marginalized communities. We must be willing listeners to their stories of struggle, before we add our voices to the existing plight of those who are discriminated against daily. If we want to live up to our legacy of being a multicultural, diverse and inclusive nation, we must make a stronger effort to become aware of and challenge our own biases.

We must continue to pursue research that will help us build effective policies grounded in mutual understanding and commit to being better allies to those who need us. The byproduct of our collective action must help us achieve lasting change, not only in our institutions but also within ourselves.

In closing, I would like to share with you an ancient Jewish teaching that states: "He who saves the life of one saves the life of the entire world."

Honourable senators, change is a gradual process that must first begin with ourselves. Our very personal role is to broaden our own perspective; engage seriously in listening and open dialogue; learn from and share educational resources; and direct ourselves to those who are leading the important work against racism and discrimination. Only then can we begin to influence change within our homes and communities, with the hope that it will inspire others to do the same.

The work we have ahead of us is a shared responsibility and it begins now. Thank you.

Hon. Margaret Dawn Anderson: Honourable senators, I want to acknowledge that we meet here today on the unceded territory of the Algonquin, Anishinabek as I rise to speak to the important matter of systemic racism in Canada. I am Indigenous and in a position of privilege in this role and in this chamber. It is not only my job to speak out against racism; as an Inuk and as a mother, it is the only option.

Indigenous lives matter. Black lives matter. Systemic racism is alive and well in Canada.

Just a few days ago, Senator Sinclair told *The Globe and Mail*:

Systemic racism is when the system itself is based upon and founded upon racist beliefs and philosophies and thinking and has put in place policies and practices that literally force even the non-racists to act in a racist way.

Canada was founded on, and continues to operate under, this premise. It is embedded in all levels of our governments, institutions, cities, politics and legislation. Our national identity is shaped by racism in insidious ways. We must acknowledge and confront our racist history if we are to effectively tackle our racist present, and this is uncomfortable work.

Colleagues, when I rose, I acknowledged the traditional territory we meet on today. Can you see, in this statement alone, evidence of the insidious nature of racism in Canada?

We meet here on unceded Algonquin, Anishinabek territory. Some of us in this chamber regularly make a brief acknowledgement of this every time we rise to speak. How often do we really stop to think about what that means?

How much time do we really give to the idea that the First Peoples of this region had their land taken from them; that in this city, and across Canada, communities of settlers displaced the original peoples of this land and established themselves in a way that, for generations, sought to kill, assimilate, control and erase the history of the original inhabitants of the land? That, to this day, our legislation, our institutions and our accepted history attempts to control the narrative, create inequalities and perpetuate racism and divisiveness across Canada?

Make no mistake; for decades, our political system actively excluded Indigenous peoples. I feel the need to remind you, colleagues, that until 1960, Indigenous people in Canada did not have the right to vote until they surrendered their treaty rights.

Do not misunderstand me; acknowledging the land we meet on is important. It is an act of reconciliation that recognizes the original inhabitants of the land and often those that still consider it home. It is a sign of respect. But I must also ask: What work does a land acknowledgement do to address the injustice of having your land taken away; your people forcibly removed and/or killed; loss of culture; loss of language; loss of connection to the land, animals and water that you have experienced; and your political representation ignored? It is also a reminder to Canadians of the rightful owners and of Canada's pivotal and tragic role in Indigenous lives.

Colleagues, I have to be frank; I have been feeling a great many things over the past weeks as we have seen, first in the United States and then here in Canada, growing protests against systemic racism in North America. But mostly I'm frustrated.

I am an Inuvialuk woman. Racism is not a hypothetical debate for me. It is real. It is palpable. It is pervasive. It is damaging. I don't have the privilege of learning about it in books or exploring the concept in my free time. I am an Inuvialuk woman. Racism is my lived experience every day.

What do you tell your children when they are followed in stores because they "look Indigenous"? What do you say to children who are ashamed to admit that they are Indigenous because they recognize the inequities and inherent challenges of being Indigenous?

I'm fortunate. I have a young daughter who, when told by her father she was Canadian, took issue with the comment and responded, "I am Indigenous!" When told again she was Canadian, she simply and emphatically stated, "I am Indigenous. Canada came after." The messages we give our Indigenous children are important.

Over the past couple of weeks, I have observed the anti-racism protests across Canada, the United States and around the world. I've seen discussions taking place online and listened to the experts, leaders and journalists talk about racism on the radio. Since I arrived in Ottawa earlier this week for the sitting, I've heard many of the same kinds of conversations between colleagues, as well as here in the chamber.

I can't help but wonder: Why is it that racism seems like news? It is not news to me, as an Indigenous woman. It's not news to my Indigenous colleagues. It's not news to my black colleagues. It's not news to my people of colour colleagues. We have been talking about racism for a long time. Why is it only now getting attention from the general public?

The findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, led by our colleague Senator Sinclair, as well as the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, highlighted Canada's systemic racism and pointed to concrete actions that governments and civil society need to take to unlearn racism — and somehow during the past few weeks it is still a surprise that racism exists in Canada.

I want to read to you a few lines written by the Chief Commissioner of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Marion Buller. In the preface of the inquiry's final report she states:

The truth is that we live in a country whose laws and institutions perpetuate violations of basic human and Indigenous rights. These violations amount to nothing less than the deliberate, often covert campaign of genocide against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. This is not what Canada is supposed to be about; it is not what it purports to stand for.

• (2100)

Colleagues, a year has passed since the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls released its Calls for Justice, and the federal government has not yet released its action plan on missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Why is this?

I am afraid I take a cynical view on racism in Canada. People don't pay attention to racism unless it affects them directly or unless it is politically expedient to do so. I know that many of my Senate colleagues couldn't travel to Ottawa for the sitting and are unable to participate in today's emergency debate, but I want to remind all of us that the work of unlearning and undoing systemic racism won't be accomplished in a day or two. It won't be accomplished in a year. The work of unlearning and undoing systemic racism in Canada will be slow. It will be tiring. It will make all of us uncomfortable. It will require constant work.

We will have to learn a new history, one that not only tells the stories of the Inuvialuit people who gathered in Kittigazuit, black Canadians who lived in Africville, and the Japanese Canadians who were held in Hastings Park, but that puts those stories front and centre of the narrative of what it means to be Canadian.

COVID-19 is a strange and difficult time for all of us, but this pandemic has highlighted the ugly truths of the injustices that exist in our country. We cannot look away now.

Colleagues, across the country, Canadians are taking stock. They are looking outwards, demanding change of our institutions. They are looking inwards at the personal work that is required to be anti-racist. This emergency debate is only the beginning of the work that we as senators have to do to confront racism in the Senate. We have an important role to play in this new chapter of the Canadian narrative.

I want to close by repeating a statement I made in an interview a few months ago:

I think if we, as senators and Indigenous people, fail to address and speak up against racism, bigotry, and ongoing ignorance of a history that is steeped in colonialism, suppression, assimilation, and erasure of who we are and can be as Indigenous people, what message are we sending our Indigenous children and future generations?

In the words of Chief Dan George, “A child does not question the wrongs of the grown-ups; he suffers them.” Our children, our homes, our community and our Canada deserves better.

Quyanainni. Quana. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond: Honourable senators, we have all heard about the recent violent acts towards Indigenous people, including the assault of Chief Allan Adam in Fort McMurray, the 22-year-old Indigenous man who was struck by a police vehicle door in Nunavut, and the two horrific deaths of Chantel Moore and Rodney Levi in New Brunswick, of whom I spoke about twice earlier this week.

These are just a few recent examples that drive home the need to address systemic racism in our policing in Canada. However, racism, be it towards Indigenous peoples, black Canadians or other people of colour within our justice system is nothing new. For decades, racial tensions have been bubbling under the surface without any significant action to address them. Unfortunately, it took deaths here and in the U.S.A. to initiate a focus on policing in Canada and to lead to a deeper conversation on systemic racism across our country.

Senators, I may not have lived experience of racism and discrimination, but I do understand facts and data when available, of course. There are no two ways about it: Systemic racism exists, and it is very much a reality for a significant portion of our population.

[*Translation*]

I gather that there are elected members in Quebec City and in Ottawa who still today do not understand — or claim to not understand — the concept of systemic racism. That is surprising, to say the least, considering the many studies, reports, commissions, Supreme Court rulings and recent events reported in the media.

Fortunately, on June 15, in response to a report on systemic racism and discrimination issued by the Office de consultation publique de Montréal, which Senator Seidman referred to earlier, the Mayor of Montreal said, and I quote:

We are firmly committed to implementing systemic solutions to these systemic problems. We must act now and the City of Montreal must set an example.

According to the mayor, recognizing that systemic racism exists within the municipal government means that the problem also exists, by extension, within the Montreal police force.

The mayor’s statement is striking, but, again, not surprising. Montreal, like other Canadian cities, has been the scene of acts of police brutality against visible minorities and, more insidiously, of dubious practices such as profiling and carding of people of colour. Nonetheless, systemic racism and discrimination go beyond policing.

[*English*]

In fact, racism and systemic discrimination still exists in all spheres of our justice system, despite the fact that it was made public many years ago. I will refer to an important example.

In 1971, Donald Marshall Jr., a man well-known in the Atlantic provinces, was wrongly convicted of murder and spent 11 years in prison for a crime he did not commit. In 1990, seven years after his release, a royal commission that was chaired by a judge and assisted by my former Chief Justice of the Superior Court, exonerated him of all blame. The commission stated that the criminal justice system failed him at every step of the way, and systemic racism contributed to his wrongful conviction. It has been 30 years since the royal commission determined Donald Marshall Jr. faced systemic racism within the justice system. Unfortunately, little has changed.

A 2014 report from the Office of the Correctional Investigator found “. . . evidence of systemic racism within each of the components of the criminal justice system . . .”

Earlier this week the Parliamentary Black Caucus also singled out this still-prevailing problem.

Speaking of Mr. Marshall Jr., back in his community, once he had been released, he took a case to the Supreme Court of Canada called *R. v. Marshall* on behalf of the Mi’kmaq, claiming fishing rights. He won before the Supreme Court of Canada in 1999 in a much-celebrated and landmark case about fishing rights and Indigenous treaty rights.

However, as we heard from Senator Christmas last year when we were looking at Bill C-68 on fishing rights, the rights of the Mi’kmaq in Atlantic Canada are still not fully recognized to this day, more than 20 years after the landmark decision of the Supreme Court of Canada. This is yet another sign that we as a society are far from equal justice for Indigenous Canadians and that the government has been failing on the implementation of conclusions of the Supreme Court of Canada judgment to enforce these recognized constitutional rights.

In its report, the Parliamentary Black Caucus has made important and significant recommendations, and I am going to point out 15 of them. They are easy. They have been identified in the past so often but not yet implemented.

First, “Eliminate mandatory minimum sentencing measures,” which has been also sponsored by Senator Pate for many years in the Senate. The government has promised to act on this, and still to this day we have not seen a bill introduced by the government. However, we heard recently that maybe it’s coming finally.

Two, “Revisit restrictions on conditional sentencing.”

Three, “Establish community justice centers across the country as an alternative for imprisonment.”

Four, “Fund community-based sentencing diversion programs . . .”

Five, “Invest in restorative justice programs and other community-grounded initiatives.”

• (2110)

Six, “Implement the recommendations from previous parliamentary committees regarding efforts to counter online hate, heighten public safety, and make sure that social media platforms are responsible for removing hateful and extremist content.”

Seven, “Address the lack of representation of Black Canadians and Indigenous people in the administration of justice (e.g., judges, prosecutors, justices of the peace).” They should come from these communities, and are fully able to serve.

Eighth, “Provide supplemental legal aid for individuals from communities that are over-represented in our prisons.” They are often forgotten for many years.

Nine, “Fundamentally reform police, public security, border security, corrections, and military forces. Focus on effective policing with an emphasis on de-escalation techniques,” as advocated by Senator Murray Sinclair in *The Globe and Mail* a few days ago.

Ten, “. . . reallocations [of funds] should be directed toward social service and mental health care experts trained in nonviolent intervention and de-escalation.” It is expected that they will work closely with the police service to prevent the use of arms in responding to mental health problems. This happened in Montreal a few years ago.

Eleven, “Move immediately to ban carding and racial profiling by federal law enforcement.”

Twelve, “. . . address over-representation of Black Canadians and Indigenous people in the federal prison population, implement the recommendations from numerous existing studies on this issue.” This is not new. It has not been acted upon. That is the problem.

Thirteen, “Immediately release from correctional institutions individuals who do not pose a risk to society with adequate support in the community and in consultation with affected communities. . . .”

Fourteen, “Address the lack of representation of Black Canadians and Indigenous people in the administration of public security (e.g., parole board members, senior prison administration, post-release administration).”

Fifteen, “Require body cameras for all on-duty police officers. . . .” This is a proposal that the Prime Minister has finally endorsed.

Honourable senators, solutions are available, but the will to implement them is missing. There cannot be any further delays. We don’t need more task forces, commissions or reports. We need action.

[*Translation*]

Yesterday I read an interesting article by Noémie Mercier in *L’actualité*. She explained how black women are often forgotten at conference tables, in workplace and in debates on systemic racism. They are largely forgotten in the conversation on racism. Ms. Mercier said that black women are twice as likely to be stopped by police as white women. They do exist then and they are more likely to come into conflict with the justice system than white women. This is far from unique to Montreal or Quebec City. As Ms. Mercier pointed out, in Halifax black women are 3.6 times more likely to be stopped by police than white women. In Ottawa, black women drivers aged 16 to 24 are pulled over at a rate 80% higher than their demographic numbers would suggest. In the country as a whole, white women earn 67% of what white men do. However, black women earn 56% of what white men do. In short, visible minority women face double discrimination on the basis of gender and race.

[*English*]

In considering ways to address systemic racism and discrimination, special attention should be given to the effect of gendered racism, especially for women members of minority groups.

[*Translation*]

To conclude, racism is a reality even today for Indigenous, black and brown people in their interactions with police and public institutions, and even in the workplace. All of us, as citizens, legislators and members of society have a moral obligation to adopt concrete measures to counter racism immediately. Thank you. *Meegwetch*.

[*English*]

Hon. Leo Housakos: Thank you, honourable senators and Senator Moodie, for bringing forward this emergency debate. It is very important.

This debate is all about Canada. It is about where we have been, where we are and where we intend to go as a nation. It is also striking how human nature has achieved such amazing accomplishments, technological accomplishments, and we have a standard of living we have never seen before. Yet it seems so elusive to teach human nature to be decent and respectful to fellow human beings and not to be afraid of differences of other people but embrace and learn from them.

I still believe this is the greatest country in the world. That was instilled in me by my parents who came to this country in the 1950s. I believe there is no country other than Canada. It has given opportunities to so many people.

We have all come here with the same dreams and aspirations. Many of us in this place are immigrants. Most of us are ancestors of immigrants who came here with dreams, hopes and came for the same reasons: They were fleeing war-torn countries, persecution and depression. They were looking for better opportunities. It doesn’t matter whether they were French or

English or everyone in between. That's the story of Canada. Canada offered that opportunity for a better life to millions of people.

I think Canada has benefited immensely from that diversity. At the end of the day, we use that language and we say that diversity is our strength. I believe diversity is part and parcel of Canada's elements and the most essential component of our elements.

I honestly believe our strength is our unity. We have become the strongest possible country when we emulsify all that diversity into one Canadian nationality. And everyone who comes here, in addition to achieving the "Canadian dream" — like my parents did — at the end of the day, we all want in. We all want to feel we are Canadians. Nobody more, nobody less: we are all the same. If we can't provide that to all our citizens, then we are not complete and we have not reached our true capacity.

My parents came here in the 1950s with enthusiasm. They landed in a place called Parc-Extension, my hometown. Parc-Extension is the landing pad for hundreds of thousands of immigrants. Senator Munson would know very well where Parc-Extension is, because I know he has done some time in Montreal.

Parc-Extension is a place that has embraced Irish, Jews, black people, Greeks, Armenians, Italians and South Asians. We have all come through that place — at least those of us who are children of immigrants. We all coexisted in peace and harmony with the same objectives and experiences. It didn't matter the colour of your skin, whether you went to the Catholic Church, the temple or the synagogue. We all came from similar backgrounds, with the same aspirations and wanting Canadian citizenship to be as much part and parcel of our hearts and who we are as much as our neighbours, the English and French who came before us and the Indigenous people native to this land.

That is really what the objective here is. That is what our challenge is.

Recently, I went to Parc-Extension and spoke in a local Hindu temple. I was introduced by the president of the temple as somebody born and raised in Parc-Extension. Today, Parc-Extension is primarily a South Asian community. It happens to be the riding of Prime Minister Trudeau.

When I started speaking to them, I saw their eyes light up when they found out that was the neighbourhood where I grew up. My experience and my parents' experience was the same experience that they were having. They were shocked that somebody with that experience and background could rise up to be a representative of the upper chamber of Parliament.

You could see the energy in that room and how these hard-working mothers and fathers who have been in this country for such a short time were saying to themselves, "Heck, maybe my kids one day can do it as well." And, of course, they can. I am proud of the fact that this institution is representative. Maybe it is not as much as it should be, but we're working on it. Canada is a work in progress.

• (2120)

I also remember being in Toronto a couple of years ago at a Greek Independence Day parade on the Danforth. A 76-year-old lady comes up to me and says in Greek, "Mr. Housakos, is your mother Anastasia Housakos?" I said, "Yes." "Does she come from a small little village in the southern Peloponnese?" I said, "Yes." She said, "I know the family name." She started crying and hugging me, the biggest hug I ever got, from this 76-year-old lady on the Danforth. I thought, what the heck is she crying about? I looked at her. She said, "I am so proud of you. You represent everything we were all about when we came to this country."

I realized at that particular moment, I'm not just a representative of the Senate or the province of Quebec or the city of Montreal. I do represent with pride and joy my province, but I also represent the aspirations of that community and those people.

So, colleagues, when we talk about these issues today, we have a moral obligation, particularly as this chamber, to do more than symbolism. Today is great; we get to talk about our personal experiences. I support the inquiry from Senator Plett because I believe we have to start doing some tangible things. The truth of the matter is ethnocentrism and racism and discrimination are part and parcel of human nature. They have existed for 4,000 years. They exist even in this great country because, sometimes, we become complacent. As we become complacent about our democracy and our institutions, we become complacent about these ugly issues as well. We need to continue to fight them. We need to continue to take action. We cannot become vigilant just because we take a step forward. When you become complacent, then it is easy to fall three steps back.

Canada, like any other place on earth, has ugliness — that we have to accept. We have to accept that, once upon a time, we were banning black immigrants to this country. We were turning back boatloads of Jewish people seeking a safe haven. We had an ugly head tax. We saw the internment of Japanese and Italian Canadians.

Those are all sad moments in Canadian history. The ugliness of residential schools — we can go on and on. Of course, we have to learn from our history. We have to address these issues. That's what great democracies and great countries do. We have.

I was very proud of our former government and Mr. Harper addressing and apologizing for the head tax in the House of Commons. I was very proud of Mr. Harper apologizing for the residential school genocide in this country and, of course, striking a public inquiry on reconciliation. I was particularly proud as a young intern in the Mulroney government. I am getting very old now. I was working for then-minister Gerry Weiner. The Mulroney government dealt with the redress of interned Japanese Canadians. I was very proud of that. I was proud that Mr. Mulroney apologized to Italian Canadians in 1993 for their internment in World War II. But we need to do more.

Racism, unfortunately, and discrimination continue to persist. We see it on a day-to-day basis. I believe it's the responsibility of all of us, in all political parties — nobody should have a

monopoly on this particular issue. This is a collective effort. We have arrived at this particular dilemma collectively, and we have a collective responsibility to get to the bottom of it and resolve this issue as soon as possible.

Like I said, it's not symbolism that will resolve this. It's not running to the front of a protest or taking a knee or just nice debates. We need to actually have inquiries, have investigations, find out why these things are going on in a country where we have laws to fight systemic racism, to fight institutionalized racism. We have the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We have laws that fight hate crimes and so on, but yet these things persist. They keep happening.

I want to share some personal experiences in regard to the three ugly elements of ethnocentrism, racism and discrimination. My mom came here in 1956. As a young woman, she and a friend got on a bus one day in Montreal, going off to work. She spent most of her life on a street called Chabanel in the Garment District in Montreal, working very hard. As she was talking to her friend, another Greek immigrant, the bus driver said to her:

[*Translation*]

“Hey, you! Speak French. Here in Quebec we speak French and if you can't speak French then go back to where you came from.”

[*English*]

That was one experience she had. It stayed with her for a very long time because in her mind, she was “chez moi.” “This is home. This is where I belong.” She's told that story on a number of occasions, about how little she felt that day. That was an experience of ethnocentrism.

I remember an experience a few years later with my dad. I was about five or six years old. It was time to go to school. My dad came to this country in 1959. He understood the importance of, “While in Rome, do as the Romans.” You have got to pick up that important language of French in Quebec. We were proud to be there. He was proud to be there.

So he takes me to register for school. Early one morning, we go to the local French school. I show up with my birth certificate. They look at it. They look at him. They said, “Sorry. You cannot register your son here.” Why not? “Because you're Greek Orthodox.” Of course, as Senator Gold would know, you could not register back then at a Catholic school board in Montreal, which was the only place you were able to get a French education. Again, my dad walked away. We had to find an alternative. Despite that, I found a way to learn the French language. I went to an English school. We persevered but he felt, that day, a little bit of discrimination. What? Just because I happened to be from a different Christian sect, I can't register in a French school?

I had another experience which shaped my mind. It has to do with racism; much uglier than discrimination or ethnocentrism. It is a story I have not shared with colleagues before because it is painful. I went to school with a good friend; his name was Anthony. We spent many years together at Chomedey High. He was one of the greatest human beings I have ever met. He didn't

have a mean bone in his body. We played together, we lived together, we coexisted together. I went to Chomedey High. That was the real United Nations — Jews and Greeks and blacks and Hindus. You name it; we had it. Anthony happened to be black; I happened to be Greek Orthodox. Different experiences. Different backgrounds. Our parents came to this country with the same dreams and aspirations. We had the same dreams and aspirations. I went on to university. One day, I opened the newspaper and read that Anthony had been picked up by the police. It was fall of 1987.

Anthony had had a skirmish with a taxi driver after being out one night, over a \$25 fare. He was handcuffed and arrested. Anthony got into a little bit of trouble after high school but I can tell you it wasn't serious trouble, other than kid trouble.

In this particular instance, the police arrested him and took him to the police station. He got out of the car, a 19-year-old kid, probably scared his mother would give him a whipping when she found out what was going on. He bolted away from the car. The police officer came out and yelled at him to stop. Anthony turned around and stopped. The police officer shot him in the head — an unarmed 19-year-old, handcuffed, over an altercation with a cab driver over a \$25 fare. He bolted away. As soon as the cop asked him to stop, he stopped and turned around. The cop shoots him in the head. Anthony Griffith was his name.

Marc, you might remember the story from back in 1987.

I look back at that and I say to myself, “What did Anthony do to deserve that? Seriously.” That police officer went to court, two trials. He was acquitted twice because he claimed it was a mistake. His gun went off mistakenly. I asked myself, even back then as a young man, “Did you mistakenly pull the gun out of your holster? Did you mistakenly point at his head?” So if he wasn't a racist, he was certainly incompetent.

Ladies and gentlemen, we've seen far too much. Even now, 35 years later, too much of this. Too much of Indigenous people in this country being stopped by cops, unarmed and ending up dead.

Either we have a serious problem amongst our police forces and they're incompetent and not trained well, and there is some kind of a culture that leads to systemic poor behaviour, or it's a lot more sinister and uglier than that. At some point this has to stop.

I agree with Senator Dyck. We had a police commissioner whom the government brought in with tremendous fanfare. They made a commitment to substantive changes. A couple of years later, we're back where we started.

At the end of the day, colleagues, we all have our experiences that have shaped us. I can go on and on, but time is limited. Many want to participate in the debate.

• (2130)

All I'm going to say is this: We in this institution have an obligation to come forward with concrete inquiries to get to the bottom of some of the institutional problems we have in this country and find out if it's a policing issue, if it's an issue with the systems we have in place, and resolve this issue. Until such time that we find a way that every Canadian feels part and parcel of our Canadian dream, we will not be a successful society. As long as there are people feeling disenfranchised and not part of our society, we will not achieve the potential greatness of this country. We must continue to work and be vigilant in making it greater. Thank you, colleagues.

Hon. Patti LaBoucane-Benson: Honourable senators, I am a Métis-Ukrainian who grew up and lives on the beautiful Treaty 6 territory. I want to thank my colleague Senator Anderson for her thoughtful land acknowledgement. I too am grateful to work on Algonquin territory.

Over a decade ago I was the executive producer of a video that investigated Cree concepts of law. We had presented protocol to two very learned Cree elders to provide teachings and to help us understand the philosophy that guided Cree doctrine. During that circle the elders also spoke at length about colonization and how it affected them, their families and their nation. They spoke about racist laws that removed children from the embrace of their families only to return as young adults with serious mental health issues, such as addictions, or to maybe never return at all. They spoke of devastating economic policies that hamstrung their nations and committed their people to poverty. These stories were difficult to listen to; my whole research and production team and I were becoming emotional. The elders could see it because it was written all over our body language. At one point, one of the elders put his hand up and told us we needed to stop. I will paraphrase his teaching.

He said that there is no place in healing for blame, shame, and guilt. He said that if we are going to solve the issues that we are facing today, we cannot be constantly looking back and blaming each other for what has happened. He said that we needed to work together to build a sacred relationship — a *wahkohtowin* — between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and nations. To do that, we needed to understand our shared history. Without understanding how the past influences the present, we cannot possibly create a better future.

Notice that he didn't mention anger. I've heard many elders say that anger is a gift from the creator. Properly directed, anger is the emotion that gets us up out of our chairs and motivates us to make change. After decades of healing through ceremony, this elder had come to understand that it's only through kindness, respect and humility that we can heal and reconcile our collective relationship. Blame, shame and guilt do nothing but derail the process.

This teaching has stayed with me and it guides my work. For over a decade I have delivered training that unpacks colonial law; the effect it has had on First Nations and Métis people, families and communities; and offers a framework for healing, reconciliation and resilience building. This is not cultural awareness training. This is the facilitation of a personal unpacking of colonial bias and an examination of our collective

relationship. To be clear, healing is necessary for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. The deep misunderstandings and racist stereotypes about the first peoples of Turtle Island have deprived not only Indigenous people of their humanity, but also deprived non-Indigenous people across this country of profoundly beautiful teachings and culture. It has deprived generations of Canadians of a sacred relationship that would transform our country.

While I've enjoyed providing this training for community-based service providers and agencies, my focus has always been to train leaders within institutions — judges, crown prosecutors, executive directors and ADMs — to facilitate a critical dialogue that promotes the unpacking of colonial bias and assumptions that almost invisibly guide policy and decision making. We live in a country where I cannot find one example of a mayor, a cabinet minister or a premier being violently arrested and detained for an expired licence plate registration; I looked. Elected officials are given honorifics, whether we deserve them or not, and are generally treated with respect or even deference by the police. It is systemic racism that creates the reality where police feel justified in using extreme violence while interacting with a democratically elected chief of a First Nation for the same non-criminal infraction a few months ago.

The fact that people in leadership positions in law enforcement cannot define systemic racism is a glaring symptom of the problem. The truth is that police relationships with First Nations, Métis and Inuit people are complex and colonial. They require unpacking and renewal. Most importantly, we need independent, accessible, transparent and timely reviews of incidents of police violence and, at the very least, meaningful consequences for dehumanizing and brutal behaviour.

The killing of eight Indigenous people by police since April must be transparently investigated. We live in a country where police officers have, after receiving my training in closed quarters, revealed that when called to a child welfare matter where the name sounds white, the conversation between the officers is about how to help this family; but if the name sounds Indigenous, the discussion immediately turns to where to place the children. Clearly, they think that this is a foregone conclusion because their experience tells them that apprehension is typical for Indigenous families. The colonial bias in that assumption allows them to be complacent and never question why. The truth is that most front-line workers are still not trained in evidence-based, historic trauma-informed service delivery. They receive no information on colonization and how it affects Indigenous people today. I know that because I've been involved in that training.

Systemic racism is deadly because it creates apathy, indifference and hopelessness in service delivery. It does not compel our institutions to learn, adapt and innovate. We live in a country where children are neither consistently nor meaningfully taught the Indigenous perspectives of the many treaties of this country — peace and friendship treaties, treaties 1 through 11, that are at the foundation of our confederation, as well as modern treaties. Generations of Canadians have no idea that these contracts between sovereign nations set out Canada's obligations to First Nations in exchange for sharing the land and its

resources. As a result, most Canadians do not understand that Canada has not met the fiduciary obligations and responsibilities outlined in treaties.

Systemic racism creates this vacuum of knowledge, a space where misunderstandings, stereotypes and myths about Indigenous people are more freely accepted and exchanged in our society than the truth. As the saying goes, a lie gets halfway around the world before the truth can get its pants on. At the very least, our school systems — kindergarten through post-secondary — must teach the truth, at the very least.

When I think about those elders' teachings, I realize that if I want to be part of the reconciliation movement, I cannot create blame, shame or guilt when speaking with individuals about institutional or personal racism. It doesn't help, and it actually has the opposite effect. Rather than changing anyone's mind, it causes people to double down and defend their positions viciously. When one group shouts, "Black Lives Matter," or "Indigenous Lives Matter," the other group shouts that all lives matter. When Indigenous and black people tell us they feel they are not valued in our society, we need to listen. It is only with kindness, respect and humility that we can understand each other's perspectives and reconcile our differences, and imagine and create relationships and institutions that are more human and humane.

Honourable senators, the unpacking and dismantling of colonial bias in the institutions of our country is long overdue. I'm tired of organizations and departments that position themselves as leaders in reconciliation but are not interested in dismantling the colonial bias in their own practice and decision making. I'm tired of the para-militaristic, toxic culture of the public safety institutions that are supposed to protect and rehabilitate. Their inability to make substantive changes is both frustrating and incredibly harmful to Indigenous people. They actually perpetuate intergenerational trauma.

I'm tired of decades of funding formulae and policies that underfund the Indigenous child welfare, educational and housing departments, further entrenching poverty and despair. I'm tired of the society that mobilizes racism and apathy to blame, shame and guilt people in poverty for their misery, but will provide assistance for businesses and corporations that find themselves struggling during a crisis. I'm tired of big ideas, round tables, inquiries and reports with no action. I'm tired of seeing the next-best strategy, model or program that was not developed with Indigenous perspectives and does nothing to promote self-determination. Honourable senators, I hope you are too. Thank you. *Hiy hiy.*

Hon. Peter M. Boehm: Honourable senators, I rise tonight to add my voice to the emergency debate on racism. I would like to thank our colleague, Senator Moodie, for leading this important effort. Senator, you have my admiration and respect.

[Senator LaBoucane-Benson]

• (2140)

As a white man, I have never experienced racism personally and I have travelled this planet. I have never had to question the reason why I was hired for a job or promoted or not. I have never been pulled over by police because of the colour of my skin, nor have I ever been carded or profiled in any way. Many of us, too many, in this room have never and will never know the all-too-common pain of being discriminated against for no other reason than our skin colour. That is something with which those of us who have not experienced racism should be deeply uncomfortable.

However, we can all be part of the solution. It will take all of us and all Canadians, regardless of race.

[*Translation*]

Colleagues, this is indeed urgent. Racism isn't a new phenomenon; it has always existed and can be traced back throughout history. However, today we can observe it because in the 21st century we can record racist or discriminatory acts with the help of our smart phone and even live stream them. We can no longer act as if racism doesn't exist because we don't see it.

Individual racism, systemic racism and discriminatory measures are not problems only in other countries. They exist here, in Canada, whether or not we want to admit it.

As Canadians, at least white Canadians, we often say that Canada isn't a racist society because we welcome immigrants and refugees with open arms. We think that Canada doesn't have the same racism problem that exists in other countries.

We very much like to claim that diversity is our strength. We've managed to relay this message to the world.

[*English*]

In my previous career, during my assignment in Berlin, my most frequent questions from Germans related to our diversity and how we had somehow succeeded in becoming the planet's first post-modern country. This is a perception of Canada that is quite widespread. It allows us as well to mount our moral high horse, especially when it comes to our southern neighbour.

We know, of course, however, that this domestic and global perception is not accurate. Racism is alive and well-ingrained in our country. The fact that ours might be a more polite version, as we have heard said of Canada's brand of racism if you watch "The Daily Show" does not make it less true or less pernicious.

What has been happening in the United States the past several weeks has had a global impact to be sure. We have seen peaceful Black Lives Matter protests all over the world — an encouraging, inspirational show of mass solidarity at a time it is most needed. This time, after yet another black American was killed by the police, the movement to address racism feels different. It feels bigger, and it is big here, too, colleagues.

Maybe this is because we are in a global health crisis at the same time that is bringing us ironically closer together. Maybe it is because the pandemic is laying bare the staggering inequality that exists in society in a way we have not seen before. Maybe the 8 minutes and 46 seconds George Floyd suffered with a police officer's knee on his neck until he died was the final straw. This is the video of police brutality that launched thousands of demonstrations all over the world.

Here at home, for every George Floyd, we have our own names, a list that has grown in just the past two months. That list includes D'Andre Campbell, who was shot and killed on April 6 by police in Ontario when his parents called for help as he was struggling with schizophrenia. They needed help and instead lost their son.

Most recently that list has grown with the addition of two Indigenous people in New Brunswick. Rodney Levi was shot and killed on June 12 by RCMP. Chantel Moore was shot and killed by a municipal police officer on June 4 during a wellness check no less.

And we have all seen the terrible photo of Chief Allan Adam's face after the brutal force Alberta RCMP used to arrest him on March 10.

The opportunity to really talk about racism in Canada and to chart a path forward is before us. We must seize it, colleagues. As parliamentarians, we have a responsibility not only to speak but to act. What this conversation boils down to is using the powers we hold to speak and act in defence of minorities.

That, colleagues, is exactly why the Senate exists. As senators, it is our constitutional and moral duty to support and defend minorities and minority voices across our country.

A discussion about racism in Canada today cannot be held without a look at why this problem is so pervasive. To understand where we are and where we are going, we must understand where we have been. The fact is that where Canada has been has often been racist and discriminatory. Any discussion on the history of racism and racial discrimination in Canada must not only include Canadians of African descent but also of Asian descent, and, of course, Indigenous peoples.

Let us look at anti-black racism in Canada. This must start with Canada's role in the transatlantic slave trade. Despite Canada participating as a British colony and not as a sovereign nation, the fact remains that for more than 200 years, from the early 1600s to 1834, people from Africa as well as many Indigenous peoples were bought and sold and forced to work as slaves in what became Canada.

After the British took control of New France in 1759, the enslavement of black people continued with African slaves being brought to the Maritime provinces and to what are now Quebec and Ontario by United Empire Loyalists after the American Revolutionary War. This was encouraged by the British to encourage settlement in Canada.

When we think of the transatlantic slave trade, we think of it — and of its cruel legacy, which is very clearly still felt today — as distinctly American.

We think of Canada, however, as the final stop on the Underground Railroad promising freedom to escaped slaves.

Canada, and free states in the United States, were indeed beacons of hope, but that does not negate the fact that there were thousands of African slaves in this country before slavery was outlawed.

While slavery was not abolished in British North America until 1834 by the British Parliament, a provision in the Act to Limit Slavery of 1793 stated that slaves who managed to reach Upper Canada would be free.

Freedom from slavery, however, did not mean freedom from racism and discrimination.

The first Africans to live as free people in Canada faced many hardships including difficulty finding employment and proper housing, as well as schools for their children along with segregation in public spaces.

Despite the challenges, many of which — legal, social and economic — continue today, black Canadians have contributed to Canada immeasurably for hundreds of years in every sector of society, including right here in the Senate as senators and as staff. The lack of representation here is another element of the larger conversation we must have.

On that note, to those of you who have not yet read the recent excellent and thoughtful op-ed in the *Ottawa Citizen* by Josh Dadjo, a former page who now works in Senator Moodie's office, I urge you all to do so.

Canada is richer for the countless and constant contributions of its strong, resilient Afro-Canadian community.

We owe it to our fellow Canadians to act on the scourge of racism, from daily microaggressions, the so-called polite racism, to police brutality and everything in between.

Canadians of Asian descent have also faced racism and discrimination in Canada. This began with the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway in the 1880s when 15,000 Chinese men were brought to British Columbia to help build the railway. They suffered greatly, facing harsh treatment and dangerous work for meagre pay. Approximately 600 died.

Using workers from China was controversial because the provincial government feared an influx of Chinese immigrants. They were needed to help develop Western Canada, but action was quickly taken to keep them out when the CPR was completed.

In 1885, when the CPR was finished, the federal government passed the Chinese Immigration Act which levied a “head tax” on Chinese people seeking to come to Canada. In the 38 years the tax was in effect, the amount was increased three times to deter immigration. Roughly 82,000 Chinese people managed to pay the tax to come to a country that treated them shamefully. When it became clear to the government that the head tax was not working, it moved to ban Chinese immigration altogether.

In 1923, the head tax was lifted but a second Chinese Immigration Act — also called the Chinese Exclusion Act — was passed. It outright banned, with few exceptions, immigrants from China and was the first law on the books in Canada that banned immigration specifically based on race. The law was not repealed until 1947.

In December 1941, when Canada declared war on Japan after its attack on Pearl Harbor during World War II, Canada began imprisoning Japanese residents, most of whom were Canadian citizens, in internment camps. This could be done quickly, as the government had begun in March to require Japanese residents in Canada, regardless of citizenship, to register with the government. This essentially made them enemy aliens.

• (2150)

In 1942, in an escalation of racist and discriminatory policies toward Japanese residents, the government expelled 21,000 from their homes by ordering them to move inland, away from the Pacific Coast. The majority of these people were born in Canada and even more were citizens. The federal government seized and sold their houses, their land, their possessions. At the end of the war in 1945, interned Japanese Canadians were given the choice to be relocated outside of British Columbia or to be deported to Japan.

Finally, colleagues, the sad and long-standing history of racism in Canada obviously cannot conclude without discussing how this country has treated Indigenous peoples. From early racist and paternalistic policies, many of which remain in one form or another, including the Indian Act, to residential schools and the intergenerational trauma that is their legacy, to over-representation in prisons and under-representation in public institutions, to rampant inequality in access to housing, health care and even drinking water, Indigenous peoples in Canada have suffered deeply due to racism of all kinds.

Even here in the Senate, when we had a chance in the last Parliament to do some real good and to show Indigenous peoples that Canada is serious about reconciliation, when we had the chance to act and not just speak about acting, we failed.

Bill C-262, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples act, was the victim of wrangling and delay, not to mention a lack of sensitivity in the Senate and in the Aboriginal Peoples Committee, where it was studied. I cannot help but think that there was unconscious or even conscious bias

at work, especially regarding the false assumption that Indigenous peoples would have had a veto on our proverbial way of life. Our failure to enact Bill C-262, and the manner in which we failed, makes it all the more important that we succeed now, whatever success looks like in the short and long term.

I want to reflect for a moment again on my previous life. More than 20 years ago, in 1998, when I was Canada’s Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States in Washington, I worked to have the then Assembly of First Nations National Chief, Phil Fontaine, address the Permanent Council of the Organization. He became the first Indigenous leader in this hemisphere to do that. His eloquent speech was about reconciliation and the efforts of the AFN to connect Indigenous groups throughout our hemisphere. That was a long time ago, but for me it feels like yesterday.

I tell this story because it serves as a constant reminder to me that Canada has a long way to go. In fact, I strongly believe the urgency for action has become more acute. And that is why I so strongly support having this discussion at the level of an emergency debate and beyond, whether an inquiry, special committee or Committee of the Whole, everything we could do, we should be doing.

Colleagues, I have laid out where we have been and where we are, albeit very quickly, but it is not for me to say where we need to go. People who look like me have the responsibility to listen to those who do not share our privileges; those who, in the words of Christine Sentongo-Andersen — who works in Senator Bovey’s office — in remarks she gave at a Senate Black History Month event, “do not have the luxury of shedding their skin like a winter jacket.”

The thing is, we have been given direction. As the statement from the Parliamentary Black Caucus — which we have all received and which I support wholeheartedly — makes plain:

Extensive reports and serious proposals already exist. What is needed is the implementation of these proposals and the dedication of adequate financial resources to do so effectively.

The Afro Canadian community has told us for years what needs to be done. Indigenous peoples have told us for years what needs to be done, most recently in the form of the final reports of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I am sorry that its Chief Commissioner, our colleague Senator Sinclair, is not here with us today.

We have been told exactly what to do, colleagues. We have heard but we have not listened and we have not acted. What we are doing tonight is a great start, but it’s just that, a start. Now is the time. If not now, when?

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: Honourable senators, I feel privileged to be able to speak in this important emergency debate on an issue that is now but should always be top of mind: systemic racism. Like Senator Moodie, I regret that, for reasons we all understand, many of our respected Indigenous senators in particular cannot lend their important voices to this debate.

In that connection, it has been my privilege to work intensely with Indigenous senators on the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples over the past 10 years. As Senator Anderson said tonight, this work has not always been easy or comfortable. In fact, this is not a committee many senators have been clamouring to sit on.

However, I do believe that the committee has done important work in a collaborative and non-partisan spirit to combat systemic racism and its negative impacts on Indigenous peoples. One of our notable achievements I will mention today was challenging the government's very weak approach to ending decades and decades of blatant and calculated discrimination under the Indian Act, aimed at reducing the number of status Indians for women who married non-Indians. This was done by successive governments of all political stripes.

We held up that clearly inadequate response to a court challenge calling for change in the first draft of Bill S-3, with the support of many senators, including then Government Representative Peter Harder. By refusing to report this flawed bill, we forced the government to finally make major steps to deal comprehensively with gender discrimination around the Indian Act.

There is much more work to do to fight systemic racism in the Aboriginal Peoples Committee and many other committees of this place. Our duty, as envisioned by the Fathers of Confederation, is to be the champions and spokespersons for regions and, most important to this debate, for minorities. We cannot continue to simply pay lip service to the challenge of ending systemic racism in our country. The Senate is the place to tackle this. Colleagues, we need to ensure that we are actively working to incorporate the voice of black, Indigenous and people of colour into every decision our federal government makes.

I'd like to draw your attention to one recent example of a decision being made about Inuit without the inclusion of Inuit feedback. I had actually meant to make a statement about this in the Senate today, but as it has significant bearing on this emergency debate, I refer to it in this debate.

June is National Indigenous History Month. I do wish to draw your attention to a tragedy occurring alongside the current pandemic. Indigenous women and children facing domestic violence are not getting the type of help and support they need. I've heard reports from the few shelters we have of sharply reduced numbers and even not having a single client for the first time in their history. This lockdown, the isolation in homes, has left women and children sheltering in place with their abusers and unable to find the opportunity to flee.

I heard of police officers refusing to enter a home when called to a domestic disturbance and citing COVID-19 as the reason. The statistics show that Indigenous women and children are at a

disproportionately greater risk of experiencing domestic violence. According to Pauktuutit, Inuit women are 14 times more likely to experience violence than other women in Canada.

Last year, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls tabled a final report and included 231 Calls for Justice. As my home territory of Nunavut is home to a population that is 86% Inuit, I have paid particular attention to the calls relating to Inuit.

Today, colleagues, I would like to highlight for you Call for Justice 16.19. It requires the government ". . . to develop and fund safe houses, shelters, transition houses, and second-stage housing for Inuit women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people fleeing violence."

• (2200)

Pauktuutit has called on the government to respond to that call for justice by identifying \$20 million in immediate support to build five shelters for Inuit in communities identified by Inuit. On May 29, the government announced that \$45 million would go to the construction of 10 on-reserve shelters and two shelters "in the territories."

Canada cannot continue to make decisions that affect the lives of Indigenous people, be they First Nation, Inuit or Métis, without the full inclusion of those communities in the decision-making process. It was disheartening when I heard that Pauktuutit made their concerns and demands known to several ministers at in-person meetings prior to this announcement, and that those concerns were not reflected in the final decision. It is concerning that there are only two shelters slated for the territories, with no indication as to which of the three territories will receive these shelters or whether Inuit women in Nunatsiavut, Labrador and Nunavik, in northern Quebec, will be addressed.

Senator Anderson and I have been working together and are writing a letter to the relevant ministers in support of Inuit women and I know Pauktuutit would welcome all concerned senators to also sign it.

Honourable senators, that was the statement that I had wanted to make today, and I would point out several things. First, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' calls for justice, the TRC Calls to Action and many of the speeches made by the Prime Minister and ministers of the Crown describe the need for inclusivity of Inuit voices, but it is not enough to discuss and engage with Indigenous people. Quite a bit of that has gone on, I do acknowledge, but there needs to be evidence that their interventions make a difference.

Here we have a call for justice that specifically calls upon the government to create shelters for battered Inuit women, and an Inuit women's organization presented the ministers in charge of responding to that call with an action plan in person. Instead of adjusting their announcement to take into account the input of this group, they proceeded with an announcement that was vague at best when it came to how they would be meeting the needs of northerners.

The President of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Derrick Johnson, has defined systemic racism — also called structural or institutional racism — as systems and structures that have procedures or processes that disadvantage African Americans. I think we can safely expand that to include the disadvantage of Indigenous people and persons of colour.

Glenn Harris, the President of Race Forward and publisher of *Colorlines*, defined it as the complex interaction of culture, policy and institutions that holds in place the outcomes we see in our lives.

Both of these definitions hold true when we look at the policies, processes and procedures that would render the interventions of an organization such as Pauktuutit moot when deciding on the creation of new shelters for women. That decision could have been easily changed to include even one or two shelters for Inuit, which would have been an important show of good faith and respect that this government is listening to Indigenous voices and the voices of Inuit women, and is working hard to meet the Calls to Action of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, which the Liberal Party endorsed in the last election.

Honourable senators, I can't as a Caucasian male stand before you and pretend to understand what it means to be black, Indigenous or a person of colour, and the chronic negative experiences of those people, as so eloquently described by Senator Moodie in her address tonight. A recent example in Kinngait, Nunavut, received national attention.

While I have often heard about and witnessed discrimination of this kind, their experiences are not my own. But as a senator, a legislator and a Canadian, I can stand and point out instances where we could have done better. I can stand with black and Indigenous persons and communities of colour to push for and effect real change.

It is my sincere hope that this debate in the chamber will inform our future actions and be informative for any Canadian who denies the existence of systemic racism in Canada.

I would like to thank Senator Moodie for initiating an overdue and important discussion that the Senate should absolutely have. It is our solemn duty. I will stand with you as an ally in this important cause. *Qujannamik*. Thank you.

Hon. Kim Pate: Thank you, Senator Moodie, for initiating this vital and important discussion tonight.

Over the past few weeks, we have witnessed the realities of decades and centuries of racist privilege being challenged anew. As Senator Boehm just reminded us, we have also clearly heard from our colleagues in the Parliamentary Black Caucus that, “Extensive reports and serious proposals already exist. What is needed is the implementation of these proposals and the dedication of adequate financial resources to do so effectively.”

I rise today in support of that message and the extraordinary leadership, courage and conviction of the Parliamentary Black Caucus, as well as the Indigenous Senators Working Group. It is vital that this place answers their calls, not only in the work that

we do but also in the way that we work. Colleagues, we have a responsibility to examine our roles and complicity as parliamentarians in perpetuating the systemic racism that has inspired the current global anti-racism movement.

The discriminatory attitudes that demonstrators around the world are demanding be redressed provide the macro level of the micro examples of what happens every day, including in this place and in the other place, to those who dare to challenge the status quo, particularly when it comes to race.

Given the historical roots and objectives of most of our state institutions, none of us should be shocked by the fact that racist or misogynist discrimination is manifesting on our streets, as well as by police and all arms of the state.

As senators in this chamber of sober second thought, we have a responsibility to represent the interests of those who are too often ignored and, worse yet, silenced. For centuries, that has been the reality endured by those who are racialized, particularly black and Indigenous peoples. This information is well documented. We do not need more inquiries, investigations or commissions to tell us what we need to do.

We could start with pulling out Senator Sinclair's Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba and reviewing the recommendations he made 30 years ago. We could also look at the recommendations made by the Law Commission of Canada and the OPP when Senator Boniface was involved in examining policing and other criminal legal issues. We could reflect on former Senator Kirby and his colleagues' observations of the injustices that result when armed police are expected to respond to mental health crises. Further, we could follow the sage advice of Senator Bernard in her life-long journey to ensure anti-black racism is exposed and extinguished.

In short, we could look to the works of many, most especially our racialized colleagues in this chamber and outside who have been drawing attention to these issues for many years. Most recently, the TRC and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' Calls to Action and Calls for Justice, respectively, provide us with some very clear direction, as does the statement released this week by the Parliamentary Black Caucus.

We must ask ourselves how and why we are in this situation today, given all this rich and thoughtful work. The answer is very simple, my friends. Too many of those who have resources, power and privilege are loathe to relinquish them. We must address the growing and unacceptable levels of economic, racial and gender inequality in this country. We must immediately act to rectify the situation in which we find ourselves.

So, where do we start?

• (2210)

I do not know what the answer is for each of you, but for me it means — to start with — a few things. First, it means refusing to allow any legislation or study to leave this place if they perpetuate colonial vestiges of race, class and gender bias. Well before my appointment, and most especially since, I have reflected on the enormous privileges and corresponding responsibilities that each of us have in this place. We must listen to, walk with and see justice done for those denied voice within majority rule political systems. We must hold to account those who wield authority and power over others. As senators, our work is to ensure the substantive equality that the Constitution guarantees to every individual in this country. We must ensure that is a reality.

Second, it means refusing to allow ourselves or each other to hide behind the archaic, elitist, colonial cloak of parliamentary privilege, which sometimes serves to protect those who harass, and not those who are victimized, and prevents those targeted by the abuse from receiving any form of justice. This is an institutional problem and it is time that we are able to discuss it frankly among colleagues, make clear what is unacceptable in an institution that represents Canadians, and move forward together. I thank our colleagues who, through their work in the chamber and on various committees, are acting to illuminate and remedy these wrongs.

Third, it means following the lead of our colleagues with lived experiences of racism as they chart a course for our action.

The calls of the Parliamentary Black Caucus to end systemic racism include the elimination of mandatory minimum penalties and revisiting restrictions on conditional sentences. They echo Call to Action 32 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Call for Justice 5.14 of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. These are both measures that the government has committed to implementing.

These and so many other studies, commissions and reports have established clear links between the trauma and marginalization that are the legacy of racist and colonial policies, and the current overrepresentation of black and Indigenous peoples as victims, accused and prisoners.

This February I introduced Bill S-208, based on a previous bill sponsored by former justice minister Irwin Cotler. Bill S-208 would provide judges the discretion to depart from mandatory minimum penalties in appropriate situations. It would allow judges to meet their obligation to craft fit and fair sentences based on the circumstances and context of each individual, including their Indigenous history or history as a member of a black or other racialized community, and to consider community-based alternatives to incarceration.

When Nelson Mandela came into power in South Africa, one of his first actions was to free from prison all women with children under the age of 12. He recognized that to incarcerate mothers was to condemn future generations to oppression. In Canada, 8 in 10 women in prison are there as a result of their attempts to negotiate poverty and ensure the economic survival of their families; more than half are racialized. Two thirds of women in federal prisons are mothers with primary care

responsibilities for their children. Their incarceration perpetuates decades of policies of forced separation, particularly of racialized children from their parents, the state-sanctioned removal of children, and discriminatory child welfare policies.

For those who have been held accountable, served their sentences and are working hard to integrate and contribute to their families and communities, criminal records too often perpetuate marginalization, stigma and poverty. They bar access to jobs, education, volunteer opportunities and even housing, all of which are vital to moving on from criminalization and to creating safer and more just communities. Bill S-214 proposes to remove barriers to criminal record relief, including costs of upwards of \$645 to \$1,000, and punishingly complex application processes.

Colleagues, after decades of study, we know what to do. We know the consequences of inaction. Time's up for empty platitudinous responses and vacuous exculpatory justifications.

Data from Toronto and Montreal — two of the hardest-hit cities in Canada — reveal higher rates of COVID-19 in lower-income neighbourhoods. It is no accident; rather it is part of the product of systemic racism, that these are also predominantly racialized communities, with a majority of black residents. Many of the residents also have no jobs or occupy precarious employment with poor working conditions and inadequate, if any, benefits.

The realities reflected in this data should not be surprising. We know that racialized individuals face barriers to accessing higher education in Canada. We know that higher education is often needed for jobs that are outside of the gig economy. We know that women — and particularly racialized women — are overrepresented in the gig economy and other front-line and essential services, and are central to the working of the economy. This is an economy characterized by jobs that are often unsafe, poorly paid, that have poor benefits and zero bargaining power. Further, we have long known that racialized candidates face racism even before being selected for an interview, and if they get an interview or a job, in those processes as well.

For these reasons and more, it was predictable that those most profoundly affected by COVID-19 are racialized, poor, women and those living on the margins because of past trauma, homelessness and institutionalization. As I see it, our job is to ensure that now, and during the highly anticipated second wave of COVID-19 and beyond, we use our immense power, privilege and influence to prevent the deaths of black and Indigenous peoples, seniors, those with disabilities, those who are institutionalized and those struggling to survive the crippling shackles of poverty.

Honourable colleagues, a guaranteed liveable income — along with other social and health supports such as child care, education, pharmacare, mental and dental health care — could help us protect all Canadians, not just the ones who look or live like us. Such a policy would ensure that those who are working in precarious employment and are dreaming of going back to school could afford it; those who are targeted with racism and sexism in the workplace could afford to step away from that environment and find another job. Finally, such a policy could ensure that those who need to look after others, whether children,

those with disabilities or the elderly, could afford to do so, especially during times of crisis. It would level the playing field and give everyone a fighting chance, and more importantly, it would give people choices.

Colleagues, history is being made outside these doors and we can choose to either listen, learn and fight against racism, or continue to uphold the archaic status quo. I, for one, want us to be on the right side of history and I believe that you do too. For that to happen, we have a lot of work to do. We need to use our resources and influence to radically shift how we operate.

To echo the words of our colleagues and friends, it is not enough to be “not racist,” we must be “anti-racist.” And for this we must include voices in the Senate that are too often silenced by our society. These are the ideas, strategies and vision that will bring us forward into this new era. Only then can we begin to operate as a body that truly represents and operates on behalf of all Canadians.

I look forward to working with all of you and continuing to learn from all of you. Thank you, *meegwetch*.

Hon. Ratna Omidvar: I want to thank each one of my colleagues who has risen and spoken. I have learned something new about each one of you and something new from each one of you. I want to commend Senator Moodie for her leadership in bringing us to this juncture.

I don’t want to repeat what has been said, but to add some value through my own lens on this question. I have been told many times by anthropologists and others that as long as there is race, there will be racism. I have also been told that racism is a feature of the human condition and the human psyche, and I ask myself, “Must it be so?”

• (2220)

It’s certainly true of our history, as Senator Boehm has pointed out. There have been clear, transparent, explicit expressions of racism in our past, when it was legal to be racist: “Taking the Indian out of the child,” resulting in the horrendous legacy of the residential schools; and the disenfranchisement and internment of Japanese Canadians are possibly some of the most virulent expressions of racism in our history.

Lest we forgive ourselves the cardinal sin of slavery — good history lesson, Senator Boehm. Let’s also remember that pre-Confederation, there were roughly 3,000 Indigenous slaves and approximately 2,000 African slaves owned by English and French settlers.

These most brutal expressions of official racism are thankfully in our past, but the sickness lingers on. It is malignant. It not only exists but thrives in hidden corners that we now call “structural racism.” In order to shine not just a light but a searchlight on it, I believe we here must look ourselves in the mirror and ask ourselves: How have we been complicit? How do we coast on our privilege of race and class whilst others suffer from its yoke?

I want to start by acknowledging a homily: People in glass houses should not throw stones. We have not exactly been champions of anti-racism or of legislation that could have improved the reality, if it had been adopted, and would have made a significant difference.

As one example, I take you back to the debates on Bill C-25 and Senator Massicotte’s amendment to ensure greater accountability by corporate boards on diversity, not just through “comply and explain,” but through targets, measuring and reporting as per employment equity definitions. Well, it was this chamber that voted it down.

Two years later, the first corporations have now filed their reports on “comply and explain.” I, for one, am not surprised that these reports indicate that only one group has made progress, and this is women. As laudable as this is, there is no progress, in fact, a regression when it comes to black directors, Indigenous directors or visible minority directors. A missed opportunity, I would suggest to us.

Let me give you another example. In 2018, CIBA’s Subcommittee on Diversity tabled a report outlining concrete suggestions on how to advance equity in our own house, where we are told repeatedly we are “masters of this house.” Senator Jaffer was the chair of this committee, and the members were Senators Tannas and Marshall. I attended the committee out of my own interest in the issue. The committee made 10 recommendations. We aligned ourselves, I remember, with great enthusiasm, with each one of these fairly concrete actionable recommendations. We were really enthusiastic about a particular one, which was to launch an Indigenous youth internship program in the Senate.

A year later, in June 2019, an interim progress report was filed by Senate HR at CIBA. It talked about the planning to implement the recommendations. Today, two years later, I was told by Senate HR that this recommendation is “still in planning.”

Colleagues, I point this out not to point fingers or to assign blame, but to note that there have been too many plans, too many reports, too many excuses and too many delays. I want to see some Indigenous youth in these hallways in September. I challenge us to make sure that this aspiration is translated into reality.

I can also attest to incidents here in our Senate that may not be structural in nature but certainly felt — let me use a polite word here — “odd.” In June of last year, I made a request to a certain department in Senate administration. I was told that it was against established practice to accede to my request. I accepted the explanation because the practice actually made sense to me, and I said, “Yes, I get it.” However, a few months later, four similar requests were made. This time, all four were made by white male senators. And notwithstanding Senate practice, which was explained in great detail to me, these requests, which were of the same nature to the same department, were accommodated.

Now, colleagues, I am not one to look for racism. I am, foolishly, too self-confident, I think. But it has felt odd to me, and when I asked for an explanation, I was told, “Sorry, senator. We made a mistake.”

I will accept a mistake once, possibly twice. But three or four times? I’m not sure. Was that a microaggression? Am I being paranoid? You tell me.

Honourable senators, I want to suggest that as part of the actions that have been suggested — and I certainly hope someone here will do a log of each of the concrete actions that have been recommended here in our speeches — we must, yes, ask more from Canadians and from Canadian institutions and our government, but we must ask more from ourselves. Will we take an honest look at structural racism right here in the Senate? Will we apply a race-based lens to matters of legislation and study? Will all Senate committees develop protocols through the lens of anti-racism and anti-discrimination? Will Senate administration implement the 10 recommendations put forward by the Senate Subcommittee on Diversity? Let’s ask ourselves first: What must we do? What can we do? How soon can we do it?

Colleagues, that is entirely in our hands. Entirely in our hands. And I urge us to consider these matters. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Hon. Julie Miville-Dechêne: First, thank you Senator Moodie for initiating this debate. I’d like to begin by commending the proposals for action brought forward by the Parliamentary Black Caucus. It’s important to collect race-based data, since, as we all know, it’s hard to change what we cannot measure. Hard numbers, statistics, are what helped the women’s movement condemn the systemic discrimination women were subjected to and made their voices heard. Women were finally taken seriously and could put forward targeted policies.

I want to use this forum to talk about the debate on racism that has shaken my society. I am from Quebec, a nation that, at the highest political levels, day in and day out, refuses to recognize that systemic racism exists within its borders, and even believes that these semantics are a waste of time and are divisive. Racism does exist, they say, but it isn’t systemic.

Lately, we have also heard everyone’s opinions on the risks of admitting that systemic racism exists. It was argued that doing so would give more ammunition to those who are looking for yet another reason to attack the people of Quebec. But who exactly are we talking about when we say the people of Quebec? Is it just the white majority who have been here for generations? I am very uncomfortable with that defensive reaction on this specific issue because, in order to put an end to systemic racism, we need to start by recognizing that it exists, that practices or behaviours in social or administrative structures are harming visible minorities, whether in their encounters with police, their job searches or their efforts to find housing.

In that regard, we are no worse but also no better than the other provinces.

If there is no systemic racism, then why would a candidate with a Québécois-sounding name have at least 60% more chance of being asked to an interview than a candidate whose name sounds African, Arabic or Latin American? It is better to be named André Tremblay than Abdoul El Said if you are looking for work in Quebec. Finding housing is an obstacle course for black Montrealers.

• (2230)

Our great writer of Haitian origin, Dany Laferrière, described his arrival in Montreal like this:

It was winter. I was looking for a room to rent. I always arrived too late. Every room had just been rented. It took a while for me to figure out that I was being politely rejected. I would walk by the same place again two days later and see the same little sign advertising a room for rent. It was cold, and I was discouraged.

According to this morning’s edition of *La Presse*, systemic racism in Quebec is a complete fabrication. The authors of the piece say that, throughout Canada’s history, Quebecers and Indigenous peoples alike have clearly been victims of systemic racism reinforced by Canadian institutions. However, the authors argue that Quebec, as a colonized entity, has always been open to immigrants and other cultures. Political scientist Andrée Lamoureux and anthropologist Michèle Sirois claim that, while racism exists, it is confined to the margins. I’ve heard that argument repeatedly my whole life everywhere I’ve been, and I disagree.

For instance, one of my former colleagues at the Conseil du statut de la femme firmly believed that Indigenous women were treated much better in Quebec than in the rest of Canada. What was her belief based on? Nothing. True, Quebec is a small society that excels in a variety of spheres, including successfully exporting our unique culture, developing hydroelectricity, fostering a feminist movement that has led to great advancements, such as child care centres, and leading the way in recognizing gay and lesbian rights. As I see it, however, like most Western societies, Quebec does in fact have a problem with systemic racism.

This is especially true for Indigenous women. A news investigation in Val-d’Or revealed that dozens of Indigenous women were afraid of the police after numerous traumatic interactions, such as violence, intimidation, harassment and sexual assault. These disturbing revelations sparked a public inquiry, which found that First Nations are victims of systemic discrimination. The Bureau des enquêtes indépendantes was created to look into the actions of police officers who injure or kill someone with a firearm. In fact, it is currently investigating the incomprehensible deaths of Chantel Moore and Rodney Levi, two Indigenous Canadians from New Brunswick.

We also can't ignore the overrepresentation of Indigenous and black minorities in prostitution in Quebec. Indigenous women who flee their communities too often find themselves in the city, homeless and without any resources, and wind up being targeted by pimps in Montreal.

However, we mustn't delude ourselves into thinking that only clandestine and fringe elements are infected by this virus. People are starting to share their stories. A white woman from Quebec who married an Indo-Malagasy man recalled on social media incidents that have marked their union, like customs officers who always pull her husband aside to question him, the shocking comments made by colleagues who talk about the "slut" who married a black man, the predictions that a marriage "outside of our race" won't last. Very little has changed over the past 30 years. The journalist Lucie Pagé has talked about walking down the street with her South African husband and someone yelling "your man's nicely toasted." Her husband and nanny, both black, were hounded and had someone breathing down their necks when they went shopping.

Despite affirmative action programs, Quebec's public sector doesn't hire very many visible minorities. There has been some progress over the past decade, but the representation of people of colour is 6%, while visible minorities make up 13% of Quebec's population. I was one of those managers who didn't meet their target. The hiring rules are strict. You have to choose from a pool of candidates who have already passed the examination process, where minorities are rare. These rules need to be reviewed and managers' diversity hiring efforts need to be addressed in their performance review.

The police force is not representative of Montreal's multi-ethnic nature. While a third of Montrealers are visible minorities, only 8% of police officers are. According to a 2019 analysis by three independent researchers, black and Indigenous people are four and five times more likely to be questioned by the Montreal police than white people. Aboriginal women are 11 times more likely than white women. This type of racial profiling also exists in other Canadian cities.

Those are worrisome numbers, indeed, but there's a strong anti-racism movement in Quebec.

As Senator Seidman and Senator Dalphond said, the Mayor of Montreal, Valérie Plante, just unequivocally acknowledged that there is systemic racism in Montreal, in the wake of a scathing report on its impact.

This serious issue affects me as a parliamentarian, a citizen and a mother, because I adopted my daughter in Vietnam. The first time that she came home from school and told me she had been called "yellow," I tried to reassure her and told her that she had golden skin with almond eyes.

More recently, when people looked at her with suspicion during the coronavirus crisis because of her Asian features, we spoke a great deal about systemic racism and the history of black Americans and Asian peoples. I am definitely not the only parent who worries that their child may be subject to discrimination that is more or less subtle or insidious. The stereotypes associated with Asian women are less deadly than the racial profiling of

black people and Indigenous peoples, but they must nevertheless be fought. Let me conclude with another quote from Dany Laferrière:

Racism is everyone's business. And we all feel dirty in its presence.

Thank you.

[English]

Hon. Frances Lankin: Honourable senators, I have the honour tonight to rise on behalf of Senator Bernard, who is unable to be with us here due to COVID restrictions. So, colleagues, these are Senator Bernard's words.

Honourable colleagues, I rise today to speak to the emergency debate called by Senator Moodie, given the rise in reported acts of racism against the Afro-Canadians, Indigenous Canadians and Asian Canadians.

What we are witnessing is the pandemic of COVID-19 colliding with the pandemic of racism. Racism is not new; it is just being filmed more, and reported more. We are beyond the point of shock and surprise; we are at the point where action is the only way forward. This is not a debate about whether racism exists or whether there is proof it exists. We are beyond that level of basic acknowledgement. I urge each of my colleagues, and the federal government, to take responsibility for the current state of racism in our country. These individual cases of violence and discrimination do not exist in a vacuum; they exist within the complex web of systemic racism.

Honourable senators, the Government of Canada and the Senate of Canada also exist within this system. The way we follow through with concrete actions and promises can have the power to make change for black, Indigenous and Asian Canadians.

The United Nations declared 2015-2024 the Decade for People of African Descent, DPAD. On January 30, 2018, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau publicly recognized the decade on behalf of the Canadian government. We were hopeful for change when the Prime Minister committed to a better future for black Canadians.

I hear from black communities that they are tired of promises that do not amount to real change. The federal government signed on to DPAD in 2018. Now, three years later, let's reflect on where we are.

I am hearing that the funds in the 2018 and 2019 budgets for black community initiatives are difficult to access. I visit countless black organizations that tell me they are operating with limited funding and with uncertainty of their future as organizations, yet they can see the valuable impact of their work on black youth, families and communities. This indicates to me that not enough is being done.

So what can be done? I recommend we use the framework developed by DPAD, focusing on three pillars aimed at building strong futures: recognition, justice and development.

• (2240)

The first pillar, recognition, includes acknowledgement of systemic racism and anti-black racism in Canada. The Prime Minister has acknowledged it, however, in order to recognize the harms of systemic racism, we must take responsibility for its roots. These roots go back to slavery in Canada and even further, to the initial colonization of this Indigenous land and peoples. An official apology is needed to allow for healing from the harms caused to Africans who were enslaved and the ongoing impact on their descendants.

The second pillar, justice, is one that many people are highlighting in the protests happening in cities and towns across Canada in the last few weeks. This pillar calls for changes to the criminal justice system, including prison, policing and law practices. We see a clear over-representation of black Canadians and Indigenous peoples in our prisons. Access to justice is necessary to begin to undo the intergenerational harms caused by colonial violence which keep so many of our communities incarcerated.

The third pillar, development, is about moving forward in education, employment, health and housing. We must strengthen and develop social programs, obstruct the school-to-prison pipeline, provide adequate and safe housing, and create change for black Canadians and Indigenous peoples to be able to thrive. We need to strategically fund black and Indigenous community organizations in an equitable way to reverse the current inequities. These communities know what they need to thrive, and they have been asking for this support.

In the letter released last week, the Parliamentary Black Caucus laid out five clear calls to action from all levels of government to measure the pervasiveness of systemic discrimination through the collection of race-based data; to assist black Canadians in providing economic prosperity to all through measures to support black-owned/run businesses; to eliminate the barriers to access to justice and public security for black Canadians and Indigenous people; to make our public administration more effective and resilient by ensuring it actually reflects the diversity of the public it serves; and to recognize and support the artistic and economic contributions of black Canadian culture and heritage.

Honourable colleagues, we have heard about anti-black racism in the last parliamentary session during the inquiry into anti-black racism. We have heard repeated commitment to change from the Prime Minister. We have a framework laid out for us from the DPAD focusing on the three pillars

of recognition, justice and development. Now we have concrete directives from a group of black parliamentarians who represent black Canadians from across our country. We have been told by black and Indigenous communities what is needed for change, and now is the time for collective action.

On behalf of Senator Bernard, thank you.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Josée Forest-Niesing: Honourable senators, I rise today to add my voice to the urgent global appeal to address the systemic racism that has plagued us for far too long. It is unacceptable that Afro-Canadians, Indigenous peoples and all visible minorities in Canada face injustice and suffering. It is especially unacceptable in a nation that is founded on democratic principles, that has a charter of rights and freedoms for all citizens, and whose society is ethnically and culturally diverse.

Systemic racism does not mean that all Canadians are racist or have discriminatory tendencies. Rather, it means that racism, in all of its forms, whether they be conscious or unconscious, causes additional difficulties and insurmountable challenges for some groups in their daily lives. It's more difficult for them to find housing and employment, and they are perceived as less trustworthy. They face greater distrust. They are at a greater risk of physical and psychological violence and, as we know all too well, of being killed by that violence.

Over the years, numerous studies, commissions and other initiatives have been conducted across the country to get a clear picture of the situation.

[*English*]

These include, just recently, the recommendations outlined in the statement by the Parliamentary Black Caucus. In June 2020, also recently, there was the public consultation on systemic racism and discrimination within the jurisdiction of the city of Montreal. In April 2020, Black to the Future's Community of Practice. In September 2019 we see, Count Us In: Nova Scotia's Action Plan in Response to the International Decade for People of African Descent. In December 2019, *Canada's Colour Coded Income Inequality* is published. In November 2018, *A Collective Impact: Interim report on the inquiry into racial profiling and racial discrimination of Black persons by the Toronto Police Service*. In December 2018, *Persistent Inequality: Ontario's Colour-coded Labour Market*. In 2017, *Making Real Change Happen for African Canadians*. In November 2017, *Cost of Doing Nothing: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*. In November 2016, *Shameful Neglect: Indigenous Child Poverty in Canada*. In October 2014, *The Dirty War: The making of the myth of Black dangerousness*. In July 2012, *Our Schools/Our Selves, Smashing the Stereotypes: Challenging race and gender in the classroom*. In March 2011, *Canada's Colour Coded Labour Market*. In June 2010, *The Role of Race and Gender in Ontario's Racialized Income Gap*.

[Translation]

If that seemed like a long and never-ending list to you, please know that it is just a few of many examples and that I limited it to the last decade. We've been analyzing the issue for far too long. We already have a long list of clear and well-founded recommendations. If that list seemed long and never-ending to you, can you imagine what the people who are the subject of these studies must feel like? Imagine the frustration they must feel every time a study brings to light the difficulties they're facing and the solutions needed to remedy the problem and then for nothing to ever change. Imagine their hope dying bit by bit as time goes on and things never improve.

The time for gathering information to get a feel for the situation and to identify the differences is over. It is now time to take action. Recommendations have been made. The question is why these recommendations weren't put in place. Why has the situation remained unchanged all this time? How can we ensure that the conditions necessary for change are finally put in place? Let's not waste any more time discussing the definition of systemic racism. Let's take action. Words, promises and findings now need to give way to action, to measures that promote change and finally to the complete elimination of systemic racism. Canada is a large and beautiful country founded on inclusion, equality and justice. Let's do what it takes to truly make that happen. *Meegwetch*. Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

• (2250)

[English]

Hon. Brent Cotter: Honourable senators, these are my first substantive remarks in this chamber, and I had anticipated that they would be delivered on some other topic than this. I had in mind injecting a modest amount of humour and perhaps an insight or two into those remarks, but this topic is too serious. If there's any humour in my remarks today, it will be only accidental.

It is my intention not to speak of the grand questions of systemic racism in our society. Those have been explored thoughtfully and deeply by many of you and in far greater depth and knowledge than I could offer. The focus of my remarks will be primarily in relation to policing and systemic racism, not because that is the most important of the questions, but it has been the entry point to the conversations that we are having, the catalyzing moments that many of you have referred to that we have seen in horrific videos of the treatment of racialized Americans and Canadians at the hands of police.

I would like to make a small personal observation before I begin, not unlike that of Senator Boehm. I'm an older white male who has some familiarity with the challenges faced by minorities, people of colour, people of different cultures, but no lived experience. As far as I know, I have never been discriminated against for any reason. I've had the opportunity to work as a lawyer at Dalhousie Legal Aid Service. Senator Pate is familiar with that institution. I directed it for a period of time and had the honour to work with a significant number of Indigenous, black and Mi'kmaq people in Nova Scotia and, particularly, Halifax.

I've had a chance to teach and work at the Native Law Centre at the University of Saskatchewan, which has been an opportunity for a significant number of Indigenous Canadians to have a chance to pursue their dream to become lawyers. It is one of the great equality-building institutions in our country when it comes to law.

In each of those lines of work, at the end of each day, I got to go home to a middle-class life and family, in safety and reasonable financial security, without the racism or disadvantages that were faced by so many Canadians, many of whom I worked with during the day.

I mention this because I have some trepidation even speaking about a modest aspect of such an important question that so many of you understand more deeply than me.

Before I speak about policing, I'd like to share with you two particular incidents that helped me to develop a perspective on these questions of system-based racism in our society. When I was teaching at the Native Law Centre in Saskatoon, a visiting Indigenous lawyer came and spoke to the students over lunchtime. He said the following, and I would like you to imagine that you are an Indigenous student experiencing this, "Many of you come from traditional First Nations backgrounds, and you will have to study property law in our law schools. Your understanding of property law, that is, land law, presently is the following: You understand that land, property, is fungible and non-alienable. That is the way lawyers talk. What that really meant was that every single piece of land is like every other single piece of land. The topography might be different, but the land is all the same and interchangeable. It is inalienable. It can't be bought or sold. You will now learn in law school the European understanding of land law, and it is not just different, it is the opposite of how you understand it, that is, European conceptions of land are that the land is non-fungible. Each piece of land is unique, and it is all alienable. It can all be bought and sold."

That is true, for the most part, about how we understand the land, including some of the land that we ungraciously took from Indigenous Canadians a hundred or more years ago. The point is that that cultural difference is dramatic, and Indigenous Canadians were takers of European approaches.

The second is a small example, but it was a profound one for me. I was Deputy Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs for seven years in the Government of Saskatchewan. At one stretch of time early on in that tenure, I was invited to make a presentation to the cabinet of the province. Some of my Indigenous colleagues invited me to try to convey the message of difference first before we talked about strategies. They showed me a map of Saskatchewan and highlighted something on that map. Saskatchewan was short of money in those days, and I had to buy 25 maps of Saskatchewan to take to the cabinet ministers. I asked each of them to open up a map and find the town of Herschel, Saskatchewan. Herschel, Saskatchewan is a town of

[Senator Forest-Niesing]

43 people. It is about an hour or so west of Saskatoon. It happened to be that the cabinet minister I reported to was from Herschel, so it was easy. He could find it, and eventually so did the others.

I then asked them to find on the map I.R. 41. They looked at each other and searched the map. These are people profoundly knowledgeable about the province. They searched on the map, and I eventually had to offer them guidance. Find North Battleford, Saskatchewan on the map and move about 50 kilometres west. I.R. 41 is the Poundmaker First Nation. On the maps of Saskatchewan, we didn't even acknowledge the Poundmaker First Nation by name, only by number. One thousand and forty-three people were living in that community, but we didn't even attach a name to it. That was true of every First Nation on that map. Every one was a number: Keeseekoose First Nation, The Key First Nation, Gordon First Nation, Little Black Bear First Nation where National Chief Bellegarde is from. All of them were numbers.

Nobody had a grand strategy to alienate and marginalize First Nations people there, but it had happened and been perpetuated. To the credit of the premier, he pointed to the Minister of Highways and said, "Get this fixed," and we did.

I don't think the point is lost on you, and it wasn't lost on me, how easy it is for us to accept as normal something that is marginalizing to others, particularly minority communities.

Let me now turn to the question of policing, systemic racism and racialized communities. I want to make three points at the beginning, if I may.

First, policing is an honourable profession. Each of us knows people who serve in the police service. Some are members of our own families. Some in the Senate are among our most distinguished members. These peace officers serve honourably and well. Many do this all of the time. Some, thankfully a small number, I think, not so much.

Second, policing is significantly a provincial responsibility, so one might say, "Why would we be talking about it in a federal chamber?" The fact of the matter is that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police is Canada's largest police service, a national police service, and in eight of the ten provinces, it is the contracted policing service for large swaths of those provinces. This makes our conversation and ideas about policing and about the Royal Canadian Mounted Police meaningful in reorienting policing across the country. If we can recalibrate and reorient the Royal Canadian Mounted Police on some of these questions in structural ways, in good ways, we would do a great service.

Third, our communities and our country need police. In some ways it made me think about lawyers. There is a somewhat uncharitable view of lawyers until you really need one. In some ways it's the same with respect to police. But we need the right kind of police and the right kind of policing, and in too many cases, we just don't have that right kind of policing right now.

• (2300)

This is a serious problem. It is a serious problem for the police. It is a serious problem for our communities, particularly our minority and vulnerable communities, but it is also a problem for our society because of the way in which it erodes public confidence in the rule of law and those we ask to support it.

So my first of the two points is about community-focused policing. Over 200 years ago Robert Peel set out nine principles of professional policing. One of the most often quoted principles is: "The citizens are the police and the police are the citizens." These seem antiquated, written in a different era, and some have suggested Peel didn't even write them himself. But embedded at the heart of these principles is a concept we have lost sight of that is fundamental to the police-citizen relationship. We must find it again, that is, policing with and on behalf of communities, all of our communities, and most especially our most vulnerable communities.

My view is that to too great an extent we have allowed and entrusted police authorities to define what communities need in the way of policing. This has led to too great of a police lens and not enough of a community lens through which we answer questions like how much policing do we need and how much policing and how will be policed? We have deferred to the views of police leadership, honourable people, but whose perspectives are understandably police-oriented, to make those calls for us. It is a moment in time, I think, for us to revisit this police-centric vision of policing. It is a time for citizens in a way to take back policing, to participate more, but in a calm, orderly, respectful way, with less demonizing and more concrete action directed at one goal, policing of our communities, by our communities and for our communities.

These structural changes are possible through all of the various dimensions what one might think of policing, from the point of view of public and citizen engagement in the hiring of police who we want, the training of police in richer ways than we try to do now, in police practices, policies and culture and ultimately police oversight. In the interest of time, I will only speak to the last two points of culture and oversight.

As with other professions, we provide a state-authorized entitlement for police in the same way we do for lawyers and doctors to do certain things in our society that no one else is allowed to do. With respect to policing, this has an immediate on-the-ground relationship with every single citizen in our country. It's therefore important in recognizing the state grant of that authority that we also ensure that it is exercised responsibly in all of our interests. And here I'm primarily reflecting on police and use of force.

I want to refer to a couple of the things that have been difficult sometimes for us to watch on television or on videos or on YouTube but that provide a couple of really powerful insights for us. That is the use of force by police officers recently directed at members of racialized communities. I'm less interested quite frankly in the tragedy of Mr. Floyd — although it has been a catalyzing event worldwide — but also with respect to Indigenous Canadians recently, as senators have spoken about in the last day or two.

I want to highlight one example of a challenge with respect to oversight of policing. If you watched the tragic video of Chief Allan Adam in relation to the incident in northern Alberta back in March, what you will have known was that incident would have been reviewed by more senior police officers through what's called use-of-force committees. When use of force is imposed on a citizen, police officers have a duty to report it and it gets examined at a higher level. That incident, including the video, was found by those senior officers to be a reasonable use of force.

The bottom line with respect to that point is that we should be engaging citizens in those uses of force, not necessarily because we distrust the police, but to bring a citizen lens to that. We also need to bring a richer, citizen lens to oversight of policing, which can and should in my view — and I think in the views of many others now — include things like body cameras so we can capture the video of incidents. None of those incidents would have been brought to our attention but for video from somewhere that has been presented to us, not a single one. We need to enrich the citizen engagement in those structures so that policing can be strengthened for all of us, but most particularly for vulnerable and particularly racialized Canadians. Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Hon. Lucie Moncion: I'd like to start my little speech by also talking about Willie O'Ree. He was featured on a commemorative coin launched by the Royal Canadian Mint this February. I think your summary of Mr. O'Ree's story was fascinating and very timely, in light of the honour bestowed on him this year. At 84 years of age, he travelled to Ottawa to accept this tribute. Coin collectors may be interested to hear that the coin is available from the Royal Canadian Mint.

This evening, there have been numerous speeches on racism in all shapes and forms. Let me tell you something my mother always used to say. Talking about human beings, she would always say that, whether it's racism or any kind of discrimination, narrow-mindedness is a fault that is cured every day. I've always felt that it's important to approach everything that comes my way with an open mind.

Now we come to the crux of my remarks. As some of you know, my way of speaking is more pragmatic than eloquent. I dive straight into the facts, without dancing around. I want to highlight something that Senator Moodie mentioned at the outset. I'm going to go back to that point, but this won't be a long speech.

I am humbled to rise today as an ally to add my voice to that of Indigenous, black and racialized people who are condemning the systemic racism that exists in Canada. As an ally, I must listen to my colleagues who experience racism every day, whether it be through hate speech or micro-aggressions. I know that I will never truly understand your reality, but I am committed to taking action against racism and systemic discrimination in every area of my life as a senator, employer and Canadian citizen.

[Senator Cotter]

With that in mind, I would like to recognize the outstanding work being done by our colleagues in the Parliamentary Black Caucus, Senator Moodie, Senator Mégie, Senator Ravalia, Senator Bernard and all the other members of that caucus who issued a statement condemning discrimination and systemic racism.

• (2310)

This document constitutes a comprehensive action plan that proposes concrete solutions that can be implemented immediately by governments in order to create a fairer society that is more respectful of differences. Yesterday in this chamber, Senator Mégie tried to table this declaration against discrimination and systemic racism, but unfortunately, some colleagues prevented her from doing so.

[*English*]

Of the recommendations in the statement of the Canadian Caucus of Black Parliamentarians, one relates particularly to data collection, and more specifically, to the collection and management of disaggregated data.

Disaggregated data are extracted from aggregate data, divided and broken down into smaller units of information, which is an essential step in acquiring knowledge from collective information. In other words, they help shine a light on hidden trends and measure the extent and magnitude of social and institutional problems, including systemic discrimination and racism.

I would also like to join my colleagues in urging the federal government to immediately act on this recommendation.

[*Translation*]

Systemic racism and discrimination manifest themselves in different ways in Canada, including by police impunity; brutality against racialized people; the abnormally high incarceration rate of racialized people, particularly black and Indigenous people; racial profiling; different treatment when it comes to employment; and different media coverage for incidents involving racialized people.

This recommendation by the Parliamentary Black Caucus really sparked my interest in the wake of incidents where police officers and heads of major organizations refused to say or use the term "systemic racism" to describe the problems of racism in the institutions that they serve and represent. This hesitation or disavowal shows a lack of understanding and a lack of sensitivity toward racialized people in Canadian society. The debates on the definitions of systemic racism are a barrier to recognizing that racism is pervasive in our society.

[*English*]

As a result, implementing the recommendation of the collection and management of disaggregated data is, in my view, the best way to resolve this semantic debate we have witnessed in recent weeks. It would enable us to clearly and accurately document and demonstrate the existence of systemic racism and its effect on our institutions. It would also expose the real issues of racism and discrimination and lead the call to action, which

would give people with influence the opportunity to take responsibility and hold the institutions they represent accountable. They will then have the power to make real progress towards eliminating racism in Canada. In the aftermath of the events of recent weeks, we are seeing a call for change, a heartfelt collective plea.

[*Translation*]

The whole issue of racism and semantic debates about definitions of systemic racism are beside the point considering the violence that black people, Indigenous people and visible minorities in Canada have repeatedly been subjected to. In many cases, these people bear the burden of their battles alone.

[*English*]

One of the barriers to combating racism is, therefore, the rejection of the very existence of the problem and its scope by people with the power to influence government and non-government institutions. Our leaders, politicians and decision makers have an even greater duty to educate themselves, become more aware and learn how racism manifests itself in their communities and their institutions.

[*Translation*]

Institutions are shaped by individuals, and individuals must strive for cultural change with respect to racism in their organizations. Each one of us must contribute to a concerted effort to answer the calls to action issued by Indigenous people, black people and visible minorities. As such, the gaps in the collection and management of disaggregated data are a real barrier to progress. Strong evidence on the presence of systemic racism across different communities, institutions and population groups could set the record straight by making the extent of the problem clear to those who turn a deaf ear to the pleas of racialized people. Disaggregated data would also enable us to measure how much progress various measures achieve and give racialized people hope that we can do better and be agents of change within our institutions.

[*English*]

So I encourage the government to implement my colleagues' recommendations and enable the collection of disaggregated data, so that the people with the most influence over our institutions can recognize the existence, scope and true nature of racism in Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Hon. René Cormier: Honourable colleagues, I rise in this chamber to add my voice as an ally in this emergency debate. Like many Canadians and colleagues, I realize that I have limited knowledge and understanding of the scope of systemic racism in our society. Like many people, I realize that my first action as a white man and Canadian citizen must be to listen, to acknowledge this reality and to broaden my knowledge through education.

Honourable senators, the systemic racism we're talking about this evening is like the invisible virus humanity has been grappling with for several months now. Some people question its existence, others seek to minimize its destructive powers, and still others think they're immune to it, until one day, they see someone nearby or on television die, killed by another human being. That's when this virus, systemic racism, rears its ugly head.

This emergency debate should have happened last year or 10 years ago or 150 years ago. This debate has been an emergency since our country was first created. I thank Senator Moodie for taking this initiative, as well as all the parliamentarians involved in this process, especially the members of the Parliamentary Black Caucus.

There were two troubling situations recently in my province of New Brunswick that illustrate how deeply rooted racism is in our systems of governance, in our justice system, in our history and society as a whole. I'm talking about the deaths in Edmundston of Chantel Moore, originally from British Columbia, and of Rodney Levi, from the Miramichi area, who were killed eight hours apart during police interventions.

Both deaths raise serious and profound questions about the following: the relationship that police forces in New Brunswick and elsewhere in the country have with Indigenous communities; intervention techniques; the training provided to police forces; the support they need to intervene in such circumstances; the unconscious or conscious bias that we all have; the repeated tragedies; how subsequent investigations unfold; and the countless recommendations that see no follow-up or tangible action.

Questions also remain on the relationships and dialogue that all New Brunswickers and all Canadians have always had with Indigenous communities. Back home, white and Indigenous people were never really encouraged to interact. I deplore the fact that the development of harmonious relationships has never really been encouraged. How can we improve these relationships and build ties between our communities? One day, I put this question to an Indigenous friend. He told me that to improve relations between white people and Indigenous people, there must first be a genuine relationship between white people and Indigenous people.

• (2320)

His answer shocked me, especially since I had always believed that the Acadian people and the Mi'kmaq First Nation had maintained close and solid ties since the arrival of the Acadians in the area. What happened? Why were these ties broken and what values were these ties based on to disappear like that?

Today, the Société nationale de l'Acadie, which represents the Acadian people on the national and international stage, released a press release urging Acadians and all Canadians to initiate an important dialogue with First Nations.

Acadia has a moral duty to support members of First Nations in their efforts to identify and resolve systemic problems that afflict them

— according to the SNA —

If we hope one day to achieve the dream of a just and fair society for all, we must take the time to listen to them so we can shed light on this matter.

I quickly want to talk about my second point, which has to do with the treatment of one of my constituents in New Brunswick. Jean Robert Ngola was thrust into the centre of a controversy over the self-isolation required after travel outside of New Brunswick during the pandemic. I will not speak to his actions or those of the provincial government. It's not my place to do so. However, the racism that Mr. Ngola faced left me speechless. He now fears for his mental health and his safety. A quick search on social networks will show you all you need to know about the hate and racism he has endured.

It has become too easy for people to simply close their eyes or look away, to ignore the comments that supposedly come from only a handful of people. The COVID-19 pandemic has revived a form of racism that is not new to us, but the insidious, latent discrimination and racism that shamelessly emerge in times of crisis, when we must face an unknown danger, as we have been in recent months, have become evident.

As you know, we are all the minority of a majority. We are all victims of something, and everyone can claim to understand racism because we have experienced discrimination. Clearly, that is not the case.

Every public policy decision and every statement must be made in consideration of all the communities and individuals who could be victims of racism and discrimination because of what we say and do. I certainly don't claim to know what we can do, but I think there are a lot of good suggestions in the statement by the Parliamentary Black Caucus, which Senator Mégie tried to table twice. I truly hope that the federal government and members of the Senate will take those ideas to heart and act accordingly.

I would like to close with another thought, this time about how art can create space for dialogue and connection. Art gives us opportunities to come together, to be inclusive, to communicate and to share our cultures. Art enables us to transcend our disagreements and deal with sensitive issues, to share our emotions, our pain and our pride. Art is a vector for learning and change. Artists dare to reveal that which is hidden, that which is buried in our collective subconscious, that which must be named. Art heals.

As the Black Parliamentary Caucus' statement so aptly put it, recognizing and celebrating black Canadian culture enriches all Canadians, spiritually and economically. To this we would add First Nations, Métis and Inuit Canadian culture. Supporting artists in every medium to promote these opportunities to come together and connect is also a federal government responsibility.

Colleagues, as senators, we have the kind of power and privilege that only a tiny sliver of the population will ever have, namely to be a force in changing a flawed system of governance by engaging with the government and, above all, by listening to racialized communities. Through our law-making powers, our ability to create and amend legislation and our influence over our

communities, we have the power to act. We need to weigh that power and make good use of it. That is the duty we owe to all the citizens we represent. The greatest of our responsibilities is to be a voice for the voiceless, to hear and bear witness in steadfast solidarity.

Colleagues, I am neither black nor Indigenous. We need to let them speak first, but this in no way diminishes our responsibility to speak out and act in unswerving solidarity, as some of our colleagues are already so admirably doing. Thank you.

Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie: I thank the Speaker of the Senate, Senator Furey, for allowing us to hold this emergency debate. This helps us keep the momentum going.

Honourable senators, Senator Plett said that four hours of debate was not sufficient to discuss an issue as important as racism. I agree. He proposed that we instead launch an inquiry. Indeed, an inquiry would allow us to explore the different facets of racism, but that would be done with you, colleagues. An inquiry would allow us to continue the conversation, but not until the fall. Today, we absolutely needed a forum, like this emergency debate, to truly start working on the topics we plan to address. I thank Senator Moodie.

Honourable colleagues, we also need another platform, such as a committee of the whole, to question the federal government about what it has done so far. This is also a way for the government to listen to us, so it can take even more meaningful action to continue laying the ground work for eradicating racism as much as we possibly can.

If we put off beginning this dialogue until the fall, it just means that we are indefinitely putting off the issue of police violence against racialized people, violence that has caused people to take to the streets all across the country. It is our role in the Senate to give a voice to those people who are demanding justice and it is our duty as senators to take action. It is with that objective of taking action that the Parliamentary Black Caucus, of which Senators Moodie, Jaffer and Ravalia and I are members, published a statement. This document, which was released on June 15 and sent to all senators, was prevented, in two separate instances, from being tabled in the Senate yesterday.

I'd still like to read a few excerpts despite the late hour, just a few sections, so that they will be included in the record of the Senate and so that, perhaps a few years after my retirement, people can once again raise the issue with the government if the appropriate measures have still not been put in place.

Data collection was very important to the caucus. Senator Moncion talked at length about the great benefits of data collection. This measure is really a priority for the caucus. The caucus also recommends collecting intersecting identity factors, such as gender and ability. For every police intervention, race-based data should be collected. The data should be collated, and Statistics Canada should be the repository for the data given its mandate to ensure that this data is publicly available for study and analysis.

• (2330)

The document also addresses economic tools, recommending that all governments create and strengthen employment equity legislation. As you know, there are evident links between economic prosperity, social status and advancement. Although black Canadians now enjoy equal access to the economic tools available to all Canadians, this was not always the case. Barriers have stunted their economic advancement, thereby perpetuating unconscious bias towards black Canadian entrepreneurs and limiting their career options.

To make matters worse, according to surveys from black Canadian business associations, the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected black-owned businesses.

Honourable colleagues, how should the federal government increase the number of procurement contracts for black-owned and black-operated businesses? How can the government help these companies tap into the supply chain?

We have to find solutions. That is also part of the recommendations. When it comes to justice, studies show that racialized Canadians are not more likely to commit a crime than the white population. However, the over-policing and over-incarceration of black and indigenous Canadians are well documented. Systemic discrimination is felt most acutely in our justice and public safety systems.

The Parliamentary Black Caucus is calling on the federal, provincial and territorial governments to reform their justice and public safety systems to eliminate racism and systemic bias. We must make the administration of justice and public safety more representative of and more sensitive to Canadian diversity. There are many programs to that end, but they rarely receive adequate funding under current budgetary processes.

Systemic discrimination and unconscious bias exist throughout the public service. It is becoming increasingly apparent that despite wide public support for anti-racism measures, the lack of diversity in the senior ranks of the public service is a major obstacle to the creation and swift implementation of such measures.

Furthermore, how many employees here in the Senate are members of a visible minority? I'll let you count them. How many of them are willing to self-identify as members of a visible minority? Does the Senate truly reflect the minorities we must defend and represent? It's still hard to work on that.

It's time to genuinely engage with black Canadians and other racialized Canadians. If the upper echelons of the public service were as diverse as Canada is, it would better reflect the society we're supposed to serve.

While many black Canadians consider it to be a wonderful country, Canada has yet to reach its full potential. For over 400 years, black Canadians have overcome legal, social and economic barriers to help shape Canadian society into what it is today. In order for our country to reach its full potential, we need to stamp out the systemic discrimination faced by too many Canadians. Eliminating discrimination is not just the business of a few black people or a few Indigenous people. It's the business

of each and every one of us as citizens. Here and now, in 2020, we need to start taking steps to make our country a fairer place. Let's all pitch in to build an even better Canada. Thank you.

Hon. Marilou McPhedran: Esteemed colleagues, I thank the Algonquin Nation for sharing its land with us. I rise this evening to express my solidarity with and sympathy for our black and Indigenous communities and people of colour in the fight against the current system of institutional violence and racism, which has become even more evident during this pandemic.

[English]

Colleagues, we have been called to an emergency debate by Senator Moodie on this matter because this is, in fact, a state of emergency, exposed and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, but not created by this pandemic.

In the last few weeks we have seen thousands take to the streets to protest against our current systems and institutions that disenfranchise our communities of black and Indigenous peoples, and all racialized peoples. In this pandemic, many Canadians who are at higher risk in terms of their health and safety are disproportionately vulnerable because our current systems have failed — and continue to fail — to provide protection that is equivalent to what more advantaged Canadians, including many lawmakers like us, are privileged to be able to rely upon. Too many lawmakers have invested in militarism in our police forces. We see the results in the killing of Indigenous, black and other racialized peoples of whom previous speakers have told us this evening.

Honourable colleagues, lives matter; specifically, black lives matter, always. Indigenous lives matter, always. The lives of racialized peoples matter, always.

We have heard variations of these phrases in the chamber, in the media, on social platforms and within our communities. But until this most basic principle is ingrained in every aspect of our democratic institutions and systems, substantive and sustainable positive change will not happen. There will be no movement forward. Incarcerations and killings will escalate.

Let us be clear, colleagues: The acts of violence and murder we have seen in recent news are neither new nor unknown. It is no secret that, historically, black and Indigenous communities have been disproportionately affected by systemic and institutional violence, oppression and disenfranchisement. The peoples and allies of these communities have been speaking to this for decades.

This is the present and daily reality faced by black Canadians and Indigenous peoples, whose demands for justice are so often unheard by those who hold power and allocate resources, like us.

Systemic racism is cancerous to our democracy. We are lawmakers, and when we see that the ways in which authority and resources have been distributed under our current laws have, obviously, failed to protect all peoples of Canada, it is indisputably our duty as lawmakers to face these failings, be them systemic or personal, as we have seen and heard in the pronouncements of some of our highest-ranked civil servants, such as RCMP Commissioner Lucki.

It is clear, but it is not simple. It is our job as lawmakers to evaluate not only the text of laws made but also to assess how implementation of our laws has failed, and is failing, to entrench effective actions on anti-racism, resulting in concrete and positive changes that are sustainable both in systems and in people.

We must be vocal in our call against racism within Canada and implement the proposals, projects and initiatives presented to us by communities of black, Indigenous and racialized peoples. They call us to action.

• (2340)

Our Parliamentary Black Caucus just gave us a well-researched and implementable plan for action to address the systemic and institutional racism that continues to run deep within Canada, reminding us that we must act and we must act swiftly. It is this document that colleagues from the Conservative side of this house refuse to have tabled as a document to be recognized in the Senate.

In this pandemic, as lawmakers, we reacted swiftly to implement systems to support and protect Canadians in this crisis. Now we must step up just as quickly in defence of Canada's marginalized and racialized communities.

I'm a human rights lawyer, and not asking about race has some history in attempts to protect the rights of racialized peoples, precisely because of systemic and intentional racism in institutions and businesses. But the lack of race-based data has obscured the realities and documentation of how disproportionately black and Indigenous communities have been affected by this pandemic. If we continue to exclude race-based data, and if we fail to apply gender-based analysis plus, then we fail to capture the range of depth of this pandemic's effects on marginalized communities like the black and Indigenous communities in this country.

We also then ignore how identities intersect with gender and ability, ramping up inequalities during this pandemic. Disaggregated data collection, with a specific focus on race-based data, is essential to face the extent of systemic — and at times intentional — racism in our increasingly militarized policing systems. As lawmakers, we can establish a repository of disaggregated data with Statistics Canada so that it is accessible and visible to the public.

Colleagues, we have often heard from the Parliamentary Black Caucus and senators in this chamber that black Canadians and Indigenous peoples are disproportionately stopped, charged and incarcerated in the criminal legal system. The evidence is overwhelming. These peoples are subject to over-policing, over-incarceration and the inherent racism, bias and violence that exist within our legal and public safety institutions and systems.

The federal incarceration rate of black people increased by 70% between the years of 2005 and 2016. From 2007 to 2017, more than a third of those shot and killed by the RCMP were people of Indigenous origin. If I named and described the police killings of just the past three months in Canada, all my time would be used. It is a heart-wrenching and disgusting list of violations of the most fundamental human right: the right of humans to live.

Sensitive to our disappearing time this evening, I won't repeat actionable proposals for reform, including for a guaranteed livable income that has already been presented by a number of senators, other than to emphasize that poverty contributes hugely to the overrepresentation of black Canadians and Indigenous peoples within the criminal legal system. I join the Parliamentary Black Caucus in calling for all levels of government to target measures to assist businesses owned and operated by black Canadians, to actively seek and support proposals from black business associations and to ensure that race disaggregated data is gathered and used to track economic development.

Colleagues, we must act now to ensure a democracy in which all individuals have the social, economic and political power to thrive, irrespective of factors such as race, gender and ability. In poll after poll, Canadians cite our Charter's equality values as the heart of our country.

As I conclude, let me share from *100 Ways White People Can Make Life Less Frustrating For People of Color* by Kesiena Boom. I highly recommend considering all of the 100 points listed, but here are 10 recommended to me by a black Canadian Senate staffer as particularly relevant to us as senators.

One:

Just because you can't see racism around you doesn't mean it's not happening. Trust people of color's assessment of a situation.

Two:

Regard us as autonomous, unique individuals, not as representatives of our race.

Three:

Share articles relating to the everyday experiences of race and racism written by people of color.

I would also recommend that you do the same with books, art and media made by people of colour that are not relating to everyday experiences of race and racism.

Four:

Have a critical eye when watching TV and movies. How are they portraying people of color and why? What purpose does it serve?

Five:

Donate money to grassroots movements around you that are run by and support people of color.

Six:

Support small businesses owned by people of color.

Seven:

If someone asks you to fill a role that you think a person of color would be better suited for, recommend a talented person of color who you know and forego the position yourself.

The eighth point I want to highlight from the article is to care about race 365 days of the year.

Nine:

Think about how race is operating even when people of color aren't around. Be cognizant of it wherever you are, whichever situation you're in. People of color have to, so should you.

Finally, Kesiena Boom implores us to not magically claim allyship to people of colour by just awarding the word to yourself. I would add that being a genuine ally is earned and requires words and actions that one must continually evaluate thoughtfully, using a lens that acknowledges gross absence of advantages that many of us so take for granted that they are invisible to us.

In closing, while many of us may be puzzled or uncomfortable with the term "woke," let's get over that. Let's instead focus on the origin of the term. It is a call to us — yes, to us — here in this chamber to wake up, to pay attention and to take action in conscientious allyship. Because whoever we are, there is someone different from us for whom an ally is needed.

For us as lawmakers, this means we must ramp up gathering evidence and turn up our listening to and taking guidance from senators who are black, who are Indigenous and who are members of racialized peoples. Thank you. *Meegwetch*.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senators, we have 10 minutes left for our emergency debate.

Hon. Yuen Pau Woo: Honourable senators, I am happy to deliver a speech on behalf of our colleague Senator Rosa Galvez, the first person appointed to the Senate of Canada from Peru and someone who knows a bit about Indigenous issues because she is an Indigenous woman from that country. These are the words of Senator Galvez:

I rise today to add my voice to the urgent matter of systemic racism in Canada. As the events of the past week have demonstrated once again, Canadians are hurting from institutionalized racism that permeates through departments and agencies, including our police forces across the country. Every week, we hear of more cases of police brutality, dismissing of charges of violence against racialized people and brutal deaths. Every week, we learn of an Indigenous woman killed during a wellness check or a black man shot down by police.

I find solace in the heavily mediatized conversation on systemic anti-black and anti-Indigenous racism, which allows us to work together on these issues, but I lament the fact that our society has failed in addressing this issue time and time again.

I want the discussion to focus on the problems at hand, and I would like to recognize the work of colleagues in the Parliamentary Black Caucus and Indigenous parliamentarians. They are the experts on the matter, and I am ready and willing to support their initiatives to address this matter. It is urgent.

As my other racialized colleagues will address the constant barrage of racism people of colour face in Canada, I would like to focus briefly on an aspect of racism that touches on my expertise and that is often misunderstood. It destroys the lives of entire racialized communities across the country and is closely linked to police violence. It is environmental racism.

• (2350)

It is well known that Indigenous, black and other communities of colour are disproportionately affected by income insecurity, poor public infrastructure and a lack of access to public services. What is less known is that heavily polluting industries tend to be located very close to these communities as well, affecting air and water quality, further compromising these residents' health and well-being.

Unlike other countries, Canada does not have a legislated "environmental justice" lens, and therefore knowledge of the issue is sparse and only recently emerging. The documentary *There's Something in the Water*, recently released, highlights the correlation between contaminating well water and elevated cancer rates in the black community outside of Shelburne, Nova Scotia, and other communities of colour that were negatively impacted by water pollution, such as Boat Harbour and Mi'kmaq lands. Please watch this video, other documentaries and media coverage I will mention.

For the sake of brevity, I will focus my intervention on some issues faced by racialized communities to illustrate the need to address the environmental dimension of racism in this country. This is relevant to all communities of colour and all Canadians concerned with justice and equality.

CBC's "Deadly Force" investigation found that during a 17-year period, despite making up only 3% to 4% of the population, Indigenous peoples represented 16% of those killed by police, with the RCMP leading all Canadian police forces in the numbers of killings. *The Globe and Mail* also found that over a 10-year period, more than 36% of RCMP killings involved Indigenous peoples. Experts warned that since the RCMP does not collect race-based data, this number is likely much higher.

Why do we talk about systemic racism? To understand the underlying causes of this violence, it is important to know the historical and contemporary role played by the RCMP in this country. Canada's first prime minister, John A. Macdonald, created the RCMP's predecessor in 1873 to extend Canada's colonial control over Indigenous territories in what would become Western Canada. In 1885, it joined Canada's military forces in war against different Métis, Cree, Assiniboine and Saulteaux communities in the West. Afterward, the police played a key role in forcibly relocating Indigenous peoples onto reserves to help clear the way for the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

The book *Enough to Keep Them Alive* documents how the crystallization of the reserve system and the use of the justice system to criminalize Indigenous peoples was a structural, poverty-producing systems. Why? It was for their lands. Hazardous waste sites, landfills, incinerators and polluting industries are disproportionately zoned for and developed in First Nations communities. Sarnia, Ontario, known as "chemical valley," Canada's largest concentration of petrochemical industries and associated water and air pollution, endanger the health of the Aamjiwnaang and Walpole Island First Nations. From the mercury contamination of the paper mill in Grassy Narrows to e-coli contamination on the Kashechewan reserve, many communities are beyond the saturation point for exposure to pollutants.

Pollution is also systemic violence against people of colour. When Indigenous people stand up to protect their health and relationships to the land, they are criminalized. In recent years, Indigenous peoples have led to a number of high-profile movements fighting for social and environmental justice in Canada. Professor Monaghan of Carleton University has documented how the police and other security agencies responded by developing a profile surveillance regime that targets Indigenous movements as national security threats. The extensive policing of Indigenous peoples or groups in the so-called "War on Terror" has been rationalized by the development of categories and labels such as "Aboriginal extremism" and "critical infrastructure." Specifically, to criminalize Indigenous movements that challenge extractive development, demand self-determination or contest federal and provincial claims to Indigenous lands.

In 2013, the RCMP arrested more than 14 members of the Elsipogtog First Nation in New Brunswick for blocking a road to resist shale gas and fracking activity on their territory. In January 2019 and again in 2020, the RCMP

invaded Wet'suwet'en territory and arrested land defenders at the Unist'ot'en camp, sparking solidarity blockades across the country.

I will focus on only one example to illustrate the issue and what we can do about it. That example is the Indigenous opposition to the Northern Gateway pipeline. In 2014, the BC Civil Liberties Association filed a complaint against the RCMP for illegally spying on Idle No More and other opponents of the Northern Gateway pipeline. Indigenous communities asserting legal jurisdiction over territories coveted by Enbridge came under increased surveillance and were framed as criminal and threats to national security.

Under the banner of "critical infrastructure protection," our state police functions as the enforcement arm of extractive capitalism in this country. Classified surveillance information was shared by the RCMP and CSIS at energy sector stakeholder meetings organized by Natural Resources Canada, where about half of the 100 participants were from energy corporations. The May 2013 meeting breakfast, lunch and coffee were sponsored by the gateway pipeline applicant, Enbridge.

We still don't know the end of it; part of the case got embroiled in court battles and gag orders, and the RCMP commission's interim report completed in June 2017 still has not been made public. The commission cannot prepare a final public report until the RCMP Commissioner responds, which she has not done three years later, an obvious flaw in our legal system.

Bill C-3, An Act to amend the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act, was maybe going to close this loophole before Parliament got upended by the crisis. Bill S-230 was also recently introduced in the other place to address environmental racism.

I would propose that, moving forward with these legislative initiatives and getting our chamber of sober second thought functioning, through using all the technological tools available, is the most useful thing we can do to address systemic racism as legislators. We must get our rules in order so that this chamber is never again the place where important bills seeking to enshrine the UNDRIP into Canadian law come to die on the Order Paper.

Honourable colleagues, we are privileged to be part of this chamber. It is my sincere hope that we will use this privilege and honour bestowed upon us so that we are not mere tokens of an image of an inclusive and fair society but that we use our power to be agents of its creation and change for the good of all. Let us play a decisive role in ensuring our country starts to respond to trauma and human suffering not with more violence but with transformative caring and justice.

I have read in full this speech by Senator Galvez, and she concludes by thanking all of you for your attention.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, the time for the emergency debate has expired. Pursuant to rule 8-4(7), the adjournment motion of Senator Moodie is deemed withdrawn.

Is leave granted, honourable senators?

Hon Senators: Agreed.

(Motion withdrawn.)

(At 12 a.m., the Senate was continued until Monday, June 22, 2020, at 6 p.m.)

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