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Wednesday, September 30, 2020

The Honourable GEORGE J. FUREY,
Speaker

CONTENTS

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

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THE SENATE

Wednesday, September 30, 2020

The Senate met at 4 p.m., the Speaker in the chair.

[English]

Prayers.

On her mandatory retirement in 2004, our former colleague the Honourable Noël Kinsella said this of her in his tribute:

Clearly, this senator is a role model — a role model, yes, for women to participate in public affairs, but also a role model for all who wish to excel in service to society.

The Honourable Brenda Robertson opened doors and paved the way for many women in politics and public affairs, including some of our colleagues here today. Brenda Robertson blazed a trail for all women in New Brunswick, and her legacy lives on.

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

THE LATE HONOURABLE BRENDA ROBERTSON, O.C., O.N.B.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):

Honourable senators, I rise today on behalf of my New Brunswick colleagues Senator Rose-May Poirier, Senator Carolyn Stewart Olsen and Senator Percy Mockler to pay tribute to the late Honourable Brenda Robertson.

[Translation]

Brenda will be deeply missed by her family, her friends and everyone who had the pleasure and honour of meeting her or working with her in service of her community, her region, her province and her country. She believed in improving our society and wanted to make it a better place to live, work, raise a family and help the most vulnerable.

It is with sadness that we heard of the passing of a dear friend and former colleague of this chamber the Honourable Brenda Robertson. Born on May 23, 1929, Brenda was the youngest of three children. Brenda became active in the local chapter of the Progressive Conservative Women's Association during the 1960s, and in 1967 she became the first woman elected as a member of the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick. Three short years later, in 1970, Brenda became the first female cabinet minister as minister of youth, which later included portfolios such as social services and health. She was most proud of the Extra-Mural Program, which she researched, developed and implemented with the support of many. The program inspired health care reform across the country and indeed the globe, and it remains a hallmark of health care delivery today.

[English]

Honourable senators, please join us in recognizing the tremendous life and many accomplishments of the late Honourable Brenda Robertson and sending our deepest condolences to her family.

[Translation]

[Translation]

After being re-elected four times, Brenda Robertson was summoned to the Senate in 1984 by the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney. She continued to serve Canadians and advocate for issues that mattered to her, such as health and social work.

Throughout her life, Brenda fought for the causes she cared about by bringing people together and encouraging everyone to collaborate. Her leadership, accomplishments, passion, loyalty and dedication earned her many accolades. For instance, she received two honorary doctorates from Mount Saint Vincent University and the University of Moncton. She also became a Member of the Order of New Brunswick in 2004 and a Member of the Order of Canada in 2008.

SALE OF MEC ASSETS

Hon. Lucie Moncion: Honourable senators, on September 14, the papers broke the news that Mountain Equipment Co-op was going to be sold to private investors from the U.S. Naturally, Canada's cooperative community was rattled by the news. MEC, Canada's largest retail cooperative, which until recently had 22 stores across the country, was going to be sold to a foreign firm. But the story doesn't end there. It turns out the cooperative's roughly 5 million members found out about the sale at the same time as everyone else, from the newspapers. They received no notice from the board of directors, nor were they involved in the decision-making process. They were not consulted at all.

Many Canadians reacted strongly to the news, and a number of them have rallied to save this Canadian cooperative. They have raised funds to defend the members' interests in court, and a petition opposing the sale of MEC has garnered more than 140,000 signatures so far.

The board's decision to sell MEC's assets was unfairly sprung on the cooperative members. While the board is free to make such decisions, it does have obligations toward the members. Many questions about this whole business remain unanswered.

[English]

Why were members not consulted? Why were they not invited to express their views on alternative solutions available to cooperatives?

• (1610)

The very foundation of the cooperative model rests on its members and their involvement as consumers and owners. By placing the cooperative under the protection of the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act, the board deliberately hindered the democratic process and denied its members the opportunity to propose alternatives.

For now, MEC's future as a Canadian cooperative is uncertain. What is certain, however, is that MEC's demise does not mean the end of the cooperative sector. With its strength and ability to adapt to competition while giving back to the community, the cooperative model has proven itself time and time again over the years across Canada. I'm thinking in particular of Agropur, Desjardins Group, Arctic Co-op, CCUA, Sollio Cooperative Group and so on. This business model deserves to be promoted and to be part of the solutions proposed by the government so that our communities can meet the many challenges brought about by COVID-19.

Based on cooperative values, such as collaboration, sharing and democratic control, this proven business model is in the spirit of a fair economic recovery for all Canadians. Cooperatives can and must be part of the solution. Thank you for your attention.

THE LATE ALINE CHRÉTIEN

Hon. Percy E. Downe: Colleagues, we were all saddened to hear the news of the passing of Aline Chrétien on Saturday, September 12, 2020, after a long and remarkable life.

Born in 1936 and the eldest of a large working-class family, she left school at 16 but never gave up her love of continuous learning and education. She spoke four languages and later in life, during international meetings, she would often surprise other delegates by giving speeches in Spanish or Italian.

Continuing her lifelong support of education, she became Chancellor of Laurentian University in Sudbury in 2010, serving until 2013.

In her fifties, she began taking piano lessons and, later, was so talented that she would perform at public recitals.

A private person by nature, Madame Chrétien was thrust into the public spotlight and became well-known to Canadians for her dignified presence and poise.

In private, at dinners held at 24 Sussex Drive, or in public at state dinners, she treated everyone with great respect and courtesy, and she was a role model for so many people. Out of the spotlight, she personally supported and advised countless others on a wide range of subjects and problems.

She served Canada well during her lifetime, and we all owe her a debt of gratitude. A grandmother, a mother, a spouse, she passed away at the summer home she designed overlooking the lake in Quebec with her beloved husband Jean and family members present. For all of us who had the pleasure of knowing her, we were enriched by the experience. She was a wonderful person. May you rest in peace, Madame Chrétien.

HONOURING CANADA'S BLACK ARTISTS

Hon. Patricia Bovey: Honourable senators, what a treat it is to be back here. It was surreal watching the proceedings from my computer at home. I felt like a melted timepiece in Dali's 1931 painting *The Persistence of Memory*.

Talking art, I thank all who had a hand in the Senate presentation *Honouring Canada's Black Artists* installed in the foyer outside this chamber. I thank our Speaker for allowing the use of the space, the Advisory Working Group on Artwork and Heritage, CIBA steering members, Senators Moodie and Ravalia, my staff, Senate curator Tamara Dolan and our administration. I particularly applaud and thank the artists for their visual insights and for permission to show these works for our and Canadians' reflection.

What is the goal of this wall? It is essential that the Canadian voices we hear and present reflect the diversity and depth of our regions and nation. As discussed for several years at the Advisory Working Group on Artwork and Heritage meetings, that includes Indigenous art, work from multiple diversities and from all parts of Canada. Stay tuned — ideas are under discussion.

This installation, the first by Canadian Black artists in the Senate, supports the Black Lives Matter movement. In recommending it, I felt it was important to start in the West. Voices by Black western communities are not heard as those in other parts of the country are. I also wanted to explore several media by both a Canadian-born and an immigrant artist.

Yisa Akinbolaji, now a Canadian citizen living in Winnipeg, emigrated from Nigeria in 1997. Formerly on the Manitoba Arts Council and a past president of the Manitoba Society of Artists, he is a co-founder of the Creative Foundation to empower youth of multiple cultures. His 2018 painting, *Stolen Identities*, depicts Louis Riel in a dream catcher set in Manitoba's woods. He fuses the rich colours and patterns of his native Nigeria with the realities of Canadian history and its present. Throughout the work, rhythmic recurring circles echoing the dream catcher call for respect and understanding among cultures.

Chantal Gibson, award-winning poet, artist and professor at Vancouver's Simon Fraser University, has exhibited widely and lectured nationally and internationally. Born in Quebec, her Nova Scotian ancestral roots are long. This work underlines the urgency to include Black history in Canada's histories. Part of her *Altered Books* series, she did *Who's Who in Canada 1927* in 2014. She cut pages from the book and filled its cover with interwoven black cotton braids of varying sizes symbolizing the strong interconnections and contributions of Canada's Black communities. The e-reader turns the pages of the original volume, revealing photographs of its "notables"—all White men. Her message is poignant and clear.

The national response to this installation has been overwhelming. May we as senators and Canadians listen and build on the messages these works convey. Thank you.

CANADIAN POLICE AND PEACE OFFICERS' MEMORIAL SERVICE

Hon. Gwen Boniface: Honourable senators, on Sunday, September 27, members of the Canadian police services honoured Canada's fallen officers. This year's ceremony, held virtually due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, was live-streamed from Parliament Hill.

This year's memorial acknowledged the loss of Constable Allan Poapst and Constable Heidi Stevenson, who died in service this past year.

Constable Stevenson was a 48-year-old wife and mother of two from Antigonish, Nova Scotia. She was 1 of the 22 victims of the mass shooting in Nova Scotia in April. Heidi served the RCMP for 23 distinguished years.

Constable Poapst was killed in a traffic collision in Winnipeg on December 13, 2019. He was in his thirteenth year of service to the RCMP and left behind three teenage daughters.

We honour their service and extend to their families our deepest sympathy.

In addition, today I would like to take a moment to honour the memory of OPP Constable Rick Verdecchia of the Huntsville detachment. In January 1981, 37-year-old Verdecchia was on patrol and attempted to inspect a vehicle that had fender damage. He was unaware that the occupants of the car were fleeing from a murder scene. They had killed a gas station attend over \$14 worth of gas, and prior to that had stolen weapons from a nearby cottage. While approaching the vehicle, Rick was shot and left in a snowbank to die.

Their third victim was OPP Constable Neil Hurtubise, who had spotted the suspect vehicle speeding near Orillia, where I live. As Hurtubise approached them, he was shot several times in the face, neck and chest and they fled the scene. He was able to radio for help and eventually recovered from his injuries. He credits the thick notebook he kept in his chest pocket for saving his life.

Our communities were left reeling from this violent incident and the senseless deaths and injuries they caused. It motivated local citizens and police in our community to push for increased

safety measures for patrol officers. Their efforts prompted some important changes, including widespread issuing of protective vests for officers and implementing the policy of two officers in a car at night.

Rick Verdecchia was remembered as an officer with the deepest sense of fairness and dedication. Left to grieve were his loving wife and his infant daughter.

Honourable senators, as we continue to live through a global pandemic and while facing trying and unsettling times for community safety, it is important to recognize the dangers police officers face each day as they serve and protect our communities. We owe it to them to work towards solutions to ensure their safety remains a priority. Thank you.

• (1620)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO RESOLVE INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE TO CONSIDER SUBJECT MATTER OF BILL C-4

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

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

1. the Senate resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole at the start of Orders of the Day on Thursday, October 1, 2020, or immediately after the adoption of this motion, whichever comes later, to consider the subject matter of Bill C-4, An Act relating to certain measures in response to COVID-19;
2. the Committee of the Whole on the subject matter of Bill C-4, receive the Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P., Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and the Honourable Carla Qualtrough, P.C., M.P., Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, each accompanied by one official;
3. the Committee of the Whole on the subject matter of Bill C-4 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.

[Translation]

COVID-19 RESPONSE MEASURES BILL

FIRST READING

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-4, An Act relating to certain measures in response to COVID-19.

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

[English]

CONSTITUTION ACT, 1867 PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Jane Cordy, for the Honourable Senator Mercer, introduced Bill S-201, An Act to amend the Constitution Act, 1867 and the Parliament of Canada Act (Speaker of the Senate).

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

[Translation]

ASSISTED HUMAN REPRODUCTION ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Lucie Moncion introduced Bill S-202, An Act to amend the Assisted Human Reproduction Act.

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

[Senator Gold]

PROTECTING YOUNG PERSONS FROM EXPOSURE TO PORNOGRAPHY BILL

FIRST READING

Hon. Julie Miville-Dechéne introduced Bill S-203, An Act to restrict young persons' online access to sexually explicit material.

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan introduced Bill S-204, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (trafficking in human organs).

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

[Translation]

PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Patricia Bovey introduced Bill S-205, An Act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act (Parliamentary Visual Artist Laureate).

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

**BILL TO CHANGE THE NAME OF THE ELECTORAL
DISTRICT OF CHÂTEAUGUAY—LACOLLE**

FIRST READING

Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond introduced Bill S-206, An Act to change the name of the electoral district of Châteauguay—Lacolle.

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

• (1630)

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Kim Pate introduced Bill S-207, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (independence of the judiciary).

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

CRIMINAL RECORDS ACT

BILL TO AMEND—FIRST READING

Hon. Kim Pate introduced Bill S-208, An Act to amend the Criminal Records Act, to make consequential amendments to other Acts and to repeal a regulation.

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

**BILL TO AMEND THE CANADA ELECTIONS ACT AND
THE REGULATION ADAPTING THE CANADA
ELECTIONS ACT FOR THE PURPOSES OF
A REFERENDUM (VOTING AGE)**

FIRST READING

Hon. Marilou McPhedran introduced Bill S-209, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and the Regulation Adapting the Canada Elections Act for the Purposes of a Referendum (voting age).

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

**COMMISSIONER FOR CHILDREN AND
YOUTH IN CANADA BILL**

FIRST READING

Hon. Stan Kutcher, for the Honourable Senator Moodie, introduced Bill S-210, An Act to establish the Office of the Commissioner for Children and Youth in Canada.

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE
CAUSES FOR THE DECLINING NUMBER OF VIEWERS FOR
CBC'S ENGLISH TELEVISION SERVICE

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, on behalf of the Honourable Senator Housakos, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications be authorized to examine and report on the causes for the declining number of viewers for the English television service of the CBC, despite increased funding with taxpayer dollars, including but not limited to a review of the level of adherence to the requirement to provide uniquely Canadian content, and the use by CBC of public funds to unfairly compete with other media outlets with its digital service, when and if the committee is formed; and

That the committee submit its final report no later than February 28, 2021.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADENOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO
STUDY THE SITUATION IN HONG KONG

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):
Honourable senators, on behalf of the Honourable Senator Housakos, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade be authorized to examine and report on the situation in Hong Kong, when and if the committee is formed; and

That the committee submit its final report no later than February 28, 2021.

NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCENOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE
PROSPECT OF ALLOWING HUAWEI TECHNOLOGIES CO., LTD.
TO BE PART OF CANADA'S 5G NETWORK

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):
Honourable senators, on behalf of the Honourable Senator Housakos, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence be authorized to examine and report on the prospect of allowing Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd. to be part of Canada's 5G network, when and if the committee is formed; and

That the committee submit its final report no later than February 28, 2021.

THE SENATENOTICE OF MOTION TO CALL UPON THE GOVERNMENT TO
IMPOSE SANCTIONS AGAINST CHINESE OFFICIALS IN
RELATION TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AND
SYSTEMATIC PERSECUTION OF UIGHUR
MUSLIMS IN CHINA

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):
Honourable senators, on behalf of the Honourable Senator Housakos, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Senate of Canada call upon the Government of Canada to impose sanctions, pursuant to the *Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act (Sergei Magnitsky Law)*, against Chinese officials in relation to the human rights abuses and systematic persecution of Uighur Muslims in China.

NOTICE OF MOTION TO CALL UPON THE GOVERNMENT TO
IMPOSE SANCTIONS AGAINST CHINESE AND HONG KONG
OFFICIALS FOR THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):
Honourable senators, on behalf of the Honourable Senator Housakos, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Senate of Canada call upon the Government of Canada to impose sanctions, pursuant to the *Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act (Sergei Magnitsky Law)*, against Chinese and Hong Kong officials for the violation of human rights, civil liberties and the principles of fundamental justice and rule of law in relation to the ongoing pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong.

NOTICE OF MOTION TO CALL UPON THE GOVERNMENT TO
CONDUCT AND PUBLISH AN ANALYSIS ON
IRAN-SPONSORED TERRORISM

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):
Honourable senators, on behalf of the Honourable Senator Housakos, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Senate of Canada call upon the Government of Canada to conduct and publish an analysis, no later than March 30, 2021, on Iran-sponsored terrorism, incitement to hatred, and human rights violations, emanating from Iran and to identify and impose sanctions, pursuant to the *Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act (Sergei Magnitsky Law)*, against Iranian officials responsible for those activities.

NOTICE OF MOTION TO CALL UPON THE GOVERNMENT TO
IMMEDIATELY BAN THE EXPORT OF CANADIAN
DRONE TECHNOLOGY TO TURKEY

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):
Honourable senators, on behalf of the Honourable Senator Housakos, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Senate of Canada call upon the Government of Canada to immediately ban the export of Canadian drone technology to Turkey following reports that such technology is being deployed by Turkey against Armenian people in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan.

NOTICE OF MOTION TO CALL UPON THE GOVERNMENT TO
PROVIDE A REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
FEDERAL FRAMEWORK ON POST-TRAUMATIC
STRESS DISORDER TO THE SENATE

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):
Honourable senators, on behalf of the Honourable Senator Housakos, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Senate call upon the Government of Canada, in accordance with the *Federal Framework on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Act*, which requires that a federal framework on post-traumatic stress disorder be laid before Parliament by December 21, 2019, to provide to the Senate a report on the implementation of such a framework.

• (1640)

SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE
IMPLEMENTATION AND SUCCESS OF A FEDERAL FRAMEWORK
ON POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):
Honourable senators, on behalf of the Honourable Senator Housakos, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology be authorized to examine and report on the implementation and success of a federal framework on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) by the government of Canada as it relates to the four identified priority areas with a focus on data collection, that is, improved tracking of the rate of PTSD amongst first responders and its associated economic and social costs, when and if the committee is formed; and

That the committee submit its final report no later than February 28, 2021.

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO RESOLVE INTO A COMMITTEE OF THE
WHOLE EVERY THIRD TUESDAY IN ORDER TO RECEIVE A
MINISTER OF THE CROWN TO RESPOND TO QUESTIONS RELATING
TO HIS OR HER MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):
Honourable senators, on behalf of the Honourable Senator Housakos, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

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

1. for the duration of the current session, at the start of Orders of the Day on every third Tuesday that the Senate sits after the adoption of this order, the Senate

resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole in order to receive a minister of the Crown to respond to questions relating to his or her ministerial responsibilities, with the minister to be designated by the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate following consultation with the leaders and facilitators of the other recognized parties and parliamentary groups;

2. the committee report to the Senate no later than 125 minutes after it starts sitting;
3. the minister be given five minutes at the start of the Committee of the Whole for any declaration; and
4. if the designated minister is unable to attend on a particular Tuesday:
 - (a) the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate advise the Senate of this fact as soon as possible by making a brief statement to that effect at any time during the sitting; and
 - (b) the designated minister's appearance be then postponed to the next Tuesday that the Senate sits, subject to the same conditions.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY
TURKEY'S INCREASED AGGRESSION AND ACTS
AGAINST INTERNATIONAL LAW

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition):
Honourable senators, on behalf of the Honourable Senator Housakos, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade be authorized to examine and report on Turkey's increased aggression and acts against international law, including but not limited to the Exclusive Economic Zone of Greece and other nations in the Mediterranean, under the provisions of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, when and if the committee is formed; and

That the committee submit its final report no later than March 28, 2021.

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO CALL UPON THE GOVERNMENT TO CONDEMN PRESIDENT RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN'S UNILATERAL ACTIONS RELATING TO THE STATUS OF THE HAGIA SOPHIA

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, on behalf of the Honourable Senator Housakos, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Senate call upon the Government of Canada to condemn President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's unilateral actions relating to the status of the Hagia Sophia and to call on Turkey to adhere to its legal commitments and obligations in accordance with Hagia Sophia's inclusion on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

HUMAN RIGHTS

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE ONGOING PERSECUTION AND UNLAWFUL DETENTION OF UIGHUR MUSLIMS IN MAINLAND CHINA

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, on behalf of the Honourable Senator Housakos, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights be authorized to examine and report on the ongoing persecution and unlawful detention of Uighur Muslims in mainland China, when and if the committee is formed; and

That the committee submit its final report no later than February 28, 2021.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO AWARD A CONTRACT FOR A STUDENT GRANT PROGRAM TO WE CHARITY

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, on behalf of the Honourable Senator Housakos, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages be authorized to examine and report on the Government of Canada's decision to award a contract for a student grant program to WE Charity, a third party without the capacity to do so in both official languages, in apparent contravention of Canada's *Official Languages Act*, when and if the committee is formed; and

That the committee submit its final report no later than February 28, 2021.

CHARITABLE SECTOR

NOTICE OF MOTION TO PLACE FIRST REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE DEPOSITED WITH CLERK DURING FIRST SESSION OF FORTY-SECOND PARLIAMENT ON ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Jane Cordy: Honourable senators, on behalf of the Honourable Senator Mercer, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the first report of the Special Senate Committee on the Charitable Sector entitled *Catalyst for Change: A Roadmap to a Stronger Charitable Sector*, deposited with the Clerk of the Senate on June 20, 2019, during the first session of the Forty-second Parliament, be placed on the Orders of the Day under Other Business, Reports of Committees – Other, for consideration two days hence.

ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR SENATORS

MOTION TO PLACE SECOND REPORT OF COMMITTEE PRESENTED DURING FIRST SESSION OF FORTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT ON ORDERS OF THE DAY ADOPTED

Hon. Scott Tannas: Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-5(j), I move:

That the second report of the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators dealing with the consideration of an inquiry report of the Senate Ethics Officer concerning Senator Victor Oh, presented in the Senate on Thursday, June 18, 2020, during the first session of the Forty-third Parliament, be placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting;

That, for greater certainty, the report be dealt with pursuant to the provisions of rule 12-30; and

That, notwithstanding rules 4-13 and 4-14, the report appear on the Orders of the Day before Government Business, provided that if more than one report appears on the Orders of the Day at this point, the reports be called in the order in which they were placed on the Orders of the Day.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

ENERGY, THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE CUMULATIVE IMPACTS OF RESOURCE EXTRACTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Margaret Dawn Anderson: Honourable senators, on behalf of the Honourable Senator McCallum, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources be authorized to examine and report on the cumulative impacts of resource extraction and development, and their effects on environmental, economic and social considerations, when and if the committee is formed; and

That the committee submit its final report no later than December 31, 2021.

[Translation]

BANKING, TRADE AND COMMERCE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE NEED TO REVIEW THE BANK OF CANADA ACT

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

That the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce, when and if it is formed, be authorized to examine and report on the need to review the *Bank of Canada Act* in order to:

- (a) specify that the Bank of Canada's mandate covers not only price stability, but also the pursuit of maximum employment or full and productive employment, as is the case in the United States, Australia and, recently, New Zealand;
- (b) provide for transparency measures regarding the procedure and choice of indicators for the setting of the key policy interest rate, as well as analyses of how the conduct of monetary policy affects the inflation rate, employment and income distribution, and report to Parliament; and
- (c) propose to the Minister of Finance items to be included in the five-year agreement between the Bank of Canada and the Government that is to be signed in 2021; and

That the committee submit its final report to the Senate no later than March 31, 2021.

• (1650)

[English]

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 4-7, Question Period is required to be called within 30 minutes of Routine Proceedings. We are now at that point in our proceedings. So unless leave is given to continue with Routine Proceedings — and I should say there are a number of senators who wish to give notices of motions and, indeed, notices of inquiries — so I ask, is leave granted that the period for Routine Proceedings be extended beyond the 30 minutes?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

[Translation]

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO FILL THE POSITION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE BY MEANS OF A SECRET BALLOT FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE SESSION

Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

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

1. for the remainder of the session, the position of Speaker pro tempore be filled by means of a secret ballot by all senators to be held before the end of this year, 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. in the period preceding the secret ballot decision provided for under the first paragraph, any vacancy in the office of Speaker pro tempore be filled on an interim basis in accordance with the Rules.

[English]

NOTICE OF MOTION THAT NO SENATE COMMITTEE BE CONSIDERED A STANDING OR SPECIAL COMMITTEE FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE CURRENT SESSION

Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules, previous order or usual practice, upon the adoption of this order, and for the remainder of the current session, no Senate committee be considered a standing or special committee for the purposes of paragraphs 62.1(1)(g) and (h) of the *Parliament of Canada Act*.

NOTICE OF MOTION TO RECOGNIZE AND SUPPORT
THE ABRAHAM ACCORDS

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):
Honourable senators, on behalf of the Honourable Senator Frum, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Senate recognize and support the Abraham Accords, an historic peace agreement between Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain that formally establishes diplomatic relations between those three countries; and

That the Senate further encourages other Arab countries in the Middle East to build on this agreement and restore diplomatic relations with Israel.

NOTICE OF MOTION TO RECOGNIZE THE SIGNAL AND HISTORIC
CONTRIBUTION THAT SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD
MADE TO THE FOUNDING OF CANADA

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):
Honourable senators, on behalf of the Honourable Senator Frum, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Senate, which would not exist without him, recognize the signal and historic contribution that Canada's first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, made to the founding of this country, which remains one of the world's greatest democracies; and

That the Senate recognize that, while Sir John A. Macdonald's legacy is not without flaw, judging him by the standards that apply today is a disservice to not only the ongoing march of history but to the parliamentary system of government he helped create that allowed progress to take place.

NOTICE OF MOTION TO CONDEMN THE STATE SANCTIONED
TORTURE AND MURDER BY THE IRANIAN REGIME OF IRANIAN
NATIONAL CHAMPION WRESTLER NAVID AFKARI

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):
Honourable senators, on behalf of the Honourable Senator Frum, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Senate unreservedly condemn the state-sanctioned torture and murder by the Iranian regime of Iranian national champion wrestler Navid Afkari, and the continuing torture and imprisonment of his brothers and others, all for their role in peaceful protests against the corruption of the same regime; and

That the Senate recognize that these flagrant human rights transgressions are consistent with a long history of human rights abuses by an outlaw regime that is the world's leading sponsor of terrorism and the biggest obstacle to peace in the Middle East.

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AFFIRM THE SENATE'S
FAITH IN THE CHARITABLE SECTOR

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):
Honourable senators, on behalf of the Honourable Senator Frum, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That, in light of the public mistrust of charities generated by the scandal that enveloped the WE Charity, the Senate affirm its faith in the charitable sector in Canada and laud the efforts of the many volunteers and staff that devote their time and energy to worthy causes at home and abroad to make this world a better place while seeking little or no attention or reward for themselves or their efforts.

[Translation]

NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE
MANAGEMENT AND MISMANAGEMENT BY THE CURRENT
GOVERNMENT'S NATIONAL EMERGENCY STRATEGIC
STOCKPILE SYSTEM IN THE YEARS AND MONTHS
LEADING UP TO THE OUTBREAK OF COVID-19

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):
Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

The Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, which in previous Parliaments conducted comprehensive studies on Canada's emergency preparedness, including pandemic preparedness, be authorized to examine and report on the management and mismanagement by the current government of Canada's National Emergency Strategic Stockpile system in the years and months leading up to the outbreak of COVID-19, when and if the committee is formed; and

That the committee submit its final report no later than March 31, 2021.

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO URGE THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPORT
THE GENUINE AUTONOMY OF TIBET

Hon. Thanh Hai Ngo: Honourable senators, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Senate urge the Government of Canada to actively support the genuine autonomy of Tibet and, consequently, to also call for the People's Republic of China to:

- (a) renew the Sino-Tibetan dialogue in good faith and based on the Middle Way Approach;
- (b) respect the religious rights of the Tibetan people and stop interference in the process of recognizing a successor or reincarnation of the 14th Dalai Lama;

- (c) respect the linguistic rights, freedom of movement, thought and conscience of the people in Tibet; • (1700)
- (d) free all Tibetan political prisoners, including the youngest political prisoner Gendhun Choekyi Nyima (Panchen Lama), and cease all arbitrary detention of dissidents;
- (e) grant Canada reciprocal diplomatic access to Tibet without limitations; and
- (f) protect the Tibetan Plateau that serves as Asia's water tower, feeding over a billion lives in Asia; and

That the Senate urge the Government of Canada to raise Tibetan issues at every opportunity with China with a view to taking the additional steps necessary to deescalate tensions and restore peace and stability in Tibet.

[English]

SOCIAL AFFAIRS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE FUTURE OF WORKERS

Hon. Tony Dean: Honourable senators, on behalf of the Honourable Senator Lankin, I give notice that, at the next sitting of the Senate, I will move:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, 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 September 30, 2022.

PRESENCE OF RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION WITHIN CANADIAN INSTITUTIONS

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to the presence of racism and discrimination within Canadian institutions.

MANITOBA'S ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to the Province of Manitoba's one hundred and fiftieth anniversary.

RISING MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES BEING FACED BY CANADIAN FARMERS

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to the rising mental health challenges being faced by Canadian farmers.

[Translation]

USE OF PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE IN THE CONTEXT OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONS AND INQUIRIES OF THE SENATE ETHICS OFFICER

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond: Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to the use of parliamentary privilege in the context of employee relations and inquiries of the Senate Ethics Officer.

[English]

LONG-TERM CARE SYSTEM

NOTICE OF INQUIRY

Hon. Judith G. Seidman: Honourable senators, I give notice that, two days hence:

I will call the attention of the Senate to weaknesses within Canada's long-term care system, which have been exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

QUESTION PERIOD

HEALTH

TESTING FOR COVID-19

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): My question today is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

Leader, on Monday, the World Health Organization announced an initiative to provide low-income countries with 120 million antigen tests; the at-home rapid tests that provide results within minutes. These tests are in use in countries around the world, but in Canada they are not in use, not approved, and Health Canada is not even currently reviewing any of them.

Minister Hajdu sat right here in March and told us her government was working as quickly as possible on testing. It is a complete failure of this government that all these months later, after over 9,000 fellow Canadians have died and tens of thousands became ill, after our economy was shut down and children lost months of education, we still don't have widely available at-home testing and we likely won't any time soon.

Leader, is the Government of Canada contributing to the WHO initiative? If so, why does your government think antigen testing is perfectly fine for people in other countries but not for Canadians?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you, senator, for your question. Colleagues, the Government of Canada recognizes that testing is one of the most important tools, not only that the government can help provide, but that the public health system and health system generally has at its disposal to respond to the challenges posed by COVID-19.

The Government of Canada knows that Canadians want access to better and faster testing no matter where they live. There are a number of elements to the question, so you'll indulge me if I answer rather fulsomely.

With regard to rapid response tests, in fact, today Health Canada approved an ID NOW rapid test, but before approving others, the government and public health needs to know that these rapid response tests work. We need tests that ensure people

who take them are not given either a false sense of security or a false sense of insecurity. They must work and be able to detect the virus reliably and accurately. Canada relies upon its own testing data and the government has its own approval process.

With regard to testing at home, which the senator also alluded to, Health Canada is working around the clock on the approval and procurement of new testing technologies. I have been advised that 36 tests have been approved to date, including 2 that are at point of care to help with rapid testing in specific opportunities like rural and remote communities.

However, to date, I'm advised that Health Canada has not received any home tests for review. The government continues to engage actively with companies that provide these types of tests to encourage them to apply for use and approval here in Canada.

Senator Plett: Well, we're okay to use other countries as guinea pigs while we don't do anything for our people. The tests given approval today, as you point out, are point-of-care tests administered by health care professionals. They are not antigen tests, which we need across Canada.

Leader, every day we see parents and small children lined up for six to eight hours in hopes they will get tested that day, and then many are turned away. We have many small business owners trying to stay afloat, whose employees have to take time off to isolate while waiting for test results. We have people living paycheck to paycheck, who can't afford to lose shifts at work while waiting for a test; all of this because rapid at-home testing has not been on your government's radar. So much for helping the middle class.

Leader, three regions of your own province have gone back into lockdown in recent days. What more will it take to convince your government to stop dragging its feet and move forward with widespread, at-home rapid testing?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question, but one of your assumptions and premises, with respect, is incorrect. The government is not dragging its feet. The government is ensuring that the tests to be administered and made available to Canadians meet the rigorous standards that Health Canada and the Government of Canada have put in place to protect the health of Canadians.

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION PRESIDENCY

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan: My question is for the government leader in the Senate.

As you know, I recently announced my candidacy for the presidency of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, making me the first Canadian to run for this prestigious position. Despite reaching out to the current government through multiple channels to endorse my candidacy, I have been ignored. Not only ignored; I have been told that the current head of the Canadian IPU has allegedly been supporting my opponent, a non-Canadian.

The current government frequently states that a Canadian is a Canadian, but is a Canadian a Canadian if they're Conservative too?

Senator Gold, my question for you today is why is your government not endorsing my candidacy at the IPU? Is partisan politics being played internationally?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Senator, thank you very much for your question. I'm sure I speak for everyone. We were pleased and proud to read rather recently that you had announced your candidacy and I wish you the best of luck, but this is the first that I've heard of it. It's with regret that I wasn't made aware of it or of your efforts to seek government support up until now. So please rest assured that I will make inquiries with the government and report back to you personally and to the chamber, if that is your wish.

Senator Ataullahjan: Senator Gold, when Bill Morneau stepped down from cabinet and his seat in the House of Commons due to the WE scandal, the Prime Minister immediately endorsed him as Canada's candidate for secretary-general of the OECD.

Leader, I have to wonder: Why am I not being afforded similar support from my government? Is it because I'm a woman — a racialized woman at that? Is it because I'm a member of the opposition party specifically? Is it because I am a Conservative? Which is it?

I wrote to the Prime Minister in the first week of July, informing him of my decision to run for the presidency of the IPU, so it's not a new decision. Those who have worked at the IPU know my commitment and I have talked about this for nine years, that this is what I want to do.

• (1710)

Senator Gold: Thank you, senator. Again, this is the first that I have heard of it, at least when I read about it, and I have no ability to comment further. This government is committed to promoting diversity and gender parity. We're a perfect example of this. As I promised, I will certainly make some inquiries. Thank you.

Hon. Marilou McPhedran: Honourable senators, I have a supplementary question for the government leader in the Senate based on the questions from Senator Ataullahjan.

Senator Gold, in making the inquiries and responding to these very serious issues that are being raised and shared with us today, could you please include in your inquiry whether there is another Canadian candidate the Government of Canada is putting forward? Could you please include that in your response to this chamber.

Senator Gold: I will certainly make fulsome inquiries, and I will report back to the chamber with regard to what I'm able to report.

FINANCE

CANADA EMERGENCY COMMERCIAL RENT ASSISTANCE

Hon. Tony Loffreda: Honourable senators, my question is for the Government Representative in the Senate.

It is so nice to see Senator Gold and all our colleagues here today in person.

As you know, the Canada Emergency Commercial Rental Assistance program is set to expire tomorrow, six months after its implementation and after being extended twice over the summer. While the program has been criticized by many, it still has been used by thousands of commercial landlords to help alleviate the financial burden of their tenants. The number I have is 106,000 small businesses have been supported, which represents nearly one million Canadian jobs. Although it was not perfect, it was a good program. It had its flaws.

Reports have shown that approximately one third of the funds set aside have been used. As of September 8, \$1.32 billion in rent support was distributed.

Your counterpart in the other place, Minister Rodriguez, recently indicated that another emergency bill to extend rent relief for businesses will be coming soon.

October 1 is tomorrow. For many, rent is due. The government needs to provide a clear indication of what it plans to propose. It has been six months, and the pandemic has been stressful for everyone. Businesses need to be reassured that the government will support them with concrete measures.

Can you tell us if, how and when it will be extended, revamped or simply eliminated, and in which way will it be more efficient and effective than the initial program, that hasn't had all the wanted benefits for our commercial tenants and all in need? Thank you.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you, senator, for your question. It is an important and timely one. Thank you for acknowledging that, notwithstanding some of its difficulties, it was a program that helped many small businesses get through and manage and survive a difficult time. I won't bore you with anecdotes, but in my circle I have a number of friends and associates who survived exclusively because of this program and are grateful for that.

The government is aware, and has been for a while, of recommendations to improve support for small business. I'm advised that the government is going to move forward with additional support for small businesses. I'm not in a position today to announce details or specific timelines, but I am advised that announcements will soon be forthcoming to provide additional and necessary support for businesses that are still struggling in this regard, and that includes support with regard to rent.

THE SENATE

HYBRID CHAMBER SITTINGS

Hon. Scott Tannas: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

Senator Gold, I want to ask a question with respect to hybrid sessions for the Senate of Canada. Given the deteriorating situation with respect to COVID-19, the increasing numbers, the potential for a significant second wave, together with the continuing travel restrictions that impair a number of senators and their ability to be physically present in the chamber, and also given what has gone on in virtually every other Westminster Parliament, including now the House of Commons, and given the hard work that has been done by the administration, people in the ISD, across so many departments in our Senate, as we near the potential to be able to deliver hybrid technology, I'm wondering if you would place a motion before the chamber tomorrow to allow us to get on with the potential of hybrid sittings and allow those senators who are not with us today, and haven't been with us for months, to fully and finally participate in the governing of Canada.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question, senator. As many of you know, and certainly the leaders know, Senate leaders have been working diligently over the last period to figure out how we can best conduct our affairs responsibly and in the best interests of Canadians during this ongoing COVID pandemic.

We have regularly and frequently adapted to the circumstances to minimize the time that we've spent in close quarters, thereby minimizing the risks, not only to ourselves but to our staff, families and communities to whom we return.

There is no blueprint for dealing with these extraordinary times. I'm very grateful and the government is grateful for the collaboration of all leaders and senators, and their support to work together to address these issues since March. For millions of Canadians, our work has made a real difference. By supporting Canadians quickly, through your help and cooperation, I strongly believe — I'm not one to exaggerate — we saved lives.

In this respect, our work continues with the bill we received today, Bill C-4. It is urgent legislation and is critical and crucial to see Canadians through this second wave of the pandemic.

With regard to your question, we are working and will continue to work positively and constructively with Senate leadership in order to further adapt to the pandemic and plan the Senate's future of operations.

The Government Representative Office, which I have the privilege of representing, fully supports the implementation of a hybrid approach as soon as the Senate internal administration reaches operational readiness. Much progress has already been achieved by the Senate's administration to make hybrid sittings operational as soon as possible this fall. We are grateful for their hard work.

Discussions between Senate leaders have begun, draft motions have been circulated and these discussions are ongoing. Out of respect for the confidentiality of these discussions, I have no further comment to make at this point.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER

Hon. Jane Cordy: Senator Gold, today we recognize Orange Shirt Day to remember the residential schools and, in particular, the young Aboriginal girl Phyllis Jack Webstad, whose grandmother gave her a new orange shirt on the first day of school. It was taken from her and she never saw it again. I'm very pleased to see a lot of orange here in the chamber today.

I will focus my questions on how we as parliamentarians have a role in reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, and the government's obligation to address over a century of injustices. This can only be achieved through actions and not just promises.

Senator Gold, in December 2019, in the Throne Speech, the government recommitted to the promise of eliminating all long-term boil water advisories on public water systems on reserves by March 2021. In last week's Speech from the Throne, there was no mention of the March 2021 pledge, and this is concerning.

• (1720)

Regarding the importance of safe drinking water on reserves and the government's pledge in the 2019 Throne Speech, the Southern Chiefs' Organization commented:

Boil water advisories have been and continue to severely impact the lives and wellness of all affected communities. Water is *the most* basic human right, and is also held to be very sacred to our Indigenous ways of life.

Every Canadian, Senator Gold, no matter where they live, should expect safe drinking water. Some communities have been under boil water advisories for decades.

Senator Gold, is the government still committed to the March 2021 pledge? If so, how is this going to be safely achieved in protecting the health of populations during the pandemic, when communities, understandably, are hesitant to allow outsiders on the reserves during COVID-19?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Senator, thank you for your important question, a question that touches upon one of the ongoing tragedies in our relationship with our Indigenous communities.

The answer is yes. The government remains committed to ensuring that First Nations and other Indigenous communities on reserve have access to safe, clean and reliable drinking water. It's frankly too early to determine the full impact of COVID-19 on the water infrastructure timelines to which you've made reference, but I have been advised that the government is working towards the goal of ending all long-term boil water advisories on First Nations by March 2021. So there is no waffling on that point.

The government knows much more work needs to be done, but there is some encouraging news, although it's not enough, to be sure. Nonetheless, there have been 91 long-term water advisories lifted since 2015, and 162 short-term advisories prevented from becoming long-term advisories. The government continues to work in consultation and, more importantly, in partnership with communities to co-develop long-term solutions to ensure clean drinking water for all communities and to end all long-term drinking water advisories on public systems on reserves. Thank you again for your question.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC—MENTAL HEALTH

Hon. Jane Cordy: Thank you very much, Senator Gold, for the update. We know this pandemic has presented a difficult time for all Canadians, but we know there's a disparity between those mental health supports available to Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. Nothing is super in terms of mental health for anybody, but it's particularly hitting the Indigenous communities. Access to culturally sensitive mental health services within Indigenous communities has obviously been impacted due to the pandemic, especially for those who are living in remote communities with limited connectivity. That's why I was pleased to hear last month of the government's commitment to the \$82.5 million for Indigenous mental health support during COVID-19.

Senator Gold, can you provide us with more information? I know it's early stages now, but we need more information on how those funds will be used, because these communities don't need more studies. They don't need more policy papers. They need tangible action. I'm also wondering, will the Indigenous communities be consulted about the best way to meet their mental health support needs?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you again for your question. My understanding is that the approach of this government to these and other issues with Indigenous communities is, in fact, to work in partnership and consultation. That is a general answer to your specific question, but I think that is the intent and goal and modus operandi of this government, to the fullest extent possible. It takes seriously the problems and challenges of Canadians' mental health, and the particular problems which you noted within Indigenous communities.

In this regard, this government has built on the previous government's investments into mental health research and programs. To cite just one example, Budget 2017 committed over \$825 million over five years for Indigenous health services, and that included \$118 million over five years to improve mental health programming specifically for Inuit and First Nations. The government is committed to continuing to work with its partners to prevent suicide, promote wellness and to address the ongoing challenge that the communities are facing.

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I should explain again, since it's been some time since we had Question Period last, that the procedure we're using is that senators can ask one question, followed by a supplementary, unless of course we're

dealing with a member of cabinet, in which case it's only the leaders who have a supplementary question. Senators themselves can ask one question only.

When I did not allow Senator Martin to ask a supplementary question, I realized I had given Senator McPhedran the floor to ask a supplementary question, but she was actually the next person on the list. So she chose her time to ask a supplementary question. That's why I said Senator Martin could go on the list and her name is on the list, time allowing.

HEALTH

TESTING FOR COVID-19

Hon. Judith G. Seidman: Well, government leader, you can likely guess the subject of my question as I have raised this issue the last few months with you several times. It is that of rapid testing for COVID-19.

Last week, Health Canada approved a point-of-care test that provides a result in 90 minutes. On Tuesday, we also learned the government will buy 7.9 million rapid point-of-care tests which received Health Canada approval earlier today. However, approval is one thing. Accessibility is another.

While this is encouraging, it is far from sufficient to help families currently standing in long lines for testing and the businesses that have recently been shut down as the second wave of COVID-19 takes hold. Over six months after the pandemic began, we're still no closer to at-home testing as there are no at-home antigen tests in Health Canada's review process.

Senator Gold, what will your government do to ensure Canadians have access to at-home rapid testing on an urgent basis?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question and your ongoing attention in bringing our attention to this important issue. As I endeavoured to explain in an earlier answer, senator, to date, Health Canada has not received any such tests for approval, but that does not mean the government is passively standing still. It understands the importance of this from a scientific point and for the well-being and sense of security for families, businesses and others. We all know folks in our families, on our staff and on our teams who have waited in long lines, with all the stress and anxiety.

The government is engaging with companies who are producing these types of tests to encourage them to submit them for approval. I know that all senators would agree that we want to make sure that the tests we make available to Canadians are reliable and go through the Canadian standards that we would expect. So our government, your government, the government, is working to try to encourage companies to get these tests into the pipeline for approval. Thank you again for your question.

Senator Seidman: So the two point-of-care tests I mentioned earlier provide results quickly, but they're not widely available. They certainly aren't at-home tests because they must be administered by health care professionals. It's still the swab.

It's been recently reported — quite different from what you just said, so maybe we have some additional information — that there are 12 point-of-care rapid tests awaiting review by Health Canada.

Leader, does your government believe that any of these 12 point-of-care tests will be widely available in Canada before the end of this year? If not, does your government have a time frame of when you can guarantee these rapid point-of-care tests will be widely accessible to Canadians?

Senator Gold: Thank you. I will certainly make inquiries to make sure that my information is up to date. You'll forgive me; you have far more scientific knowledge than I do and than most of us do in this regard. The information I have is that there have not been home tests yet submitted for review. There have been a number of tests approved to date, as you would know — 36, indeed, and 2 that are point-of-care tests. But I will make further inquiries and report back.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

SHELTERS INITIATIVE FOR INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. It's good to see you again as well, Senator Gold.

• (1730)

On May 29, 2020, Minister Miller announced \$44.8 million to build 12 shelters for Indigenous women and children fleeing violence in 10 First Nation communities, and I emphasize "only" 2 of the 3 territories.

On June 26, 2020, I wrote a letter, co-signed by several Senate colleagues, to all five ministers involved in this decision in support of Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada's call to build an

Inuit-specific shelter as outlined in the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Call for Justice 16.19.

On June 29, 2020, a letter was signed by all three territorial ministers responsible for housing and the Nunavut minister responsible for homelessness calling on the government to fund a shelter in all three territories, instead of making them compete over the two allocated.

Finally, on September 23, this government stated in its Speech from the Throne, "Women's safety must be the foundation on which all progress is built." Will the government ensure the safety of Inuit women and children, as well as women and children in the territories, by heeding the calls of Pauktuutit and the territorial ministers to build an Inuit-specific shelter and a shelter in each territory?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you, senator, and I thank you for your advance notice of this question, which has allowed me to give the following answer.

The government knows very well that shelters in First Nations communities provide a vital place of refuge for women and children escaping violence. The May 29 commitment for an additional \$85 million to build and help support the new shelters added to the \$50 million already allocated on March 18 to women's shelters and sexual assault centres across Canada. That included \$10 million in direct funding for 46 emergency shelters in First Nations communities and in Yukon to support Indigenous women and children fleeing violence. The government knows, however, that more support is needed.

Having made inquiries, I am advised that the government is committed to working with Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada and other Inuit partners on the construction of shelters and future supports for Inuit women.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, the time for Question Period has expired.

(At 5:33 p.m., the Senate was continued until tomorrow at 2 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Wednesday, September 30, 2020

	PAGE		PAGE
SENATORS' STATEMENTS		Criminal Records Act (Bill S-208)	
The Late Honourable Brenda Robertson, O.C., O.N.B.		Bill to Amend—First Reading	
Hon. Yonah Martin	13	Hon. Kim Pate	17
Sale of MEC assets		Bill to Amend the Canada Elections Act and the	
Hon. Lucie Moncion	13	Regulation Adapting the Canada Elections Act for the	
The Late Aline Chrétien		Purposes of a Referendum (voting age) (Bill S-209)	
Hon. Percy E. Downe	14	First Reading	
Honouring Canada's Black Artists		Hon. Marilou McPhedran	17
Hon. Patricia Bovey	14	Commissioner for Children and Youth in Canada Bill	
Canadian Police and Peace Officers' Memorial Service		(Bill S-210)	
Hon. Gwen Boniface	15	First Reading	
ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS		Hon. Stan Kutcher	17
The Senate		Transport and Communications	
Notice of Motion to Resolve into Committee of the Whole to		Notice of Motion to Authorize Committee to Study the	
Consider Subject Matter of Bill C-4		Causes for the Declining Number of Viewers for CBC's	
Hon. Marc Gold	15	English Television Service	
COVID-19 Response Measures Bill (Bill C-4)		Hon. Donald Neil Plett	17
First Reading	16	Foreign Affairs and International Trade	
Constitution Act, 1867		Notice of Motion to Authorize Committee to Study the	
Parliament of Canada Act (Bill S-201)		Situation in Hong Kong	
Bill to Amend—First Reading		Hon. Donald Neil Plett	18
Hon. Jane Cordy	16	National Security and Defence	
Assisted Human Reproduction Act (Bill S-202)		Notice of Motion to Authorize Committee to Study the	
Bill to Amend—First Reading		Prospect of Allowing Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd. to be	
Hon. Lucie Moncion	16	Part of Canada's 5G Network	
Protecting Young Persons from Exposure to Pornography		Hon. Donald Neil Plett	18
Bill (Bill S-203)		The Senate	
First Reading		Notice of Motion to Call Upon the Government to Impose	
Hon. Julie Miville-Dechéne	16	Sanctions Against Chinese Officials in Relation to the	
Criminal Code (Bill S-204)		Human Rights Abuses and Systematic Persecution of	
Bill to Amend—First Reading		Uighur Muslims in China	
Hon. Salma Ataullahjan	16	Hon. Donald Neil Plett	18
Parliament of Canada Act (Bill S-205)		Notice of Motion to Call Upon the Government to Impose	
Bill to Amend—First Reading		Sanctions against Chinese and Hong Kong Officials for the	
Hon. Patricia Bovey	16	Violation of Human Rights	
Bill to Change the Name of the Electoral District of		Hon. Donald Neil Plett	18
Châteauguay—Lacolle (Bill S-206)		Notice of Motion to Call Upon the Government to Conduct	
First Reading		and Publish an Analysis on Iran-sponsored Terrorism	
Hon. Pierre J. Daphond	17	Hon. Donald Neil Plett	18
Criminal Code (Bill S-207)		Notice of Motion to Call Upon the Government to	
Bill to Amend—First Reading		Immediately Ban the Export of Canadian Drone	
Hon. Kim Pate	17	Technology to Turkey	
		Hon. Donald Neil Plett	18
		Notice of Motion to Call Upon the Government to Provide a	
		Report on the Implementation of the Federal Framework	
		on Post-traumatic Stress Disorder to the Senate	
		Hon. Donald Neil Plett	19
		Social Affairs, Science and Technology	
		Notice of Motion to Authorize Committee to Study the	
		Implementation and Success of a Federal Framework on	
		Post-traumatic Stress Disorder	
		Hon. Donald Neil Plett	19

CONTENTS

Wednesday, September 30, 2020

PAGE	PAGE
The Senate	
Notice of Motion to Resolve into a Committee of the Whole Every Third Tuesday in order to Receive a Minister of the Crown to Respond to Questions Relating to His or Her Ministerial Responsibilities Hon. Donald Neil Plett	19
Foreign Affairs and International Trade	
Notice of Motion to Authorize Committee to Study Turkey's Increased Aggression and Acts Against International Law Hon. Donald Neil Plett	19
The Senate	
Notice of Motion to Call Upon the Government to Condemn President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Unilateral Actions Relating to the Status of the Hagia Sophia Hon. Donald Neil Plett	20
Human Rights	
Notice of Motion to Authorize Committee to Study the Ongoing Persecution and Unlawful Detention of Uighur Muslims in Mainland China Hon. Donald Neil Plett	20
Official Languages	
Notice of Motion to Authorize Committee to Study the Government's Decision to Award a Contract for a Student Grant Program to WE Charity Hon. Donald Neil Plett	20
Charitable Sector	
Notice of Motion to Place First Report of Special Committee Deposited with Clerk during First Session of Forty-second Parliament on Orders of the Day Hon. Jane Cordy	20
Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators	
Motion to Place Second Report of Committee Presented during First Session of Forty-third Parliament on Orders of the Day Adopted Hon. Scott Tannas	20
Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources	
Notice of Motion to Authorize Committee to Study the Cumulative Impacts of Resource Extraction and Development Hon. Margaret Dawn Anderson	21
Banking, Trade and Commerce	
Notice of Motion to Authorize Committee to Study the Need to Review the Bank of Canada Act Hon. Diane Bellemare	21
The Senate	
Notice of Motion to Fill the Position of Speaker Pro Tempore by Means of a Secret Ballot for the Remainder of the Session Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond	21
Notice of Motion that No Senate Committee be Considered a Standing or Special Committee for the Remainder of the Current Session Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond	
21	
Notice of Motion to Recognize and Support the Abraham Accords Hon. Yonah Martin	
22	
Notice of Motion to Recognize the Signal and Historic Contribution that Sir John A. Macdonald Made to the Founding of Canada Hon. Yonah Martin	
22	
Notice of Motion to Condemn the State Sanctioned Torture and Murder by the Iranian Regime of Iranian National Champion Wrestler Navid Afkari Hon. Yonah Martin	
22	
Notice of Motion to Affirm the Senate's Faith in the Charitable Sector Hon. Yonah Martin	
22	
National Security and Defence	
Notice of Motion to Authorize Committee to Study the Management and Mismanagement by the Current Government's National Emergency Strategic Stockpile System in the Years and Months Leading up to the Outbreak of COVID-19 Hon. Yonah Martin	22
The Senate	
Notice of Motion to Urge the Government to Support the Genuine Autonomy of Tibet Hon. Thanh Hai Ngo	22
Social Affairs, Science and Technology	
Notice of Motion to Authorize Committee to Study the Future of Workers Hon. Tony Dean	23
Presence of Racism and Discrimination within Canadian Institutions	
Notice of Inquiry Hon. Donald Neil Plett	23
Manitoba's One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary	
Notice of Inquiry Hon. Donald Neil Plett	23
Rising Mental Health Challenges Being Faced by Canadian Farmers	
Notice of Inquiry Hon. Donald Neil Plett	23
Use of Parliamentary Privilege in the Context of Employee Relations and Inquiries of the Senate Ethics Officer	
Notice of Inquiry Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond	23

CONTENTS

Wednesday, September 30, 2020

	PAGE		PAGE
Long-term Care System		Indigenous Affairs	
Notice of Inquiry		Access to Safe Drinking Water	
Hon. Judith G. Seidman	24	Hon. Jane Cordy	26
		Hon. Marc Gold	26
		COVID-19 Pandemic—Mental Health	
		Hon. Jane Cordy	27
		Hon. Marc Gold	27
QUESTION PERIOD			
Health		Business of the Senate	27
Testing for COVID-19			
Hon. Donald Neil Plett	24	Health	
Hon. Marc Gold	24	Testing for COVID-19	
		Hon. Judith G. Seidman	27
Inter-Parliamentary Union Presidency		Hon. Marc Gold	27
Hon. Salma Ataullahjan	24		
Hon. Marc Gold	25	Indigenous Affairs	
Hon. Marilou McPhedran	25	Shelters Initiative for Indigenous Women and Children	
		Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson	28
Finance		Hon. Marc Gold	28
Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance			
Hon. Tony Loffreda	25		
Hon. Marc Gold	25		
The Senate			
Hybrid Chamber Sitings			
Hon. Scott Tannas	26		
Hon. Marc Gold	26		