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The Honourable GEORGE J. FUREY,
Speaker

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THE SENATE

Friday, October 2, 2020

The Senate met at 9 a.m., the Speaker in the chair.

Prayers.

[Translation]

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

THE LATE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOHN NAPIER TURNER, P.C., C.C., Q.C.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, today I pay tribute to the Right Honourable John Napier Wyndham Turner, the 17th Prime Minister of Canada. Since his passing on September 18, much has been said and written about John Turner. His friends and former colleagues have talked about his career, shared memories and anecdotes and celebrated his achievements, which were many.

Prime Minister Turner was an accomplished student and athlete. He began his studies at the University of British Columbia at the age of 16. He received a Rhodes scholarship and obtained a bachelor's degree in jurisprudence, a bachelor's degree in civil law and a master's degree from Oxford University.

He also qualified for Canada's 1948 Olympic team as a track sprinter.

[English]

John Turner began his political career in 1962 as member of Parliament for St. Lawrence—St. George and Montreal and then for Ottawa—Carleton. He spent 13 years in Parliament and in the cabinets of Prime Ministers Pearson and Trudeau, holding some of the most influential portfolios at a time of great change in Canada: minister of consumer and corporate affairs, justice, and finance. In 1984, he won the leadership of the Liberal Party and served as prime minister until the election that year, but he stayed on as leader of the opposition and more than doubled the party seats in the 1988 election. He was viewed as a hard-hitting debater, yet always maintained the respect of colleagues on all sides. To quote former Prime Minister Mulroney, he was someone who "... never believed in the politics of personal destruction."

In reading stories and memories of those who knew John Turner, and I include my 91-year-old mother in this regard, the word that comes up most often is "gentleman." He was a politician who vociferously attacked ill-conceived policies and believed that was required of him, but attacking the person putting the policy forward certainly was not. He relished the blood sport of debate in the House of Commons, but then could laugh and enjoy fine wine and a steak, and maybe a few glasses of scotch as well, with rivals that same evening. The tributes paid to him by former foes are, indeed, testaments to his

gentlemanliness, and his belief that politics is at the core of public service. That is John Turner's legacy. On behalf of this chamber, I offer condolences to his wife Geills, his children Elizabeth, David, Michael and Andrew, and the many friends mourning his loss.

In closing, I would like to put on record Prime Minister Turner's own words that still hold true today:

In any democracy, there is a tug-of-war between policies to achieve equality and policies to promote excellence. I'm sure that Canada can achieve both equality and excellence.

John Turner, rest in peace.

ANTI-BLACK RACISM

Hon. Jane Cordy: Honourable senators, it is my honour, on behalf of Senator Bernard, to read a statement that she would wish to bring to the attention of the chamber and beyond, but she is unable to do so personally in light of the COVID restrictions.

I will start by saying proudly and emphatically that Black lives matter. Anti-Black racism is a public health issue that can no longer be overlooked. Blatant acts of racism, daily micro-aggressions and the over-criminalization of Black Canadians have had devastating impacts on the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health of Black Canadians. Anti-Black racism has the impact of post-traumatic stress on Black families, relationships and communities across our country.

The murder of Mr. George Floyd by a police officer in the middle of the day was caught on video and has been referred to as a modern-day lynching. This has led to a global awareness of the pandemic of anti-Black racism and systemic racism. People of all ages and races have been publicly protesting for months. They have been demanding systemic changes to institutions that have been oppressive for far too long. We cannot allow this moment in our global history to fade into the background. We must do all that we can, individually and collectively, to create sustainable systemic change from this Black Lives Matter movement. Canada can no longer exist in this state of denial and non-action. There have been many efforts to combat systemic anti-Black racism; however, we have yet to see the systemic change racialized people across our country desperately need.

Honourable colleagues, as we begin a new session of Parliament, I invite you to reflect on what actions you will take to help build a more equitable and socially just Canada for Black Canadians. I challenge you to take this movement as an invitation to demonstrate in your work that Black lives matter in Canada and Black lives matter here in the Senate.

Honourable senators, these are the words of Senator Wanda Thomas Bernard.

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan: Honourable senators, as many of you have heard, I am the candidate for the presidency of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. I am the first ever and only Canadian candidate running for this international leadership position. In the last two days, I have been approached by many of my colleagues who are unfamiliar with the IPU and its mandate. I thought I would take this opportunity to share more details about the work done by the IPU and my contributions over the last decade. The IPU is an international organization of national parliaments — 131 years old, it predates the League of Nations — and the IPU works on strengthening parliaments, promoting democracy and defending and promoting human rights and gender equity. It is the only international intergovernmental organization that speaks on the human rights of parliamentarians.

• (0910)

This is some of the most important work that the IPU does. At every assembly, the names and pictures of parliamentarians who have been wrongfully imprisoned by their governments are shared with the governing council. I have personally known parliamentarians through the IPU who have later been imprisoned for speaking out against their governments. The IPU meets with these imprisoned parliamentarians and puts pressure on their governments for release. This is just one way we work to promote democracy and freedom of speech globally.

Canada has been a member of the IPU since 1912 and has hosted four IPU assemblies. My involvement in the IPU extends beyond a decade. Some of the positions I have held include rapporteur for the IPU Standing Committee of Democracy and Human Rights, Goodwill Ambassador for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, member of the executive of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians and a member of the Executive Committee where I was the chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance.

Currently I serve as the chair of the Committee on Middle East Questions where I am working on projects for peace. The committee works to support peace processes between Israel and Palestine, and most recently in Libya and Yemen.

One of the activities I am most proud of is co-leading a report called *Access to Health as a Basic Human Right*, which focused on maternal and child health. This report was drafted here in our libraries. Its success is a testament to Canada's impact on the health of women and children globally.

Colleagues, I'm proud to tell you that the report resulted in a landmark resolution at the one hundred and twenty-sixth IPU Assembly in Uganda. My commitment to, and strong belief in, the importance of the IPU's work has encouraged me to run for the presidency. I'm proud of the work the IPU does and my contribution to it. But most of all, I'm proud of the strong presence Canada continues to have today in the IPU. I hope to continue Canada's legacy as the first-ever Canadian IPU president.

MENTAL HEALTH—SYSTEMIC BIAS

Hon. Peter M. Boehm: Honourable senators, I would like to support the statement that Senator Ataullahjan just made on the importance of the IPU and wish her well in her candidacy.

Honourable senators, I rise today to speak about the case of Soleiman Faqiri who died in a segregation unit at the Central East Correctional Centre in Lindsay, Ontario on December 15, 2016.

He was allegedly beaten to death by prison guards. In August, however, the Ontario Provincial Police announced that, in concluding the investigation it began in January 2019, none of the guards would face criminal charges. This is another tragic turn in a case that has been full of tragic turns, colleagues.

Soli, as he is known to the family that loves him and continues to fight for some justice for him, was a young man living with schizophrenia. After a car accident at 18, Soleiman was diagnosed and as a result, he left his studies at the University of Waterloo and subsequently had run-ins with the police.

On December 4, 2016, at age 30, he allegedly attacked a neighbour but, despite his serious mental illness, he was taken to a correctional centre instead of a mental health facility. Soleiman was found dead in his cell 11 days later after a violent altercation with several guards. He had been shackled, face down, and had a spit hood over his head.

While the coroner's report did not cite a cause of death, it did find that Soleiman suffered 50 instances of blunt-impact trauma.

Almost four years later, justice for Soli is still proving elusive. Two investigations — the first by local police in Kawartha Lakes and the second by the OPP — laid no charges, stating that it was impossible to trace the actions or inaction of each guard. Soleiman's case revealed a complete failure to properly assess and care for a man dealing with severe mental illness.

Further, with the heightened awareness of police brutality against racialized Canadians — the Faqiri family is originally from Afghanistan — the OPP's refusal to hold accountable those responsible for Soli's death is a devastating example of systemic racism in both our correctional and law enforcement systems.

Led by his brother Yusuf, Soleiman's family has been fighting for justice since his death and will continue despite this most recent setback. I have been honoured to work with the family alongside our colleague Senator Pate.

While we consider the systemic problems that contribute to this tragedy, we must also remember the human element: that a family lost its beloved son and brother. When the system fails one of us, dear colleagues, it fails all of us. This is Canada. We can and we must do better. Thank you.

MENTAL ILLNESS AWARENESS WEEK

Hon. Stan Kutcher: Honourable senators, I rise to bring attention to Mental Illness Awareness Week taking place October 4 to 10.

Awareness is good, but it is not enough. We must do better. We must move beyond awareness and increase our mental health literacy with the goal of improving rapid access to effective mental health care for all Canadians in need.

Let us also now recognize the hard work that many Canadian educators have done to effectively improve mental health literacy in schools and for their commitment to supporting the mental health of our students as schools have reopened across this country.

Research conducted in Canada highlights poor levels of mental health literacy in our population. For example, people often use the term “mental health” when they mean mental illness. People often confuse normal, existential distress with having a mental illness or indicating that they are not mentally healthy.

Mental health is not about feeling good all the time. It is about learning the skills needed to adapt to the challenges and opportunities that life brings us. Sometimes that learning is painful, but it is normal. We don't need treatment for feeling upset. We need the support of our loved ones and our communities.

We must also remember that having a mental illness does not mean people do not have good mental health. On the contrary, the skills that a person who is living with a mental illness often develops to cope with it gives them additional resilience, better mental health.

In Canada, mental illness affects between 15 and 20% of the population. Like all chronic diseases, they increase the risk of a wide variety of negative outcomes: socially, vocationally and interpersonally. They increase risk for other illnesses, such as diabetes and heart disease. They increase risk for early mortality and are the primary risk factor for death by suicide.

Mental illnesses start in the first quarter of the life cycle. Most can actually be diagnosed before age 25. Knowing this, it is essential that everyone who has a mental illness be identified early and that the pathway to effective, evidence-based care is barrier-free.

Honourable senators, I encourage us all to pledge not just to be aware, but to become mental health literate and to work to ensure that all Canadians, regardless of wealth, race, creed, colour, belief or place of residence can equally access the best available based treatments for mental illness if and when they need to. Thank you.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

THE ESTIMATES, 2020-21

PARTS I AND II: THE GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE PLAN AND MAIN ESTIMATES FOR 2020-21 TABLED

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the estimates for the year 2020-21, Parts I and II: The Government Expenditure Plan and Main Estimates.

[Translation]

THE SENATE

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE HYBRID SITTINGS

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 provision of the Rules, previous order or usual practice:

1. as soon as practicable after the adoption of this order the Senate begin to hold hybrid sittings, with senators able to participate in sittings either from the Senate Chamber or through an approved videoconference technology to be determined from time to time by the Speaker after consulting with the leaders and facilitators, with the provisions of this order applying until hybrid sittings cease;
2. the Speaker, after consulting the leaders and facilitators, determine the date on which such hybrid sittings shall commence;
3. hybrid sittings be considered, for all purposes, proceedings of the Senate, with senators participating in such sittings by videoconference being considered, for all purposes, including quorum, present at the sitting; the sitting being considered to take place in the parliamentary precinct, irrespective of where the participants may be located; and times specified in the Rules or this or any other order being Ottawa times;
4. subject to variations that may be required by the circumstances, senators, to participate by videoconference, must:
 - (a) use a desktop or laptop computer and headphones with integrated microphone provided by the Senate for videoconferences;

- (b) not use other devices such as personal tablets or smartphones; and
 - (c) have their video on and broadcasting their image when speaking;
5. the Senate recognize that, except as provided in this order, there should generally be parity of treatment among all senators attending in person and those attending by videoconference and that proceedings should follow usual procedures, subject to such variations required for technical reasons as may be directed by the Speaker, subject to appeal to the Senate if technically feasible;
 6. senators participating by videoconference need not stand;
 7. provisions of the Rules relating to the ordinary time of adjournment be suspended, except on a Friday;
 8. without restricting the right of senators to move a motion to adjourn the Senate as allowed under the Rules, without affecting requirements in certain circumstances that the Senate continue sitting after receipt of a message from the Crown or the announcement that a message is anticipated, and except as otherwise provided in this order, sittings last, except on a Friday, until the earlier of:
 - (a) 9 p.m.; or
 - (b) the end of business for the day;
 9. the Speaker be authorized to suspend the sitting as required for technical and other reasons;
 10. the Speaker be authorized to direct that the sitting be adjourned for technical reasons, provided that this direction be subject to appeal if technically feasible;
 11. if the bells are ringing or a vote is underway at a time provided for in paragraph 8, the adjournment shall be suspended until the vote and any consequential business are concluded;
 12. in cases where the Rules allow or require the Senate to sit beyond the ordinary time of adjournment to deal with an item of business, and if such an item of business is under consideration at the time the sitting would otherwise end, the provisions of paragraph 8 only take effect when proceedings on that item of business have finished for the sitting, and, if the provisions of paragraph 10 are invoked while such an item is under consideration, the item of business shall, except in the case of an emergency debate, be dealt with at the following sitting at the start of the Orders of the Day;
 13. on the first day of debate on a motion moved in relation to a case of privilege, debate may be adjourned, even if normally prohibited under rule 13-6(6);
 14. the provisions of rule 3-3(1) be suspended;
 15. if the Senate sits on a Friday, it sit at 11 a.m., with provisions of the Rules that specify the timing of certain events on a Friday, including the ordinary time of adjournment, being delayed, except as otherwise provided in this order, by two hours on that day;
 16. the Senate recognize the importance of providing the Speaker with information necessary to allow him to assist with the orderly conduct of business in hybrid sittings, and therefore, subject to normal confidentiality practices, strongly encourage all senators:
 - (a) to advise their party or group representatives, or the Clerk of the Senate or his delegate, as far in advance as possible, if they intend to intervene during the sitting; and
 - (b) to provide the Clerk of the Senate or his delegate, as far in advance as possible with an electronic copy of any amendment, subamendment, notice of motion, notice of inquiry, committee report to be tabled or presented, bill to be introduced, or any other document required for the sitting as far in advance as possible;
 17. a senator who has provided an advance copy of a document under subparagraph 16(b) be considered to have fulfilled any obligation to provide a signed copy of that document;
 18. the following provisions have effect in relation to voting:
 - (a) only senators present in the Senate Chamber shall participate in the procedure for a voice vote;
 - (b) a standing vote may only be requested by senators in the Senate Chamber;
 - (c) during hybrid sittings, rule 9-7(1)(c) shall be read as follows:
 - “(c) then:
 - (i) ask the “yeas” in the Senate Chamber to rise for their names to be called;
 - (ii) ask the “yeas” participating by videoconference to hold up the established card for voting “yea” for their names to be called;
 - (iii) ask the “nays” in the Senate Chamber to rise for their names to be called;

(iv) ask the “nays” participating by videoconference to hold up the established card for voting “nay” for their names to be called;

• (0920)

[English]

(v) ask those who are abstaining in the Senate Chamber to rise for their names to be called; and

(vi) ask those who are abstaining and participating by videoconference to hold up the established card for abstaining for their names to be called.”;

(d) if a vote is deferred pursuant to rule 9-10, it shall be held at the end of Question Period on the next day the Senate sits, after a 15-minute bell;

(e) if a vote is deferred pursuant to rule 4-6(1), it shall be held at the end of Question Period on the same day; and

(f) in the case of votes deferred pursuant to other provisions of the Rules, the usual processes for such votes shall hold, with the sitting being suspended, if necessary, at the end of the time otherwise provided for the end of the sitting pursuant to this order;

19. for greater certainty, leave be considered granted when requested, unless the Speaker hears an objection from a senator, either in the Senate Chamber or participating by videoconference;

20. from the time of the adoption of this order:

(a) any return, report or other paper deposited with the Clerk of the Senate pursuant to rule 14-1(6), may be deposited electronically;

(b) the government be authorized to deposit electronically with the Clerk of the Senate any documents relating to its administrative responsibilities, following the process of rule 14-1(6); and

(c) written replies to oral questions and to written questions may be deposited with the Clerk of the Senate electronically following the process of rule 14-1(6), provided that written replies to oral questions be published as an appendix to the *Debates of the Senate* of the day on which the tabling is recorded in the *Journals of the Senate*; and

21. the terms of this order cease to have effect, and hybrid sittings cease, at the end of the day on December 18, 2020.

HUMAN RIGHTS

NOTICE OF MOTION TO AUTHORIZE COMMITTEE TO STUDY ISSUES RELATING TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF FEDERALLY SENTENCED PERSONS IN THE CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM AND REFER PAPERS AND EVIDENCE FROM FIRST SESSION OF THE FORTY-SECOND PARLIAMENT TO CURRENT SESSION

Hon. Kim Pate: Honourable senators, 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 issues relating to the human rights of federally sentenced persons in the correctional system, with reference to both national and international law and standards, as well as to examine the situation of marginalized or disadvantaged groups in federal prisons, including Black and Indigenous Peoples, racialized persons, women and those with mental health concerns, when and if the committee is formed;

That the papers and evidence received and taken and work accomplished by the committee on this subject during the First Session of the Forty-second Parliament be referred to the committee; and

That the committee submit its final report no later than June 30, 2021.

• (0930)

QUESTION PERIOD

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

AGRIINVEST

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question today is for the government leader in the Senate. It concerns the AgriInvest program for our farmers. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Minister Bibeau has maintained that she could not make the case to her cabinet colleagues for greater help for our agricultural sector when farmers have unused money sitting in their AgriInvest accounts. When the minister was before this chamber in May, she stated several times that farmers had \$2.3 billion available in their accounts, which they were not using. In fact, the vast majority of AgriInvest accounts — over 72,000 out of just under 100,000 accounts — have less than \$10,000. Worse, almost 11,000 accounts have nothing at all, zero.

Leader, your government claims its decision-making is evidence based. Given these figures, how can the minister continue to claim that our farmers don't need help from this Liberal government?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you, senator, for your question. I don't think the government's position is as you have described. The government understands that farmers and the agricultural sector, like so many Canadians in so many sectors, are struggling. They are struggling not only because of COVID but because of other circumstances beyond anyone's control: world markets, geopolitical affairs and the like. That said, I don't have the answer for you for the specific question and the figures that you cite. I certainly will make inquiries and report back.

Senator Plett: Thank you, leader. I hope those answers will be coming very shortly, because this is, for Canadian farmers, an emergency.

On May 15, when I asked the minister why her government was ignoring the needs of our farmers, the minister said:

I'll offer the example of the amount of money that the grain sector has in their AgriInvest account. This is the most significant one. I think the average is over \$100,000.

In fact, that information was also false. Data sent in August from the minister's own department to the Agriculture Committee in the other place showed that grain farmers have an average of \$33,600 in these accounts.

Leader, why did the minister tell us grain farmers have over \$100,000 in their AgriInvest accounts when the average is two-thirds less than what the minister has claimed?

Senator Gold: Thank you, senator. I would not presume to know when the figures were calculated or to which accounts you refer, but, again, I will make inquiries and be happy to report.

[Translation]

FINANCE

SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate and I am asking it on behalf of Senator Mockler.

[English]

We all know that COVID-19 is changing the landscape of our families and our small- and medium-sized companies. The challenges are monumental and create a lot of uncertainty. It is reported that in 2017, the hunting and fishing outfitting industry contributed nearly \$2.7 billion to Canada's GDP and supported over 37,000 jobs nationwide. In New Brunswick, the estimate for 2015 was around \$145 million, employing many thousands of New Brunswickers. On the great Miramichi River, the Atlantic

salmon alone contributes over \$20 million and supports over 600 full-time equivalent jobs. The Restigouche River is in a very similar situation.

Can the Leader of the Government in the Senate advise the thousands of outfitters and guides in New Brunswick and across Canada who are facing closures and bankruptcies, which programs in Bill C-4 can they access in order to save their families' livelihoods?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you. Senator Mockler, if you are watching, thank you for the question. Your advocacy and commitment to the people of your province are legion and much appreciated by them, no doubt, and by all of us here in the chamber.

That the outfitting industry in Canada generally, and New Brunswick in particular, is suffering should come as no surprise to any of us. It relies, in part, on tourism and on travel between provinces. People flock to New Brunswick to take advantage of the marvellous opportunities to fish and hunt.

The government has announced a suite of measures to help small- and medium-sized businesses, and many of them have been described in this place. I'm not aware of what specific program might be available — or might even be in the works — to help in a more focused way the industry to which Senator Mockler refers and your question alludes, but I will take this up with Minister LeBlanc, who has important regional responsibilities in New Brunswick, as all senators know. Thank you for the question.

CITIZENSHIP, IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEES

SPONSORSHIP APPLICATIONS

Hon. Marilou McPhedran: Honourable senators, my question is for the government leader in the Senate. It's a continuation of the question that I asked on behalf of Senator Mobina Jaffer yesterday. The question, as it was left when we ran out of time, was:

What is currently being done to recognize the needs of Canadians who need to be reunited with their loved ones, and to ensure the immediate process of their sponsorship applications?

In addition to that part of the question, Senator Jaffer also asks:

Some Canadians have been waiting for over two years to be reunited with their spouses.

Part (a) of the question:

Have more officers been hired to process the sponsorship applications in Canada and in our posts around the world?

And part (B) of that question:

How is the processing of these applications being expedited if, indeed, they are being expedited?

Thank you.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you very much for the question, and, again, to Senator Jaffer for her ongoing commitment to this important issue.

We all can imagine how frustrating — “frustrating” is too weak a word — the situation must be for those who are waiting to be reunited with their loved ones. The plain fact is that due to these exceptional circumstances that we are in, the government and, indeed Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada has been and is focusing their resources on the response to the pandemic. As a result of that, the opening of the call for interest for the new parents and grandparents program that was to be launched has been delayed. The government knows this is very important to so many people. Though this will not impact the processing of applications in the current inventory, indeed IRCC will continue to process existing applications during this time.

I’m not in a position to answer specific questions with regard to whether additional officers have been hired or how many, nor the specific details of how the government plans to expedite these. I can assure this chamber that the government is seized with this issue. Indeed, as we know, over 6,000 people have signed the petition of NDP member Jenny Kwan calling on the government to deal with this backlog. The government is seized with this. We are all concerned about this. I will endeavour to have details, and I will communicate them in this chamber and, if I have them more quickly, to Senator Jaffer personally.

• (0940)

FINANCE

INCOME AND WEALTH INEQUALITY

Hon. Rosa Galvez: My question is for the Government Representative in the Senate. Senator Gold, the government is well aware that Canada has a growing wealth inequality problem that tends to worsen in times of crisis. For instance, since the March 2020 COVID-19 lockdown, the total wealth of the 20 richest Canadians has increased by \$37 billion. Recent polling from Abacus Data indicates that 85% of Canadians think it’s at least important to create or increase taxes for the richest Canadians to recover from the COVID-19 crisis. Based on the recent Parliamentary Budget Officer’s report on wealth distribution, 10% on the 13,800 households with wealth above \$20 million would yield an estimated \$56.1 billion in its first year, and could repay the entire direct emergency funding today in less than five years.

If you can, please provide more details about the government’s commitment to:

... identify additional ways to tax extreme wealth inequality, including by concluding work to limit the stock option deduction for wealthy individuals at large, established corporations, and addressing corporate tax avoidance by digital giants.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. It’s the position of the government — and it’s been clear about this — that building a fair, more robust but more inclusive economy that works for all Canadians is of central importance, not only to this government but to the stability and health of our country. Since 2015, the government has taken a number of measures to improve fairness by closing loopholes, eliminating measures that disproportionately favour the wealthy, cracking down on tax evasion — we had a good question yesterday from Senator Downe in the chamber — and reducing taxes for the middle class and people who are working hard to climb the ladder to join it. The government’s position is that when it adopted a tax cut for the middle class that kicked in on January 1, 2016, it took another step in that direction.

You make reference to a number of issues that the government is committed to working on. I am not in a position to share the specific details of exactly how that will be implemented in the period before us. When those details become available, they will be made public and I will happily share them in this chamber.

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

TRANSITIONING EMPLOYEES

Hon. Rosa Galvez: Last week in the Speech from the Throne, it was announced that:

... the Government will launch a campaign to create over one million jobs, restoring employment to previous levels. This will be done by using a range of tools, including direct investments in the social sector and infrastructure, immediate training to quickly skill up workers, and incentives for employers to hire and retain workers.

In its new announcement of this measure to create over 1 million jobs, will the government ensure that these jobs will be part of clean and sustainable industries? If so, what criteria for funding will be enforced to provide sustainable work for the transitioning workers?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. The government has made it clear throughout its mandate that it believes that the future of Canada is to build upon our strengths, our resource sectors and others and help us transition towards a cleaner economy. It has taken many measures in that regard. Most recently, the Prime Minister announced a major investment through the device of the Canada Infrastructure Bank. It runs in that direction in order to better prepare us to transition, not only for the period when we transition out of the crisis we are in but transition to a more sustainable, robust and cleaner economy.

CANADIAN RADIO-TELEVISION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

CBC/RADIO-CANADA

Hon. Percy E. Downe: My question is for Senator Gold, the spokesperson for the government in the Senate. Prince Edward Islanders were surprised on March 18, at the beginning of the pandemic, that CBC Toronto decided that they would cancel all local newscasts. Prince Edward Island only has one English newscast in the province, and it's the CBC. We were surprised that when we appealed to the CRTC, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission — because CBC gets their licence from the CRTC — it was pointed out by the CRTC that the CBC, as a condition of their licence, promised “at least 7 hours of local programming per week . . .” Another condition was that they could not change that without approval from the CRTC following a public process of consultation. None of that was done.

Islanders, of course, were asking, “who do we appeal to?” We are at the beginning of a pandemic, we have a province with a high percentage of seniors and some of the worst rural internet connections in Canada. The information from the local CBC TV news was critical for the health and well-being of Prince Edward Islanders. CRTC did nothing, and Prince Edward Islanders were wondering if the Prime Minister or the Minister of Heritage could do anything. Of course, they can't, because the CBC is an independent organization.

Will the government inquire why the CRTC failed in their responsibility to enforce the conditions that the CBC agreed to operate under?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for that question. I won't take time to express my understanding of the importance of local news programming in Prince Edward Island, or indeed everywhere in this country. Not having had any notice of this question, I was unable to make inquiries. I certainly will, Senator Downe, and report to you personally during the break if I have answers, or upon our return.

Senator Downe: The weakness here was the CRTC. The CBC, in the view of Islanders, made an idiotic statement. At the beginning of the pandemic, when we needed it the most for information, they abandoned the field. However, they didn't cancel the local CBC French news across Canada. They continued operating. The English CBC said, “it's not safe and we have to protect our employees.” The employees were not asking for that. They said they could carry on and provide the service. It was somebody at CBC Toronto who decided to do it. At the same time, the CBC French local newscasts continued; a complete contradiction. The CBC eventually backtracked, but they were putting the lives of Islanders at risk. The provincial health authorities were trying to get information out on conduct, how to behave and what the situation was, and we were left with — fortunately — a daily newspaper and radio stations, but the primary CBC news was gone. The disappointing factor was the CRTC, which was responsible for making them keep that

newscast on, did not do their job. Why is the CRTC not doing their job? That's a question I would like you to find out on our behalf.

Senator Gold: Thank you.

FINANCE

COVID-19 PANDEMIC—HOTEL SUBSIDIES

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: My question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Hotels across Canada are still struggling with unsustainable vacancy rates. In the North, this grave situation is exacerbated by the extreme travel lockdowns where, unlike southern Canada, intraterritorial travel is not happening. In addition, there are quarantine barriers in place severely limiting travel into the territories from the south. Hoteliers in the North have gotten nowhere with CanNor with their reasonable proposal, formally submitted June 3, 2020, for room subsidies on an equitable basis for all hotels until they are self-sustainable again and severe travel restrictions are reduced or eliminated.

The direction federal officials are taking in discussions with the Hotel Association of Canada seems to be heading towards possibly offering a guaranteed loan program for banks to aid struggling hotels. This will only prolong the agony for some smaller hotels in the territories who will, sadly, in most cases, default on federally guaranteed loans.

• (0950)

Hotel operations in every Northern community are essential services. They provide accommodation during this crisis to health care workers, government services personnel, maintenance and construction workers, and residents requiring health care or a place for their relatives to stay while they are being treated. Housing and accommodation are in severe shortage in almost every Northern community.

The operation of hotels is essential to the North. Community-based hotel operators in the territories who run diversified business operations and have other sources of income are subsidizing their hotels from their grocery stores and rental properties. They tell me they are not likely to take up any federal loan-guarantee options, so the weak will fall by the wayside and the others will continue to struggle and suffer, enduring damaging costs to these essential services in Northern communities.

Will the government reconsider the reasonable proposal from large and small territorial hoteliers across Yukon, NWT and Nunavut that, with the support of all three territorial senators, formally ask the federal government to establish a per-room subsidy until lower vacancy rates allow the hotel operations to become sustainable?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question and for your advance notice of this issue.

The government knows that the hotel industry is the backbone of tourism in this country and is suffering significantly because of the pandemic and the difficult but necessary decisions that provincial and territorial governments have been called upon and have chosen to make.

With regard to your question, beyond the emergency wage subsidy, the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance and the investment of over \$1 billion in our regional development agencies to assist businesses on the ground, I want to recall Minister Freeland's remarks in yesterday's Committee of the Whole. She said that the government knows full well that sectors like tourism, hospitality and cultural industries have inevitably been hit harder, and that the programs may not fully meet all of the particularities of their circumstances. She said:

I think now is the moment when we have to start looking in a more targeted way at the harder-hit sectors.

That is cold comfort for some. I was in the hotel business once, so I know what it's like to have a room that you don't rent; it's gone. But the government is committed to focusing increasingly on sectors that are particularly hard hit. The government will have more announcements, I'm sure, in the weeks to come.

HEALTH

VIRTUAL MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Hon. Judith G. Seidman: Honourable senators, my question for the government leader is a followup to questions I asked in June that did not receive an answer before prorogation. It's not on testing; I can see you getting ready.

On May 3, the Prime Minister announced \$240 million to develop, expand and launch virtual care and mental health tools. On June 3, the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology heard from witnesses representing three leading mental health organizations: the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, the Strongest Families Institute and the Canadian Psychiatric Association. These witnesses said they had not been consulted by the government on the development of the virtual mental health tools and, therefore, did not know how to access or recommend them to patients.

Leader, could you tell us which mental health organizations, if any, were consulted prior to the government's announcement on May 3?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. I tabled a number of answers in the chamber yesterday. I assume that of the 11 or so that remain unanswered, yours is still in that pile. I will make further inquiries, senator, and endeavour to find the answers.

Senator Seidman: Honourable senators, on August 6, the government's last biweekly report on its emergency programs before prorogation gave a status update on the mental health care announcement saying that, "Work on virtual care is proceeding with ongoing discussions with [provinces and territories.]"

The implementation status was described as "shortly."

Senator Gold, have discussions with the provinces and territories concluded since this report was released, and if not, when exactly are they expected to conclude? Has any of the money under this program begun to flow to mental health providers? If so, do you know how much has been allocated so far and to which groups?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question regarding these specific issues for which I do not have the answers today. I will make a point of asking those specific questions when I can.

FINANCE

SAFE RESTART AGREEMENT

Hon. Donna Dasko: Honourable senators, my question is for the Government Representative in the Senate.

Senator Gold, the federal government recently advanced \$19 billion to the provinces under the so-called Safe Restart Agreement. Those dollars were advanced to be spent in many areas, one of which is data management.

Can you confirm in which areas data is being collected and shared? Can you tell us something about the extent of data collection under this agreement? For example, does this include measures related to COVID-19 infection rates and the factors related to infection rates? Does it include data about the long-term-care sector in the provinces or other areas?

What commitments have been made with respect to data? I will have a supplementary question.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): My answer will be brief because I don't have the specific answers to your specific questions. I would just encourage senators that, when they have such specific questions, they might fairly assume I will not have the answers at my fingertips; that advance notice will help me provide the answers to you in a more expeditious way.

Having said that, the government is committed in all of its policies with regard to data, public health and the lives of Canadians to ensure our legitimate constitutional rights to privacy are respected as we navigate, not only through a crisis but through the digital transformation in the world in which we live.

I will do my best to get the answers to the chamber when I can.

Senator Dasko: Senator, as I looked at several of the agreements between the federal government and the provinces, I saw no mention of the federal government receiving data in exchange for federal dollars. Only in the British Columbia agreement is it mentioned that it explicitly commits to share data with Health Canada and CIHI. There is no mention of the federal government receiving data from Ontario, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta under their agreements. Maybe there is fine print somewhere that I haven't seen.

Has the federal government made the funding to the provinces in the Safe Restart Agreement contingent upon the provinces sharing the data they collect with the federal government? It seems this data would be essential to your government in fulfilling your promise to set new evidence-based national standards for long-term care and to inform your efforts to build back better in the wake of the pandemic.

I'm sorry I didn't give advance notice; next time, I will. I was really hoping to ask the minister these questions yesterday, but I was further down the list. I would hope she would have had the answers, so I thought I would ask you. Down the road, I expect to have more questions about this agreement and other issues in it. In any case, I'll leave that with you, and if you could answer it, thank you.

Senator Gold: Thank you. I'm flattered to be asked the question. I'm not offended that mine would be the second-best answer, which I am in all cases when we have a minister. However, this gives me an opportunity to pick up on something Senator Harder alluded to in his speech and which is really important. Notwithstanding my background as a constitutional lawyer, I have avoided involvement in any of my answers. But this is a federation, and the provinces have legitimate interests and laws dealing with access to their data and the protection of their citizens' rights to privacy that are no less robust, no less important and no less constitutionally anchored than the privacy laws that govern Canada in its federal jurisdiction.

• (1000)

The fact is, in all of the debates during this very challenging time, when I've been pleased to take your questions about the federal response to this pandemic, as Senator Harder pointed out — and it's something we should reflect upon going forward, as he recommends, and I subscribe to it 100% — our response has been an all-government response, not only federal, provincial and territorial, but municipal. The fact is there are no quick answers and no appropriate ways for the federal government to intervene in areas that touch upon the businesses and the lives of citizens governed so much by provincial legislation without cooperation, consultation and sometimes horse-trading with their provincial counterparts.

That's not an answer to your question, but it's to underline the complexity of how Canada has to respond to important questions such as you raise, given the federal nature of this country.

I will endeavour to find the answers to your questions, of course, but I take the liberty, since we won't be together for a number of weeks, to encourage us to reflect upon some of the complications that our federal system imposes on us, and some of our responsibilities, as Senator Harder so rightly pointed out, to educate others about the federal fabric of this great country. Thank you.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR SENATORS

SECOND REPORT OF COMMITTEE—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Tannas, seconded by the Honourable Senator Patterson, for the adoption of the second report of the Standing Committee on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators, entitled *Consideration of an inquiry report of the Senate Ethics Officer*, presented in the Senate on June 18, 2020, during the First Session of the Forty-third Parliament.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, pursuant to rule 12-30(2), a decision cannot be taken on this report, as yet. Debate on the report, unless some other senator wishes to adjourn the matter, will be deemed adjourned until the next sitting of the Senate.

Is that agreed, honourable senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Pursuant to rule 12-30(2), further debate on the motion was adjourned until the next sitting.)

COVID-19 RESPONSE MEASURES BILL

THIRD READING

Hon. Tony Dean moved third reading of Bill C-4, An Act relating to certain measures in response to COVID-19.

He said: Honourable senators, it is a privilege to speak briefly at third reading of Bill C-4, An Act relating to certain measures in response to COVID-19.

I want to start by thanking Minister Qualtrough and Minister Freeland for being with us yesterday at Committee of the Whole. They answered some pertinent and often tough questions on the proposed legislation, and I'm sure you will agree that their presence here helped us considerably.

Next, I want to report on some important questions raised by my colleague Senator Martin yesterday. It's important that we clearly understand what we are approving here, especially as we are moving quickly. Of course, this is the primary responsibility of sponsors and critics.

First, Senator Martin sought clarity on the total cost impact of Bill C-4. Senator Martin and I can confirm that the amounts mentioned in my statement yesterday have been verified independently by both of us. The cost of the proposed new CRB, CRSB and CRCB benefits total \$24 billion.

In addition, proposed payments to be made under the Public Health Events of National Concern Payments Act by December 31, 2020, total \$17.14 billion. This would result in the two amounts being voted on in Bill C-4 totalling just over \$41 billion.

An additional \$10.2 billion in EI costs mentioned by the Minister of Finance yesterday are not being voted on today, as they were already approved by an interim order.

Senator Martin also asked about the intent of clause 41 in Bill C-4, which would approve CRA spending on enforcement and administration through to March 31, 2024. We can confirm that this spending authority is congruent with clause 36(b) of Bill C-4, which gives the CRA three years to pursue offences outlined in the act, and therefore, the funding mentioned in clause 41 would support that.

I thank you, Senator Martin, for raising these questions and for working together with me to get them answered.

Consequential tax amendments are often complicated and they confuse us. So briefly, for our collective understanding, I want to tell you that after clause 41, clause 42 deals with repayments not being taxable, clause 43 deals with information sharing between departments, including the CRA and the HRDC, and clause 44 deals with the flat rate of withholding taxes on CRB payments, which is expected to be 10%.

Colleagues, we are all being challenged in myriad ways as we grapple with how we can make the most effective contribution to Parliament in these very challenging times. Today's notice of motion on hybrid sittings is welcome news to all of us.

As we work through this, I listened yesterday to a broad sweep of views that senators from across the country, from varying backgrounds and with different affiliations, brought into this chamber. These were mightily impressive, and one more time made me proud to have the opportunity to sit in this place. It made me think about how much weight we could bring to important issues and opportunities confronting Canadians if we set out to address them together. We heard plenty of virtuous proposals raised in this chamber for our consideration.

Senator Harder raised the question of wealth creation, how we can accelerate the growth of our economy and how to better align roles and responsibilities in our federation. Of course, those two things very much go hand in hand.

Senator Bellemare highlighted the importance of labour market development, particularly in relation to young people. We thank her for that.

Senator Pate raised serious and important issues about poverty and racism, and their intersection. That prompted, I think, a relatively positive response from Minister Qualtrough, which I think we were all pleased to hear.

As we continue to wrestle with the restrictions placed on us by COVID-19, I thank all colleagues who are in the chamber with us today and yesterday, as well as those who engaged from afar in various ways, and the many people inside this chamber and outside of it who support us doing our work in this place.

Honourable colleagues, this may be the worst health and economic crisis of our generation, but it's not going to last forever. Canadians are going to overcome these challenging times, and we'll do that by working together. None of us in this place want any of our fellow Canadians to suffer through illness or worse, or put themselves at risk, thereby prolonging any prospect of economic recovery.

These are not normal times, to say the least. Governments at all levels are being forced to make decisions quickly in order to protect their towns, their cities, their provinces and the country as this virus ebbs and flows. The Senate is not exempt from the need to act swiftly and certainly not the responsibility to act diligently. I think we're finding the very best balance here as we work on this this week.

The passage of Bill C-4 is necessary for the health and safety of all Canadians, for their income security and livelihoods, and for the businesses that are the engines of our economy.

Let's join our colleagues in the other place in supporting this crucial bill. Thank you. *Meegwetich*.

• (1010)

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my thanks to Senator Dean for his responses to my questions and the opportunity to work with him to provide clarity for the chamber. As he said, we are at third reading and it is so important to our nation, and our work as senators, to be responsible and clear in what we are approving.

My statement today is a bit longer than yesterday's, but I hope you will indulge me, as the critic, to do a further analysis.

I rise today, colleagues, to speak to Bill C-4, An Act relating to certain measures in response to COVID-19, formally tabled as an act relating to economic recovery in response to COVID-19.

As our sponsor has already expressed, I want to thank members of this chamber for the efforts that you have made in participating in our Committee of the Whole, as well as yesterday's debate and today's. I know each of us takes a lot of time to deliberate on what we are doing. I wish this could have gone to committee. We had Committee of the Whole, but time was limited. Two, two and a half or even three or four hours may seem like a long time, but there are a lot of us and there are specific regional questions that were not answered. And here we are at third reading.

This is the sixth bill we are considering with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, this is the first bill that suggests we are now focused on recovery, as Part 1 enacts the Canada recovery benefits act. The word “recovery” is in all of the titles. I’m certain we would all be pleased if we had in fact moved beyond emergency benefits to recovery benefits, but I find the suggestion to be a bit of a stretch when there are still 1.1 million people unemployed in Canada due to the pandemic, and many businesses have either not reopened or are on the brink of closing.

Just a few weeks ago, Restaurants Canada, a lobby group representing 30,000 firms, warned the federal government that more than half of all Canadian eateries could go out of business in the next three months due to the economic turmoil caused by the pandemic. They estimate that 10% of food service establishments have already permanently closed due to the impacts of COVID-19.

A survey of its members by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business indicated that 3% of businesses still operating expect to close permanently due to COVID-19 and another 9% expect to never fully recover.

In July, Statistics Canada reported that 19.3% of businesses said they would be able to continue operating at their current level of revenue and expenditures for fewer than six months before considering staffing actions, closing their doors or filing for bankruptcy.

The failed Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance program, CECRA, has now ended, with no plan from the government to help small business owners and their employees survive the second wave. This program should have sent assistance to small business owners to help pay their rent, but a majority of business owners were unable to participate in the program because landlords needed to agree that they will cover 25% of the rent in order for businesses to qualify. And I empathize with the landlords as well, because they have bills to pay. This very difficult situation was just not resolved.

Honourable senators, I appreciate the government’s optimism in referring to these measures as “recovery” benefits, but I beg to differ. There are many businesses and families across the country, including tens of thousands of Canadians in the hunting and fishing outfitting industry, as we heard in Senator Mockler’s question, and artists — the list goes on — who do not share the Prime Minister’s optimism. These are most certainly emergency benefits, not recovery benefits — emergency benefits that continue to be critically necessary because of the terrible impact the pandemic has had on our country, which was made worse by the government’s mismanagement.

Canada’s strong road to recovery is tied to the success of our small businesses, which are the backbone of our economy. Small businesses in Canada make up over 97% of all employer businesses, whether it’s a family-run business or a business with up to 99 employees. Their survival is essential for economic recovery, but the statistics we’ve heard, that I’ve shared with you, indicate otherwise. In Metro Vancouver, where I live, I have seen so many boarded-up businesses. I personally know of businesses that are on the brink of closing their doors.

As you know, honourable senators, the Canada Emergency Response Benefit has come to an end. The government has told us that 2.8 million CERB recipients are being transitioned to the Employment Insurance system. Bill C-4 will create three additional benefits to complement the support provided by the EI program.

Conservatives have no quarrel with the intent of any of these emergency benefits. They are critically necessary measures in the midst of these turbulent times — and the CERB program was a blunt instrument that was not properly designed in the first place — so we need these additional measures. If you recall, after CERB was announced, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives estimated that one third of unemployed Canadians were going to be left with nothing from either Employment Insurance or the Canada Emergency Response Benefit: part-time workers, seasonal workers and the self-employed were all passed over in the first draft. Then there were numerous accounts of people receiving duplicate payments, incidents of fraudulent claims and other concerning stories related to the CERB program.

The core issue with the program was that the government did not build in incentives for people to get back to work once the lockdown was lifted. Therefore, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business reported in July that 20% of their members were having difficulty finding people to return to work. More than half of them said that the CERB program was a major reason for the labour shortage because their employees did not want to lose their benefits. The Province of Manitoba even had to implement a Job Restart Program, which paid people up to \$2,000 to leave CERB behind and return to the workforce. This may be the first time in history that we needed a government program to get people off a government program.

One of the many things this Liberal government is not good at doing is listening. All of the opposition parties in the House of Commons repeatedly expressed their frustration, but the government was just charging ahead unilaterally, refusing to work in a collegial and co-operative way in order to ensure that Canadians received the best possible support throughout the pandemic. I raised some of those concerns to our government leader or to ministers who appeared in our chamber, especially regarding small businesses and the micro-businesses — mom-and-pop businesses.

The result was an ever-growing suite of programs from the government that were poorly targeted, more expensive and less effective than they should have been. There were constant policy rewrites, clarifications, updates and, as we just experienced again, legislation that never made it past first reading.

These three new programs are a welcome upgrade to what has been the government’s mishandling of the pandemic, and it is regrettable that it has taken six months to get here. These programs are essential, but it concerns me that this government seems to think we are already in a recovery, when we are being warned that the second wave is upon us.

In his address to the nation that followed the Speech from the Throne, the Prime Minister said it himself:

... the second wave isn't just starting – it's already underway.

The numbers are clear. Back on March 13 when we went into lockdown, there were 47 new cases of COVID-19. Yesterday alone, we had well over 1,000.

We're on the brink of a fall that could be much worse than the spring.

If the Prime Minister was trying to confuse Canadians, this was a good way to do it. On the one hand, the government wants Canadians to think that things are getting better and, on the other hand, the Prime Minister is telling us the worst is yet to come. I suppose this shouldn't surprise us because it illustrates the fact that the government doesn't know what it is doing. We don't see a sustainable plan to get us through the pandemic, and we don't see a fiscal plan to ensure the health of our nation's finances after the pandemic.

Instead, we seem to have a government that confuses government spending with recovery. We have a Prime Minister who makes glib statements like, "We took on debt so Canadians don't have to." What does that even mean? Does the Prime Minister not understand that public debt must be repaid by public money, which comes from the taxes on the money Canadians work so hard to earn?

• (1020)

The fact is that taxpayers are on the hook for every single dollar this government has borrowed. It is taxpayers who will be paying the interest charges and repaying the principal when it comes due. The government has no money of its own. It only has money it takes from the taxpayers. Justin Trudeau is doing nobody a favour by suggesting otherwise, and deficit spending today is tomorrow's debt burden on our children, their children and their grandchildren.

Canadians who have lost jobs or income because of the government's mishandling of the pandemic need the benefits that are being introduced in the bill before us, but what Canadians need even more is better management of this pandemic and a responsible route to recovery, two things that this government has not provided.

The second benefit that this bill creates is the Canada recovery sickness benefit. When the government finds it necessary to compel people to stay home from work for public health reasons, then it makes perfect sense that the government should provide support so people can do that. But the government messaging around this benefit has been more than a bit confusing at times. Let's be clear about what this benefit provides and what it doesn't provide.

First of all, this benefit is sick leave for COVID-related reasons only. It does not cover sick leave for any other reasons. Second, the benefit will cover you for only two weeks. If you're required to self-isolate more than once this year, then you're on your own after the first time. Likewise, if you're unfortunate

enough to come down with COVID and it takes you longer than two weeks to recover, you're paying your own way after two weeks.

Third, this benefit is for one year; it is not permanent. The bill was held up in the other place because the government had to deal with the NDP in order to get their support for the Speech from the Throne. They wanted the benefit to cover any sickness, but it does not. It only covers COVID. The NDP wanted the benefit to be permanent, but it is not. It is only one year. This benefit will be helpful to many Canadians, but what is not helpful is how this government manages to create confusion around almost every COVID-related announcement they make.

The third benefit that this bill creates is the Canada recovery caregiving benefit. This is one of the great challenges of the pandemic. Some people are just getting back to work only to have to take time off again because their child came down with a stomach ache or a minor cough or runny nose and needs to get tested for COVID-19 before they can go back to school. Others have adult family members who require supervised care but then their program gets closed because of a COVID outbreak. They have no choice but to take time off work to care for their family member. These things are extremely frustrating for parents and caregivers and are hard on everyone. It is appropriate that the government provide some assistance to people facing these challenges.

Once again, we need to be very clear. The Prime Minister makes these announcements as if the government is there to take care of all your problems. But, in fact, these benefits are half-measures which help to mitigate the financial impacts of the pandemic but do not remove them. While \$500 a week for 26 weeks might be a gold mine for a 15-year-old who only made \$5,000 the previous year, the same is not true for most working Canadians.

Canadians who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own during the pandemic are looking for the certainty of employment, not a handout. Businesses want to reopen and welcome back staff and customers. This is what real recovery looks like. But instead of showing leadership and presenting Canadians with a clear path forward through the pandemic, the government prorogued Parliament, causing great worry about program deadlines and forcing parliamentarians, including this chamber, to rush on the examination of such important legislation.

Honourable senators, the Conservative caucus supports emergency programs contained in the bill because these measures are necessary and urgently needed by Canadians, but what we do not support is a government that is fiscally irresponsible and economically illiterate. Even in the midst of a pandemic, Canadians have a right to know how these programs are going to be paid for. There is no excuse for not having a budget and a financial plan. These are the fundamentals of government, not shiny accessories to be discarded when they are inconvenient.

The welfare of the generations that follow us is constantly on my mind, as I'm sure it is on yours. How much government debt will they be burdened with? What will it mean for future tax rates? How will the decisions we make today affect our children and grandchildren and their children? We have been warned

repeatedly that the population is aging and the workforce is not keeping pace, but I'm not convinced that the current government is paying attention to such warnings.

Allow me to quote from a report by the Vancouver-based Fraser Institute:

Canada's fiscal challenges extend far beyond just the short-term impact of COVID-19. An aging population will continue to place upward pressure on federal finances and a new structural imbalance between revenues and spending means deficits and debt are likely to continue growing for decades to come.

A lower population growth rate coupled with increasing life expectancy means that the share of the population over 65 is projected to increase to 25.6 percent by 2068. This will require greater spending on income transfer programs to seniors like Old Age Security (OAS) and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS).

Declining population growth combined with an aging population also means that Canada will likely face a declining labour force participation rate, a slower growing labour force, and slower tax revenue growth.

Spending on elderly transfer benefits is expected to peak at about 3.2 percent of GDP by 2031, an increase of almost 0.5 percentage points from the expected spending level in 2021.

The long-term projections demonstrate that based on current trends, the federal government is not on track to balance its budget at any point during the next three decades.

Now, I should also add that I had a really great conversation with Senator Omidvar yesterday about the need for immigration reform and looking at solutions to break down barriers, because we know that the future of Canada is, in part, in the hands of immigrants and new immigrants who will be coming to our country. So I shared this quote from the Fraser Institute with the hope that we will work together on the solutions. It's really critical. There was a question from Senator Ngo about when the budget will be balanced. Well, according to the Fraser Institute, not any time soon. It will take decades because we have this growing debt and the deficit spending, which I know we must do at this time to help Canadians, but we need a plan to get back to fiscal responsibility.

Honourable senators, the report from the Fraser Institute is not only concerning, it is alarming. Before you dismiss these comments as coming from a right-wing think tank, I would remind you that the Parliamentary Budget Officer has been repeatedly issuing the same warnings over the past number of years.

The challenges that lie before us are real, and they don't end when the pandemic ends. It is imperative that we as parliamentarians take the time to look down the horizon a bit further and see what is coming. It is imperative that the decisions we make today protect not only those who we are journeying with today, but those who will follow us when our journey is finished. Thank you.

[Senator Martin]

Hon. Pierrette Ringuette (The Hon. the Acting Speaker): Senator Harder, do you have a question? Senator Martin, will you accept a question?

Senator Martin: Yes.

Hon. Peter Harder: Senator Martin, thank you for your speech. I have a question. You indicated that you and your caucus support this bill and the measures in it, although your speech articulated concerns with the broad handling. Yesterday, in the second reading vote, it was called on division, which means that you opposed it. Am I to assume, on the basis of your support for this bill, that when we have our third reading vote, you will support it?

Senator Martin: Thank you for giving me the opportunity to explain why we adopted it on division. As my speech indicates, and based on conversations that I have had with my colleagues, we support emergency benefits to Canadians at this time of need, and there are measures in this bill that do that. But we are concerned about some of the language, as I had indicated to Senator Dean, and about how CRA will retrieve some of the moneys that may be part of overpayments or other errors that we can't fully anticipate but we can think about based on what happened with the CERB program.

• (1030)

We feel this was rushed. We have not had time to fully and thoroughly examine and do the kind of work the Senate is used to doing and that we should be doing. We support the measures, but there are concerns still remaining in this bill and the fiscal irresponsibility of the government.

In terms of the plan, they have not given us all of the details. We don't have a fiscal update. We had a fiscal snapshot in the summer. The Parliamentary Budget Officer gave us his report based on numbers from September 1. It didn't include the analysis of what's in this budget. There are those concerns.

I will not answer for my colleagues at this time, except that is why we did it on division. We shall see with third reading that the support is there for the emergency measures, but we have great concerns as well.

Senator Harder: I have a supplementary question. Just to be clear, I assume it will continue to be on division? I know that you don't whip, but I would expect that might be something Senator Plett will say.

I just remind senators that in the other chamber the vote was supported.

Senator Martin: In the other place, which was done in a hybrid setting, it was my understanding that the government did not do a voice vote as we would in the chamber. There were some discussions that took place, and I was not privy to them. What I will say is what happened there, happened there, and what happens in this chamber is up to us.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Colleagues, just last week, the day after we were here in this chamber, the government tabled Bill C-2, An Act relating to economic recovery in response to COVID-19.

It was the first bill tabled in this new session after pro forma Bill C-1 and Bill S-1. This was the bill the government spent the last five weeks working on while Parliament was prorogued. It was touted as the “plan to help support Canadians through the next phase of the recovery,” which, no doubt, was combed over by armies of government lawyers and bureaucrats in order to ensure it was ready for tabling on September 24. Yet, today, we find ourselves here not considering Bill C-2, but Bill C-4. Only one week after it was tabled, Bill C-2 is now destined to die a slow and silent death on the Order Paper, stuck forever at first reading.

Imagine explaining this to a young political science student. How does this happen? The government’s flagship legislation for the new session of Parliament is dead after only five days. It was not defeated by the opposition; rather, it was abandoned by the government itself.

Was there something irreparably wrong with it? Apparently not. The only difference between Bill C-2 and Bill C-4 is that the title was changed and an additional subsection consisting of 37 words — out of 12,150 — was added to it in two different places. Changes of this magnitude hardly require starting over.

Colleagues, the only reason the bill needed to be abandoned and a new one introduced was because the Prime Minister wanted to circumvent the parliamentary process.

After boasting that he was ready to go to an election over his bold, new and phony agenda, the Prime Minister scurried away to hammer out a deal with the NDP in a series of backroom meetings and secret negotiations instead of on the floor of the House of Commons.

The leader of the NDP, Jagmeet Singh, told the country last week that in order for the Prime Minister to win his party’s support for the Throne Speech, the Prime Minister was going to have to “extend CERB and put in paid sick leave for all Canadians.” That meant permanent sick leave for all Canadians for any sickness, not just COVID.

The only problem was that the Prime Minister was not about to do any such thing. However, there were two things he did need. One, he needed a way to stall the bill so that he could ink a deal with the NDP while making it look like the Conservatives were the ones holding things up; and, two, he desperately needed the NDP’s support on the Throne Speech, because he certainly didn’t have it from the Conservatives and the Bloc Québécois, which put him in a bit of a pickle.

So, after hammering it out for hours, with periodic media updates to heighten the dramatic tension, in the end they came to an agreement. The headlines all basically read the same: “Liberals strike deal with NDP to avert federal election.”

It sounds quite successful. But what did the NDP actually walk away with? The short answer is absolutely nothing.

Bill C-2 had already provided one year of coverage for up to two weeks’ paid sick leave for every employee across the country for reasons related to COVID-19. Bill C-4 does exactly the same thing. The amendments wrestled from the Prime Minister by Jagmeet Singh himself did not make the sick leave permanent, and it did not extend the coverage due to sicknesses that are unrelated to COVID-19. The NDP got nothing. You don’t have to take my word for it. You can read it in the legislation.

Bill C-2, subsection 10(1)(f) says a person is eligible for the Canada recovery sickness benefit if:

. . . they contracted or might have contracted COVID-19 or because they isolated themselves on the advice of their employer, a medical practitioner, nurse practitioner, person in authority, government or public health authority for reasons related to COVID-19.

Bill C-4 kept this, but added subsection 10(1)(f)(ii), which tells us that a person is eligible for a Canada recovery sickness benefit if:

. . . they have underlying conditions, are undergoing treatments or have contracted other sicknesses that, in the opinion of a medical practitioner, nurse practitioner, person in authority, government or public health authority, would make them more susceptible to COVID-19

That additional subsection provided some clarification, but it did nothing to expand the parameters of the original coverage that already existed in Bill C-2.

You might say Bill C-4 added issues of underlying conditions, undergoing treatments or contracting other sicknesses to the list. This is certainly an extension of the coverage provided in Bill C-2.

There is only one problem with that. These were already included without being itemized, because Bill C-2 provided coverage for anyone who needed to isolate for any reason related to COVID-19 on the advice of a doctor, employer, et cetera. That obviously would have included issues of underlying conditions, undergoing treatments or contracting other sicknesses.

You might say Bill C-2 restricted the sick leave coverage only to situations where the person either had COVID or needed to isolate due to COVID. The NDP amendment removed this limitation.

This is incorrect. The amendment changed nothing. As I said before, if someone has underlying conditions, is undergoing treatments or has contracted other sicknesses that would make them more susceptible to COVID-19, then they would have already qualified for the coverage in Bill C-2, because it included anyone needing to self-isolate for reasons related to COVID-19.

The NDP amendment changed nothing but the title of the bill. The whole exercise was little more than political smoke and mirrors with the Prime Minister and Jagmeet Singh both pretending that the NDP won something.

• (1040)

In reality, Justin Trudeau managed to buy the support of the NDP for a bargain-basement price, since he obtained it without actually giving them anything beyond phony bragging rights.

In return, the Prime Minister dodged an election and came up with a narrative that made it sound like the Conservatives would have stalled the bill so he was forced to do a side deal with the NDP and then ram it through Parliament.

In reality, it was the Conservatives — and the Conservatives alone — that were pressing to work through the weekend and get this legislation done so there would be no hiccups, but the government refused.

The Prime Minister likes to say he wants to help Canadians but then he doesn't want to put in the work needed to get the job done on time. He knew full well that CERB was winding down in a few days and that Canadians were rightfully anxious about it, but he was happy to shut down Parliament for the weekend, go home and start the legislative process all over again on Monday with a new bill.

Colleagues, the only reason this bill was not passed weeks ago was because of this government's incompetence. Everything in this legislation could have been completed long before the end of August without all the drama.

Consider what happened. On August 18, Justin Trudeau announced he was proroguing Parliament. He claimed that he needed to launch a new legislative session that focused on the next phase of Canada's response to COVID-19.

Here's what he said:

We need a mandate from this Parliament to move forward on implementing these ambitious ideals. And it's important that we have an opportunity to debate it.

What ambitious ideals? There was nothing new in his Throne Speech. It was all regurgitated from previous announcements. The Prime Minister did not need a new mandate. He already has one and it's exactly the same as the old one. Get to work.

Quit hiding out in your cottage or your bungalow. Quit stalling and quit playing political games. Quit obstructing the investigations into your multiple scandals. Quit shutting down Parliament. Maybe even work over the weekend if that's what is required to get the job done. But instead, the PM shuts Parliament on August 18.

Then two days later on August 20, the government suddenly announces a suite of new COVID recovery benefits to replace CERB, which was coming to an end on September 26. There was only one problem. Parliament is already prorogued until September 23. As you all know, but the Prime Minister apparently forgot, a prorogued Parliament cannot pass legislation necessary to implement those new benefits.

This meant that Parliament would stand idle for five long weeks while the clock was ticking down. And when it finally resumed, the Liberal government introduced new legislation in a panic, insisting that the opposition must pass it immediately.

However, when the Conservatives agreed to work with the government and offered to sit through the weekend to get the job done, the government refused. Instead, they took the weekend off, did a little side deal with the NDP, introduced new legislation after the weekend and then invoked time allocation to ram it through.

When the Minister of Finance Chrystia Freeland was in this chamber yesterday, she left the clear impression that Bill C-4 sailed through the House of Commons and passed with everyone holding hands and singing "Kumbaya." She said:

It was actually a remarkably collegial, even friendly and convivial atmosphere. We joked across the aisle, and ultimately there was unanimous support for the bill.

Senator Harder has alluded to that two or three times in this chamber.

I'm not sure where the minister was during the debates but they were hardly convivial.

When the bill finally got to the floor of the House of Commons, Government House Leader Pablo Rodriguez said, "It is time for action. It is a time of urgency," and invoked closure with the help of the NDP. Is that what the Minister of Finance calls "collegial."

Every party except the NDP was outraged. After shutting down Parliament for five weeks, the Liberals have the gall to up and inform the house that they are ramming a \$41-billion piece of legislation through with four and a half hours of debate because "it's urgent."

This is unbelievable, colleagues. And even some Liberals are waking up to the fact that this is not the proper way to conduct the business of the nation.

In response to *The Globe and Mail* story entitled “Federal Liberals move to shut down debate on billions in pandemic-related spending”, former Liberal MP Andrew Leslie tweeted:

I wonder what the great Prime Ministers . . . of the past might think. During the entirety of the Second World War, neither the British . . . nor the Canadian . . . PMs ever sought to limit debate, especially on matters involving financial appropriations.

For once, I fully agree with a Liberal. And it took only 70 years for me to do that so I wouldn’t hold my breath waiting for the next time.

Colleagues, I’m not sure if the Liberal government understands how things function. There is a better way. If the Liberals wanted to get the legislation passed, all they needed to do was show up for work. And if they wanted to consider an NDP amendment to the legislation, there is an existing venue for that as well. It’s called Parliament.

Why does this government insist on doing backroom deals instead of having a fulsome public debate? Why does this government constantly skirt around any accountability by limiting how often Parliament sits, shutting down committees, proroguing Parliament and moving the debate on important bills into backrooms. Why is everything a rush and nobody seems to know what is going on from one day to the next?

We were here just last week and the Government Representative in the Senate decided that we did not have any government business to attend to. He insisted there was no reason to sit until October 5 and a motion to adjourn was passed accordingly. Two days later, colleagues, the Speaker of the Senate was forced to reverse that decision and call the Senate back for September 30.

Yesterday, we saw this play out again. Senator Gold struggled to answer a simple question from Senator Tannas about how confident he was that this chamber will not be called back before October 27 to pass some emergency measure. Senator Gold was unable to provide us any such reassurance.

You might ask, “How can the government leader in the Senate not know what the government is doing? How could he not know last week that there was some urgency to Bill C-2 and that the expectation of the government was to pass it this week?”

Colleagues, I’m glad you asked, because I can answer. It’s because this government is incompetent and despite his very best efforts, Senator Gold cannot change that. I suspect that the reason we are told one thing on Thursday and another thing on Friday is because Senator Gold is being told one thing on Thursday and another thing on Friday. It’s not because Senator Gold changed his mind; it’s because the Prime Minister cannot make up his mind.

This government reminds me of a news story I read recently about a driver in Alberta who blew through a police radar at 150 kilometres per hour in a 110 kilometre per hour zone.

What was even more alarming was that the police officer could not see anyone driving the vehicle as it sped past. Apparently, the driver had put his Tesla on autopilot, reclined his seat and decided to have a snooze. It wasn’t until the police officer pulled up behind him and turned on his siren that the driver woke up and realized what was going on.

This is frightening, colleagues.

It’s bad enough when someone falls asleep behind the wheel, but when a person actually makes the decision to check out for a while and have a little nap while he is rocketing down the highway in a 2,100-kilogram vehicle, that person should not be driving at all.

• (1050)

That is how I feel about this government. It’s like they are hurtling down the highway and the prime minister is fast asleep behind the wheel, completely unaware that he’s about the hit gravel at 150 kilometres per hour. The only problem is we’re all along for the ride. We look out the window and see the asphalt is coming to an end up ahead and wonder, “Is anyone paying attention?”

Colleagues, it’s not just that CERB was coming to an end while the government was asleep at the wheel. The clock was winding down on other measures as well. For example, the spending authority for COVID measures was due to expire on September 30. The spout where the money comes from was about to be shut off because the Public Health Events of National Concern Payments Act was about to be automatically repealed.

You may recall Bill C-13, the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act, included section 10, which said the following:

The Public Health Events of National Concern Payments Act is repealed.

Section 11 then said:

Section 10 comes into force on September 30, 2020.

Section 10 repealed the Act, but section 11 determined that section 10 would not come into force until the end of September.

This was the sunset portion of the bill that was written into the legislation after the Liberals got caught trying to give themselves unilateral power to tax and spend without parliamentary approval until the end of 2021.

I have no idea when the government realized that they were missing an important deadline, but at some point someone must have flipped the siren on and the government woke up.

You see, the problem was that despite their enthusiasm about spending taxpayers’ money, the government was not going to get it all out of the door before the deadline. There was still \$17.14 billion that needed to be dispersed. Now, even I am shocked that, when given six months to spend \$325 billion, the big-spending Liberals could not pull it off and needed more time to write the cheques. Be that as it may, section 11 of the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act posed a problem for the Liberals. On September 30, it was going to activate the coming-

into-force of section 10, which would repeal the entire act, leaving the remaining \$17 billion unspent because the government would now be without parliamentary spending authority.

The legislative summary for Bill C-4 provided by the government says:

A failure to extend the legislation would disrupt these payments, with harmful consequences for people's lives, families and businesses. Specifically:

- Payments for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, and the Canada Emergency Student Benefit would no longer reach Canadians;
- Payments for critical orders of personal protective equipment (PPE) would be put at risk; and
- Safe Restart Agreement funding for provinces and territories to support testing, contact tracing, and PPE would be delayed.

Obviously, this little oversight had to be addressed, so Part 3 of Bill C-2 — now Bill C-4 — was drafted to include clause 12, which reads as follows:

Section 11 of the *COVID-19 Emergency Response Act* is replaced by the following:

11 Section 10 comes into force on December 31, 2020.

This clause would postpone the existing repeal date and give the government what it needed to keep spending the money allocated, provided Bill C-4 received Royal Assent prior to September 30.

Now, the problem was that because the government had dithered so long with a completely unnecessary prorogation, they didn't know if they could get the bill passed to postpone the repeal before the clock ran out.

They needed a plan B just in case they needed the September 30 deadline because, if they did miss the deadline, then by the time Bill C-4 was being passed the Payments Act would have already been repealed.

In the event that happened, they needed to figure out how to un-repeal the repeal without endangering the postponement of their original repeal, just in case the bill actually did not pass before September 30 and the repeal was already postponed.

Does your head hurt yet? That's not COVID. That's what happens when this government is asleep at the wheel.

I'm not sure if I should send kudos or sympathies to the government lawyers who worked on Part 3 of this bill, but the government's inability to do something right the first time, and their inability to do it on time the second time, meant their lawyers had to perform legislative acrobatics to get the job done and cover off the various possibilities.

In case they missed the September deadline, they added subclause 13(2) which reads as follows:

If this Act receives Royal Assent after September 30, 2020, then

(a) the headings before section 10 of this Act and sections 10 to 12 of this Act are replaced by the following:

Colleagues, I'm not going to take time to wade through everything that follows that subclause because, first of all, it will make your head explode, and, secondly, you have the bill in front of you. But what happens next is that the act goes on to provide new text that will replace the old text on the previous page of the same act in the event that the date of the repeal has come and gone before this bill is passed.

In other words, because of this government's incompetence they had to introduce legislation to amend legislation that included an amendment to amend the proposed amendment, even before it is amended.

This is what happens when you don't show up for work. Things get complicated.

Colleagues, it was not just the payment authority provided by the Public Health Events of National Concern Payments Act that was repealed on September 30. There is a long list of amendments that were made by Bill C-13 that was automatically repealed at the end of September. They've already happened.

For example, Bill C-13, the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act, amended the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation Act to allow the Minister of Finance to increase the deposit insurance coverage limit. This amendment was repealed on September 30.

Bill C-13 also amended the Export Development Act to permit the Minister of Finance to determine the amount of EDC's authorized capital, as well as certain limits applicable to EDC. This amendment was repealed on September 30.

The amendment to the Financial Administration Act, which authorized the Minister of Finance to borrow money for certain payments without the authorization of the Governor-in-Council, was repealed.

The commissioner's ability under the Patent Act to:

... authorize the Government of Canada and any person specified in a patent application to make, construct, use and sell a patented invention to the extent necessary to respond to the public health emergency ...

— was also repealed.

The amendments to the Canada Student Loans Act and the Canada Student Financial Assistance Act and the Apprentice Loans Act, which provided that no interest was payable on student loans and no amounts on the principal or interest was to be required by the borrower, were also repealed, and the temporary ability of the minister to make interim orders was repealed.

Colleagues, I have no idea if the government intended to allow all of these amendments to be repealed or not. Because when you keep seeing the speeding car go by with no one at the wheel, you begin to lose confidence that there is actually someone paying attention.

We will know soon enough what the government missed, however, by what “emergency” legislation they rush into Parliament next in order to paper over their latest lack of oversight and planning. Based on this government’s track record of incompetence and disdain for Parliament, I would not be surprised if that legislation arrives sooner rather than later.

Colleagues, the incompetence of this government concerns me greatly. When you factor in that it is doing deals with the NDP in order to stay in power, my concern is amplified.

We already have a government that has no regard for deficits, debt or budgets. It has no understanding that every penny it spends must come from taxpayers sooner or later, that government debt is everyone’s debt, and that jobs are created by businesses not government. It doesn’t understand the difference between an investment and an expenditure. It is economically illiterate, and it thinks that it can spend with impunity.

This government appears willing to let Jagmeet Singh be the prime minister any time it is necessary to keep the government in office for a little while longer.

Colleagues, the Liberal governments were bad enough when they were governing from the centre. This government has moved so far to the left that they are now driving on the wrong side of the road. The only thing worse than a driver who is asleep behind the wheel is one that is asleep and driving on the wrong side of the road.

• (1100)

Today we will be voting on a bill that will add more than \$41 billion to our national debt, and yet the government has not provided us with either a budget or a fiscal plan. The only snapshot we received was released 87 days ago by the Finance Minister, who has since been fired. Today we will be voting on a bill that will release \$17 billion in assistance for Canadians who need this money; spending that was previously approved by Parliament but left stranded because of this government’s disdain for Parliament. These things concern many of us.

In spite of them, today the Conservatives will be allowing — in answer to Senator Harder’s comments — this bill to pass because it contains benefits that are vital to Canadians, but we have concerns, colleagues. As Senator Martin pointed out, passing something on division does not mean we are opposed to the principle of what we have to do. Canadians need this money. However, I will answer Senator Harder’s questions, and yes, we will be passing this on division, clearly.

The government ran out the clock before this bill even arrived in this chamber. In the last two days, not a single penny of COVID-19 emergency spending authorized under the Public Health Events of National Concern Payments Act has moved due to the mismanagement of this government. Not a single penny can flow under the new benefits until this bill receives Royal Assent. We, the Conservatives, will not stand in the way of this. We will help get this out the door.

Honourable senators, one thing is clear: This pandemic is bad enough in itself, but its impact on Canadians has been multiplied by the incompetence and disdain for Parliament demonstrated by this Liberal government. That, colleagues, is truly regrettable. Thank you.

Hon. Donna Dasko: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Bill C-4 at third reading. First, I want to thank our colleague Senator Dean for taking on the task of sponsoring this piece of legislation.

Colleagues, here we are considering another piece of legislation — the seventh piece, according to Senator Harder — introduced to address the COVID-19 pandemic. I think back to the first pieces of legislation that built on existing program structures, then the next pieces of legislation that created new programs and income supports for individuals and businesses, then again to another round of legislation fixing the gaps and extending these new programs. Now we have another bill to fix, further extend and create new support programs in an effort that will hopefully take us to the end of the pandemic.

The legislation before us provides details of a support plan first announced by the government in August. The termination of the CERB on September 26 would have left many Canadians without support, and this bill will fill the gap for many who would not otherwise have been covered by Employment Insurance. Bill C-4 is an omnibus bill that implements a variety of benefits programs meant to carry Canadians through the foreseeable future of the pandemic. Included are the Canadian recovery benefit, which provides 26 weeks of support at \$500 a week for those experiencing unemployment or underemployment; the Canada recovery sickness benefit, which ensures all Canadians have access to sick leave; and the Canada recovery caregiving benefit, amounting to \$500 per household to support those caring for family members with COVID or children who cannot attend school or daycare due to the virus.

In addition to benefits programs, the legislation includes amendments to the Canada Labour Code that facilitate sick leave in the case that an individual or someone in their family contracts COVID-19. With the recent surge in COVID-19 cases and the uneven economic recovery, it is inevitable that this legislation will not provide support for everyone in need, nor indeed for everyone affected by the pandemic. Still, it is very much needed and it is worthy of our support.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a health crisis and an economic crisis. All Canadians have had their lives changed. People have given up seeing family and friends, given up life in the public space, given up going to movies, restaurants, cultural events and travel. Canadians have had to work from home, practice physical distancing, wear masks and more. But while we all have been affected in some way, the most vulnerable among us have suffered the most, both from the health crisis and the economic crisis. Young people have lost opportunities that they have worked so hard for. Those in the service sector — especially retail and hospitality — many in low-wage jobs, including many women, have lost their jobs. Seniors in long-term care have suffered disproportionate loss of life. Where data are available, we have learned that racial minorities have experienced higher levels of virus infection; so too have those in low-income households and those living in crowded spaces, as well as essential workers, many in low-wage situations. COVID-19 has not been the great equalizer, it has rather made existing inequalities worse.

Now we are trying to build back and build back better, as the government so often says, even as we battle the second wave of infections. The Speech from the Throne last week outlined a great many measures. The government promised to invest in health care, create 1 million jobs, direct funding toward housing and infrastructure, and inject capital into many other areas of the economy. Two commitments there caught my attention, specifically the promises related to long-term care and the promises related to child care. On long-term care, the Governor General stated that:

. . . one of the greatest tragedies of this pandemic is the lives lost in long-term care homes. Elders deserve to be safe, respected, and live in dignity.

In our study into the government's response to the pandemic at the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, we heard calls for improved training, better salaries, more staff, and better monitoring and oversight in senior care facilities across Canada. We also heard from experts that the federal government should create change by making funding to the provinces contingent upon improved regulations, standards and information sharing. I was pleased to hear in the speech that the federal government intends to work with the provinces and territories to set new national standards for long-term care and also do more to ensure that Canada's elderly stay in their homes longer.

With regard to child care, I was also pleased to hear the Governor General announce that:

. . . the Government will make a significant, long-term, sustained investment to create a Canada-wide early learning and childcare system.

Honourable senators, it has been 50 years since the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada made it clear that access to affordable child care is one of the biggest hurdles standing in the way of women's economic equality. When the numbers have come out in recent months, the reality of that inequality was laid out very plainly. Women represented 70% of the job losses in Canada among workers aged 25 to 54 this past March. As recently as June, mothers of school-aged children

were less likely to be employed when compared to fathers of school-aged children. While a national child care strategy is not a silver bullet, it is a terrific start, as are programs like the Canada recovery caregiving benefit, which acknowledge that women disproportionately play the role of family caregivers.

Meaningful change will require federal leadership. It is incumbent upon the federal government to ensure that any agreements they reach with the provinces, in return for federal dollars, set standards for these programs, including better information collection and sharing across jurisdictions, monitoring and even sanctions.

• (1110)

The recent arrangements made with the provinces in the Safe Restart Agreement in return for \$19 billion in federal funds do not inspire me with confidence. As mentioned earlier in my question to Senator Gold, I have looked at these agreements. For example, when it comes to long-term care, I see some mention of increased staffing levels in some of the agreements, but I do not see mention of the standards that are so needed and that have been called for by experts to ensure health and safety in seniors and long-term-care facilities. So that is one tremendous concern that I have when I look at those agreements.

Here is another concern: When it comes to data management in long-term care, across the health domains that are of interest to the federal government and in the domains to which they have directed federal dollars, I see some mentions of data-sharing across the provinces but no mention of sharing with the federal government, with the exception of the case of one province, British Columbia.

The federal government is funding data-sharing but seems not to be getting any data for its important purposes. That is what I see when I look at these agreements. Furthermore, I do not see in these agreements the ability to monitor results. I also see no sanctions or penalties if a province fails to act in respect of these agreements.

Maybe there is fine print. I would be very happy to be proven wrong, because I want to see change, believe me.

Without these provisions, how can we be confident we will indeed improve these programs, help those people in need and build back better? Senators, I support the legislation before us today, but let us not lose sight of how to achieve the significant and long-term change that we seek. Thank you very much.

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre J. Daphond: Honourable senators, I would like to begin by extending my deepest condolences to the family of Joyce Echaquan, especially to this young mother's seven children, and to the Atikamekw of Manawan community.

I was born and raised in Joliette, and I worked for many years at the hospital where Ms. Echaquan died. I am shocked at what happened, and it fills me with sadness.

Ms. Echaquan was a seriously ill woman in need of medical care and compassion, but she was treated with contempt and disdain because she was an Indigenous woman. Racism like that is unacceptable. Sadly, it is an expression of deeper systemic racism. The whole truth about this incident must come out. Let us hope it will result in changed attitudes and genuine reconciliation.

Now I would like to comment briefly on the context surrounding the passage of Bill C-4.

[English]

Since June 2019, the Senate has seen its activities substantially reduced. The summer recess was followed by a general election, a slow recall of Parliament and the pandemic. As a result, this chamber has sat for only 128 hours over 32 days since June 2019. During the same period, the House of Commons has sat for 344 hours over 50 days. At the committee level, the differences are even more striking.

COVID-19, the dynamics of the minority government in the other place and our inability to reach consensus on ways to carry out our functions in the previous session have transformed — momentarily, I hope — our institution into what the leader of the Canadian Senators Group, Senator Tannas, has rightly described as a rubber-stamp body. We need hybrid sittings as a step to resume our regular functions with the full participation of all senators.

[Translation]

Unfortunately, we are once again being asked to ratify this bill speedily without holding long debates or undertaking a thorough parliamentary committee analysis. This is a major bill for expenditures in excess of \$51 billion.

[English]

I guess I am close to agreeing with Senators Martin and Plett on this. Maybe it's because I come from Joliette, the home riding of Roch La Salle, a family friend.

[Translation]

During the first wave of the pandemic, the government had to support Canadians by rapidly implementing temporary benefits such as the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, or CERB, and the Canada Emergency Student Benefit, or CESB. Unfortunately, CERB was not coordinated with EI, which caused glitches in the system. This meant that workers who were eligible for EI were

applying for CERB instead, since it provided \$500 a week for up to 26 weeks, whereas payments from EI would have been lower and also taxed at the source.

CESB also contained a startling clause. A student who earned \$1,001 in a one-month period would lose the entire \$1,500 benefit, whereas a student who earned \$999 would keep the whole thing. Furthermore, in practice, these two benefits had an adverse impact on employment. In Quebec, staff at long-term care homes quit their jobs so they could claim CERB.

Employers in the restaurant sector could not recruit enough student workers this summer, so they had to reduce their business hours. Business groups across the country complained of similar unintended consequences, and Senator Martin also talked about them.

[English]

In this regard, we can learn some lessons from what happened south of the border. There, the U.S. Department of Labor provides unemployment benefits to eligible workers who become unemployed through a joint state-federal program. Each state administers a separate unemployment insurance program, but all states must follow the federal guidelines.

In response to the pandemic, Congress adopted various measures, including the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act. Pursuant to this legislation and the billions of dollars attached to it, states are providing pandemic unemployment assistance up to the end of this year to individuals who are self-employed, seeking part-time employment or who otherwise would not qualify for regular unemployment compensation. Like regular unemployment benefits, individuals receiving assistance must act upon any referrals for suitable employment. In other words, it is intended to provide coverage during a temporary lack of work, as an integral part of the tools available to manage the labour market during the pandemic.

On the other hand, in Canada, CERB and CESB were launched without much coordination with the provinces and lack a requirement to accept suitable employment, or a strong incentive to work or improve skills. The programs were not conceived as part of a larger framework designed to provide access to skills, training and unemployment supports to help the beneficiaries to get back to work.

• (1120)

As our unemployment rate went up from 5.5% in January to 13.7% in May, close to 9 million Canadians applied for CERB, and about 8.6 million received it at one point from the Canada Revenue Agency, helping them to pay their bills during a challenging time and reducing stress on millions of families.

Because of the features that I just described, some have seen in CERB nothing but a fiscal measure to support income. Many, including members of this chamber, have been advocating the replacement of the CERB, which is soon coming to an end, with either a universal basic income for all Canadians regardless of income level, or, at least, a guaranteed minimum income for Canadians below a certain income level.

In July, the Parliamentary Budget Officer estimated the cost of a guaranteed basic income for a six-month period starting this October at between \$46 billion and \$96 billion, depending on the applicable reduction rate. These costs could be offset by approximately \$15 billion by repealing all existing federal and provincial refundable and non-refundable tax credits, such as the caregiver tax credit, the disability tax credit and the GST credit.

The response of the premiers to the Speech from the Throne has clearly indicated that provincial governments would oppose any federal initiative designed to replace or alter the social programs they currently run. As Senator Harder said last night, Canada is a federation, and one of our functions is to represent our provinces and regions in this federal Parliament.

In my view, putting in place a guaranteed income is not a realistic option without provincial participation, except maybe for Aboriginal peoples. However, a major reform of the Employment Insurance system is within the sole bailiwick of the federal government.

[Translation]

In the Speech from the Throne, the government recognized that this pandemic has shown that Canada needs an EI system for the 21st century, including for the self-employed and those in the gig economy.

As pointed out by many experts and economists, including our colleague, Senator Bellemare, it must be acknowledged that the EI system has become overly restrictive and is incapable of responding to emergencies that significantly affect employment in Canada.

[English]

In the Speech from the Throne, the government also announced that, over the coming months, the Employment Insurance system will become the sole delivery mechanism for employment benefits, including for workers who would not have qualified for EI before the pandemic. This is a very important announcement for the Canadian gig economy.

Honourable senators, we should be proactive in this area through studies and committee hearings with experts in order to suggest an appropriate process and to consider options.

In my opinion, such a reform should not be left to the executive, subject only to negotiations between a minority government and one or two dancing partners in the House of Commons.

Incidentally, through recent changes in regulations, the government has already amended the Employment Insurance system in order to transition no fewer than 2.8 million Canadians from CERB to EI benefits.

The so-called simplified EI program provides for the following temporary measures: to help claimants reach the minimum threshold for EI, they are given a one-time credit of 300 insurable hours for claims for regular benefits — job loss — and 480 insurable hours for claims for special benefits such as sickness, maternity and/or parental leave, compassionate care —

in other words, only 120 hours of work are now required to qualify; the minimum EI benefit is increased to \$500 per week to align with the expiring CERB and the new Canada recovery benefit; workers are entitled to at least 26 weeks of regular benefits; the use of a minimum employment rate of 13.1% for all economic regions in order to lower the hours required to qualify, a measure effective for one year, starting on August 9, 2020; and a freeze of employees' and employers' premium rates at the 2020 level.

Overall, these measures represent an additional charge to the EI system of over \$10 billion.

In addition, the government will add \$1.5 billion to the \$3.4 billion already provided to provinces and territories under the Labour Market Development Agreements and the Workforce Development Agreements in 2020-21 to retain workers. The government will also significantly scale up the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy to provide more paid experience next year for young Canadians.

Finally, the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy paid to employers is also extended right through next summer.

Clearly, the whole government strategy is now focused on labour market recovery and the creation of new jobs. Unfortunately, a second wave of COVID-19 is striking Canadians while the reform of Employment Insurance is just beginning.

Hence, Bill C-4, which, as stated by Senator Dean yesterday, provides for the three temporary benefits of \$500 per week: a Canada recovery benefit to workers who are self-employed or not eligible for EI and who cannot work due to COVID, or those whose income has dropped by at least 50%; a Canada recovery sickness benefit for workers who are sick and must self-isolate; and a Canada recovery caregiving benefit for Canadians unable to work because of the need to attend to a child or a relative.

The cost of these three new temporary benefits are significant: \$24 billion for the CRB only.

[Translation]

The Hon. the Acting Speaker: Senator Dalphond, your time is up. Are you asking for five more minutes?

[English]

Senator Dalphond: One minute will be enough.

[Translation]

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

[English]

Senator Dalphond: Thank you. Contrary to the previous temporary benefits, the new ones are clearly linked to the labour market. For example, Canadians receiving the new CRB must be available and looking for work and must accept work where it is reasonable to do so.

I am also glad to see that Bill C-4 provides for a gradual reduction of the CRB beyond a certain level of earned salary instead of a complete loss of benefits. This should be an incentive for self-employed individuals and other workers to focus on resuming work, including part-time, as soon as possible.

[Translation]

On a final point, I am wondering whether single self-employed individuals whose incomes have fallen by \$40,000 or \$50,000 over the past few months will still be able to collect benefits. I'm not convinced that this expense is absolutely necessary, and a committee study could have explored that further.

To sum up, honourable senators, just like all the parties in the House of Commons, I do support the passage of this bill, but not without lamenting the fact that the government did not give us an opportunity to examine it carefully. In that respect, I support the arguments made by many of my Conservative caucus colleagues, with whom it has not taken me seven years to agree.

I urge you to pass Bill C-4, which will give Canadians the legislation they need, and I hope we can move quickly and decisively toward a comprehensive reform of Canada's employment insurance system to bring it in line with the new economy.

Let's make sure the Senate and its deliberations create added value. The government needs this. As we have seen, some programs appear to have been put together on the fly. The government needs the Senate's sober second thought.

Thank you, *meegwetch*.

• (1130)

[English]

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Bill C-4. While I agree that Canadians need support and do not want to stand in the way of millions of Canadians getting the help they need to survive this pandemic, I must join colleagues in this chamber and the other place in lamenting the speed at which we have been made to consider this bill. Yesterday's cursory discussion of the bill in Committee of the Whole left many questions unasked or unanswered. Like others, I would have preferred not to have had Parliament prorogued for six weeks this summer so we could have given close consideration to the programs and policy changes that are required to truly support Canadians.

This help goes far beyond the \$500 per week stopgap and the 10 days of sick leave that are being proposed. The COVID measures we need to be talking about, the ones that I wish were a

part of this bill, are the ones that look at restarting our economy. I would have liked to see measures that address the needs of business owners and employers in this country, and in Nunavut in particular, who need federal support to stay afloat or keep their people employed.

I know that many Canadians would prefer to make their full salary rather than try to survive off of \$2,000 per month, which does not go far when you have to factor in rent, groceries and utilities. Goods are getting more expensive due to interruptions in the supply chain, while the prices of services are rising due to the increased costs of doing business in a pandemic. The bills add up, and people need to have the ability to make a livable wage.

Some work has been done to fill the gap. The Government of Nunavut and local hamlets have worked hard with Nunavut employers to help ensure that Nunavummiut are supported during these difficult and uncertain times.

But seeing as the territory is made up of 25 fly-in-only communities, Nunavut has mandated that only Nunavut residents and essential service workers may enter the territory. It is mandatory to isolate for 14 days in an approved designated facility before flying North, with very few exceptions for essential workers. We understand that. With our desperate housing situation, lack of resources and infrastructure and a disproportionately high percentage of underlying health conditions among the population, the spread of COVID-19 in our communities could be devastating. That is why mining companies have had to require Nunavut residents working at their sites to stay home.

Most of these companies have continued to generously pay a percentage of the wages for Nunavummiut, understanding the importance for them to continue to provide for their families. They have even worked out wage-sharing programs and new community work programs with hamlets to enable employees to make their full salaries, and many Nunavut mine workers have even had to move south to keep their jobs on a fly-in basis.

While inventive and laudable, it shouldn't be necessary for companies to bear this burden alone. Different sectors and different regions need different types of supports. We must do the work required to ensure that the decisions we make in Ottawa meet the needs of various businesses around the country.

This is why I launched a survey last week for Nunavut businesses. I am doing the work to ensure that the government hears directly from businesses across the territories. We need to know what is working, what's not working and what else is needed.

I am already gaining valuable insight, like the fact that the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, the Regional Relief and Recovery Fund and CanNor support for businesses in the territories are the most accessed federal supports. However, I am also learning that there is an average decline of 60% in revenue among respondents, and while some were able to access these programs, many were not due to not meeting requirements, being considered too high risk for loan programs or a cumbersome and unduly bureaucratic application process.

This type of quantitative data is crucial to smart policy decisions, and I would like to thank Senators Anderson and Bovey for offering to launch similar surveys in their regions. I think that it will help immensely in giving a snapshot of the types of barriers to survival being faced by northern businesses.

One sector that I already know is facing extreme hardship, which I mentioned in Question Period today, is the hotel industry. It cannot be overlooked that these entities are either Indigenous-owned or provide much-needed jobs and security to the Indigenous people of the North.

In the case of Arctic Co-operatives Limited, for instance, their hotels are spread out over 20 communities in Nunavut and N.W.T. In 2017, the co-op paid \$32.5 million in wages and benefits, and co-op businesses paid \$8 million in patronage dividends to more than 65,000 local co-op members. In Nunavut, this is directly supporting and benefitting Inuit.

Yet despite their importance to the Nunavut economy, hotels are facing the need to permanently shut down. The strict travel restrictions that I mentioned earlier and the lack of inter-territorial travel — which is generally prohibitively expensive anyway — have led to unsustainable vacancy rates. Appeals for help to the federal government have not resulted in any meaningful action.

The fact is, colleagues, that while some sectors have received support, such as the airline industry — and I am grateful for federal and territorial support for vital northern air carriers — there are still many sectors of our economy that are hurting. In addition to the struggling hotels, there are non-revenue-generating companies that have been unable to access any federal support. There are small businesses that have had to close. There are small outfitters and tourist businesses in Nunavut that are unsure if they will ever return to pre-COVID revenues.

These are the Canadians that I wish we were able to help today. These are the types of measures that I wish we could debate as part of this bill. But sadly, we only have Band-Aid solutions.

When the Senate last met to consider these COVID-related programs, I spoke of the expressed need I had often heard from Nunavut employers who were having difficulties finding workers. They told me that there must be incentives to work built into the program. Finally, the government has listened, and those concerns are reflected in this bill, namely the requirement that recipients be ready to accept reasonable employment when it is offered.

I also lamented that despite there being many deserving applicants in Nunavut, loose eligibility criteria and a lack of vigilance for fraudulent applications have actually had documented negative social impacts, especially for persons vulnerable to addictions. This has finally been addressed up front in the bill, as Senator Dean outlined yesterday.

Support in the amount of \$2000 a month may be an immediate help, but it is not a long-term solution. Canadians need to know that they can go back to work and enjoy the same financial

security that they did before the pandemic. What are we doing to give them back that comfort? How will we save their businesses and get their employees earning their full wages again?

Honourable senators, I wish that these were the questions we were answering with this bill, but sadly, they are not. I will vote in support of this bill, but I protest that these other measures are not a part of it.

Thank you. *Qujannamiik.*

Hon. Rosa Galvez: Colleagues, as we gather to hastily adopt Bill C-4 in a brand-new legislative session, we cannot forget the dire point in time in which we find ourselves. The second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic is spreading like forest fires throughout Canada, something that has been a certitude since last March. We should have been better prepared for the next waves, and we could have avoided more infections and deaths.

Long-term care facilities bore the brunt of the first wave of the pandemic in Canada, with more than 70 per cent of deaths occurring in those over the age of 80, about twice the average rate of other developed countries. Letting our elderly people continue to die may one day be considered criminal negligence or willful ignorance, and they are not the only victims of our inability to truly plan long-term care. We are also failing at taking long-term care of the natural living systems that keep us all alive and healthy.

• (1140)

Bill C-4 will provide new, welcomed sick leave and a recovery benefit for independent workers as well as extend emergency support measures. As we adopt the eighth emergency legislation to date to address the pandemic, I note the change in key words used in each piece of legislation. Back in March, we were in emergency-response mode, whereas Bill C-4 concerns itself, at last, with recovery, starting with the creation of the Canada recovery benefit to support the employment system.

I am heartened that Bill C-4 extends specific funds for some of the most vulnerable among us, like the homeless, temporary foreign workers, Indigenous communities and food banks, to name a few. But those earning less than \$5,000 per year, the poorest among us — whom we can see very close by on Rideau Street — will still fall through the cracks. Hopefully, the government will finally conclude and seize the opportunity to establish a permanent, guaranteed livable income as an efficient way to integrate financial assistance that covers everybody, as more than 50 senators under the leadership of Senators Pate and Lankin have been advocating for since the beginning of the crisis. That call was then echoed by the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance in its interim report on the COVID-19 economic response, which recommended that the government study the concept.

Undeniably, COVID-19 is providing time and context for in-depth reflections about fundamental questions: how did we get to this point, how do we prevent future pandemics, how do we reset our economy to be resilient and how do we infuse future generations with hope?

[Translation]

Prime Minister Trudeau said in April that just because we are dealing with a health crisis it does not mean we can neglect the environmental crisis. In the spring, we found out that a new group of ministers had been created to deliberate on the economic recovery. The Economic and Fiscal Snapshot of July 8 states the following:

This is an opportunity for Canada to build back better through investments in a strong, inclusive and green recovery

In the Speech from the Throne, the government mostly repeated its old commitments, promising that there would be a plan in a few months. Indeed, we must have a detailed plan with clear deadlines and objectives along with a budget organizational chart. How can they claim to want to build infrastructure without a plan or resources? How will they convince skeptics without showing them the positive economic, social and environmental benefits or even how any of this will be paid for? By doing things this way, the government is giving skeptics, polluters and corporate profiteers an opportunity to obstruct the transition to a low-carbon economy and the development of a 21st century industry and workforce, delaying and jeopardizing the progress, competitiveness and prosperity of Canadians relative to the advances being made in other developed countries.

We can understand certain necessary measures to protect the environment, public health and human rights being put on hold during a global pandemic, but how do they explain that the actions making matters worse are still going ahead?

[English]

As a reaction to the Throne Speech, students and workers across the country took to the streets last Friday to protest the federal government's slow action on their earlier green promises.

A group of more than 100 economists and energy experts from across Canada, including Canada Research Chairs, a former National Energy Board economist and the former chair of BC Hydro, have recently sent letters to the federal government outlining their concerns about the economic viability of the now \$12.6 billion Trans Mountain expansion project in light of COVID-19.

According to *The Globe and Mail*, the government has never provided a public cost-benefit analysis to justify one of the largest public investments it has made to date, at a time when international actors have already realized how risky those investments are.

Colleagues, we must do more to address the social injustices revealed and aggravated by COVID-19.

When we come back, we need to study, and hopefully adopt, specific policies to address the growing wealth inequality in this country, which has only worsened during the crisis. Since the March 2020 COVID-19 lockdown, the total wealth of the 20 richest Canadians has increased by \$37 billion. The latest polling indicates 82% of Canadians believe that the wealth of Canada's richest is better off or has not been impacted by the pandemic, while most think the economic and social well-being of youth, racialized Canadians and women have been negatively impacted, and that it is at least important to create or increase taxes for the richest Canadians to recover from the COVID-19 crisis cost.

We can build on the political will of the last few years to increase taxes on the 1% to finally address tax loopholes and tax havens through which we lose billions in tax revenues every year, billions which could help pay for a fair recovery.

From calculations based on a recent report of the Parliamentary Budget Officer on wealth distribution, a 10% tax on the 13,800 households with wealth above \$20 million would yield \$56.1 billion in revenue in its first year, and could repay the entire COVID-19 direct emergency funding to date in less than five years. This crisis is an opportunity to robustly implement tax justice and pay for the recovery without resorting to harmful austerity measures.

Bill C-4 addresses immediate needs for unemployed workers falling through the cracks of our regular social safety net, but does not offer a permanent solution and vision to support all workers on an ongoing basis and through the future waves that are very likely coming.

I challenge our government to propose revolutionary social programs that will be able to address workers' needs in good times and in bad, without having to resort to emergency measures during the next pandemic.

[Translation]

I support the passage of Bill C-4. However, like many members, I am asking that you work together to seize the opportunity for change thrust upon us by this unfortunate COVID-19 crisis. Canadians' expectations for future budgets and bills could not be any higher. Thank you, *meegwetch*.

[English]

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan: Honourable senators, I didn't intend to speak to Bill C-4, but as I listened to the debate I felt there was one group left out and thought it was my duty to stand up and speak about this group: those who come to Canada as refugees and those who are new Canadians but don't have all the health benefits. They have fallen through the cracks. If you look at the data where mapping has been done, some of these vulnerable groups have been most impacted by COVID. It's our duty as Canadians to keep in mind those who come looking for a better life and safety.

I realize that most often they fall through the cracks because we're not a world bank and nobody thinks about them. But we senators look at things differently; we have a broader view and we have more, dare I say, compassion. We need to keep these groups in mind, so I thought I would bring that to your attention because I have spoken on this internationally, and people have reached out and said, yes, these groups have fallen through the cracks, unfortunately. But they are here, and what happens to them, ultimately, if they don't have good health or if COVID is spreading among these communities, will impact all of us, so we need to keep them in mind. Thank you very much.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Agreed.

An Hon. Senator: On division.

(Motion agreed to and bill read third time and passed, on division.)

• (1150)

[*Translation*]

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION ADOPTED

Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate), pursuant to notice of October 1, 2020, moved:

That, when the Senate next adjourns after the adoption of this motion, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, October 27, 2020, at 2 p.m.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

[Senator Ataullahjan]

[*English*]

PARLAMERICAS

GATHERING OF THE PARLIAMENTARY NETWORK ON CLIMATE CHANGE, AUGUST 8-9, 2019—REPORT TABLED

Leave having been given to revert to Tabling of Reports from Interparliamentary Delegations:

Hon. Rosa Galvez: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the ParlAmericas concerning the Fourth Gathering of the Parliamentary Network on Climate Change, held in Paramaribo, Suriname, from August 8 to 9, 2019.

UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE (COP 25), DECEMBER 1 TO 3, 2019—REPORT TABLED

Hon. Rosa Galvez: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the ParlAmericas concerning the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 25), held in Madrid, Spain, from December 1 to 3, 2019.

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

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

That the sitting be suspended to await the announcement of Royal Assent, to reassemble at the call of the chair with a five minute bell.

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.)

(The sitting of the Senate was suspended.)

• (1230)

(The sitting of the Senate was resumed.)

[*Translation*]

ROYAL ASSENT

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

RIDEAU HALL

October 2, 2020

Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that the Right Honourable Julie Payette, Governor General of Canada, signified royal assent by written declaration to the bill listed in the Schedule to this letter on the 2nd day of October, 2020, at 12:08 p.m.

Yours sincerely,

Assunta Di Lorenzo

Secretary to the Governor General and Herald Chancellor

The Honourable
The Speaker of the Senate
Ottawa

Bill Assented to Friday, October 2, 2020:

An Act relating to certain measures in response to COVID-19 (*Bill C-4, Chapter 12, 2020*)

(At 12:38 p.m., the Senate was continued until Tuesday, October 27, 2020, at 2 p.m.)

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