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The Honourable GEORGE J. FUREY,
Speaker

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Debates Services: Josée Boisvert, National Press Building, Room 831, Tel. 613-219-3775
Publications Centre: Kim Laughren, National Press Building, Room 926, Tel. 343-550-5002

THE SENATE

Monday, June 21, 2021

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

Prayers.

[Translation]

SENATORS' STATEMENTS

COVID-19 VACCINE ROLLOUT

Hon. Jean-Guy Dagenais: Honourable senators, since we will soon be taking leave of each other for the summer break, I want to share with you some thoughts I have had over the past few weeks about the pandemic that we have been and are still going through.

I will soon be able to get my second dose of the vaccine, which, in theory, should immunize me against COVID-19. I say "in theory" because I'm worried we will soon learn that we will have to get this type of vaccine every year. However, it is not so much the effectiveness of the vaccine or the efficiency of those on the ground who are responsible for this mass vaccination effort that I want to talk to you about. The situation is clearly improving in Ontario and Alberta, where the third wave of the pandemic had a devastating impact. What I really want to talk to you about is what happened in my province of Quebec.

First, I believe that, on behalf of all my fellow Quebecers, we need to commend Premier François Legault and his health minister, Christian Dubé, for the work they do every day. Their determination to implement provincial health measures, which have now proven to be effective, was key to deploying all of these human resources, who, for a few weeks now, have enabled us to envision much more normal days when we come back to work in September.

Attempts to compare Quebec with the other provinces or other countries in the world are always challenging. However, I think I can say that Quebec set an example with its vaccination rollout. Quebec rallied health care stakeholders and sought help from a number of businesses in the province. Both of these decisions can largely be credited for a well-coordinated, fast and effective vaccine rollout, even amidst the constant uncertainty about access to vaccines, which the federal government is responsible for. Some decisions, such as the curfew and the shutdown of several segments of the economy, were certainly not popular, but where would we be today without some restrictions to mitigate the risk of spread?

Today, June 21, is the first day of summer and the fight against the virus is not completely over. The return to normal starting today remains fragile and will have to be closely monitored, and I believe that the people of Quebec can count on their government to do just that. I think that all Quebecers should thank François Legault and his entire team for the work they have done, as I am doing today.

Quebec premiers, whether we are talking about Robert Bourassa during the October Crisis, Lucien Bouchard during the ice storm or François Legault during the COVID-19 crisis, have had their share of opportunities to set politics aside and be compassionate and reassuring leaders. I think it is important to recognize that.

Quebec and the rest of Canada are preparing for a summer free from the restrictions we've had in recent months. Let's remain vigilant and take advantage of local tourist sites, since there are still some questionable restrictions over travel abroad.

I wish everyone a happy summer.

[English]

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY

Hon. Dan Christmas: Honourable senators, I'm humbled to rise today to recognize and celebrate National Indigenous Peoples Day. This day is all about recognizing the important and fundamental contributions that First Nations, Inuit and Métis have made to the national identity and culture of all Canadians. Our cultures, heritages, traditions, languages and spirituality have shaped our own past, and I believe they can and will enrich the future of Canada.

Our creativity, industriousness and entrepreneurship are helping to build a more prosperous and productive economy, such as the recent acquisition of Clearwater Fine Foods by a coalition of Mi'kmaq First Nations led by my home community of Membertou. On this day, it's important to note the progress we have made as Indigenous peoples and as nations within the Canadian federation. I'd like to share another example of where Indigenous ingenuity is yielding real value and benefit to the community.

Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey, or MK, is a collective of 12 Mi'kmaq communities that created its own education authority in 1997 through a self-government agreement with Canada that is community-based and Mi'kmaq led. They did so in an effort to overcome the contrast of dominant Eurocentric school systems and in the devastating wake of Indian residential schools. Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey has achieved this objective through collaborative governance, effective planning, strategic influence and transformative Mi'kmaq teacher education. The results of their endeavour speak for themselves, with high school graduation rates that range from 85% to 90% annually, which is more than double the graduation rate for Indigenous students in the rest of Canada. MK is undoubtedly the most successful Indigenous education system in Canada.

What's more, MK was recently recognized in the receiving of the Governor General's Innovation Award. The award celebrates excellence and innovation across all sectors of Canadian society and inspires Canadians, particularly Canadian youth, to be entrepreneurial innovators. They are awarded to individuals,

teams or organizations whose innovations are truly exceptional, transformative and positively impact the quality of life in Canada.

Honourable senators, the recent days have not been easy ones, especially for Indigenous peoples and certainly not for the national moral conscience of this country. But in the face of tragedy, we may still find reminders of the indomitable spirit of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people. My Mi'kmaq brothers and sisters with Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey are shining proof of this.

Let each one of us pause on this National Indigenous Peoples Day to celebrate the warmth, diversity, talent and determination of the Indigenous community. And let us choose to always welcome Indigenous people's contributions to Canada, as the words of the old treaty instruct us, "for as long as the sun shines, the grass grows and the river flows."

Wela'liog. Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

• (1410)

Hon. Brian Francis: Honourable senators, June 21, 2021, marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of National Indigenous Peoples Day, a time to celebrate the rich histories, cultures, traditions and contributions of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people and to reflect on the significant work remaining in our collective journey toward truth, justice, healing and reconciliation. Although generally a joyous and uplifting occasion, activities taking place today have taken a more sombre and reflective tone because of the immense grief and mourning felt over the discovery of mass graves at the sites of formal residential institutions in British Columbia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

These innocent children have brought to light what so many of us have known and spoken about for too long and confronted non-Indigenous people with the widespread neglect, abuse and death perpetrated by state and church officials with little outcry. The sheer shock and horror have prompted growing demands for immediate action and accountability, including implementation of the 94 Calls to Action issued six years ago by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Some of these are concerned with the nationwide search, identification and return of remains. There have also been appeals for Canada to drop the legal battles involving residential school survivors and First Nations children separated from their families due to the underfunding of child welfare and other services. These are all important and necessary steps that need to be taken and have to be situated within the context of the ongoing genocide of Indigenous people in Canada.

Governments, churches and society as a whole have to reckon and atone for this fact. Colleagues, this National Indigenous Peoples Day, which coincides with the summer solstice, is associated with growth and renewal. I stand in strength, unity and pride with my Indigenous brothers and sisters and remain hopeful that the long-overdue and urgent change needed to build a new relationship has begun. The passage of Bill C-15, An Act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of

Indigenous Peoples, is an example of the small yet significant steps forward made this year, which we must commit to translate into concrete action and outcomes. *Wela'liog.* Thank you.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

TRIBUTE TO CANADIAN VETERANS

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, on this day, National Indigenous Peoples Day, and the day after Father's Day, I rise to pay tribute to all the fathers, grandfathers, great- and great-great-grandfathers, soon-to-be fathers and father figures who all play important roles in our lives.

I'm also honoured to pay tribute to the service and sacrifice of our brave veterans, including Indigenous veterans, of the Korean War, to whom my late father and mother and millions of people of Korean descent around the world — as well as myself — owe our lives. Yesterday, I had the honour to attend the annual Korea Day ceremony to mark the seventy-first anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War and lay a wreath on behalf of the Senate of Canada at the National War Memorial in Ottawa. Although small in number due to the COVID-19 restrictions, we gathered to honour all those who fought for peace, freedom and democracy during the Korean War. Our beloved veterans, now in their late 80s and 90s, stood at attention to remember their fallen comrades on behalf of their colleagues across Canada who could not be with us.

His Excellency Keung Ryong Chang gave remarks on behalf of The Republic of Korea and her people, thanking the veterans for protecting them and allowing Korea to be the prosperous country it is today. I stand here as a daughter of Korea and a daughter of Canada who enjoys the freedoms and privileges of life as I have always known. Their service and sacrifice have allowed our children and future generations to dream of bright futures and live in peace. Our veterans left their homes to defend a country and a people whom they did not know, but they understood the universal values of peace, democracy and human rights. That is what they fought for.

Their dedicated efforts and the ultimate sacrifices the Canadians paid on the Korean Peninsula surpass any amount of gratitude that can be expressed in words. Honourable senators, please join me in remembering the service and sacrifices made in Korea and in past wars and conflicts throughout our history by brave and noble Canadians. We will remember them. Lest we forget.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

AIR INDIA FLIGHT 182

THIRTY-SIXTH ANNIVERSARY OF TRAGEDY

Hon. Paula Simons: Honourable senators, this week marks the thirty-sixth anniversary of the most horrific and deadly act of terrorism committed against Canadian citizens and Canada itself. I speak, of course, of the bombing of Air India Flight 182, a murderous attack that killed 329 people, most of them proud

Canadians. Three dozen years have passed since that dreadful day, June 23, 1985. In the interim, an entire Canadian generation has come of age. Therefore, not everyone remembers as I still do the shocking horror of learning the plane had blown up as it flew over Ireland; the sickening sense of relief people felt when they realized a second bomb, meant for a second plane, had failed to detonate mid-air as planned — instead, that bomb killed two baggage handlers at Tokyo's Narita Airport — the sense of betrayal that many in Canada's South Asian community felt when they saw their own government treating this as not so much an attack on Canada and Canadians but as an Indian tragedy; and the frustration over decades as investigations, inquiries and trials failed to give friends and families of the victims the justice they had been waiting for.

Today, I want to recognize the hard work of my fellow Edmontonian Dr. Meera Nair, who wants to make sure Canadians never forget what happened that day 36 years ago.

Dr. Nair is a writer and the copyright officer at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology. For years now, she has been writing essays and articles about the mass murder and campaigning for Parliament to observe a moment of silence on June 23, the anniversary of the Air India tragedy. Of course, as we well know, June 23 isn't always a date when parliamentarians are sitting. However, during this difficult year when we have mourned together all too often, I feel Dr. Nair's campaign is more timely than ever. Several times, just in recent weeks, we in the Senate have felt the power of taking a moment to remember — even when we have been separated COVID. For some, I'm sure, that moment is a moment of prayer. For others, it's a moment of quiet reflection or meditation. It may be a largely symbolic act; a cynic might even see it as a performative one. However, I think for us as parliamentarians those quiet moments are a chance to ground us — to remind us of why we are truly here.

However we mark June 23, whether as senators or as private citizens, I hope we will never forget the hundreds of Canadians — the dozens of Canadian families — who lost their lives that day. I hope we will forever stand with the Canadian friends and families who still mourn their loved ones. Today I want to salute Meera Nair for never stilling her voice.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: Honourable senators, today marks National Indigenous Peoples Day; 2021 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of this national day to celebrate the unique cultures that form the rich tapestry of Canada's Indigenous peoples. This year, the celebration of National Indigenous Peoples Day and June as National Indigenous History Month is tempered by the grisly findings in Kamloops and now in Brandon, Manitoba.

This has led many Canadians to question what it means to be Canadian in the face of a horrific past, leading also to a more sombre approach to another fast-approaching day of celebration, Canada Day. Many are left asking, "What can I do to help

reconciliation efforts in Canada?" As I reflect on this same question, I am heartened by the work that this chamber has done and continues to do.

I recognize advancements made in Indigenous languages protection and Indigenous child welfare. In this month alone, the Senate has passed legislation to create a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, to change the Citizenship Oath to reflect respect for Indigenous peoples as an important aspect of Canadian life and to allow for the alignment of federal laws with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Yet, there is more work to be done. The action plan on C-15 must be an inclusive process that meaningfully addresses the hard, still-unanswered questions and issues raised by stakeholders throughout our study. Advocates are demanding concrete plans and dedicated funds to respond to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice while, similarly, progress on the 94 Calls to Action has been slow going over the past six years.

• (1420)

We have before us much more work to do to address the legacy of hundreds of years of colonialism and broken promises to Indigenous people, but today — as we should every day — Canadians should get to know and celebrate the rich history, contributions and resilience of First Nations, Inuit and Métis in Canada.

Thank you. *Qujannamiik. Taima.*

[Translation]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

SPEAKER OF THE SENATE

PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
OF NEPAL AND THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA,
FEBRUARY 10-14, 2020—
REPORT TABLED

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Report on the Visit of a Parliamentary Delegation of the Senate, led by the Speaker of the Senate, that travelled to the Democratic Republic of Nepal and the Republic of India, from February 10 to 14, 2020.

Is leave granted, honourable senators?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

APPROPRIATION BILL NO. 2, 2021-22

FIRST READING

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-33, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022.

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

APPROPRIATION BILL NO. 3, 2021-22

FIRST READING

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-34, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022.

(Bill read first time.)

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

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

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

CANADA-EUROPE PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

SECOND PART OF THE 2021 ORDINARY SESSION OF THE
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL
OF EUROPE, APRIL 19-22, 2021—
REPORT TABLED

Hon. Lucie Moncion: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association concerning the Second Part of the 2021 Ordinary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, held by video conference from April 19 to 22, 2021.

[English]

THE SENATE

MOTION TO AFFECT TODAY'S SITTING ADOPTED

Hon. Yuen Pau Woo: Honourable senators, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 5-5(j), I move, seconded by the Honourable Senators Gold, P.C., Plett, Tannas and Cordy:

That, notwithstanding any provision of the Rules, previous order or usual practice, when the Senate sits today, the sitting continue beyond the end of Government Business, and the Senate adjourn at the earlier of the end of business for the day or 9 p.m., unless earlier adjourned by motion.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

QUESTION PERIOD

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MANDATORY QUARANTINE

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

Leader, last week I asked you if Canadians vaccinated with AstraZeneca would be allowed to enter the United States without quarantine as the U.S. has not authorized AstraZeneca for use.

The Prime Minister was also asked this question on Friday, and he admitted his government is getting the Americans to be “on the same page.”

On June 3, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States stated:

COVID-19 vaccines are not interchangeable. If you received a Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, you should get the same product for your second shot.

Leader, this is a yes or no question. Has the U.S. government said anything to your government about allowing Canadians who receive different mRNA vaccines into the U.S. without quarantine, meaning one shot of Pfizer and one shot of Moderna?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. I don’t have the answer to that particular question. I will make inquiries, but as all senators know, the government is in regular contact with its counterparts in the United States on a range of issues concerning vaccinations, border openings and the like, and the government continues to take an appropriately prudent approach to make sure that the health and safety of Canadians and their well-being is protected.

Senator Plett: Senator Gold, these are questions that have some urgency. People want to travel. We aren’t getting answers. We’re being told how serious the government is taking it. If they’re taking it as seriously as you are saying, Senator Gold, we should have answers. This should be something that you should know, senator.

Leader, the Canada-U.S. border is still closed at least for another month. It’s very important for your government to get this confirmation from the Americans and to communicate it to Canadians as soon as possible, both for Canadians vaccinated with AstraZeneca and those who have received two different mRNA vaccines.

Leader, please let us know the answer to my first question tomorrow. Can you also tell us which specific minister? You say they are in constant communication. Which specific ministers have had discussions with their American counterparts on this point? How often have Canadian officials raised this in recent weeks? When do you expect to have an answer for Canadians?

Senator Gold: Thank you. I will certainly make those inquiries. When I get responses, I will share them with the chamber at the first opportunity.

• (1430)

HEALTH

SUICIDE PREVENTION

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

Leader, you may remember that in December I raised with you a motion that passed the House of Commons which had been brought forward by B.C. Member of Parliament Todd Doherty. The motion called on the federal government to establish a national suicide prevention hotline.

Earlier this month, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, or CRTC, announced that it had begun a consultation period on this matter which will accept submissions until September 1 and reply to submissions until October 1. This effectively means we will not see the creation of a national suicide hotline in Canada this year.

Senator Gold, I asked you this question six months ago and did not receive an answer. What is your government’s plan and timetable for the implementation of a national suicide prevention hotline?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for raising the question again, senator. I’m sorry you haven’t received an answer. I will look into that and try to get an answer to you and to the chamber as quickly as I can.

Senator Martin: With that, there is a requirement to undertake consultations with provinces to establish the national suicide prevention hotline. We know that municipalities are already aware of this initiative. Well over 200 cities and towns across Canada have passed resolutions stating their support, including municipalities across your province of Quebec and mine, and right here in the City of Ottawa.

Leader, I will ask my question and hope for an answer regarding how the Government of Canada has engaged with the provinces and municipalities on this hotline. They will be a very important partner to what we do.

Senator Gold: Again, I will make inquiries, senator, and will be pleased to report back when I have the answer.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MANDATORY QUARANTINE

Hon. Marty Deacon: Honourable senators, my question to the Government Representative was about 80% covered by my dear colleague Senator Plett this afternoon with respect to AstraZeneca. I want to add one small piece, if I could, and be assured in that question, for those 2.1 million Canadians who in good faith took their first dose of AstraZeneca, we have all heard over the last four or five days of issues arising concerning travel in the United States, events in the States, those kinds of things. My question is just to make sure and to look for assurance that the government is doing everything they can. What is the government doing to ensure that Canadians who did their part and received AstraZeneca are not feeling punished for their choice? This needs to be resolved to honour their intent and vaccine compliance for many Canadians. Sorry to be repetitive, but I wanted to make sure we were clear.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question; you have raised an important point. Canadians who responded to the call of public

health officials here in Canada to be vaccinated as quickly as possible with the first available dose are to be congratulated for doing their part to keep themselves, their families and all of us safe. In that regard, I'm pleased that millions took the opportunity to receive that vaccine.

The issues of the border are complex. Decisions cannot be made or should not be made unilaterally — they haven't been made unilaterally, and properly so. I will make every effort to inquire, but I ask the chamber to understand that I may not have an answer tomorrow, notwithstanding those who wish that I would. I'll do my very best to get an answer as quickly as possible.

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

PARENTAL LEAVE—EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Hon. Rosemary Moodie: Honourable senators, this question is for the Government Representative in the Senate.

Senator Gold, last Friday UNICEF published a report comparing parental leave and child care policies among 41 rich countries. Canada is underperforming. We learned that Canada ranks a disappointing twenty-second overall, twenty-third in parental leave policies, sixteenth in access to child care and twenty-first in affordability of care.

Our parental leave policies are exclusive of millions of Canadians in non-standard employment circumstances who do not satisfy the work requirements of EI. They are also not sufficiently generous. We only provide 52%, as compared to 66% in our peer OECD countries.

One proposal is to introduce a guaranteed income for the first year of the life of a child, regardless of parents satisfying a minimum work requirement in the previous year. This is an idea that was first proposed in 2019 on the Liberal platform and was included in the Minister of Employment's mandate letter in 2019.

Senator Gold, why has the government failed to introduce a guaranteed paid family leave program?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for your question. The issues that you raise are obviously important to families across the country but are complex, especially in a federal system such as Canada's, where so many of these issues and the differences between provinces flow from decisions that provincial legislatures properly make. Nor is it any less complex to introduce a guaranteed income, whether broadly or even targeted, as you suggested, again because of the complicated interaction between programs at the federal and provincial levels, and therefore brings the requirement of consultation, not only with provinces and territories but with other stakeholders.

Senator Moodie: Senator Gold, the current requirement for eligibility for parental leave is 600 hours of work in the previous year, as I mentioned. This excludes millions of Canadians who are in the "gig economy" or other form of non-standard work.

The government has recognized as much, providing a 480-hour credit to parents in August of 2020 due to the pandemic. The leave benefits Canada offers are insufficiently generous. I have championed in the past a guaranteed paid family leave, but there is also immense value in strengthening the EI-based parental leave policies.

Senator Gold, does the government believe the eligibility requirements include enough Canadians and that the benefits are sufficiently generous? If so, can you tell us why?

Senator Gold: Thank you for your question. I think the most accurate answer is that these issues are always being reviewed by government and its officials, and will continue to be assessed and evaluated in the best interests of Canadians.

INDIGENOUS SERVICES

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Hon. Vernon White: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate, please. Suicide rates among First Nations people, Métis and Inuit are significantly higher than the rate among non-Indigenous people. The rate among First Nations people is over 24 deaths per 100,000 annually — three times higher than the rate among non-Indigenous people, which rests at 8.

Today being National Indigenous Peoples Day, what has the present government done over the past five plus years to concretely address this Indigenous suicide crisis, in particular with an emphasis on youth?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for raising this important issue. The high rate of suicide among Indigenous communities and youth is a national tragedy. This government acknowledges that it and many other issues dealing with our Indigenous peoples require much more work before we can fairly say with pride that all Canadians have the same access to services, to clean water, adequate housing, health services and the like. The causes of the distress that we find in these communities and among youth are multiple.

The government has been working hard over the last five and a half years to support Indigenous communities so that social services are in their hands and not provided from the top down. It has provided large sums of money and other resources to help Indigenous communities address issues within their communities, including the mental health challenges with youth, and will continue to do so to support communities and their members.

• (1440)

Senator White: I appreciate that you have identified the issues and challenges faced, but can you clearly identify the money being spent in Indigenous communities to combat mental illness and try to cut into the deaths that are occurring every single day across this country? I would like the exact amounts, if possible.

Senator Gold: I will certainly pass on this question and your request for specific amounts and items. I hope that we get an answer in a timely fashion so that I can share it with this chamber.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

EXPATRIATE VOTING

Hon. Peter Harder: Honourable senators, my question is for the Government Representative in the Senate. It concerns the Iranian elections held last Friday.

Around the world, many thousands of Iranian nationals not living in Iran were able to cast their ballots at polling stations. For example, in the United States, 16 such polling stations were set up and many Iranian nationals voted. Only Singapore, war-torn Yemen and Canada refused to allow expatriate voting.

Can the Government Representative explain why Canada refused to allow the quarter million Iranian Canadians from exercising this vote?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you, senator, for the question. The government takes note of the presidential election and remains concerned about the lack of free and fair elections in Iran. Thanks to your advance notice of this question, I have asked the government for more information on Canada's role in this election; I have not yet received the details that I've requested. I can say, though, that Canada continues to advocate for the democratic rights to which the Iranian people are entitled.

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

EMERGENCY COMMUNITY SUPPORT FUND

Hon. Dennis Glen Patterson: Honourable senators, my question is for the government leader in the Senate.

Senator Gold, Canadians who need help to manage the complex web of government- and community-based social services can dial 2-1-1, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Services through interpretation are available in over 150 languages, including Indigenous languages such as Inuktitut.

The Emergency Community Support Fund awarded \$10 million to United Way Centraide Canada to enhance the 2-1-1 service as a COVID response measure and enable the United Way to offer the service in previously under-served regions like Nunavut, making this a national service. However, the United Way has been unable to secure federal support on an ongoing basis.

Senator Gold, 2-1-1 connects people in my region of Nunavut with vital services available to them, all with one simple, free and confidential phone call. It's needed far beyond COVID. Will this government provide ongoing, long-term support to ensure that 2-1-1 can continue to act as a resource for Nunavummiut in need?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you for the question and for underlying the important role that 2-1-1 plays. I will make inquiries as to your question and report back to the chamber.

Senator Patterson: Thank you.

FINANCE

REPORT OF PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my second question is for the government leader as well.

Last month, leader, the Parliamentary Budget Officer warned once again that the lion's share of the Trudeau government's \$100 billion in so-called stimulus spending is going to come too late to do any good. In fact, the PBO projected this poorly calibrated spending of \$100 billion in borrowed money will bump up inflation this year, next year and in 2023. The PBO says this will result in an increase in the Bank of Canada policy rate of 50 basis points in order to keep inflation in check, which will then "... directly increase public debt charges as existing debt is refinanced and future borrowing requirements are financed at higher rates. . . ."

Leader, is your government aware of the PBO's warning that the so-called stimulus is going to do more harm than good? Are you reconsidering this ill-thought-out plan?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): The government is certainly aware of the PBO report and it takes seriously its observations. The government remains of the view that the measures that were announced — and to which you refer — will benefit the economy, help us get through this period in a stronger way and is keeping a careful, watchful eye, of course, on all indicia of our economy, including inflation.

Senator Plett: Given the government's track record, I would be betting on the PBO over this government 9 out of 10 times for sure, maybe 10.

Leader, inflation rose to 3.6% in May, its highest point in more than a decade. The Angus Reid Institute reports that 9 in 10 Canadians say that over the past six months, it has become more expensive for them to improve their home through renovations, purchase a new home, fill up their tank with gas and buy groceries for their households.

Leader, why is your government insisting on borrowing \$100 billion to stimulate an economy that won't need to be stimulated, driving up interest rates by half a percentage point, increasing costs for every Canadian and escalating our public debt charges in the process?

Senator Gold: The government remains of the view that the measures it has introduced and announced will serve Canadians well and is keeping a careful and prudent watch on the economy. Time will tell.

In that regard, I cannot resist reminding this chamber of the nature of the questions that I had been receiving for months and months about the terrible and disastrous approach that Canada has taken to procure vaccines. I don't hear those questions anymore because, as I have been saying for many months in the past, the government remains committed to its plan and is confident that it will meet or, indeed, exceed its targets.

Again, when we reconvene in this chamber in the months to come, I will have occasion to see whether or not the prudent stewardship of our economy through these difficult times will continue to hold.

NATURAL RESOURCES

GROWING CANADA'S FORESTS PROGRAM

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question is to the leader.

In the 2019 election campaign, the Trudeau government announced a plan to plant 2 billion trees over the next 10 years to help combat climate change. We learned, as late as last November, more than a year after the announcement had been made, that the program had yet to be funded and not a single tree had been planted. This government is quick to impose carbon taxes on Canadian farmers on the front lines of implementing solutions to fight climate change but slower than slow when it comes to keeping its promise to plant 2 billion trees.

Back in November, we were told that planting would begin in the spring of 2021. Here we are on the first day of summer. Senator Gold, how many trees have been planted so far this spring? How far behind is your government on this 10-year project?

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Clearly, I don't have the specific answer, but there is no question that the last year has seen delays in this program. There are delays in other programs, such as the passage of Bill C-12 in the other place.

This government remains committed to moving forward to ensure a responsible and sustainable approach to climate change.

Senator Martin: I guess you can inquire about the number, how many trees were planted this past spring.

In making its tree-planting announcement, your government estimated it would cost \$3.16 billion over 10 years. In what is becoming a pattern with the Trudeau government, the Parliamentary Budget Officer said it would actually cost nearly twice that amount, \$5.78 billion.

[Senator Gold]

Leader, given the delay in getting under way, how many trees now need to be planted annually? What changes have been made to the program to accommodate this delay? What is the estimated final cost of the program, taking into account both the delay and the PBO's findings?

• (1450)

Senator Gold: These are all legitimate questions. I'll make inquiries and report back.

[Translation]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

APPROPRIATION BILL NO. 2, 2021-22

SECOND READING

Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) moved second reading of Bill C-33, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022.

She said: Honourable senators, I will reserve my remarks for third reading.

[English]

Hon. Elizabeth Marshall: Honourable senators, I will also reserve my comments for third reading. Thank you.

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 second time, on division.)

[Translation]

THIRD READING

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

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

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Gagné: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Appropriation Bill No. 2, 2021-22. The appropriation act is the mechanism by which necessary monies are withdrawn from the Consolidated Revenue Fund to cover expenses related to government programs and services. As a reminder, the interim supply bill, introduced in March 2021, included the amounts needed for each department and organization to operate from April to June of 2021. The bill provided funding for activities during that period while the Main Estimates were being studied.

[English]

The bill I am introducing today is the full supply bill that details the remaining monies to be released. The voted amounts represent maximum “up to” ceilings or estimates and, therefore, may not be fully spent during the course of the year. Actual expenditures will be found in the public accounts after the end of the fiscal year.

Through this supply bill, the government requests Parliament’s approval of the planned spending proposals that are detailed in the Main Estimates. The estimates include the Main Estimates, supplementary estimates, departmental plans and the departmental results reports in conjunction with the public accounts help parliamentarians scrutinize government spending.

I cannot overstate how important this information is to the functioning of our system of government. In fact, accountability is predicated on parliamentarians knowing how public funds are being spent so that they can hold the government to account for its actions.

[Translation]

With that in mind, it is my pleasure to speak to you about the 2021-22 Main Estimates, which forms the basis of this appropriation bill.

The purpose of these estimates is to seek funds to continue previously approved programs and services, as well as investments to support Canadians during the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to create the right conditions for a successful economic recovery.

The Main Estimates provide information on the proposed spending of \$342.2 billion for 123 organizations. This amount may be divided into voted expenditures of \$141.9 billion and statutory expenditures of \$200.3 billion that have already been approved by existing legislation.

Of this spending, just over \$22 billion has been allotted to measures to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, investments outlined in these estimates include economic support for individuals and businesses in Canada, funding for vaccines, enhanced support for tools that provide mental health support in the context of the pandemic, virtual care and others.

The estimates include important payments to help Canadians better cope with the pandemic by bringing in, for example, the Canada Recovery Benefit, the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit and the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit.

An essential part of Canada’s fight against COVID-19 has been the financial support made available to Canadians and Canadian businesses by the federal government. Considering that Canada’s GDP grew by roughly 10% in the fourth quarter of last year, we see that as a good indication that government intervention in the economy was not only necessary, but also effective.

Honourable senators, I would like to go over some of the major expenditures in these estimates, highlighting six organizations that are seeking more than \$5 billion each in voted budgetary expenditures.

One of these is the Public Health Agency of Canada, which is asking Parliament for authorization to spend \$8.7 billion. PHAC will use the money to continue its important work helping Canadians get through the pandemic. This work includes investing in COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutic products, medical equipment and PPE, as well as closing gaps in biomanufacturing.

PHAC also maintains quarantine facilities managed by the federal government, strengthens its border and health travel program, and helps municipalities offer safe voluntary isolation sites to prevent the virus from spreading further.

[English]

Honourable colleagues, while the estimates reflect the government’s investments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, they also demonstrate continued support for ongoing priorities that are vital to the interests of Canadians, such as national security and defence.

The Department of National Defence is presenting \$22.8 billion in voted expenditures in the 2021-22 Main Estimates, which include investments in the Strong, Secure, Engaged defence policy as well as important funding for equipment upgrades.

National Defence is also funding the continued implementation of initiatives and programs set out in the Canadian Armed Forces Sexual Misconduct Response Strategy to ensure Canadian Armed Forces members affected by sexual misconduct have access to the supports and services they need.

I would now like to turn to the Department of Indigenous Services, which is seeking \$13.4 billion. Included for Indigenous Services Canada in the estimates is a proposed net increase of \$508.6 million to improve access to safe, clean drinking water in First Nation communities.

• (1500)

In addition, proposed spending includes increases of \$122.6 million for supportive care in Indigenous communities, and \$104.7 million for education programs at the elementary, secondary and post-secondary levels.

Honourable senators, the fourth organization I would like to highlight is the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, which is seeking \$7 billion through these Main Estimates. These voted expenditures include several votes, which are centrally managed by Treasury Board ministers and total roughly \$3.7 billion. The funds are allocated across federal organizations and facilitate the Treasury Board's roles as the employer, general manager and expenditure manager for the government.

There are also just over \$3 billion for responsibilities as the employer. These expenditures will serve to make payments under the public service pension, benefit and insurance plans, including the employer's share of health, income maintenance and life insurance premiums.

The Secretariat's Main Estimates also include a net increase of \$27 million to program expenditures. This is primarily to foster a diverse and inclusive public service and to allow the Canadian Digital Service to continue providing critical digital products and services related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another important priority of the government is international development and diplomacy. Through the proposed funding of \$6.3 billion in these estimates, Global Affairs Canada will continue to implement Canada's feminist foreign policy and support actions to reduce poverty and fragility in developing countries. Global Affairs Canada will also work with global partners to promote trade and continue to strengthen its consular program.

Honourable senators, Canadians care about how the government treats our veterans, and it expects the government to honour their service. These are the veterans who served to protect the very rights and freedoms we enjoy today.

With the proposed funding in these estimates of \$6.2 billion, Veterans Affairs Canada will continue to deliver important services and ensure benefit programs continue to meet the needs of our veterans who have given so much on our behalf.

[Translation]

Esteemed colleagues, the government continues to make the presentation of these Main Estimates a priority by providing comprehensive documentation that is readily accessible online to parliamentarians and Canadians.

I would encourage my colleagues who have not already done so to consult GC InfoBase, an interactive online tool that displays a host of federal data in graphical format.

The ability to provide oversight is one of the most important roles parliamentarians take on on behalf of our citizens. To properly carry out this role, parliamentarians must have access to accurate and understandable information, in a timely manner, about government spending. GC InfoBase provides that information.

[Senator Gagné]

InfoBase contains the Main Estimates and other information about the government's finances, people and results. Releasing data sets on spending by means of digital tools of this nature is essential to providing parliamentarians and Canadians with more information about the allocation of public funds and how they are spent.

Esteemed colleagues, the bill that I have the honour of introducing today is important for us to be able to move forward with the government's commitment to the health and well-being of Canadians and other key priorities.

If COVID-19 has taught us anything, it is that we are all in this together.

I would like to thank all of you for working together to do what is required to protect Canadians in these extraordinary circumstances.

[English]

Colleagues, this has been an unprecedented year in reviewing money bills, and I want to thank all of you for the role you are playing in helping Canadians manage through this difficult period. We are moving toward an economic recovery, toward a time where we can reconnect with our friends and family and hopefully rediscover a sense of normalcy. It has been a long haul, but I believe we are turning the corner and turning toward a well-deserved summer break. Thank you, *meegwetch*.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Senator Mercer, do you have a question for Senator Gagné?

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: I want to raise an issue with Senator Gagné. Most colleagues who have been with me for the past 18 years will know that I raise the same question this time every year.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: We'll ask Senator Gagné if she will accept a question.

Senator Gagné, will you take a question?

[Translation]

Senator Gagné: Yes, I will take the question.

[English]

Senator Mercer: Thank you for taking my question. Each year I ask a question. In your speech you talked about the role of parliamentarians in providing oversight on behalf of Canadians. Oversight is measured in different ways and in time. Unfortunately, in this Parliament — not just this government; all four governments since I have been a member of the Senate have all done the same thing — they have given us not days, not months, not weeks, but have given us hours to officially fulfill our oversight role. Have you, as the person responsible for introducing this bill, expressed a concern to government officials that there's not a lot of time here for the oversight that Canadians expect us to perform?

Senator Gagné: Thank you, Senator Mercer. I have not necessarily communicated that directly to the government. You can certainly ask my colleague Senator Gold if that is the case with his interventions. I must say that with the Main Estimates that have been tabled and studied and the interim supply that was also studied in March, we have been at this for quite a while, Senator Mercer. So that would be my response to your question.

Hon. Elizabeth Marshall: Thank you, Senator Gagné, for your remarks and also to Senator Mercer for his very interesting question that I will address in my comments. I am going to start off by talking about the Main Estimates 2021-22 because it supports Bill C-33. In it the government is outlining its request for parliamentary approval to spend \$142 billion.

In addition to the \$142 billion requiring parliamentary approval, \$204 billion in statutory spending is also being forecast. Parliamentary approval to spend this \$204 billion is not being requested in this appropriation bill, Bill C-33, because it has been or will be approved by other legislation. Bill C-33 is the second appropriation bill for this fiscal year.

Honourable senators may recall that we passed the first appropriation bill for this year, Bill C-26, the interim supply bill, in March. I spoke to that bill. That bill effectively provided an advance so that the government would have enough funding to operate until this main supply bill is passed. In essence, of the \$142 billion requiring parliamentary approval, Parliament already approved \$59 billion in March. Parliamentary approval of the remaining \$83 billion is being requested in this bill.

The Main Estimates document that supports Bill C-33 was tabled before Budget 2021 and, therefore, neither the Main Estimates document nor this bill includes funding for any new budget initiatives.

• (1510)

Funding for the new budget initiatives will be included in Supplementary Estimates (A), (B) or (C), or they have already received or will receive parliamentary approval by the budget implementation act, Bill C-30 — which we have to pass later this week — the Economic Statement Implementation Act, 2020, Bill C-14 — which we passed earlier this year and which I spoke to — or other statutes.

There are 123 organizations requesting funding in Main Estimates, and 6 are requesting more than \$5 billion each. Senator Gagné spoke to that. These organizations are the departments of National Defence; Indigenous Services; Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development; and Veterans Affairs. The other two organizations are the Public Health Agency of Canada, which is requesting \$8 billion, and Treasury Board Secretariat,

which is requesting \$7 billion. Of the \$142 billion in total funding requested, Treasury Board has indicated that just over \$22 billion is COVID related.

Unlike the supplementary estimates documents last year, the Main Estimates document this year does not identify COVID-related initiatives. Subsequent to the tabling of the Main Estimates, the government included on its website a listing of the COVID-related initiatives.

I have commented many times on the difficulty in tracking government spending, including COVID-related spending. I have raised the matter with Senator Gold on several occasions in this chamber, as well as with the Minister of Finance, the President of the Treasury Board and with government officials when they appeared before the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance.

While this has been an issue for me, the government's own website acknowledges the problem. The website reads:

Do you understand the process the government uses to spend your tax dollars? If you're a little foggy about it, you're not alone. Many Canadians don't understand how public money is directed to programs and services, or how to track government spending.

That's why, over the past few years, we have taken steps to demystify the process and make it easier for people to hold the government to account for its spending decisions. . . .

The website goes on to reference the estimates reform project, which was initiated around 2016. One of the objectives of the project was to better align the Main Estimates with the federal budget. This was an ongoing problem for parliamentarians, and the government was committed to resolving the problem.

Prior to 2018, and again this year, the Main Estimates were tabled before the budget. This year, for example, the Main Estimates were tabled in February and the budget was tabled in April. As a result, the Main Estimates do not include any new budget initiatives; rather, budget initiatives are to be included in future supplementary supply bills.

This presents a problem because we have to continually cross-reference the budget document with future supply bills. This year is extra challenging because the budget initiatives included in Supplementary Estimates (A) are not all identified.

In addition, the format of the budget has changed this year, so it is not evident which organization is to receive funding for each budget initiative. We have to go back and read the commentary on each budget initiative to identify which organization or organizations are to receive the funding.

In 2018, as part of the estimates reform project, the government tried to better align Main Estimates with the budget by tabling the Main Estimates after the budget. All budget initiatives were included in Main Estimates in one vote, called

“vote 40.” Treasury Board managed vote 40, and as each initiative was developed and subsequently approved, Treasury Board transferred the money out to the respective organizations.

The following year, 2019, the government further refined the process. Each budget measure had its own vote in its respective organization, and a brief description of the budget initiative was included under the respective organization in the Main Estimates document. The funds were held separately until the program details were approved. This process not only identified the budget initiative in the estimates document, but it also provided parliamentarians with a better opportunity to examine individual budget initiatives and provide oversight.

However, when the Senate Finance Committee met with the President of the Treasury Board after the 2019 Main Estimates had been tabled, she told us that the estimates reform project was a two-year pilot, that the pilot had now ended and that future initiatives would rest with the new Parliament. Unfortunately, the estimates reform project has been abandoned and we are back to the same situation that existed prior to 2018, trying to align the budget with the estimates document.

This year, Treasury Board provided a chart in the Main Estimates document, reconciling the Main Estimates with the expenses in the Fall Economic Statement. In the Supplementary Estimates (A) document, Treasury Board has similarly provided a chart reconciling Supplementary Estimates (A) with the expenses in the budget. However, these charts are merely a tool to help us navigate our way as we review the government’s spending plans.

There have been a few improvements. The government finally reinstated the COVID-19 reports that were discontinued last August, but we had to wait eight months for their reinstatement. The individual COVID-related initiatives, which were not identified in this year’s Main Estimates, have now been disclosed on the government website. The individual Budget 2021 initiatives, not all of which were identified in this year’s Supplementary Estimates (A) document, were provided at the request of the Senate National Finance Committee.

However, more remains to be done. This is not a problem just for parliamentarians. The government itself has acknowledged the problem. The government should reinstate the estimates reform project, pick up where they left off in 2019 and engage with parliamentarians on this important issue: understanding how to track government spending.

The Standing Senate Committee on National Finance commenced its review of the Main Estimates on May 4 and we will continue our review into the fall. However, the committee has received testimony from three departments, and I will briefly comment on some of those discussions. I won’t repeat what Senator Gagné said in her opening remarks, but I would like to make reference to a couple of departments.

The first is the Department of Transport, which is requesting \$1.8 billion. In addition to the Department of Transport, the minister is also responsible for VIA Rail, \$769 million; the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, \$567 million; and Marine Atlantic, \$149 million. Each of these organizations has

their own funding requests in the Main Estimates, and departmental officials were able to provide information in response to questions on these organizations. Of the \$1.8 billion requested by the department, \$960 million is for grants and contributions, \$742 million is for operating and \$122 million is for capital expenditures.

Officials informed us that the Minister of Finance, and not the Minister of Transport, was the lead department for the recent agreement with Air Canada, although the Department of Transport does provide support. Discussions with other airlines, such as WestJet, are ongoing and, as officials said:

... assistance can be available to those airlines, but that also depends upon ensuring that customers are able to access refunds for any tickets they might have purchased and have not been able to use.

While \$58 million is being requested for air services support to remote communities, officials indicated that discussions are ongoing and include a restart of a number of routes that had been discontinued during the pandemic. This \$58 million is in addition to a number of initiatives outlined in the Fall Economic Statement, including \$206 million for the Regional Development Agencies for a new Regional Air Transportation Initiative and \$186 million for the Airports Capital Assistance Program, which is intended to support small and regional airports in investing in health and safety infrastructure.

Officials also reassured the committee that part of the negotiations with Air Canada included restarting routes that Air Canada had served previously, including Air Canada entering into interline agreements with other carriers to provide service. Transport officials said they were “committed” to ensuring that service is available to these communities.

Many senators have received emails or other correspondence from employees of NAV CANADA concerned about layoffs. Officials said that NAV CANADA is a private, not-for-profit company, and while NAV CANADA reports are tabled in Parliament by the Minister of Transport, there is no direct oversight.

However, the department said they are working closely with NAV CANADA to ensure essential coverage in remote communities during the pandemic, even though the number of flights and passengers have declined.

Departmental officials provided an update on the Lac-Mégantic bypass, which is estimated to cost \$133 million. The department is working with CP Rail to obtain the necessary regulatory approval to ensure construction starts in the spring of 2022 to meet the completion date of 2023. The federal government has indicated that they will pay 60% of the cost of this project. They also indicated that they are taking a number of measures since the tragedy by hiring more inspectors and carrying out thousands of inspections on tracks. Efforts will also be made to collect data to identify the areas that are at the highest risk.

• (1520)

The other agency I'd like to comment on is the Public Health Agency of Canada. Senator Gagné also spoke regarding that organization. They are requesting \$8.7 billion in these Main Estimates compared to \$641 million in the Main Estimates last year. That indicates the financial impact that COVID-19 has had on the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Of the \$8.7 billion, \$5 billion is for vaccines and \$1.7 billion is for protective and medical equipment, including PPE, medical equipment and supplies to meet the needs of provinces, territories and Indigenous communities. The remaining \$2 billion is for a number of other initiatives, including new positions related to the response to COVID; border and travel health measures and isolation sites; vaccine deployment; and vaccine information campaigns.

That concludes my remarks on Bill C-33, but I would like to end by saying that having met with departmental officials and also the minister at times, they are responsive to the requests for additional information. However, I do really feel that the pilot project for estimates reform needs to start up again.

It would also be advantageous to the government if they spoke to parliamentarians who are using these financial documents to ask what kind of suggestions they might have to make the documents more easily understandable, as well as how to track different types of schedules and different types of expenditures.

I know that, personally, we did go back. In the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance I asked for a breakdown of some of the numbers in the Main Estimates or supplementary estimates, and they responded and provided the information. However, if they were to come and solicit information from parliamentarians, they could provide other suggestions that would really have a big impact on how we review those documents.

Thank you very much, honourable senators.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Question.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: 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.)

[Translation]

APPROPRIATION BILL NO. 3, 2021-22

SECOND READING

Hon. Raymonde Gagné (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate) moved second reading of Bill C-34, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022.

She said: Honourable senators, I will reserve my comments for third reading of the bill.

[English]

Hon. Elizabeth Marshall: Your Honour, I will reserve my comments until third reading.

An Hon. Senator: Question.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: 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 second time, on division.)

THIRD READING

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

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

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Gagné: Honourable senators, I am pleased to have the opportunity to provide the chamber with an overview of the 2021-2022 Supplementary Estimates (A). As you all know, the government tables up to three additional supplementary estimates each year that outline incremental spending plans to the Main Estimates. This year, the President of the Treasury Board tabled the Supplementary Estimates (A) for 2021-2022 on May 27.

[Translation]

This budget includes a summary of the government's incremental financial requirements, as well as an overview of major funding requests and horizontal initiatives.

For the benefit of all senators, I think it would be useful to differentiate between voted expenditures and statutory expenditures. Voted expenditures require annual approval from Parliament through an appropriation bill. Statutory expenditures are approved by Parliament by other legislation and do not require any additional approvals for payments to be made. The projected statutory expenditures are set out in the estimates documents for parliamentarians' information.

[English]

Colleagues, this distinction raises an important issue, the issue of transparency. It is the right of every Canadian and the parliamentarians who represent them to know how public funds are being spent so that the government can be held to account. That is why the supplementary estimates are one part of a broad set of reports, including the departmental plans, *The Fiscal Monitor*, the departmental results reports and the Public Accounts that provide transparency to Canadians and parliamentarians.

Throughout the pandemic the government has endeavoured to report to Canadians and parliamentarians with the greatest possible openness and transparency. Starting last fiscal year, several changes were made to enhance the presentation of the supplementary estimates. For example, additional information relating to the COVID-19 response was published in both the tabled estimates and in an online annex. GC InfoBase was also expanded, with more information on planned spending authorities and expenditures for COVID-19 response measures.

[Translation]

Honourable senators, I would also like to point out that the changes that have been made to the projected statutory spending, including those pending parliamentary approval in Budget Implementation Act, 2021, No. 1, are also included in these estimates.

This provides a more comprehensive view of the government's total planned spending. As it is with all estimates, the government is committed to providing parliamentarians and Canadians with as much information as possible.

[English]

Let me now turn to the supplementary estimates in more detail. These estimates present \$24 billion in planned voted spending. As senators might expect, this large sum is due, in part, to the economic and emergency response measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, \$11.2 billion, or approximately 47% of the proposed voted spending, is for the government's response to the public health, social and economic impacts of the pandemic on Canadians.

Of that amount, some of the top expenditures include \$1.5 billion for medical research, development and purchase of vaccines; \$1.1 billion for enhanced border and travel measures,

and isolation sites; and \$760.6 million for the Indigenous Community Support Fund.

• (1530)

[Translation]

Esteemed colleagues, the Main Estimates also provide funds for the economic responses to the pandemic, including support for targeted sectors and businesses, and to promote growth during the recovery.

In this case too, the government is committed to being transparent in its reporting. For example, departments regularly report their spending through quarterly financial reports. The Department of Finance provides monthly updates on the financial situation of the government in the *Fiscal Monitor*, whereas the Canada Revenue Agency and Employment and Social Development Canada regularly post updates online about their spending on major programs.

[English]

Honourable senators, planned spending authorities for COVID-19 response measures are also available to parliamentarians and Canadians through GC InfoBase, back to last spring's Supplementary Estimates (A) 2020-2021.

The government is also proposing funding to address homelessness, the lack of affordable housing and food insecurity, all of which have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Over 70% — that is \$29.5 billion — of the planned budgetary spending presented in Supplementary Estimates (A) relates to Budget 2021 announcements. This includes \$1.5 billion for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's rapid housing initiative, a critical program that is addressing the urgent housing needs of vulnerable Canadians, especially in the context of COVID-19, through the rapid construction of affordable housing. Also, \$760.6 million is proposed for the Department of Indigenous Services' Indigenous Community Support Fund, and \$477.1 million for public health response measures in Indigenous communities. There is a proposed \$399.6 million to Employment and Social Development Canada's Community Services Recovery Fund, \$333 million for a comprehensive training strategy to drive recovery, and \$319.6 million for a Canada-wide early learning and child care system.

[Translation]

The government is committed to not only supporting Canadians in this difficult period, but also to doing so in a transparent manner. The Supplementary Estimates (A) continue to serve the objectives of transparency and accountability in the use of public funds by the government when delivering programs and services required by Canadians.

[English]

Honourable senators, as these estimates demonstrate, the government continues to remain aware and responsive to the needs of Canadians during the global pandemic. These new spending plans will continue to provide relief for those affected by COVID-19, while helping to ensure robust economic recovery for all Canadians.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank all parliamentarians for working together in person and virtually to continue serving Canadians during these extraordinary times.

[Translation]

I want to especially thank the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance and Senator Mockler's leadership. Given its work reviewing the budget implementation bill, not to mention many other studies, the committee was extremely busy this session. However, it got the job done and provided the chamber with diligent and thorough studies.

Bravo and thank you.

[English]

Senator Marshall, I also want to thank you for your commitment to providing the highest quality assessments and for your exemplary work as critic of this bill. Thank you. *Meegwetich.*

Hon. Elizabeth Marshall: Honourable senators, Bill C-34 is the third supply bill for this fiscal year and was preceded by the interim supply bill and the main supply bill, which just received third reading. Through this bill, the government is requesting parliamentary approval to spend \$24 billion. To support its request, the government has provided the details of the departments and organizations requesting the funding and the programs for which the funds are being requested. This \$24 billion is being requested by 45 organizations, although four organizations are requesting the majority of the funding. These are Indigenous Services Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, Employment and Social Development Canada, and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

The government has also provided updated information on forecasted statutory spending. That is spending that will be approved by legislation other than appropriation bills. Also, \$222 billion will be approved by legislation other than an appropriation bill. Some of this statutory spending will be approved by the budget implementation act when that bill receives parliamentary approval.

The Treasury Board oversees the spending and operations of the government and prepares the estimates and supplementary estimates documents, which we study in the Finance Committee. Accordingly, Treasury Board officials appeared before the Finance Committee to present Supplementary Estimates (A) and answer questions. Several of the questions of the committee focused on accountability. Officials confirmed that under sections 32 and 33 of the Financial Administration Act, the government cannot spend money without parliamentary approval. In other words, the money being requested in this bill cannot be

spent until the bill is approved by Parliament. The officials also focused on other accountability documents, including departmental spending plans, departmental results reports and the Public Accounts of Canada, as well as other detailed information provided on the government's website.

Since the Main Estimates were prepared before the budget was tabled, Supplementary Estimates (A) and this appropriation bill are the first financial documents to include this year's new budget initiatives. This presents a problem for several reasons. In previous years, the budget clearly indicated the organizations that would receive the funding for each budget initiative. This year, the format has changed. As a result, we now have to review each chapter of the budget manually to identify the organization that will receive the funding.

The Supplementary Estimates (A) states that, in total, \$29.5 billion is being requested for new budget initiatives, but only the total was provided. While some of the individual initiatives were identified in Supplementary Estimates (A), not all initiatives were identified. As a result, it was impossible to track the funding of the new budget initiatives. While Treasury Board officials, at the request of the Finance Committee, did provide the list of individual budget initiatives included in Supplementary Estimates (A), future estimates documents should identify these budget initiatives without having to be requested. The financial information in Supplementary Estimates (A) does not align with the financial information in Budget 2021. While Treasury Board has included a chart and Supplementary Estimates (A) — which reconciles Supplementary Estimates (A) with the budget — the chart is confusing and does not provide all the necessary details.

The Department of Finance is responsible for the preparation of the budget, and provides advice to the government on economic and fiscal measures. Some of the discussions with Finance officials during our study of Supplementary Estimates (A) revolved around government debt and public debt charges. Supplementary Estimates (A) indicates that statutory approval has already been given for \$21 billion in interest costs. There has been a recent increase in interest rates, which increased the cost of servicing the public debt. However, officials indicated that inflationary increases are expected to be contained.

Since changes in economic assumptions will impact projections for revenue and expenses, including interest costs, Budget 2021 shows the impact a sustained 100 basis point interest rate increase will have on the deficit. In year one, it would increase the deficit by \$1 billion, and this impact would increase the deficit by \$5 billion in year five. While this sensitivity analysis of a 100 basis point increase has been routinely presented since 1994, the government should have considered whether this stress test should have been more robust this year, given the uncertain economic times we are now experiencing.

Honourable senators, the revenues of the government, which are mostly tax revenues, will not be sufficient to pay expenses in this fiscal year. So far this year, the government is requesting \$383 billion in the Main Estimates and Supplementary Estimates (A), and we have been told there will be two more appropriation bills this year requesting more funding. In total, the government is projecting \$497 billion in expenses this year but only

\$355 billion in revenues. The shortfall will be borrowed. In fact, the government has already indicated that it will need to borrow an additional \$191 billion this year.

• (1540)

At the end of March 2020, just 15 months ago, government's debt was \$1.093 trillion. At the end of October, it had increased to \$1.421 trillion. It is now expected to increase \$1.744 trillion by March 2025.

The OECD recently released its current economic outlook and commented on our government's fiscal plans. While commenting favourably on the financial supports to businesses and households during the pandemic, the OECD went on to state:

. . . once the economy is on a firm footing, a medium-term fiscal strategy to reduce public debt should be considered.

It further went on to say:

. . . a medium-term fiscal strategy should aim to restore fiscal headroom after the pandemic subsidies. . . .

Despite the improving economic outlook, risks remain elevated. . . . Vulnerabilities in the corporate bond market remain a concern. Recent housing price growth will make home ownership still less attainable for many households, while increased mortgage borrowing could compound financial market vulnerabilities in the event of future shocks.

The OECD specifically singled out housing as vulnerable. These comments are consistent with the comments of the newly appointed president of CMHC when she testified at the Finance Committee. She said CMHC was concerned about escalating house prices because it encourages homeowners to take on excessive debt, and while it may not be a problem at the moment, excessive debt creates economic fragility. And it creates fragility in the event of future economic shocks where there may be high unemployment.

While the president of CMHC was specifically talking about the mortgage debt of individuals, the increasing debt of our government also creates fragility in the event of future economic shocks. Finance officials did comment briefly on the public debt and the continuing support provided by government to businesses and individuals during the pandemic, which is now expected to wind down in this fiscal year.

With regard to a strategy to reduce the debt, officials indicate the focus has not gotten into many details, although there is a commitment for the government to reduce travel expenses.

The Department of Indigenous Services is requesting \$5.4 billion in addition to the \$13 billion requested in the Main Estimates. Of the \$5.4 billion being requested, \$2 billion is COVID-related while the remaining \$3.3 billion is for a number

of initiatives, including \$1.2 billion for out-of-court settlements and \$1.1 billion for First Nations Child and Family Services Canadian Human Rights Tribunal orders implementation and non-compliance motion settlement.

The departmental officials did not provide any details on the \$1.2 billion requested for out-of-court settlements, citing confidentiality of discussions during the litigation process. They explained that the \$1.2 billion is being requested to ensure it is available should there be settlements.

The request for the \$1.1 billion relates to the September 2019 Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decision regarding compensation to First Nations children removed from their homes and those that did not receive services or experienced unreasonable delays in the receipt of services under Jordan's Principle.

As honourable senators are aware, there is currently a court case ongoing in which the government is challenging the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal rulings. We are continuing to follow the proceedings.

Bill C-92, An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families was enacted last year and affirms the rights of Indigenous people in relation to child and family services. Officials indicated that funding was provided in the Main Estimates for this program, and no additional funding is provided in these supplementary estimates.

I was specifically interested in the number of Indigenous children in care, as that is one of the objectives of additional funding for child and family services. The department had previously indicated there were 9,000 children in care, and I would expect to see this number decline. Witnesses agreed to provide this information to the committee.

The department is also requesting \$75 million for post-secondary students and youth who face financial difficulties during the pandemic due to loss of income, and \$79 million for the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy.

The departmental results report of the Department of Indigenous Services Canada includes 61 performance indicators. The most recent results report for the 2019-20 fiscal year indicates that 6 of their indicators have met their established targets; 10 of the 61 did not meet their targets; 15 performance indicators were not available; and 30 performance indicators are to be achieved. One of the 30 performance indicators is established for 2030, which is nine years down the road, while several others are targeted for 2028, seven years down the road.

I had previously suggested that the performance indicators in departmental results reports need to be reviewed to ensure performance indicators are reasonable and that performance indicators actually measure the impacts of program funding. Since these performance reports and performance indicators also fall under the auspices of Treasury Board, I did mention that to Treasury Board officials when they appeared before the National Finance Committee.

The Public Health Agency of Canada is requesting just over \$4 billion in additional funding, primarily for COVID-related expenses: \$1.5 billion is for medical research and vaccine development, which includes just over \$1 billion for vaccine acquisition, and \$130 million for international partnerships.

While officials told us that \$220 million has been set aside for COVAX, they could not provide any additional specific information. They said they are monitoring key performance indicators that would indicate when there are enough vaccines across provinces and territories, and then they would be able to determine what is available for donation.

There is a request for \$1.1 billion for border and travel measures and isolation sites to support municipal and urban voluntary isolation sites and testing at land and air borders. Just over \$500 million is being requested for the acquisition and deployment of therapeutic treatments for those with COVID, as well as vaccine equipment and vaccine supplies.

Last month, the Auditor General of Canada issued a report on the Public Health Agency of Canada and its preparedness for the pandemic. She concluded that the agency was not adequately prepared to respond to a pandemic, and it had not addressed long-standing health surveillance information issues prior to the pandemic.

One of the areas reviewed by the Auditor General was the Global Public Health Intelligence Network alert system, which is supposed to monitor media reports worldwide and provide early warning of emergency public health events by issuing alerts. These alerts provide early warning of serious public health threats. However, no alert was issued for the COVID-19 virus. In September, the Minister of Health announced an independent review of this system. It is due to be completed this month. The review is nearing completion, and officials informed us that it will be released publicly.

The Department of Employment and Social Development is requesting a total of \$3.4 billion in Supplementary Estimates (A). An amount of \$877 million is being requested for existing early learning and child care programs and to help attract and retain early childhood educators. This funding will also be used to establish a federal secretariat in support of a Canada-wide early learning and child care system and to support the existing Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care secretariat. Additional funding of \$38 million is being requested by two other departments for this program: ESDC for \$35 million and the Public Health Agency of Canada for \$3 million.

The federal secretariat is intended to enhance the capacity of the federal government to work with provinces and territories in support of the Canada-wide early learning and child care system announced in Budget 2021.

Supplementary Estimates (A) also forecast statutory payments of \$2.6 billion to provinces and territories for the new Canada-wide system. However, officials told us they are in the process of beginning negotiations with the provinces and territories, and no payments can be made until the bilateral agreements are in place. One of the objectives of the program is a 50% reduction in average fees by the end of 2022, an ambitious target seeing that it's only 18 months away.

The department is also requesting \$400 million for the Community Services Recovery Fund, a one-time program announced in Budget 2021 to support charities and non-profits to modernize and emerge out of the pandemic. Officials said charities and non-profits will have to apply for the funds, which can be used for a variety of purposes such as procurement of equipment to meet their changing needs and the adoption of new approaches to fundraising. Officials said the program design is in progress as this is a new program and additional details will be available as the design is finalized.

• (1550)

There is a request for \$298 million for the Reaching Home initiative, which is Canada's Homelessness Strategy. This is a 10-year program started in 2019, but has been delayed because of the pandemic. Budget 2021 proposes to provide an additional \$567 million over two years, beginning in 2022-23.

The Department of Employment and Social Development is requesting \$239 million for the Student Work Placement Program to provide students and undergraduates with on-the-job experience. This would include co-op and other placements in the fields in which the student is studying.

In addition to the Student Work Placement Program, the department is also requesting \$136 million for the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy to support youth who need support to get into the labour market. This program is a grant-and-contribution program and will be delivered by third parties.

Departmental officials also told us that the Canada Employment Insurance Commission is currently conducting a review of the Employment Insurance Economic Regions, or zones, the results of which will be available this year. The EI benefits of individuals are impacted by the zone in which they live and this is causing a problem such as the situation in P.E.I., which has been identified by Senator Griffin. The EI commission will determine whether the current regional boundary definitions remain appropriate. Officials also told us there will be consultations on future long-term reforms to EI and \$5 million over the next two years has been requested in Budget 2021 to carry out these consultations.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation is requesting \$1.8 billion in Supplementary Estimates (A); \$1.4 billion of the \$1.8 billion is for the Rapid Housing Initiative to provide 4,500 affordable housing units. The objective is to construct the units within 12 months of when the funding is provided to the applicants, hence the term "rapid" in the program name. CMHC officials told the committee that targeted increases in the supply of housing is the best way to address the escalating prices of housing.

Many of the questions asked by senators focused on the housing sector generally rather than on Supplementary Estimates (A). CMHC officials expressed concern about the excessive levels of debt Canadians are assuming to finance their housing purchases. They said they support the recent changes in the stress test and the qualifying rate. While it reduces the buying power of potential homeowners, CMHC said it's necessary.

Another factor affecting house prices is the increase in construction costs, not only because of the increased cost of lumber but also because of labour shortages in some parts of the country.

While CMHC insures mortgages, officials said they are only responsible for a small portion of the insured mortgage market, as they share the insured mortgage market with two other companies. They have also not experienced an increase in defaults. However, they said they are concerned about the escalating house prices because it encourages homeowners to take on excessive debt. Excessive debt creates economic fragility and it creates fragility in the event of future economic shocks, where there may be high unemployment.

CMHC also assured the committee that they conduct a series of stress tests to make sure they have sufficient levels of capital in the event of an economic shock. While increasing interest rates is an element of their stress analysis, they said the principal factor that would result in losses for CMHC is unemployment and that is what they are most concerned about in their stress testing.

I would like to add that it's not just CMHC that is concerned about the increase in household debt. We see it in a number of other reports. I mentioned it was in the OECD report. As well, we had the Governor of the Bank of Canada testify before the Banking Committee last week and he made remarks in that regard — the vulnerability where households are assuming more debt.

Then to extend that, we all know the Government of Canada is assuming more debt. If there is another economic shock — we hope there won't be — I do think it's a gamble. We're resting our deficits and debt on hoping that we're going to have a robust economy and low interest rates. Nobody has a crystal ball — that might never materialize but we hope it does.

That concludes my remarks. Thank you, honourable senators.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: We have a question.

Hon. Leo Housakos: Would Senator Marshall take a question?

Senator Marshall: Yes, of course.

Senator Housakos: Thank you, Senator Marshall, for that informative speech. You always seem to take billions of dollars and make them comprehensible for us laymen who are not used to dealing with billions and billions of dollars.

I have a couple of points and a question. You mentioned how the CMHC was concerned about individual debt load in the country. Of course, as a parliamentarian, I am concerned about our national debt load, as we've seen in the last few months. As a result of excessive amount of currency printing and having generous bankers for the federal government, we are starting to experience inflation.

Senator Marshall, has there been any questioning of government officials with regard to what happens when inflation starts kicking in on a debt load that is already surpassing our annual economic output? Is there a contingency plan? I understand the government's assumption that they are going to try to grow the economy out of the debt that we're in, but is there a plan B in case that actually doesn't happen over the next two fiscal years?

Senator Marshall: Thank you very much. That's a very interesting question, Senator Housakos, because the Minister of Finance testified at the National Finance Committee, and my question was focused on the increased debt and the deficit. I said to her that she's counting on a healthy economy and low interest rates, so she is sort of gambling there. I said to her that she must have other financial documents within her department that play out less optimistic scenarios. She didn't respond to that. The chair of the committee, Senator Mockler, did ask the minister to provide any other scenarios to the Finance Committee.

I'm not aware of a plan B, but, Senator Housakos, I can't believe the government doesn't have other scenarios within the department. I say the smartest people in the country are working in the Department of Finance. They must have scenarios that are based on higher inflation and the economy tanking.

The other thing I was concerned about, which was brought up in the OECD report, is the possibility of another fiscal shock. We just had one and they say we get a fiscal shock every 10 years. Maybe that was our one shock in 10 years but maybe it's not. According to the OECD, there is really not much fiscal headroom left and they suggested the government work to reduce their deficit, reduce their debt and make room for some fiscal headroom in case there is another fiscal shock.

I don't know if that answers your question.

Senator Housakos: It does, and thank you for that, Senator Marshall. I'm not surprised you actually posed those questions. I'm a little disappointed they didn't have a more concrete response, as I'm sure you were.

My last question is this: I heard in your speech about \$1.2 billion in out-of-court settlements and a couple of other line items you alluded to where there were no explanations, no details given. Again, given our shared view that our primary role is to keep this government to account, accountability and transparency are so important. Therefore I'm a little concerned. We are talking about \$1.2 billion. You're not talking about a petty cash fund.

How could it be that government officials are not prepared, in camera, to provide a parliamentary committee those details, and if there is some other oversight mechanism that you can inform us about in order to account for that kind of money?

Senator Marshall: It wasn't an in camera meeting; it was a public meeting. I wasn't the senator who asked the question but I was a little surprised that they didn't provide more information. I find in committee — and I'm sure other senators find the same thing — when you ask a question you don't always get a fulsome answer. Sometimes when another senator asks a similar question you will get additional information, or the next time the officials appear the question can be repeated and you get a more fulsome answer. Yes, I was surprised at the \$1.2 billion.

• (1600)

The other issue I raised, which I found a bit confusing, was the \$1.1 billion they had provided for the Human Rights Tribunal rulings, and I see that's going through the courts now. My understanding is that they are making payments out of that fund, but I'm waiting to see what's going to happen with regard to the court case. Then, the next time that department comes in, questions will be focused on that area.

I find in National Finance — and, of course, I've been on the committee for a number of years — it's not like you look at something one year, and that's the end of it. It starts five years back, and then you have to track it every year into the future. I always say it's not a one-shot deal.

Senator Housakos: Thank you.

Hon. Marty Deacon: Honourable senators, I'm happy to rise today to speak to Bill C-34, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022. Today, my comments will be focused on individual items in the corresponding Supplementary Estimates (A) document.

I'd like to thank Senator Marshall for reminding me of the work done in the National Finance Committee during the last few months under the leadership of Senator Mockler.

These estimates are before us as we enter yet another period of uncertainty. Though the virus seems to be on its back foot here in Canada, we cannot be sure what this pandemic has in store for us in the near to long term. Businesses across the country have had to open and shut their doors a number of times. Each time, some had to shut their doors for good. Those businesses that made it through are hesitantly reopening in parts of the country, and the business supports that are contained in these estimates are needed and welcome in the face of this ongoing uncertainty.

There is also \$1.4 billion in these estimates for the funding of medical research and vaccine development, which should equip us with the domestic tools to combat this virus through vaccines and treatments in the long term. It will also help fund and contribute to the COVAX facility.

The reality is that we will not be able to put this pandemic behind us until the entire world is vaccinated. This is not charity; it is in our best interest. Failure to do so will see this virus continue to mutate as it burns through unvaccinated populations in other countries with the potential to escape the vaccine.

With all that said, for my purposes today, my comments will focus on one group of people in particular, that being our young Canadians. I would argue that along with our medical professionals and small business owners, there is not a group who has been called on to sacrifice more and who continue to face more uncertainty than our young people. They have had their schooling disrupted like no time in our memory. They were told to isolate from their friends and relatives at a time when socialization is so critical to their development. They have missed athletic, work and scholastic opportunities, some of which they will not be presented with again. They made these sacrifices to protect us.

Last week, the CBC interviewed high school and university graduates. Their stories were compelling, honest and raw as they described the last 15 months. We owe it to them to make sure this year of disruption has as minimal an impact on them in the long term as possible.

In this regard, one of the most important items in these estimates is the \$503 million earmarked to fund the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy. This is a cross-departmental investment that is intended to help youth gain the skills and work experience they need to transition into the world of work. The money is intended to be used to subsidize wages, create work placements and develop skills and training to better transition our young Canadians into steady careers. This is important because as far as employment goes, our youth have suffered immensely over these last 15 months. In May, Statistics Canada reported that the unemployment rate for students who will be returning to classes in the fall stood at 23%. That's nearly one quarter of this cohort.

Traditionally, this is a time when students find full-time work to save for next year's tuition. Without this revenue stream, many will be forced to take on more loans and subsequent debt. For those who are employed, we can't ignore that many of their jobs are low paying and don't give them the job experience they will need when they graduate.

For much of this pandemic, those young Canadians who managed to hold on to their employment worked on the front lines in essential retail. At the outset of the pandemic, we as a society expressed our gratitude for their sacrifice, but as time wore on, some Canadians grew tired and resentful, and they took out their frustrations on these young workers. Canadian youth were put in the role of trying to enforce public health guidelines, like masking and social distancing. Many were unfairly berated for it, and they had to shoulder this in addition to the risks they were taking, both from a personal point of view but also from one of trying to prevent bringing the virus home to their families.

To place such a burden on our young people no doubt contributed to what has been a steady degradation in their mental well-being. Our teenage years are ones of emotional and psychological development, and yet, in this pandemic, support

systems like schools and social circles suddenly disappeared as the country went into lockdown. As a result, our kids are struggling. Children's hospitals are reporting a threefold increase in admissions related to substance abuse, as well as a 63% increase in admissions for complex eating disorders.

I won't argue against the need for lockdowns or public health restrictions, but it's clear that as the country moved to protect itself from the virus, many of our young Canadians struggled with their mental health as a result. Therefore, as we work to put this pandemic behind us, we need to focus on mental and social support for our young Canadians.

Dr. Ronald Cohn, president and CEO of SickKids Hospital said it succinctly when he said:

As we get to the other end of this pandemic, I hope that we are not talking about a generation that is at risk It's just going to require a special focus on really making children a priority.

Which is why, colleagues, I was encouraged when I saw in these estimates substantial funding in the areas of mental health and wellness. There is \$42 million to be used in funding for mental health and to combat substance abuse, as well as \$14.2 million for the Mental Health Commission of Canada. Importantly, there is also a \$3.3 million investment in these estimates for Kids Help Phone.

The largest request for mental health supports, \$193 million, has been made by Indigenous Services Canada. This request is being made as part of the 2021 budget announcement of \$597.6 million over three years for a distinctions-based mental health and wellness strategy with First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

While youth across the country have had so many difficulties over the last year, it will come as no surprise that some of those with the worst experiences come from our Indigenous communities. Throughout their entire lives, Indigenous youth have had to deal with pre-existing adversity left by enduring colonial legacies. On top of a disruption in their employment and schooling, many Indigenous youth were also deprived of cultural practices that rest at the core of their resilience and wellness. It will take some time to undo the psychological harms this pandemic has brought in these areas, and I am encouraged to see these investments in a distinctions-based mental health and wellness strategy.

The price tag of these and other budget items stand out in our recent memory, but I argue that as far as our youth are concerned, we are in their debt for the sacrifices they have made over the course of this pandemic. The investments I just listed should be but the start of an increased investment in our young Canadians to see their development and experience are not tripped up as a result of this pandemic.

During a recent interview, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion Carla Qualtrough stated her concern over the potential for long-term scarring our young Canadians could face. She pointed out that

historically, in past crises, it was younger Canadians who were getting their working lives started whose suffering seemed to drag on even after the emergency or crisis had subsided.

I appreciate her sentiments, and I hope they translate to a long-term, steady focus on trying to lift up this cohort of Canadians. Outside-the-box thinking is needed if we hope to undo some of the harms done in the past year. I think of items like Senator Moodie's bill calling for the creation of a child commissioner, which could go a long way to cementing this commitment, and I hope to see this position created in one form or another in the months and years to come; this needs to happen.

With the increased pace of vaccinations, Canada seems to be turning a corner in this pandemic. As our economy reopens, it is my hope that we will encounter continued good news on the virus front as the months wear on. Any jubilation, though, should not shroud the sacrifices made by our younger Canadians in this "lockdown" generation. The investments in these estimates are encouraging, but they should be but the beginning of our focus on young Canadians if we are to pay them back for what they have done for and with us.

• (1610)

Finally, when I sit at the National Finance table, while we reviewed the budget bill and these supplementary estimates over the past weeks, I try to prepare, listen and speak with this question on the tip of my tongue: What does every page, every observation and every recommendation mean to Canadians generally? Do I understand this enough to articulate it to any Canadian? Does it make sense? Is it fair? And, particularly now, does it continue to support us in a time of healing, recovery and hope?

We are watching Finance and the Treasury Board closely — you heard Senator Marshall — to make sure our processes are improved and make sense, ensuring better transparency for all Canadians. This continues to be a year-over-year work-in-progress. There are issues of alignment between the budget and the estimates, but I am cautiously hopeful that given so many factors we can look forward and outward from the Senate with confidence to support a better "desired Canada." Thank you, *meegwetch*.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Senator Ataullahjan, do you have a question?

Hon. Salma Ataullahjan: Will the senator take a question?

Senator M. Deacon: Certainly.

Senator Ataullahjan: Senator, I thank you for your impassioned speech, but what I am hearing from fellow Canadians is the government has not issued any kind of guidelines for those Canadians who are fully vaccinated. As we've spoken about, vaccination has picked up; 20% of Canadians have been fully vaccinated. Isn't it time the government issued some sort of guidelines for those who are fully vaccinated?

Senator M. Deacon: Thank you. Senator, I think you were at our dinner table last night at home and that was a discussion we had quite voraciously and I'm looking forward to; it's that first vaccine and now the second vaccine. What are the behaviours we are expecting and some guidelines so we can move forward with groups of all ages? I'm looking forward to that. Thank you.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: 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.)

CITIZENSHIP ACT

BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) moved third reading of Bill S-230, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (granting citizenship to certain Canadians).

She said: Honourable senators, I am honoured to sponsor and speak once again at third reading of Bill S-230, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act, which will permit certain persons who lost their Canadian citizenship to regain citizenship. I will be brief.

I would like to begin by thanking our colleague Senator Omidvar for her efforts in advocating for Lost Canadians, refugees and other vulnerable groups, as well as her work on this bill as the critic. I would also like to acknowledge the Chair of the Social Affairs Committee, Senator Petitclerc, and all members of the committee for their thoughtful and insightful questions during the study of Bill S-230.

As I said at second reading and in committee, this bill will address a specific gap in the Citizenship Act to capture a small group of Canadians who had lost their Canadian citizenship or became stateless because of changes to policy. Many of these individuals were raised in Canada from a young age. Though they were born abroad, some came to Canada as infants in some cases. They went to school in Canada, they raised their families in Canada, they worked and paid taxes in Canada, yet they turned 28 without knowing that their citizenship would be stripped from them because of the change in policy to the Citizenship Act of 1977 that required Canadians born abroad to apply to retain citizenship when they turned age 28.

As previously explained, this law — “the age 28 rule” — was passed, then forgotten. Those who turned 28 but didn't apply to retain their citizenship before their twenty-eighth birthday subsequently became Lost Canadians on their twenty-eighth birthday. Bill C-37 of 2008, which repealed the age 28 provision and grandfathered all those Canadians who had not yet turned 28 to be included in the policy change, left out a small group of Canadians who had already turned 28, specifically those born in

a 50-month window between February 15, 1977, to April 16, 1981. This small cohort of Lost Canadians is the group for whom Bill S-230 was brought forward in this Parliament.

Bill S-230 focuses on these Lost Canadians to ensure that they can continue their lives upon enactment of Bill S-230 without fear and to know that they are valued and supported by reinstating them as they should have been in 2009 when the age 28 rule was repealed.

During the committee study we heard from the Director General, Citizenship Branch, Strategic and Program Policy, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and the Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic and Program Policy of IRCC. We heard questions from the members of the committee about the importance of the framework and post-enactment of this legislation to ensure that the officials look at strategies that will help the legislation to be implemented successfully.

Senator Bovey asked:

What about those who don't know that they're lost and so therefore aren't looking at the site? Once you know you want to do something, you can find ways to do it. I'm concerned about how people become aware that they can do it or might be affected by it. How do we deal with those who are unsuspecting and unknowing?

Senator Robert Black asked:

What will you do outside of the website rules and forcing people to the website? I'm building on my colleague's question. Do you anticipate doing anything out of the ordinary to inform these Lost Canadians, for example, placing ads in newspapers across the country or different things?

Catherine Scott, Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic and Program Policy with IRCC, replied:

If there are changes to the Citizenship Act, the department — as it would when there is any major legislative change — would undertake a proactive and sustained communication strategy. We would need to look at that.

• (1620)

Senator Petitclerc expressed her concerns during committee that:

Not everybody has the same tools and capacity to reach out and get their citizenship recognized. What I was trying to understand is that the government is not being proactive in finding them.

We also heard from Don Chapman about so many unique stories from Lost Canadians and each one is asking for our help. “Each case will be very exceptional, but I know Don will continue to advocate.”

As the sponsor of this bill, and hopefully with Senator Omidvar and others of the working group on immigration, I will remain active and follow up with officials and key departments to

ensure that information is made widely available and the framework is in place for a transparent and successful post-enactment of this legislation. An effective communication strategy will be vital to ensure that we reach as many Lost Canadians in this cohort as we can.

The follow-up that my colleagues described in committee is important, and I thank them for their interventions.

I ask all honourable senators for your support at the conclusion of this debate at third reading. With the passage of Bill S-230, we can reinstate this last cohort of Lost Canadians affected by the age-28 rule from a previous policy decision that was repealed in 2009, to never live in fear again and to ensure they are given the rights and opportunities that they deserve as Canadians at birth. Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[Translation]

Hon. Chantal Petitclerc: Honourable senators, I will rise briefly to speak to Bill S-230, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act with respect to granting citizenship to certain Canadians.

First of all, I would like to thank Senator Martin for her work on this file, along with Senator Omidvar, of course.

I make my remarks today as Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, to add a few points to the report submitted without amendment or comment by our committee.

However, during our study of the bill, members of our committee expressed their wish that the Senate be informed of certain comments, particularly on the measures of success for this legislation, as well as on the communications strategies that would be necessary once it is passed by Parliament.

Time constraints kept us from including these comments in our report, which was tabled on June 17, and the committee members entrusted me to share this information with you, which I will do in a moment.

The first part of my intervention is about the number of people who could benefit from the bill, and about the measures of success.

[English]

As Senator Martin already mentioned in her speech, Bill S-230 proposes amendments to the Citizenship Act that would resolve the issue of a very small group of Lost Canadians, born between February 15, 1977, and April 16, 1981.

Members of the committee asked officials from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada how many people would be affected by these potential amendments to the Act. IRCC officials could not confirm how many people fall into this category of Lost Canadians.

[Senator Martin]

Officials from IRCC reminded the committee that this cohort would now be in their 40s, and that as people get older they are more likely to have already discovered and resolved any questions surrounding citizenship.

Members of the committee also expressed a keen interest in knowing how many Lost Canadians will be granted citizenship through these amendments if the bill passes.

IRCC officials informed the committee that since 2014, 109 individuals have applied for ministerial discretion to grant citizenship under section 5(4) of the Citizenship Act.

Of the 109 applications, 105 have been dispensed with and the individuals in question have received citizenship, while four are currently under review.

[Translation]

Some committee members wondered how these prospective amendments to the legislation would be communicated to those who would benefit from them if Bill S-230 passes.

That will be the subject of the second part of my speech.

[English]

As Senator Martin mentioned in her speech, members highlighted that it would be important that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada makes a significant effort toward informing as many people as possible.

Bill S-230's sponsor, Senator Martin, highlighted the importance of using a variety of communication tools to inform interested parties of these amendments to the act if it passes.

Senator Martin also mentioned that she had been in communication with the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, and that he verbally confirmed that the department would ensure these prospective amendments are effectively communicated if Bill S-230 is made law.

Officials from IRCC informed the committee that their website currently outlines how to apply for citizenship and who is eligible.

Officials further informed the committee that after previous major amendments to the act that came into force in 2009 and 2015, approximately 17,500 people applied for and were granted proof of citizenship.

They confirmed that if there are amendments made to the act, the department would undertake a proactive and sustained communication strategy.

[Translation]

Honourable senators, I hope this information will be useful to you as we debate this bill, which our committee passed without amendment.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Question.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING—MOTION IN AMENDMENT NEGATIVED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Wells, seconded by the Honourable Senator Plett, for the third reading of Bill C-218, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (sports betting).

And on the motion in amendment of the Honourable Senator McCallum, seconded by the Honourable Senator Duncan:

That Bill C-218 be not now read a third time, but that it be amended in clause 2, on page 1, by replacing line 5 with the following:

“2 (1) Subsection 207(1) of the *Criminal Code* is amended by adding the following after paragraph (a):

(a.1) for an Indigenous council, government or other entity that is authorized to act on behalf of an Indigenous group, community or people that holds rights recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* to conduct and manage a lottery scheme under an agreement or arrangement with the Government of Canada;

(2) Paragraph 207(4)(b) of the Act is re-”.

Hon. Marilou McPhedran: Honourable senators, as an independent senator from Manitoba, Treaty 1 territory and the homeland of the Métis Nation, I supported the amendment

proposed by Senator White and I support this amendment. I commend Senator McCallum for bringing it forward, and I will stand with her if she requests a standing vote. This is reasonable in addressing the concerns of First Nations peoples who are seeking an even playing field in keeping with their rights under section 35 of the Constitution, and in keeping with the established practice of the current government through the Ministers of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Indigenous Services Canada.

• (1630)

If ever there was a single day when we can be attentive to the sovereignty of First Nations, it would be today. I approach this present debate using the lens we recently employed in our deliberations before adopting Bill C-15 last week to incorporate the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the Canadian legal system. I note that this approach was shared by senators who voted for and against this historic bill.

Senator Plett, in debate on Bill C-15, questioned whether the cause of reconciliation is better served by accusations against anyone who happens to disagree with the echo chamber, or is reconciliation actually furthered by dialogue and respect?

This reminder serves us well in the context of the private member's bill before us. Could we please pause? Today, the echo chamber is the push to pass this private member's bill, facilitated by the government, for reasons that are less than clear, without duly considering its impact on First Nations. To echo Senator Woo from earlier debate on another bill, either we fix the bill or send it back. We should not be rushed.

We have spoken at length regarding reconciliation. This bill presents us with an opportunity to act. First Nations spokespersons have voiced displeasure that their views were not heard, some noting that the interests of horse racing — considered federal jurisdiction, as are Indigenous and Crown relations — were prioritized. Proponents of this bill have described it as simple, a small amendment to section 207(4)(b) of the Criminal Code. That may well be so, but then so too is this amendment simple. All it seeks to add a clause that recognizes the right of First Nations to negotiate directly with the federal government, nation to nation.

Let's bear in mind that First Nations were not consulted or included in the agreement, nor were they mentioned in the subsequent amendments to the Criminal Code. Arguably, the failure to consult and accommodate First Nations regarding the 1985 amendments to the code was a breach of the fiduciary duty that Canada owes to First Nations.

What really is the primary purpose of this bill? We have been told it's to stop criminal activity and the diversion of funds, to provide Canadian gamblers what they apparently want and to provide new revenue streams for provinces in desperate straits, but this amendment does not affect those outcomes. In fact, this amendment supports and increases the overall odds of success. By passing this amendment, the purpose of Bill C-218 is no way frustrated in that no Canadian would be denied their right to bet, provinces would still generate revenue through their gaming corporations and illegal activity would still be redirected to legal outlets. The good news is that this amendment would add to

those goals by enabling a framework for First Nations to exercise their right to self-government, provide them the legal recognition to operate without the accusation of a grey market entity and widen capacity to control economic development for the benefit of the members of their respective territories.

This amendment ensures that First Nations can enter into negotiations with third-party companies with the same standing as other domestic or foreign companies. First Nations have already reported false communications and fearmongering that portray their gaming authorities as illegitimate. We know that the Criminal Code amendment in 1985 does not include First Nations and the delegation of authority. A 2020 report issued by the Fraser Institute concluded that the federal government's transfer of jurisdiction over gambling to the provinces is proving to be a limiting factor for First Nations, as it "... endowed the provinces with superior legislative authority, which they have used to limit the role of First Nations."

Recently, an open letter from the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake provided examples of how certain provincial governments have increased efforts to stigmatize and marginalize First Nations gaming rights in communications to third-party companies and businesses.

Perhaps of greater concern is the evidence of provinces moving against First Nations with all their legislative and, at times, militaristic might. In June 2014, Sand Hills Casino, owned equally by 64 First Nations in Manitoba, opened its doors. But a few years later, a \$1 billion civil action was commenced by the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs against the Government of Manitoba and the Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries Corporation. The ongoing lawsuit alleges breaches of contract, breaches of fiduciary duty, breaches of the duty to consult and negligent misrepresentation in relation to gaming.

Senator McCallum's amendment can redress the omission of First Nations. Is this not a concrete and achievable act of reconciliation? Will we knowingly and willfully miss this opportunity?

To those who argue that such an amendment is not at all needed, consider that Bill C-218 will remove single-match gambling prohibitions for provinces, but without recognizing Indigenous governments it will further entrench the material disadvantage that many Indigenous councils face.

Further, without this amendment, Bill C-218 does not give First Nations a clear path to exercise their rights. Silence in this bill may lead third parties to be even more hesitant to partner with Indigenous-owned and operated sports betting platforms.

As Chief Gina Deer of the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake said to senators:

... laws are constantly created to shut us out of industries that are very lucrative. ... It makes it very difficult to believe in true reconciliation and righting the wrongs of the past.

Kahnawake in Quebec is recognized as a global leader in regulation.

Colleagues, perhaps there is a parallel with the Nova Scotia fishing dispute. Although First Nation fishers have the right to fish for a moderate living, Parliament has never officially recognized that right by statute, and the right is therefore questioned and often disrespected. This has led to violence and extensive economic harms.

To those who argue that this is a provincial issue, this bill is about the federal Criminal Code — an inherent federal jurisdiction. The Supreme Court in the *Furtney* case held that gambling could be regulated jointly by the federal and provincial governments acting under different heads of power. The provinces, which own and derive revenue from casinos and gaming, must navigate an intrinsic conflict of interest. Provincial jurisdiction over First Nations gaming is not a matter of a constitutional right; it is a result of a legislative transfer that can be modified by Parliament and can be addressed in this amendment.

To those who argue that this is simply a provincial issue in Quebec, you're wrong. There are hundreds of Indigenous groups and councils across the country whose right to self-governance will be impacted by this legislation.

As Senator Cotter has advised, a good model can be found in Saskatchewan's province-wide Aboriginal authority that manages this level of negotiation. This is commendable, but not found across every province, nor is it desired uniformly by First Nations.

Senator Cotter counselled us to "have some faith in the provinces to get this right." Unfortunately, I don't think good faith is enough. In his comments, he referenced a police raid on the First Nations Bear Claw Casino, stating that:

... the RCMP came in and shut down the casino and took custody of all the gaming equipment and cash at the casino.

He said that the RCMP handled this raid with as great care as possible.

However, Chief Bernard Sheppard recounts his own eyewitness version of events, wherein SWAT troops in balaclavas, armed with assault rifles, helicopters, road blockades and police dogs descended on the casino. As the police did not identify themselves, employees believed it was an armed robbery. Chief Shepherd described the destruction of gaming tables and equipment, gaming boxes smashed and upturned, laughter from officers as they confiscated equipment in a semi-trailer.

• (1640)

I am distraught that Senator Cotter's personal safety was imperiled during that crisis. His leadership role in resolving the issue to the benefit of both province and SIGA is to be commended. However, the heavy-handed actions taken by law enforcement are too often the norm, not the exception, and make it difficult to fully entrust faith in the provincial ability to deal fairly and equitably. This amendment allows First Nations to carve out a level playing field.

As a Manitoba senator, with a former jockey for a sister, I welcome the protective amendment in favour of Canada's horse-racing industry, but are we not, in fact, signalling a preference for rich horse owners over Indigenous peoples, as some have described it?

In his Bill C-15 speech on June 15, Senator Plett quoted Shannon Joseph, who observed that ambiguous legislation renders investment difficult. In fact, it pushes investment away due to fears over uncertainty.

Senators are not those arguments equally applicable to the First Nation's exclusion in Bill C-218?

I recognize there is considerable pressure to move this legislation. As Senator Dagenais stated eloquently:

... I would hope that partisanship and the rush to blindly accept legislation from the other place will not be impediments to improving this bill, in the spirit that should always guide a responsible federal government.

The Law Commission of Canada argued that Canadian criminal law has been used to consolidate provincial authority over gambling as a revenue-raising instrument, and to expand its availability rather than restrict it in any meaningful sense. Are we rushing this because we are beholden to big professional teams without knowing for sure? Our lobbying law has the convenient loophole decryd by past and current lobbying commissioners that companies don't have to register in-house lobbying contacts if they keep them to under 20% of an employee's time. How much time do a few strategically placed phone calls take?

The Canadian Football League Commissioner advised senators that legalized sports betting was a huge opportunity and indicated they would be ready to go by Labour Day, if not earlier. The BC Lottery Corporation indicated a readiness almost immediately.

We can't close that loophole at this point, but we can make Bill C-218 fairer to First Nations in Canada. I urge you to vote in favour of this amendment. It is the right thing to do. If it requires the bill to return to the other place, so be it. We're beholden to the responsibility to provide sober second thought, not to the gaming calendar of the day. Hopefully, we all heard member of Parliament Mumilaq Qaqqaq's blunt appraisal that without

action, reconciliation is just a hollow word. This amendment is a tangible, actionable and simple way to live up to our collective word.

Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

Hon. Vernon White: Honourable senators, it's good to see us again discussing Bill C-218. I will now speak to the amendment that has been brought forward by Senator McCallum.

Although the amendment brought forward focuses specifically on Indigenous rights, I would argue that the concerns raised have been typical of what we have seen throughout the process of moving Bill C-218 forward.

In looking at the witnesses and briefs presented in the other place, we saw 29 briefs and 32 witnesses who appeared. Of the 29 briefs, we saw two First Nations who provided those briefs, and both recommended changes to the legislation, either in the form of an amendment or in the delay of implementation to ensure provinces and territories engage with First Nations to include their interests in the implementation.

The remainder of the 27 witnesses included one from the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, who made a number of recommendations which were significantly ignored, including recommendations for changes in the Criminal Code regarding match manipulation, and one presentation from the Responsible Gambling Council identifying the need for work in relation to mental health and gambling.

While I can get the point of a need to consider changes to the Criminal Code of Canada regarding single-event sports betting, the concern we should have, and I would argue should focus on, is whether or not the other place — and in their absence, we — have completed a thorough review of this proposed but not yet passed legislation.

As I said in my second reading speech, this piece of legislation has many tentacles that could have and should have been looked at more closely. While I have spoken earlier about match fixing and my opinion on that area, I will not speak to it today. However, we could speak to areas such as mental illness and the impact micro-betting will have on gamblers, the tools used by online gambling infrastructure to ensure a gambler's continued betting, ethics in sports. I could go on, but I want and I'm expected to focus on the amendment brought forward.

In 2019, the Assembly of First Nations requested the Government of Canada look at section 207 of the Criminal Code, the same section we're looking at here today. The difference is that they were asking the Government of Canada to amend the Criminal Code to include First Nations in the provisions of the code pertaining to gambling. In essence, the code today prohibits casinos on Indigenous lands, for example, unless they are sanctioned by the province. First Nations leaders want to build more casinos, seeing the gambling industry as a road to prosperity for impoverished communities with few natural resources.

To quote the Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde:

It's all about recognizing and respecting First Nations jurisdiction We have to make this one of the items on all party platforms: respecting First Nations jurisdiction. It's about creating really good paying jobs for all people, not just First Nations peoples — and it's another avenue to creating economic stability.

Gaming has a huge impact on the economy. There is only one economy, and First Nations people have got to be part of that economy in a meaningful and substantive way, and this is just one of the pieces in the puzzle. Looking at Criminal Code amendments just makes good economic sense.

We have heard that a lot in the last couple of weeks.

As the Government of Canada was refusing to open Criminal Code section 207 for economic reasons in relation to First Nations in Canada, they are now agreeing to open that very section of the Criminal Code for provinces, territories and, of course, those who have the most to gain off the advent of single-event betting: big corporations, the Canadian Gaming Association and others.

In fact, in the other place, the only amendment that came about as a result of the 29 briefs and 32 witnesses was directly linked to harness racing in Canada. Not an insignificant issue, and I agree fully with the amendment, but what about the argument First Nation leaders have made for years and are continuing to make? What about the argument the AFN made to the Government of Canada in 2019 and First Nations again made in the other place and here? Is that not important as well?

I have been trying to figure out why the government did not run with their own bill as planned. They brought it forward around the same time. They will argue that Bill C-218 was a step ahead in the parliamentary process, but was it for that reason or because the government did not want to deal with the myriad of issues that must be considered before such a bill passes, in particular in relation to today's discussion relating to the issues of equitable access to lotteries and gaming, argued by the national chief of the AFN in 2019 and other First Nation leaders today?

The sponsoring critic might argue the agreements and changes should take place between provinces and First Nations. That's a good argument. After all, that's exactly what the Criminal Code states, in essence:

for the government of a province, either alone or in conjunction with the government of another province, to conduct and manage a lottery scheme in that province . . .

It goes on it say that a province or group of provinces operating can work together.

So it appears that First Nations can — if a province wishes to allow them to do so — operate a gaming enterprise. If they wish. Since when do First Nations rights come in this manner, a wish?

In the past few months and for years before, we have spoken about the importance of UNDRIP. Now, at the first opportunity to show what we said, we meant, and we meant what we said, I would argue if we do not make substantive changes to this bill regarding the demands of the AFN in 2019 and now other First Nations, then we are ignoring that work.

I do not believe we have given thought to a number of areas raised, like my friend Senator Simons who raised micro-betting and the issues of addiction that come with this, or the issues Senator Batters raised to the sponsor on second reading regarding mental illness, or the issues raised by experts in Ethics in Sport.

Clearly, my issue with the bill is we have not done our job; the job the public expects us to do. They expect us to break down and build up a piece of legislation to make certain we consider the very issues that have been raised. Right now, it is about First Nations' rights. If we agree that Indigenous governments and peoples have a right to engage in the pursuit of their own economic opportunities — those same opportunities granted to other governments under federal legislation and found in section 207 under "Permitted lotteries" — then we have an opportunity, on National Indigenous Peoples Day, at the very first opportunity following the passing of the UNDRP legislation, to do the right thing and accept the amendment as presented. Thank you.

• (1650)

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Senator Batters, do you have a question?

Hon. Denise Batters: I do. Senator White, the last time we dealt with this bill, Senator Cotter referred to a legal opinion he commissioned on your proposed amendment. I only received that legal opinion this weekend, unfortunately after the fact. I note that in that legal opinion, the author, who is a criminal law professor, states he views the major:

. . . detriment to the criminal justice system from match-fixing offence is that this could lead police to lay two different charges for the same facts and that this should be avoided.

That argument wasn't mentioned by Senator Cotter last week. However, Senator White, my experience in practising law — I'm sure you would concur in your decades of policing — is that the police lay more than one charge on the same fact pattern every single day. An example is "0.08" and "impaired driving" and another example is "fraud" and "theft." Would you agree that is a common occurrence? I do wish that we would have seen that legal opinion earlier.

Senator White: Thank you very much for the question. In fact, I wish I had seen it earlier. I could have spoken to it in the last session here in relation to match fixing. In fact, in the one case that was presented by the critic in committee hearings, two charges were laid for the same offence: "cheating at play," which was decided by the Supreme Court to be sent back, and "fraud." It's not uncommon to have multiple charges. I believe that having had the legal opinion ahead of time, we could have had a further discussion and dialogue in relation to whether or not changes in the Criminal Code would have been required.

Hon. Brent Cotter: Honourable senators, I'll be brief. I support the general sentiment of Senator McCallum's amendment. Three reservations will cause me to vote against it.

First, the amendment proposes a dramatically expanded framework for the regulation of gaming in general and not just in relation to single-event sports betting, which is the very specific and narrow focus of this bill. Going down this route has widespread ramifications, proposing as it does a substantial amendment to one of our most powerful and far-reaching laws, the Criminal Code. I think this is problematic.

Second, the amendment seeks to embed an aspect of the inherent right of self-government found in section 35 of the Constitution Act in a provision of the code. The route to self-determination is important, but the route is not through a single provision of the Criminal Code dealing with sports betting. This is not the central purpose of the Criminal Code. Last-minute amendments to what I think of as this highly important law need far more careful consideration than this particular amendment.

Third, I'm concerned that any amendment, if adopted at this late date, would delay this bill for an unknown period of time. This bill represents, by any measure, an opportunity for many First Nations in my province — and in other provinces — who support this bill in its present form. In fact, all of the First Nations in Saskatchewan — 74 of them — support this bill.

First Nations in Saskatchewan represent under 20% of the people of the province, yet they receive 50% of the benefits of gaming in the province. They will get an equally proportionate dimension of the benefits this bill presents in terms of jobs and revenue that go back to their communities.

Absent a compelling need to address a serious flaw in the bill, which I do not believe exists, I cannot justify standing in the way of this opportunity to bring jobs and resources to my province, most particularly to First Nations people and communities — an initiative they fully support.

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

Hon. Senators: Question.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: If you are opposed to the motion, please say "no."

Some Hon. Senators: No.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Those in favour of the motion, and who are in the Senate Chamber, please say "yea."

Some Hon. Senators: Yea.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Those opposed in the Senate Chamber, will please say "nay."

Some Hon. Senators: Nay.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: I believe the nays have it.

And two honourable senators having risen:

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: I see two senators rising, so we will have a standing vote. Is there an agreement on time?

Hon. Senators: Fifteen minutes.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Fifteen minutes. Are senators okay with 15 minutes? The vote will be held at 5:11 p.m.

Call in the senators.

• (1710)

Motion in amendment of the Honourable Senator McCallum negated on the following division:

YEAS THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Anderson	Kutcher
Bernard	Lovelace Nicholas
Boniface	McCallum
Bovey	McPhedran
Cordy	Mercer
Coyle	Miville-Dechéne
Downe	Omidvar
Forest	Pate
Forest-Niesing	Simons
Francis	White—21
Hartling	

NAYS THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Ataullahjan	Manning
Bellemare	Marshall
Black (<i>Alberta</i>)	Martin
Black (<i>Ontario</i>)	Marwah
Boehm	Massicotte
Busson	Mégie
Carignan	Mockler
Christmas	Munson
Cotter	Ngo
Dagenais	Oh
Dasko	Petitclerc
Deacon (<i>Nova Scotia</i>)	Plett
Deacon (<i>Ontario</i>)	Ravalia
Duncan	Saint-Germain
Galvez	Seidman
Greene	Smith
Griffin	Tannas
Harder	Wallin

Housakos	Wells
Lankin	Wetston
Loffreda	Woo—43
MacDonald	

ABSTENTIONS
THE HONOURABLE SENATORS

Boisvenu	Gagné
Boyer	Gold
Brazeau	LaBoucane-Benson
Cormier	Moncion
Dalphond	Moodie
Dean	Patterson—13
Dupuis	

• (1720)

BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING—VOTE DEFERRED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Wells, seconded by the Honourable Senator Plett, for the third reading of Bill C-218, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (sports betting).

Hon. Gwen Boniface: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to Bill C-218 on single-event sport betting. I have read the committee testimony and listened intently to the speakers before me, and I thank all of them for their individual speeches and their addition to this debate. The reason I decided to speak to this issue today is that I don't believe that we, as senators, have given this bill the time and deliberation needed to understand all the impacts of what this legislation entails. I am in no way against the idea of single-event sport betting, but I am a firm believer that this is a bill that must proceed with caution after more fulsome study.

As the evidence has made clear, Canada already has a match-fixing problem. As Declan Hill, one of the foremost experts on match fixing and corruption in international sports and who was earlier referred to by Senator White in his speech, stated in *The Globe and Mail* in past December in an op-ed piece:

At international police conferences, the Interpol delegates would single out Canada as a bastion of match-fixing. They led a delegation to our country in 2015 to share their knowledge of the problem and, specifically, which games were being fixed.

The response of Canadian authorities? A giant metaphorical shrug of the shoulders.

I think it is worth noting, honourable senators, that the senators with previous police experience who make up a portion of this chamber voted in favour of Senator White's amendment, and I would say that was for a reason. It's on the police to collect the evidence in order for the Crown attorney to prosecute, and I can

attest that cases of fraud are difficult enough to lay, let alone to result in convictions. Senator White, who spent significant time policing fraud, spoke to this and his concerns in answer to Senator Cotter's question.

From testimony in the other place on February 25, 2021, I would like to refer to an exchange between Member of Parliament Fortin and Mr. Michael Ellison, Counsel, Criminal Law Policy Section, Department of Justice. In his question, Mr. Fortin was asking, if Bill C-218 were passed, would the Criminal Code or Canadian legislation make it possible to properly control problems that are potentially related to the fixing of single-event sports, and, if not, what we could do to improve it. In reply, Mr. Ellison said:

Currently, the Criminal Code has two offences that are charged in these circumstances for match-fixing that is identified. Those offences typically are cheating at play, which is a potential one, but more commonly, fraud, which is under subsection 380(1) of the Criminal Code.

He went on to say:

Those offences have been successfully prosecuted, including recently a case that went to the Supreme Court, in 2015: the Queen v. Riesberry. Therefore, we have offences in the Criminal Code that can combat this activity. Of course, there are other issues that have to do with detection.

Mr. Fortin said:

Is that enough?

Could we improve that?

And Mr. Ellison replied:

At this time, my comment would be that the Supreme Court has ruled that these offences are applicable, but I would say that the committee could look to other jurisdictions and also measures at the UN and other international organizations where there are calls for specific offences.

• (1730)

Mr. Fortin asked, "Are you sure that, if Bill C-218 was passed, we could avoid the fixing of single-event sports in Canada?"

Mr. Ellison replied:

I think it would be fair to say that match-fixing already occurs and it would still occur after, and that provinces and territories and the prosecution services and investigation services would have to focus on learning more about match-fixing and preventing it. As with all crime, it would be impossible to completely eliminate it.

I cite this because it goes to the heart of my concern. Indeed, a white paper in response to the international Symposium on Match Manipulation and Gambling in Sport, co-authored by the

Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport and McLaren Global Sport Solutions, recommended the following in their report of October 2019:

A review of relevant sections of Canadian Criminal Code should be undertaken including amendments to address the prosecution of corrupt practises focussed specifically on match manipulation in Canadian sport.

Senators, I don't wish to re-engage in an already defeated amendment, but I think the topic of match fixing may not have received full consideration as this bill made its way through Parliament. I believe this matter should have had the benefit of clarity, particularly for those in the policing community who will be tasked with obtaining evidence — which, in the case of match fixing, would be extremely difficult to detect in most cases.

Another missed opportunity is around associated addictions. Many international regimes are already in place, which could be studied in Canadian context, but in my view this expertise has been lacking in the bill's progression.

In the same article by Declan Hill, he speaks of a conversation he had with a colleague who ran a European sportsbook with about 1 million clients. Mr. Hill asked him how many clients won, rather than lost, over a one-year span. The response was “five.” Out of roughly 1 million clients, only five won money over the course of a year. Colleagues, that is a lot of people losing money.

Now let us look at the U.K. for some startling figures. Last July, our colleagues in the House of Lords published a report entitled *Gambling Harm — Time For Action*, which deals extensively with problematic gambling. Their findings reveal that approximately 333,000 people in the U.K. are problem gamblers and that, on average, one problem gambler commits suicide every day.

But more than this, it found that 55,000 of those problem gamblers are aged 11 to 16, and the rate of problem gambling for girls in this age group is twice that of adults, and for boys it is three times that of adults. For this age cohort, gambling is illegal, but efforts to curb this reality have been unsuccessful.

The Independent newspaper in the U.K. reported that the number of young people struggling with gambling addiction has quadrupled in the past two years. The news reports states:

As a result of growing concern that child gambling is being fuelled by online gaming sites and targeted adverts, NHS England has announced plans to launch The National Problem Gambling Clinic in London which will offer specialist help for children and young people aged 13 to 25.

However, there are wider consequences to problem gambling that also affect families. For every problematic gambler, on average, six people are directly affected.

Opening up single-event sports betting without these considerations in mind could see a similarly troubling circumstance in Canada. This type of betting is quick and easily accessible to anyone who has internet capabilities. It is easy to

understand and easy to do, and we should expect an increase in gamblers of all ages once — and if — single-event sports betting is opened up.

If we look back to the House of Lords report, it says that “60% of its profits come from the 5% who are already problem gamblers, or are at risk of becoming so.” Let me put the emphasis on “at risk of becoming so.” Single-event sports betting will increase the number of people at risk of becoming addicted to gambling.

While we know there are supports already in place, we don't know the extent to which more supports will be needed in the case of single-event sports betting. Remember, colleagues, this is an expansion of legal gambling options that we are creating, and when we do so, we should do so with rigour and with sufficient time to review.

Senators, I am of the belief that had Bill C-13, a government bill, been in front of us rather than Bill C-218, a private member's bill, we may have seen more scrutiny in the other place and perhaps here in the Senate. It is unfortunate that we are so pushed for time on this issue. Perhaps we would have heard from more witnesses. Perhaps we could have learned more from international experts — both those in favour and those against — and they would have been able to give us a broad range of views. I would like to have heard from law enforcement about the intricacies of the law and the choices that would have to be made.

This amendment to the Criminal Code seems minor in nature, but its implications are more wide-reaching than have been discussed thus far. These are but two areas in need of further clarity, neither of which were attached as observations to the report. I fully appreciate that the committee was under time restraints.

I also believe that a more prudent approach may have been to wait for the final report of the Cullen Commission in British Columbia. This independent commission has been tasked with looking at money laundering in certain sections; gaming and horse racing being one of them. It will assuredly reach helpful conclusions that apply to single-event sports betting, before us today. It would be beneficial for provinces to have this information before crafting or amending associated regulations. I do not see why we can't give the appropriate time to the commission to develop the recommendations before moving forward with this bill.

Honourable senators, as I said, I am not opposed to single-sports betting itself. I commend the work of MP Kevin Waugh, the sponsor of this legislation. I also want to thank Senators Wells and Cotter for their contributions here in the Senate. However, in my view, unfortunately not enough deliberation has occurred for me to feel comfortable voting in favour of this bill.

I am unmoved by an argument that revolves around, “It's already being done in the shadows, so we might as well bring it into the light.” Colleagues, if we're going to bring it into the light, let's do it with our eyes open. This is not about denying people a small wager on their favourite NHL team. This is about addressing the risk of match fixing and addressing and understanding the implications of more options for Canadians to

gamble. If we are to vote on this bill at third reading, let's make sure we have a full understanding of its impact. Thank you. *Meegweetch.*

The Hon. the Speaker: Are senators ready for the question? It was moved by the Honourable Senator Wells, seconded by the Honourable Senator Plett, that the bill be read a third time. If you are opposed to the motion, please say "no."

An Hon. Senator: No.

The Hon. the Speaker: I hear a "no." All those senators in the chamber who are in favour of the motion will please say "yea."

Some Hon. Senators: Yea.

The Hon. the Speaker: All those senators in the chamber who are opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

Some Hon. Senators: Nay.

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

And two honourable senators having risen:

The Hon. the Speaker: Is there agreement on a bell?

Senator Plett: Your Honour, we move that we defer the vote until the next sitting of the Senate.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, pursuant to paragraph 16 of the order of October 27, 2020 concerning hybrid sittings, the vote stands deferred until 3:30 p.m. on the next day the Senate sits, provided that, if that day is a Monday, the vote will be at the end of Question Period. In both cases, there will be a 15-minute bell before the vote.

CANADA LABOUR CODE

BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING—DEBATE

Hon. Judith G. Seidman moved third reading of Bill C-220, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (bereavement leave).

She said: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak at third reading of Bill C-220, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (bereavement leave). When I spoke to Bill C-220 at second reading, I acknowledged the unanimous support this bill received in the other place, and I am pleased to see strong support here too, in this chamber.

• (1740)

I would like to commend Member of Parliament Matt Jeneroux for his work on this important issue and thank the honourable members of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology for their study of this bill.

I would also like to thank Senator Simons for her role as a friendly critic of this bill and her energetic commitment to seeing it through.

The objective of Bill C-220 is simple. It first expands the period of bereavement leave from 5 working days to 10 days with 3 of those days paid for all employees who fall under the Canada Labour Code. This would mean that approximately 18,000 federally regulated employers and up to 2 million workers would qualify for this benefit in Canada.

Bill C-220 also proposes to extend the same bereavement benefits to those who are on unpaid compassionate leave caring for a non-immediate family member. As I mentioned in my second reading speech, it is important to note that, within the Canada Labour Code, for the purposes of compassionate care leave, the definition of "family member" is larger in scope than that of "immediate family member." Currently, as stated in the Canada Labour Code, bereavement leave only applies to the loss of an immediate family member.

By modifying subsection 210(1) of the Canada Labour Code to include the term "family member" within the eligibility criteria, bereavement leave would be extended to caregivers caring for someone who is not an immediate family member.

On June 9, the Social Affairs, Science and Technology Committee held a hearing on Bill C-220 and heard from Member of Parliament Matt Jeneroux, the sponsor of the bill. In his opening remarks, he said:

Bereavement has become a topic that we, as representatives, must discuss. We've seen more than 25,000 Canadians die from COVID-19 in the last year alone. What's really heartbreaking is that many people had to see their loved ones die while in a long-term care home behind a paned-glass window. That leaves thousands of Canadians to grieve while trying to juggle their job and other personal responsibilities.

While it is true that this bill will only benefit 6% of the Canadian workforce, I believe that Bill C-220 provides us with an opportunity to show leadership on this issue in the hopes that it will incentivize action for the majority of workers in this country who fall under provincial labour codes.

The committee also heard from Patrice Lindsay from the Heart and Stroke Foundation who argued that, while Bill C-220 only affects federally regulated industry, its passage would have knock-on effects throughout the country. She said:

The bill also sends an encouraging message to the private sector highlighting the importance of providing their employees the time they need following the death of a loved one.

She also said:

Each death is tragic and requires a compassionate response from all levels of society, including government. Extending bereavement leave for workers will provide more time to grieve, plan funerals and finalize estates. . . .

Julie Kelndorfer, a representative of the MS Society of Canada, spoke about the importance of extending these benefits to caregivers. She said:

Canadian caregivers exhibit increasing levels of chronic stress due to the added caregiving responsibilities placed upon them. Unfortunately, caregivers often sacrifice their own health as they carry out this vital role. Long hours of caregiving and weeks without relief contribute to high levels of stress, often resulting in illness for the caregiver. . . .

When it comes to end of life, the intensity of caregiving only increases. For people living with MS the end of life is difficult to predict, which leaves their caregivers in a precarious position as they are unable to access support programs that require the care recipient to have a serious medical condition with a significant risk of death within 26 weeks. Therefore, this bill, which extends bereavement leave, is critical in supporting all MS caregivers grieving the death of their loved one.

The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology examined Bill C-220, voted unanimously to support the bill and reported back to this chamber without any amendments or observations.

Honourable senators, we all understand the important leadership role federal legislators can provide by passing this legislation. I am confident that our actions now will have that knock-on effect for the majority of workers in this country, in other jurisdictions and in the private sector. Thank you for your support.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Paula Simons: Honourable senators, I am so pleased to speak to you again today as the official critic for Bill C-220, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code bereavement leave. I will keep my remarks short and plain because Bill C-220 is itself short and plain. The bill would modify the bereavement leave provisions of the Canada Labour Code to add an additional five days of unpaid leave for people who are mourning the death of a close family member or who are mourning the death of a person to whom they were providing compassionate care. The leave can be taken at any time up to six weeks after the death.

The change is straightforward and largely self-explanatory, as I outlined at second reading and as Senator Seidman has outlined here this afternoon. It would give a little more time, the equivalent of an extra workweek, to grieve and to plan for those Canadians who work in industries that are federally regulated, including those who work in sectors such as aviation, telecommunications, broadcast media and banking.

It would only have a direct impact on about 6% of Canadian workers, and it would only provide unpaid leave, but it would be an important first step to expanding bereavement leave for all Canadian workers.

I want to thank all of my Senate colleagues for working diligently and so co-operatively to bring this bill to third reading today. I want to thank, of course, Senator Judith Seidman who stepped up to serve as sponsor of the bill. I also want to thank all

the members of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology and especially committee chair Senator Chantal Petitclerc for holding hearings and summoning witnesses at short notice so expeditiously and for holding an extra meeting for completing clause-by-clause deliberations.

I also want to sincerely thank my ISG colleague Senator Ratna Omidvar who allowed me to attend all those deliberations at committee in her stead. I was so pleased to be present, albeit via video, to ask and answer questions and to support the bill as it passed through the clause-by-clause process unanimously and without amendments.

I take that as a strong signal of the support for this plain and useful bill in every quadrant of this chamber.

But, today, I first and foremost want to commend Matt Jeneroux, the Member of Parliament from Edmonton Riverbend, for sponsoring this bill and shepherding it through the parliamentary process. When he first asked me to help him in this effort, I said I would do so largely as a courtesy for a fellow Edmonton parliamentarian, but over the months that he and I worked together on this initiative, meeting with stakeholders, speaking with the media, I took on his cause as my own. And as a fellow Edmontonian, I'm proud to ask you today to stand together to bring this bill home with all due speed. Thank you and *hiy hiy*.

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Bellemare: I would like to ask a question.

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

Senator Simons: Certainly.

Senator Bellemare: I had a question for Senator Seidman too, but I'll ask you instead.

I will vote in favour of Bill C-220 because, as you said, it was passed unanimously in the other place. Nevertheless, I have some concerns about the bill, especially as regards the process and how quickly it was passed.

This bill will have a major impact on the Canada Labour Code and businesses. However, House of Commons and Senate committees did not hear from employee or employer representatives. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce, for example, would really have liked to participate in the consultations but wasn't able to. Don't you think there should have been broader consultation, for one thing? For another, shouldn't this bill have come from the government, given that it amends the Canada Labour Code and that it's likely the Employment Insurance Act will have to be amended to fund these benefits?

• (1750)

I would like to hear your thoughts on this. First, what do we say to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and to the other employee and employer representatives who were not invited to speak? Second, do you think we should continue this practice of having public bills introduced this way by parliamentarians?

Senator Simons: Thank you very much for these questions.

[English]

I can say I can't speak for what happened in the other place. Certainly the bill took its fair time to move through the system and there were substantive amendments at committee with members of all parties basically rewriting the bill in committee. Perhaps it was because of that that there were not the witnesses called because they didn't know where the bill was going to end up. I honestly can't speak for what happened in the other place.

As I'm not a member of the Social Affairs Committee, I guess I can't speak to the lack or presence of witnesses at that committee either. You raise a fair point. The other group that was not heard from was members of the labour unions that represent some of these industries. For example, we didn't hear from the postal workers or from ACTRA, which represents people who work in broadcasting. In a perfect world, it would have been useful to hear from those voices. I think that's a very fair critique.

Whether it makes sense for public interest bills to be moved as private member's bills, private member's bills are very circumscribed in that people cannot propose bills that would have significant changes to the cost of things in the same way that we cannot in our Senate public bills.

To me, this is such a modest change — five days of unpaid leave — that I don't think the lack of those witnesses precludes my confidence in supporting this bill. You raise an excellent point and in a different calendar year with different access to translation and committee time, we probably ought to have done so.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I rise today in support of Bill C-220, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (bereavement leave). I want to thank Senators Seidman and Simons for their cogent explanations regarding the intentions and effects of the bill for the more than 18,000 employees who fall under the Canada Labour Code. That's about 6% of Canada's workforce.

I would like to add that these changes to the Canada Labour Code have unintentionally come before us at the most opportune time, and I join my colleagues in commending Member of Parliament Jeneroux for introducing Bill C-220 in the other place. Anything Parliament can do to assist Canadians and their families during these trying times is worth doing.

I will skip over the parts of my speech that repeat some aspects of the bill that have been very well set out.

As we know, there are already a number of leaves and protections for employees in federally regulated workplaces following the death of an immediate family member, including five days of bereavement leave. Bill C-220 would allow for two full weeks. Two full weeks may not seem like much, but for any of us who have been in that position, we know how much there is to handle: funeral arrangements, lawyers to contact, numerous phone calls to make. Truth be told, we would rather choose to sit somewhere quietly with our memories. The extra days provided

in Bill C-220 will make things easier during a very stressful period and allow time for the practical tasks associated with the death of a loved one and maybe allow for a little quiet and healing time as well.

For those already on compassionate leave in order to care for an ill family member or loved one, Bill C-220 provides this additional time off for them as well.

COVID-19 has had an impact on thousands of families across Canada. The death of someone close is often a time when friends, family, neighbours and workmates come together for a few hours to comfort each other, trade stories and just generally honour and remember someone who mattered to them. This pandemic has made these simple acts that mean so much almost impossible.

Now, as rules are relaxed and lifted, there will be hundreds, possibly thousands, of delayed memorial services across the country so that friends and family can gather to finally honour a loved one. The additional days provided for in Bill C-220 may allow some federally regulated workers to attend these services.

As witnesses representing the Heart & Stroke Foundation and the Multiple Sclerosis Society testified at committee, Bill C-220 is an excellent first start. For these witnesses, the most important piece of the bill is the extension of leave for those who acted as caregivers and provided the essential support for a loved one. The hope is that this effort by the federal government will serve as an example for the provinces to extend compassionate leave for employees who fall under their provincial codes. It's also an opportunity to start a conversation in private workplaces to determine what can be done to support employees during times of bereavement.

As you have heard, Bill C-220 had the support of all parties in the other place. As we know, very few ideas or initiatives brought forward by private members are debated, let alone passed and reach the Senate. Losing someone we care about is a universal experience. Allowing for more time to grieve or take care of practical matters, while knowing that your job remains secure, can give one some peace of mind. This was recognized by all the members in the other place.

Colleagues, grief and loss know no partisanship. I ask that we pass Bill C-220. The provisions in the bill won't erase anyone's pain or sorrow, but it's within our power to help a little bit and ensure a few more days of time in allowing a person to better cope and deal with their loss. Thank you, colleagues.

[Translation]

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Gold, Senator Bellemare has a question for you. Would you take a question?

Senator Gold: Certainly.

Senator Bellemare: My question for you is very similar to the one I asked Senator Simons. You taught law in university, so you know full well that the Canada Labour Code is at the foundation of the relationship between employees and employers. In general, when changes are made to the Canada Labour Code, they are often done through social dialogue.

This debate is about increasing the length of bereavement leave, which may seem harmless, but it is being done through a public bill introduced by a parliamentarian.

Do you support this type of process? Don't you think that the government should take the initiative and engage in broader public consultation, according to standards appropriate to everyone?

I would like to hear your views on this and on the fact that the parties at the very heart of the Canada Labour Code and its fundamental role were not consulted.

Senator Gold: I understand your question and your concerns.

Throughout this pandemic, the Canadian government focused on helping as many Canadians as possible. The government also focused on financial assistance programs for businesses.

This bill was introduced by Mr. Jeneroux, and the Government of Canada supports it. As the saying goes, do not let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Even though in an ideal world it would have been better to take more time to hold consultations, the fact remains that we have a solid bill that will help Canadians, and that is why the government supports it.

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Bellemare, do you have a supplementary question?

Senator Bellemare: I have a brief remark that is also a question.

If the bill had been a government bill, the leave might have been given in the form of a reimbursement or a payment as part of a salary, but in this case it is unpaid leave. That makes a big difference for Canadians who are grieving a death.

What are your thoughts on that?

Senator Gold: I understand your suggestion. There are many ways to help Canadians during difficult times like the loss of a loved one. I sincerely believe that this bill will help Canadians and that is why the government supports it.

• (1800)

[English]

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, it is now six o'clock, and pursuant to rule 3-3(1) and the orders adopted on October 27, 2020, and December 17, 2020, I am obliged to leave the chair until seven o'clock unless there is leave that the sitting continue. If you wish the sitting to be suspended, please say, "suspend."

An Hon. Senator: Suspend.

The Hon. the Speaker: I hear a "suspend." The Senate will suspend until 7 p.m.

(The sitting of the Senate was suspended.)

(The sitting of the Senate was resumed.)

• (1900)

[Translation]

ROYAL ASSENT

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

RIDEAU HALL

June 21, 2021

Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that the Right Honourable Richard Wagner, Administrator of the Government of Canada, signified royal assent by written declaration to the bills listed in the Schedule to this letter on the 21st day of June, 2021, at 6:35 p.m.

Yours sincerely,

Ian McCowan

Secretary to the Governor General

The Honourable
The Speaker of the Senate
Ottawa

Bills Assented to Monday, June 21, 2021:

An Act to amend the Canada Revenue Agency Act (organ and tissue donors) (*Bill C-210, Chapter 12, 2021*)

An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's call to action number 94) (*Bill C-8, Chapter 13, 2021*)

An Act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (*Bill C-15, Chapter 14, 2021*)

An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022 (*Bill C-33, Chapter 15, 2021*)

An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022 (*Bill C-34, Chapter 16, 2021*)

[English]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

BILL TO AMEND—THIRD READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Seidman, seconded by the Honourable Senator Martin, for the third reading of Bill C-220, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (bereavement leave).

Hon. Denise Batters: Honourable senators, I am proud to have the opportunity today to speak in support of Bill C-220. This private member's bill, or PMB, proposed by my Conservative caucus colleague and friend MP Matt Jeneroux would extend job-protected bereavement leave for federally regulated workers.

For Matt, this bill has been a labour of love. He explains the genesis of Bill C-220 as born from his own difficult choice a number of years ago: accept increased responsibility at a new job or care for his ailing grandmother. He chose the job and came to regret that decision when his grandmother passed away a few weeks later.

When Mr. Jeneroux was a member of the Alberta legislature, he introduced and passed a bill to create compassionate care leave in that province. He recognized that Albertans shouldn't be forced to choose between a loved one and a job. As the Member of Parliament for Edmonton Riverbend, Mr. Jeneroux chose to create a similar private member's bill about compassionate leave for federally regulated employees.

As many of you know, the procedure for creating private members' bills in the House of Commons is very different than that of Senate public bills. In the House, the names of members of Parliament are drawn in a lottery system to determine the order of priority for private members' bills. An MP may very well only get one chance during their entire time in Parliament to bring forward a PMB, so the initiatives tend to be well considered and often a "passion project" for an individual MP. This is certainly the case for Bill C-220.

Following committee study and discussions with Labour Minister Filomena Tassi and Parliamentary Secretary Anthony Housefather, Matt expanded his bill from compassionate leave, involving primarily caregivers, to focus on bereavement leave. This would encompass those whose loved ones passed away unexpectedly, in addition to those whose family members had endured prolonged sickness.

Currently, federally regulated employees are allowed five days of bereavement leave — three of them paid. Bill C-220 will provide an extra five days of unpaid bereavement leave to be taken within six weeks of a family member's death. It would also offer workers who have been on compassionate care leave, who may have exhausted all other avenues of leave during that period of caregiving, the opportunity to take additional bereavement leave after that person's death.

Honourable senators, we have all known grief, and we all grieve differently according to our circumstances. Some of you have unfortunately known, as I have, the pain of losing a spouse. In my case, my husband's death was sudden and unexpected. For me, returning to work the following week was my personal method of coping. But another person may find it difficult to even get out of bed. Someone else may need to spend time in the supportive embrace of family and friends before returning to their workplace. Grief also does not necessarily proceed in a straight line — some days may seem better while others trigger a setback. Further, there is often a significant amount of time necessary to deal with important estate matters. Bill C-220 will give federally regulated employees the time and flexibility they need to grieve in their own ways, while protecting their jobs and livelihoods.

Honourable senators, this initiative is especially needed now during a COVID pandemic that has so cruelly isolated many Canadians during their time of grieving. Many of the supports and comforts usually offered to people struggling in the wake of a loved one's death are unavailable. Bill C-220 extends to federally regulated workers the compassionate gift of additional time to mourn, to rest, to make arrangements and to cope during what may well be the most difficult period of their lives.

I want to address a couple of concerns that were raised about Bill C-220: namely, that it does not go far enough. Senator Simons mentioned that this bill will affect only 6% of the Canadian workforce because it focuses only on federally regulated employees governed by the Canada Labour Code. The fact of the matter is federal private members' bills can only be drafted about matters falling within federal jurisdiction. **Furthermore, Senator Simons expressed her wish to see this initiative expanded to include paid bereavement leave. While I certainly understand her desire to see that Canadians have the supports they need, I do think we need to keep in mind the rules governing private member's bills dictate that a PMB cannot require the spending of public funds. As such, because of the parliamentary limitations of private members' bills, Bill C-220 could not be expanded to address those concerns. A large part of the value of this bill lies in providing a model for Canada's provinces to institute similar measures in their own labour standards legislation and through that to expand this initiative to even more people within Canada.

• (1910)

Matt Jeneroux is known as a strong constituency MP. He has done an exceptional job of advancing this private member's bill. Mr. Jeneroux has taken the time to consider carefully how this legislation could best benefit Canadian workers. He has worked collaboratively with members of the other parties, including the government, to develop consensus within the House of Commons that this private member's bill is necessary and important. This bill passed unanimously in the House of Commons in a standing vote — a rare feat indeed. In that spirit, I hope all honourable senators will join me in voting in favour of Bill C-220. Let's take this opportunity to build a more compassionate Canada. Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

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

An Hon. Senator: Question.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

REDUCTION OF RECIDIVISM FRAMEWORK BILL

THIRD READING

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition) moved, for Senator Martin, third reading of Bill C-228, An Act to establish a federal framework to reduce recidivism.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I rise today to speak in support of C-228, An Act to establish a federal framework to reduce recidivism.

This bill was put forward by MP Richard Bragdon in the other place and lays out a reasonable framework in order to support and assist those reintegrating into society after serving a sentence in a federal institution. As mentioned by Senator Martin, the Senate sponsor, this bill received strong support in the other place.

Bill C-228 calls on the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness to develop and implement a federal framework to reduce recidivism. The framework includes the initiations of pilot projects and the development of standardized and evidence-based programs aimed at reducing recidivism, promotes the reintegration back into the community through access to adequate and ongoing resources — including employment opportunities that support faith-based and communal initiatives aimed at rehabilitation that reviews and implements international best practices — and, finally, it evaluates and improves risk assessment instruments and procedures to address racial and cultural biases, ensuring that all people who are incarcerated have access to appropriate programs.

This bill is important because sooner or later almost all offenders in Canadian federal correctional institutions will be released into the community. We need to ensure that when people who have been incarcerated make the transition, they are well prepared and well equipped to succeed.

I do not believe that any offender upon release has anything but the best of intentions, but in order to accomplish their goals, they require the relevant services available to them, both in prison before release and afterward in the community. They require employment opportunities, otherwise how can anyone transition back into society and lead a crime-free life, no matter how noble their intentions? The importance of training programs cannot be overstated.

Bill C-228 would mandate the Minister of Public Safety via the framework to work with partners — NGOs, faith-based and private sector organizations and Indigenous groups — to come together using a holistic approach to reducing the risk of reoffending. The goal of this federal framework is consistent with the government's commitments to providing reintegration resources, supporting community-based and community justice centre programs, and addressing the overrepresentation of Black and Indigenous persons in the criminal justice system. The bill is also consistent with government priorities announced with its recent Throne Speech. This includes its commitment to introduce legislation and make investments to take action to address the systemic inequities in all phases of the criminal justice system, from diversion to sentencing, from rehabilitation to records. Bill C-228 would provide a prioritized opportunity and overarching mandate for broad collaboration to address the complex issue of recidivism and thereby strengthening public safety.

In his most recent report, the Correctional Investigator highlighted the need for additional community corrections resources and raised concerns relating to insufficient community bed spaces. He also noted that individuals are often released into the community without health cards or other official identification. The Auditor General has reported on gaps in housing and health supports, and the voluntary sector has advocated for increased access to conditional release; release preparation and planning; employment, housing and health resources, with tailored supports for women, aging Indigenous and Black Canadian inmate populations. The John Howard Society of Canada expressed support for Bill C-228, noting the framework should address post-custody homelessness, unemployment, arbitrary conditions and limited mental health treatment.

Unfortunately, Canada is not currently able to produce national recidivism data. Each jurisdiction and sector have their own information. The data collection and measurement are not done consistently, nor is it integrated. The public service is working with Statistics Canada on a multi-year project that aims to link criminal justice data and reporting on national indicators. The project also plans to eventually link this criminal justice data with socio-economic data to better capture reintegration outcomes. This information will help enormously in reporting evidence-informed policy and program interventions.

The government is committed to supporting the safe reintegration and rehabilitation of offenders and reducing recidivism to keep our communities safe. While we have increased community expenditures by 10.8% since 2015-16, more can and should be done for the safety of our communities and the lives of those looking to start over. Bill C-228 assists by providing a level of coordination and cooperation between all levels of government and all organizations involved in the field of recidivism and support for those re-entering communities.

There are colleagues in this chamber who know far better than I the struggles and barriers faced by those who must navigate the outside world upon release and why it is sometimes so difficult for them. Bill C-228 offers a measure of collaboration that is a step forward in coordinating the necessary supports and gathering the information required to determine how best to move ahead. This private member's bill has the support of the government and

a majority of members in the other place. I support Bill C-228 for all the reasons mentioned and I ask that colleagues in this chamber do the same.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Kim Pate: Honourable senators, I speak today to Bill C-228, the purpose of which is articulated as the development of a framework to reduce recidivism. In essence, the legislation urges the government and the Correctional Service of Canada to fulfill what is already their legal obligation. Pursuant to section 3 of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act:

The purpose of the federal correctional system is to contribute to the maintenance of a just, peaceful and safe society by . . . assisting the rehabilitation of [prisoners] and their reintegration into the community . . .

This is not a situation where the government or Correctional Service Canada needs new legislation to authorize them to act. The changes Bill C-228 seeks could have been implemented nearly three decades ago when the CCRA was first developed and enacted as a piece of human rights legislation with numerous provisions creating not only opportunities but legal requirements to support reintegration and access to community supports. For decades, there has been a failure to breathe life into these provisions.

It has been those most marginalized — women, Black and Indigenous peoples and others from the racialized communities, those living with disabilities and those below the poverty line — who have disproportionately paid the price for this failure to fulfill and fully implement the CCRA in accordance with its legislative intent. Marginalized people have struggled and are struggling to access crucial community, health, social and economic supports prior to, during and following prison sentences.

• (1920)

Because of the terminology in this bill, it is worth taking a moment to reflect on the message that we risk sending by using terms such as “recidivism prevention” or “crime prevention” for what should really be understood as questions of fundamental Charter and human rights. Research demonstrates time and again that people leaving prisons need three things: a place to stay, a community of support and a way of supporting themselves. These are not specific tools for preventing crime. They are the same things that all of us need and without which none of us can thrive.

In the absence of adequate access to such supports, 80% of women in Canadian prisons are there as a result of attempts to negotiate poverty. Imagine for a moment trying to survive on provincial and territorial social assistance programs that provide resources so far below any measure of the poverty line that you

are rendered infinitely criminalizable and left with no legal way of affording necessities, such as feeding or clothing or sheltering your children. For those who are criminalized, a criminal record is too often a further barrier to jobs, to education, to shelter and to contributing to the community.

Despite the challenges and the barriers that criminal legal policy too often creates and entrenches, however, as government data indicates, the majority of people who leave federal prisons never return to them. Research is also clear that after a certain number of years in the community, people with a criminal record are no more likely than anyone else to be criminalized.

In the past months, as horrific and isolating COVID-19 conditions in federal prisons have created new opportunities to advocate for release, I have witnessed Indigenous women, whom the Correctional Service of Canada had labelled as dangerous and high security risks, thrive in the community when given the opportunity. Those within Corrections who were initially skeptical of their releases — and that is putting it mildly — have not only become supportive of them, they have recognized that the problem was not these women, but rather it is the racist and sexist context and assessment tools that CSC persists in employing that created the problems.

The success that so many have had in the community, despite a systemic lack of supports and community access while in prisons, speaks volumes about their determination to make positive contributions to their communities. It should not, however, excuse a system that is legally responsible for reintegration.

Bill C-228 rightly tells us that this status quo is unacceptable. However, it focuses very narrowly on only one part of the solution. The duty of the correctional system to support reintegration begins the moment a person arrives in prison. Bill C-228 focuses on the time immediately before a person is released. In between are a host of crucial opportunities to support individuals to successfully integrate by enhancing access to community supports and release measures that we cannot afford to miss.

In its report on Bill C-228, the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence issued an observation to this effect, urging, alongside Bill C-228, more rigorous pursuit by the government of options for supporting reintegration that already exist in the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, in particular sections 29, 81 and 84. This echoes the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights’ report on the *Human Rights of Federally-Sentenced Persons* as well as the Senate amendments to Bill C-83.

CCRA sections 29, 81 and 84 create opportunities for releasing prisoners and building community supports during a prison sentence. They have been a part of the CCRA since its inception decades ago, yet have rarely been used in practice.

Section 29 allows individuals to be transferred out of prisons to provincial and territorial hospitals to receive the health and mental health supports they need in a community, not a correctional setting.

Section 81 allows individuals to be transferred from a federal penitentiary to an Indigenous community to serve their sentences. The intent of this provision was to promote inherent rights to self-determination and self-governance of Indigenous peoples with respect to matters of criminal justice and to redress overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in Canadian prisons by creating community-based alternatives to incarceration and institutionalization.

Section 84 likewise permits parole and other forms of conditional release.

These opportunities for reintegration have been unfairly and unduly circumscribed by correctional authorities and policies. For example, correctional authorities have indicated to Indigenous communities seeking to support individuals in transferring out of prisons under section 81 that the community would be expected to build a kinder, gentler, indigenized but nevertheless prison-like structure to receive them, despite the fact that this is not a requirement in the law. In the meantime, the number of Indigenous people in Canadian prisons has continued to increase precipitously and exponentially.

Meaningful rehabilitation and community integration will and must be supported by actions to decolonize, decriminalize and decarcerate the Canadian criminal legal system. This means recognizing and upholding inherent rights of Indigenous people to self-government, including decolonization of legal systems to meaningfully incorporate community-based and culturally appropriate approaches. This means respecting Indigenous laws and practices, implementing programs like guaranteed liveable income in the community to recognize and redress systemic inequalities and economic marginalization, and perhaps even insisting on the option of deferred prosecution agreements, a privilege we currently only bestow on corporations. Imagine how many fewer people we might criminalize and imprison if we implemented deferred prosecution agreements for individuals and not merely for corporations. For those currently before courts, this could provide prosecutors and judges the discretion to consider alternatives to prosecution as well as incarceration.

Indigenous histories and other experiences of systemic racism could help to inform these approaches. We could also ensure measures such as judicial oversight and remedies for unlawful and unfair correctional decisions. Ultimately, shifting correctional culture to uphold human rights is most likely to increase the successful community integration of all.

Bill C-228 is a small, repetitive step at a time when more is desperately needed. Let us continue to do this work together as we strive for justice for all.

Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

[Translation]

Hon. Patricia Bovey: Honourable senators, I am speaking to you from Winnipeg, Treaty 1 territory, the traditional territory of the Anishinabe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dene and Dakota, the birthplace of the Métis Nation and the heart of the Métis Nation homeland.

I support Bill C-228, An Act to establish a federal framework to reduce recidivism.

[English]

I draw your attention to clause 2(2)(a) of Bill C-228, which says the framework must "... initiate pilot projects and develop standardized and evidence-based programs aimed at reducing recidivism ..."

And I would also like to point out clause 2(2)(e), which says the framework must include measures to:

... evaluate and improve risk assessment instruments and procedures to address racial and cultural biases and ensure that all people who are incarcerated have access to appropriate programs that will help reduce recidivism.

All faith-based and Indigenous organizations should receive support to undertake programs of particular spiritual and cultural meaning for those involved.

You've heard my late husband's mantra, "we are all better off when we are all better off." That mantra and my work in the arts impels me to speak to Bill C-228. I do so honouring National Indigenous Peoples Day and the tremendous work and cultures of all artists. Senator McCallum, your carrying the eagle feather is important. I thank you. Your cultural leadership and honesty is applauded and truly meaningful to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

[Translation]

Why am I talking about C-228? Because I believe we have a duty to look beyond the reasons for these incarcerations, to help people discover their creative heritage and to develop tools that encourage positive community interaction and healthy, meaningful living.

Prison art programs and those where professional artists provide training create positive outcomes and reduce recidivism and crime rates.

[English]

Education programs in prisons prepare inmates for life outside and equip them with skills to prevent recidivism. We know those which existed in the past had good outcomes nationally and internationally. I believe revitalizing earlier programs of artists-in-residence in our prisons — federal, provincial, women's, men's and youth detention centres — would make a positive contribution to society.

For years I have followed arts programs with goals of crime prevention and recidivism reduction. Some are developed for adults; others for youth.

• (1930)

My multi-year research on youth after school community programs revealed truly encouraging results. A pioneering program was in Fort Myers, Florida. After just several years in existence, the 1996 publication *Coming Up Taller* reported its stunning early impacts:

The City of Fort Myers police claim a 28 percent drop in juvenile arrests since the inception of the award-winning STARS Program . . .

— a program that provided recreational and artistic outlets.

J. Weitz, of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, noted in the same report:

One of the most natural and effective vehicles for gang members is the road of the arts, especially theater. New values only emerge through new experiences, and the arts provide a unique laboratory where truth and possibility can be explored safely. Validating emotional safety is everything.

Further, the report comments that art programs that allow:

. . . youth to accept responsibility is part of what makes these programs work. "It's not learning to please some external thing. The kids are in charge of the project."

These projects are brought out into the community for viewing and sharing . . . the kids are responsible for the success.

Other publications draw similar conclusions. *Youth on Youth*, concluded that art:

. . . allows youth to express themselves, to create their own identity instead of having it shaped by the mainstream institutions . . . There is no expected outcome or no right or wrong.

This is particularly important for at-risk kids who are marginalized to begin with.

I should say now I prefer not to use the negative at-risk-youth nomenclature but rather youth with untapped potential.

The overriding result in Dr. Gina Browne's 2003 extensive study, "Making the Case for Recreation" was that cultural and recreation programs can reduce the cost of social services and policing, indicating that accessible services appear to pay for themselves, the reduced use of health and social services, child psychology, social work, policing and probation. "A \$500 savings was attributed to family not including the doubling of exits from social assistance!"

A proposal for arts programming in Winnipeg's youth detention centre was unfortunately turned down a few years ago. I was told kids creating art together might "incite negative behaviours." However, the then First Nations spiritual leader at the centre underlined that art creation was essential for these young people. He showed me drawers filled with art the kids had

created, work never exhibited. I hope the significant impact of such programs will be understood. In that case, I had private funders ready in the wings.

Winnipeg's Graffiti Gallery is an inspiration, founded in 1998 by Steve Wilson, not an artist but a former Stony Mountain Institution prison guard with a social work degree. He knew there was a better way to deal with youth in trouble, so he founded, with the power of positive creativity, this unique place in Winnipeg, a not-for-profit youth community arts centre dedicated to enhancing the cultural well-being of the community, focused on arts programming and legal mural painting.

Young artists meet, work, research, exchange ideas, learn skills and show their work in an encouraging environment, which sees value in their work. It is a powerful tool for community development, social change and individual growth. The Murals of Winnipeg website comments of this former prison guard's work:

Many of the young people he encounters have serious trust issues, especially with people who are adults or in some kind of authority position. Some of them, perhaps, have been in trouble with the law or have been portrayed by others as attacking their community.

I spoke with Steve last week. He said:

. . . the reason that these young people are attacking their community is because that's all they know. It's because at a very early age they were being attacked by their community. . . . When they get a little older, it's little wonder that they start getting into trouble. Number one they're trying to get away from their community that is abusing them, and number two they're looking for some sort of connection that they can hang onto.

Graffiti Gallery has diligently worked to:

. . . reverse that cycle and get a young person who has a little bit of skill, teach them a thing or two about painting Murals . . . Murals are one of the best ways to bring at risk youth and young adults back into the community. . . . They come away from that experience with feelings of accomplishment and confidence. Plus in order to complete the work, they've had to drop the negative influences on their life and get it together to accomplish this work which leaves a lasting legacy in the neighbourhood.

They come to the point where they:

. . . are offering to contribute to give something back to help their community heal through some form of public art. The end result is a young person who was attacking their community is now back in the community painting a beautiful Mural that is adding to the community and gives the artist a sense of renewed pride in that community. . . . It's a really positive experience for both the artist and the community, and can act as a catalyst for further change.

Exhibitions of their artwork at Graffiti Gallery expand their self-esteem and their community connections, and the young artists realized as they said to me:

Well I can do other things besides breaking the law; I can get attention in a positive way with my artwork.

A number of other programs have developed since, and many led by recent graduates of the University of Manitoba. They are instilling cultural understanding through beading, murals, drumming and painting in these young people, and it's proving to reduce incarceration and recidivism.

I have recently been involved in a number of discussions about potential exhibitions of art created by prisoners, and I hope these opportunities will be supported. They validate the artist's ideas, increase self-confidence and afford audiences the opportunity to understand the issues and perspectives of prisoners from the inside, from the outside, and prisoners' personal circumstances. We need these voices of change. We need to understand that place making can make an individual and community level change. It's especially timely now.

When formulating Winnipeg's public art policy, a Winnipeg police officer called me. He wanted to join the public art committee, not because he knew anything about art — he said he didn't — but because he knew public art reduced crime since it contributed to civic pride and because most people honour the creative work of others. He contributed significantly to the development of the policy and thereafter as part of the public art committee.

An American study for a rehabilitation program reducing recidivism in prison had interesting conclusions:

When an arts-based, non-profit organization claims to have developed a prisoner rehabilitation program that reduces recidivism to less than five percent, criminal justice experts may shake their heads in disbelief. Yet that is what Rehabilitation Through the Arts (RTA) a non-profit organization based in New York State has done. Their program has improved prison morale and safety, caused the incarcerated population to act more respectfully and work more cooperatively, and helping people in prison build the life skills necessary to make it on the outside.

New York State's Department of Corrections and Community Supervision independently published research that demonstrated, "... fewer infractions; and a greater pursuit of higher education among the program participants."

Brampton's Bridge Prison Ministry, in 2017, exhibited art by former and current convicts. The work I have seen reproduced is impressive, truly moving, and the revelations are of deep suffering yet of hope and humanity. Colleagues, when I was director of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Albert Head prisoners helped us build stages and some installations. Some prisoners attended the opening of an exhibition in which they were the subjects for a featured portrait artist. That same night we opened an exhibition of Jack Bush, a major Canadian artist. The sponsoring bank's board chair and CEO were in attendance.

A harmony drum was set up, and through the evening corporate executives drummed unknowingly alongside the prisoners. Some had been incarcerated for bank robbery.

In closing, I want to quote an article from *The Tyee*, about a University of British Columbia program where Indigenous academics were researching art and culture for those in prison. They distributed art and journaling kits to Indigenous men in prison and halfway houses to "... alleviate dual mental health tolls of incarceration and the pandemic." Revealing:

... the importance of relationships between First Nations communities and Indigenous incarcerated people against the backdrop of over-incarceration of Indigenous people in British Columbia. ...

Last December, Emily van der Meulen and Jackie Omstead published a report about rethinking evaluation arts programming in prison. They say:

Canadian prison-based arts and other programming are limited at best. Even the country's Correctional Investigator, or prison-ombudsperson, has critiqued the lack of meaningful options in which prisoners can engage. Those programs that do exist tend to be focused on the logic of penal rehabilitation, with the end goal of reducing recidivism.

Their work showcased the evaluation of a nine-week arts program in a women's prison, which was tremendous.

Colleagues, we have a long way to go. I support prison and community programs aimed at reducing recidivism and building self-esteem, self-confidence and skills. Excellent art has been created on the inside over the years, and art has prevented others from going inside. Let's turn that creative talent into constructive ends. These programs are essential, successful and far-reaching. I therefore support this bill. Thank you.

• (1940)

[Translation]

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Bovey, Senator Dagenais would like to ask you a question. Would you accept another question?

Senator Bovey: Yes, if I have time.

Hon. Jean-Guy Dagenais: Senator Bovey, you know as well as I do that femicide has been on the rise for some time now and that we are doing everything we can to prevent that. Unfortunately, we know that most femicides are committed by repeat offenders. I am thinking about what happened in Sainte-Foy last year and about the woman who was stabbed in the neck on Monkland Street in Montreal by a repeat offender who had just gotten out of prison. I am also thinking about André Livernoche, whose son was killed by a sexual predator who had just been released from prison.

What do we say to these families when we want to support a bill that seeks to rehabilitate murderers, especially now, when it is impossible to deny that there has been a tragic rise in the number of cases of femicide and that femicide is often committed by people who have had trouble with the law?

What do we say to those families?

The Hon. the Speaker: Senator Bovey, you have only 40 seconds to answer the question.

[*English*]

Senator Bovey: Thank you for the question. That's a big question and, honestly, in the time I have, I don't think I can answer it, save to say that Steve Wilson has often told me that many of these people who get in trouble the first time do so because of the upbringing they had or they didn't have, and the lessons they learned or were witness to as youth. That's where these programs that he has been working with have been so successful. I think we need more of them.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I rise today to speak to third reading of Bill C-228, An Act to establish a federal framework to reduce recidivism.

I would like to once again begin by acknowledging the sponsor of this bill, member of Parliament Richard Bragdon, and to thank him for his years of dedication in helping others and bringing forward this bill to reduce recidivism in our communities across Canada.

I would also like to acknowledge members of the other house for their contributions at committee and for the broad support of the bill.

I want to commend our Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, Senator Boniface, the deputy chair Senator Boisvenu, Senator Bovey for her remarks and Senator Pate, who has been a champion, really, of what happens to individuals in and out of prison. We have heard her speak on this issue many times. I thank them for all of their leadership and efforts to ensure an efficient and effective review of this bill at committee.

I would also like to thank my fellow colleagues and members of the committee for their thoughtful questions to the witnesses and for the discussions and observations at clause-by-clause. Finally, I thank Senator Jim Munson, the friendly critic on this bill, for his support and his unwavering dedication to helping so many people.

At our Senate committee, the bill's sponsor, MP Richard Bragdon, stated the intent of Bill C-228:

The bill aims to address the ever-revolving door within our prison system and break this perilous cycle that sees individuals consistently reoffend. Lasting societal change can only be accomplished when we work across different sectors to come to meaningful solutions.

Our witnesses at committee concurred and generally gave resounding support to the bill. Let me quote some of them.

Carmen Long, Director General of the Offender Programs and Reintegration Branch of the Correctional Service of Canada, said:

. . . the focus within the Correctional Service of Canada really is the safe reintegration of offenders. We take a number of different approaches to manage that. . . by teaching offenders how to manage those factors, they are able to better successfully reintegrate.

The Honourable Graydon Nicholas, Endowed Chair in Native Studies at St. Thomas University and former Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick, said:

. . . there have been many studies done to recommend fundamental changes in the criminal justice system, but not enough have been implemented. I want to commend the initiative of member of Parliament Mr. Richard Bragdon and the other members who have supported this important legislative blueprint.

I make the same request for your positive input and the endorsement of Bill C-228.

Catherine Latimer, Executive Director of the John Howard Society of Canada, said:

We enthusiastically support Bill C-228. . . This bill provides us a real opportunity to work collaboratively and to put together the best practices that allow our communities to be safer.

Lastly, Franca Cortoni, Professor of Criminal Psychology, School of Criminology at the University of Montreal, said:

One of the elements that has demonstrated value for the reduction of recidivism is the availability of community systems to support offenders in their efforts at reintegration. It's within this context that I fully support Bill C-228.

Honourable senators, as stated by the bill's sponsor, the witnesses echoed that efforts are being made and good programs do exist. Therefore, we need to harness and coordinate all the good that is happening and address the gaps. The national framework, as proposed in Bill C-228, is needed to move forward. It is essential for the success of the framework that governments and civil society groups can work together cooperatively and collaboratively in its implementation. We need to reduce the rate of recidivism by helping offenders reintegrate back into the community, by helping their families and by helping the community that they will be a part of for years to come.

Honourable senators, I hope that you agree on the importance of this bill, and I ask you for your support at third reading.

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

Hon. Senators: Question.

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

[English]

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

[Translation]

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR DIABETES BILL

THIRD READING

Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie moved third reading of Bill C-237, An Act to establish a national framework for diabetes.

She said: Honourable senators, thank you for making it possible for us to debate Bill C-237, An Act to establish a national framework for diabetes, at third reading today. This bill received unanimous support in the other place, and we've helped move it forward in the Senate.

During my second-reading speech, I went into great detail about diabetes, Canadian discoveries and treatments available to millions of people in Canada at this time. I don't need to go over that again.

I would like to thank the hundred or so diabetes-focused organizations that have helped build a cross-Canada consensus about the urgent need for action. These organizations came up with the Diabetes 360° strategy, which can help people with Type 1 diabetes, Type 2 diabetes and gestational diabetes prevent potentially life-threatening emergency situations, reduce the risk of long-term complications and enjoy a good quality of life.

The goal of Diabetes 360° is to improve access to information, treatment and technology — everything people with diabetes across the country need.

I am optimistic that, once Bill C-237 is passed, diabetes research will continue to evolve and eventually find a cure.

Finally, I thank MP Sonia Sidhu, who is the sponsor of the bill in the other place, as well as the members of our respective offices, for their concerted efforts to get the bill passed at all stages, in both Chambers.

• (1950)

I would also like to extend my thanks to the members of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology and its chair, Senator Petitclerc, to Senator Martin, the bill's critic, and to all those who will rise briefly at third reading today. You have all contributed to moving the national framework for diabetes bill forward. This wonderful collaboration reassures me that we can accomplish great things together. I have every confidence that we will be able to pass Bill C-237 today.

Thank you.

Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I rise once again as the critic for Bill C-237, An Act to establish a national framework for diabetes.

One in four Canadians live with pre-diabetes or diabetes, as we have heard. We have also learned from witnesses who have appeared at committees in both houses how important early detection is, as well as knowing the signs of diabetes. Education is the best way to teach people about the disease, and knowledge is the best way to equip those who have diabetes, who may develop it in their lifetime or who are caring for loved ones with diabetes.

I want to take a moment to thank the sponsor of the bill in the House of Commons, member of Parliament Sonia Sidhu, for her dedication to this important cause and the bill that will help so many Canadians. I also want to acknowledge member of Parliament Chris d'Entremont, the Conservative critic of the bill, and the members of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health.

I also want to acknowledge the work of Senator Mégie, the sponsor of the bill in the Senate, and the members of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. The witnesses, such as Kimberley Hanson, Executive Director of Federal Affairs at Diabetes Canada, and others, offered their expert insights and knowledge of this widespread health concern.

MP Sidhu, who appeared before the Senate committee, said:

. . . we can learn from Canada's past diabetes plans and programs and make sure that the framework called for in Bill C-237 is data-driven, accountable and engaged with stakeholders such as Diabetes Canada, JDRF and others. A national framework for diabetes would provide a common direction for all stakeholders to address diabetes and, by extension, other chronic diseases with the same common risk factors. . . . The bill calls for promoting research, data collection and treatment.

Honourable senators, Bill C-237 received unanimous support in the House of Commons. Our colleagues in both houses and in committees on both sides heard from important witnesses and worked to ensure that this bill would come back to the Senate Chamber for third reading in a timely manner. Now it is up to us at third reading to support this important bill so that it can receive Royal Assent and soon begin helping millions of Canadians living with and caring for those with diabetes.

Thank you.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Honourable senators, I rise today to speak in support of Bill C-237, An Act to establish a national framework for diabetes. I will be very brief, as there is very little to be added that has not already been addressed by the sponsor, our physician colleague Senator Mégie, and the critic, Senator Martin.

As we have heard, this private member's bill was introduced by member of Parliament Sonia Sidhu in the other place. MP Sidhu spent over 18 years in the health care field as a diabetes educator and research coordinator. She understands the disease and is perfectly placed to put together the framework outlined in Bill C-237 to support improved access to prevention and treatment, and to better ensure health outcomes for Canadian with diabetes.

As we have heard, diabetes affects one in four Canadians. That means it affects every one of us, even if not ourselves; it most definitely impacts the life of a family member or friend. While manageable, diabetes is not curable. As Senator Mégie pointed out so personally, diabetes can lead to life-altering and life-threatening complications.

Currently, 90% of all new cases diagnosed are Type 2 diabetes. Many of these cases were preventable through education and lifestyle changes. Bill C-237 mandates the Minister of Health to work with provincial health authorities, Indigenous communities and stakeholders to develop a national framework for the purpose of better preventing and treating diabetes. No one level of government, health care authority or sector of society can address the complex challenges of this chronic disease. Diabetes affects segments of society differently. Where one lives, one's access to health care, one's awareness of symptoms and the availability of nutritious food are all factors in the prevalence of diabetes. Unfortunately, according to the Canadian Indigenous Nurses Association, this is the reason Indigenous and Métis populations are at far greater risk.

A federal framework mandating the consultation and involvement of all stakeholders at all levels would go a long way in the prevention of diabetes through education, and its treatment and management in its early stages.

It was 100 years ago at the University of Toronto where Banting and Best discovered the protein hormone that could treat a disease that, when diagnosed at the time, was effectively a death sentence. Colleagues, Bill C-237 passed unanimously in the other place. This comprehensive framework, when proclaimed into law, will be a tribute to the discoverers of insulin by preventing and fighting diabetes. Please join me in supporting and passing Bill C-237.

Hon. Nancy J. Hartling: Honourable senators, it is with pleasure that I rise to add my voice in support of Bill C-237, An Act to establish a national framework for diabetes.

I would like to express my gratitude to MP Sidhu and Senator Mégie for sponsoring this bill.

My interest in diabetes piqued about six years ago when my grandson Max was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes, which led me to become passionately involved in issues relating to diabetes.

My thanks to Senator Mégie, who delivered a concise and well-constructed speech in second reading, and my thanks to all of you who have worked on this bill.

Over 11 million Canadians, or 1 in 4, currently live with diabetes or pre-diabetes. There are three major types, as we have talked about: gestational, Type 1 and Type 2. During the ongoing pandemic, there has been an even more urgent need to develop a national diabetes framework to ensure that there is a cross-Canadian approach to so that those living with diabetes have access to new technologies, finance and medications needed to manage their diabetes.

Dr. Sarah Lord, who holds a PhD in diabetes research, has been employed as the Health & Wellness Coordinator for over 11 years at a local pharmacy here in my hometown of Riverview. She shared with me her expertise and practice around diabetes. She has been actively engaged with Diabetes Canada and JDRE. She believes in building a sustainable community, including a national diabetes framework.

In 2011, the New Brunswick government produced an excellent comprehensive diabetes strategy. However, a round table in the province, conducted by Diabetes Canada, revealed that many of the same issues existed eight years later, such as access to and cost of drugs and test strips. It was also noted that the province relies on other provinces in consideration of innovations, such as insulin pumps.

Bill C-237 would require the Minister of Health to develop a truly national framework on diabetes that focuses on improved and equitable access to treatment, with an emphasis on preventable measures. It must identify the training and educational needs of health professionals that relate to the prevention and treatment of diabetes, promote improved data collection to share regarding prevention and treatment and continue to promote diabetes research.

We don't need to start from scratch, colleagues; there is a lot of expertise right here in Parliament, including Diabetes Canada's Diabetes 360 framework. In addition, we already have two all-party parliamentary diabetes groups that foster dialogue, policies, best practices and awareness on diabetes.

Diabetes 360 was developed after extensive consultation with stakeholders, including experts, health care providers, governments, researchers and the diabetic community. It is based on the UN AIDS model, which combined successful 90-90-90 targeting strategy with the treatment as a prevention model to make ambitious inroads against HIV/AIDS epidemics.

Diabetes Canada saw an opportunity to adapt the strategy to diabetes and developed the 360 targets, which are composed of the four 90s: one, prevention and elimination of health inequities; two, awareness and screening; three, achievement of health outcomes through treatment and technology; and four, engaging in a patient-centred approach to reduce rates of diabetes and improve overall well-being.

The four 90s are achievable. They require a consistent, coordinated approach and the cooperation of all levels of government. Bill C-237 aims to facilitate this process and provides all the tools our government needs to do it.

Colleagues, as we've said throughout this last while, please vote in favour of this important bill that will really enhance the wellness of many Canadians. Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

• (2000)

Hon. Patricia Bovey: This is a very important bill and I do support Bill C-237, calling for a national framework and strategy on diabetes. I'm going to be very personal in my comments, building on the excellent speeches we've already heard. I'm going to start with the Nobel Prize-winning discovery of 100 years ago — that of insulin. What a great contribution Canada gave to the health of the world. Many Canadians have heard me say for decades that I believe scientists and artists are about 20 years ahead of the rest of us. They have a special makeup with an experimental curiosity to know more, find out more and help. That is a real gift. Sometimes we see both attributes and capabilities in one person, as with Sir Frederick Banting, who with Charles Best discovered insulin, and who went into the Canadian wilderness to paint with Canadian Group of Seven artist A.Y. Jackson. He executed quite remarkable paintings.

Now to the personal. Forgive me, I am going to be very personal in this. I do know that Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes are different diseases. My first husband, who died of a heart attack almost 17 years ago, was diagnosed with Type 2 some 10 or more years before he passed. I have to say he managed it expertly for years, but as you all know, diabetes and heart disease are connected. A year ago in early April, my granddaughter in the U.K., then 9, was diagnosed with Type 1. I have learned that there's no hereditary link between Type 1 and Type 2, so there's no link between the granddaughter and the grandfather she never knew. Her diagnosis was sudden and came as a real surprise. She's bright and athletic and had no prior symptoms.

I know many of us have had to deal with such surprises as partners, parents, grandparents and friends. In Zoe's case, she was rushed to King's Hospital London at the height of their COVID first wave. She was the only child in the whole pediatric wing of that esteemed hospital. Her father, who took her there, had to stay with her for the whole time, which was more than a week. Given COVID rules, her mother and sister were not allowed to visit at all. They were some very dicey days, and I am so blessed that she and her immediate family have the spirit, resilience and determination they do. Of course with COVID, I have not been able to see her or any of her family, save on Zoom or FaceTime, for over 18 months. However, I'm lucky we have the technology we do today. For my part, in the midst of my stress and anxiety through all this, I want to thank Senator Ravalia. He kindly heard me out in my state and underlined the research and the lead Kings was doing internationally, coupled with researchers here in Canada.

Since then, I have to say I am very proud of young Zoe. Just after her tenth birthday several months ago, she administered her insulin injection herself and is now on top of calculating the carbohydrates for her next meal — thus her insulin need, which she has to give herself 10 minutes before she eats, and on she goes. Early on, she instinctively knew when her sugars were too high or too low and could do the finger pricks herself to confirm where she was at. She has declined an insulin pump for now, which really surprised me. However, in one of our long and wonderful two-person FaceTimes, she said:

Mama, I need to know how to do it without technology, in case technology fails. Then I will get the technology. That way, I'll know what to do.

I was pretty proud of her approach.

The personal aside, you can appreciate, as Senator Hartling said, how family experiences feed one's desire to dig deeper. They are in the U.K., I am here. I well know all the services my family has had there — and does have — and could not be more grateful or admiring. I know the depth of the medical, nutritional and psychological team Zoe's whole family has. I know her school hired a fully qualified nurse after her diagnosis. I hasten to say it was not just for her. With other children's needs, it seems Zoe's reality tipped the scales, for which I am a very grateful grandmother.

[Translation]

Let's talk about Canada now. I want to sincerely thank Kimberly Hanson from Diabetes Canada and our entire Manitoba leadership team at Winnipeg's St. Boniface Hospital. They provided a wealth of knowledge and vision. I am so impressed by what they do and that they do it with patience, skill, first-hand experience and compassion.

I also want to thank Senator Mégie, who sponsored this bill in the Senate. I thank Member of Parliament Sonia Sidhu, who sponsored the bill in the other place, for her leadership on Bill C-237, a bill that I wholeheartedly support. Her family and her community face huge challenges, and they are so fortunate to have someone like Ms. Sidhu making changes at the national level to address such considerable needs.

[English]

I support Bill C-237 fully. We do need a national strategy that gives equal access to research, funding, technology, diagnoses, information, equipment, awareness, treatment and more all across this country. The fact that equipment is not equally accessible across Canada amazes me. Why don't all Canadians get the support my Zoe gets in London? Why do some supports stop at 18 or the age of majority? When will we grasp that research funds spent now will pay for themselves later in treatments, lives saved or corollary impacts now and in the future? Will all those with diabetes be able to access the latest technology? I do know how that has changed since the days in the 1990s when John had to test his sugar levels with finger pricks. Zoe, in the 2020s, does hers with a reader, which goes to hers and her parents' phones.

This disease is a major health risk and determinant in Canada. It links to so many other diseases. Research between diabetes and COVID is in full swing. As Senator Mégie clearly outlined in her speech, we do know the connections to heart health, circulation, vision and so many other conditions. Money spent on research and prevention, and for a cure, is absolutely critical. So too is making sure those findings and treatments are equally accessible across our country. Research entails patience, diligence, care, detail, compassion, teamwork and a long-term focus. Many people and policies only deal with short-term focus. In this case, both the long term and short term must prevail.

[Translation]

A national strategy is now essential and is a perfect way to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the massive contribution Canada made to research on this disease. I was naturally pleased to see funding for diabetes in Budget 2021, which will have a positive impact on people all across the country. I also want to thank all of the volunteers who are raising money to expand that research, which is so needed.

[English]

I want my Canada to continue as a diabetes leader through the next 100 years as it has in the last 100 years.

In conclusion, back to the personal. This grandmother is sending the hundredth anniversary stamps — the first day cover celebrating the discovery of insulin — to her granddaughter in honour of our past Canadian contribution, in thanks for Canada's present-day research and in hope for the future cure. Colleagues, please support this bill. I doubt there are few of us who are not affected one way or another by this critical disease. Canada deserves a national framework and strategy. It can only improve the health of our citizens and the future well-being of many.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

[Translation]

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

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

[Senator Bovey]

• (2010)

[English]

PROTECTING YOUNG PERSONS FROM EXPOSURE TO PORNOGRAPHY BILL

SEVENTH REPORT OF LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the seventh report of the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs (*Bill S-203, An Act to restrict young persons' online access to sexually explicit material, with amendments*), presented in the Senate on June 15, 2021.

Hon. Larry W. Campbell moved the adoption of the report, for Senator Jaffer.

He said: Honourable senators, I will be making the following remarks on behalf of the chair, Senator Jaffer, who is unable to be here today.

As per rule 12-23(4), in my remarks I will explain the amendments that the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs passed during its deliberations on Bill S-203.

The Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs has completed its study on Bill S-203, *An Act to restrict young persons' online access to sexually explicit material*. It was introduced on September 30, 2020, by Senator Julie Miville-Dechéne. The bill proposes a new law that aims to protect young persons by making it an offence to make sexually explicit material available to them on the internet for commercial purposes.

As stated in the bill's preamble, online age verification technology is becoming increasingly sophisticated. During the committee's hearings, we explored with witnesses how new techniques could be used to effectively ascertain the age of users without breaching their privacy rights. We also heard from witnesses about other topics, including the potentially harmful effect of watching pornography on young persons. The bill added that a person will not be convicted of the new offence if they posted the material for a legitimate purpose related to science, medicine, education or the arts, or if they can demonstrate that they implemented an appropriate age verification method to limit online access. The bill also includes mechanisms to require internet service providers to block access to sexually explicit material that is being made available to young persons.

The committee made several amendments to Bill S-203 during its clause-by-clause study. Amendments 3, 4 and 5 are of an editorial nature that made minor corrections, but there were several other substantive changes. Amendments 1 and 2 changed the minister responsible for implementing the bill from the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness to a minister to be designated by the Governor-in-Council. This change will ensure that cabinet has the

flexibility to determine which minister will be most appropriate to monitor and respond to this type of illegal activity on the internet.

Amendments 6 and 7 changed the compliance mechanisms under the proposed new law. Witnesses had expressed concerns about the framework in the original drafting, where the Minister of Public Safety was responsible for providing notice to internet service providers when further steps needed to be taken after the new offence has been committed. With amendment 6, the Governor-in-Council designates an agency, division or branch of the government as the enforcement authority for the new law. With amendment 7, when this enforcement authority has reason to believe that a person or corporation has committed an offence, it can send them a notice with the steps that need to be taken to address the illegal activity. If these steps are not complied with, the enforcement authority could apply to the Federal Court for an order requiring internet service providers to prevent access to the sexually explicit material.

Amendment 7 would also require the designated minister to table an annual report to each house of Parliament pertaining to the administration and the implementation of the law. This report must also include the number of notices issued by the enforcement authority, the number of applications made for an order requiring internet service providers to prevent access to the sexually explicit material to young persons on the internet and the outcome of these applications.

Last, amendment 8 changes the regulatory powers given to the Governor-in-Council, which are now limited to prescribing the suitable age verification methods that can be used to prevent young persons from accessing sexually explicit materials.

Thank you for your attention, honourable senators.

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

Some Hon. Senators: Agreed.

An Hon. Senator: On division.

(Motion agreed to, on division, and report adopted.)

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Honourable senators, when shall this bill, as amended, be read the third time?

(On motion of Senator Miville-Dechéne, bill, as amended, placed on the Orders of the Day for third reading at the next sitting of the Senate.)

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

SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator McPhedran, seconded by the Honourable Senator Loffreda, for the second reading of Bill S-209, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and the Regulation Adapting the Canada Elections Act for the Purposes of a Referendum (voting age).

Hon. Donald Neil Plett (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I'll say this is on debate. We advanced much further tonight than we had expected, and we wanted to move this bill forward this week but, as a result of our getting here quickly, I would like to make some comments about this bill tomorrow.

I want to assure Senator McPhedran that we will be prepared to call the question on this bill tomorrow, and I hope she accepts that as a guarantee. With that, I will adjourn the debate for the balance of my time.

(On motion of Senator Plett, debate adjourned.)

• (2020)

[Translation]

NATIONAL RIBBON SKIRT DAY BILL

SECOND READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator McCallum, seconded by the Honourable Senator Galvez, for the second reading of Bill S-227, An Act respecting a National Ribbon Skirt Day.

Hon. Josée Forest-Niesing: Honourable senators, last week in this chamber, I shared with you a very personal story about how I discovered my Métis ancestry a few years ago. I also told you how confused I felt about my deep desire to honour and claim my Métis heritage while respecting my Franco-Ontarian heritage.

I think it is very fitting, on this National Indigenous Peoples Day, to add a few words to the debate on Bill S-227, which would essentially designate January 4 of every year as National Ribbon Skirt Day. This recognition is very important to me, because it is the very expression of how my two heritages are intertwined. The ribbon skirt resulted from the relationship between Indigenous tribes in the Great Lakes region and new French colonists of the 18th century who traded their European ribbons with the Menominee people.

[English]

According to the *Leech Lake News*, the first recorded instances of ribbon-work appliqué was on a Menominee wedding dress made in 1802. Of course, we're talking specifically about a ribbon skirt here, since skirts adorned with purely Indigenous appliqués appeared long before 1802.

As I was reflecting on what I might include in my speech in support of this wonderful initiative for which I thank and honour my friend and colleague Senator Mary Jane McCallum, I thought about what a ribbon skirt could mean to me. Those who know me will agree that I certainly don't need another piece of clothing to add to my already overflowing wardrobe, but this is a piece of clothing that I plan to add regardless of the cost or the trouble.

I plan to make my ribbon skirt, as many Indigenous women do, selecting very deliberately the fabric, the colours and the number of ribbons that will adorn it. I will complete it with the input of those whose opinions matter to me, and I will ensure to have it completed in time for next January 4 whether this bill is passed or not. I will wear it proudly on that day as part of my journey as a proud and powerful Métis Canadian woman.

That is, after all, what the ribbon skirt is about, isn't it? Doesn't every person have a power suit or some other garment that we reach for on the morning of a particularly important day at work or a nerve-wracking task ahead? We wear it because it reminds us of our power and cloaks us in the confidence that we require for the task, decision or desired result at hand.

[Translation]

The ribbon skirt is making a comeback after being long forgotten and abandoned out of shame for traditional Indigenous clothing, shame caused by colonialism. The ribbon skirt is a long, hand-sewn skirt that is shaped similarly to the teepee. Traditionally, Indigenous women made them out of tanned hides and decorated them with hand-gathered natural materials. The materials used to make ribbon skirts changed over time as Indigenous peoples began trading with colonists. Ribbon skirt teachings are passed down from generation to generation as women teach their young daughters how to design and sew their own skirts.

Unlike so many cultures in the world, Indigenous peoples see women as sacred and honour them for their strength and their ability to carry and give life. Ribbon skirt teachings have to do with women's importance, power and resilience.

In a blog post on thepolestarpost.com, educator Erin Halolen from the Cree Nation explains the symbolism and importance of the ribbon skirt. She says the following, and I quote:

[English]

Elders teach that the ribbon skirt is worn to remind us of the sacredness of the woman as a life bearer, and to honor the values taught within the teepee or around the home fire. The skirt symbolizes the cyclical nature of life. We wear our skirts to honor the Grandmother's These are women who have lived before us, and paved our way. Our skirts unite us as woman who are journeying together in this

lifetime, and serve as a reminder that our choices and actions in this moment will impact many generations to come. We have the responsibility of carrying forward the teachings of our ancestors while paving the way for those who follow us. . . .

Ms. Halonen continues by telling us what they teach us:

. . . that when we wear our ribbon skirts the hem is long and brushes against the healing herbs that grow on the Earth. In this way, our original mother, Mother Earth, recognizes who is walking upon her there. I wear my ribbon skirts with pride, in honor of the woman who have journeyed here before me, in solidarity with my living female relatives, and as a reminder of my responsibility to future generations, and to the earth.

[Translation]

In her speech at an Anishnabek Nation symposium about healing and honouring missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, artist and social worker Tala Tootosis had this to say about the importance of being an Indigenous woman:

[English]

We are waking up. We're getting up. We are taking care of our kids. We are getting degrees. We're getting sober. We're learning to sew, bead, quilt, paint, sing, dance, everything again.

We're learning to heal. We're lawyers. We're doctors. We're judges. And at the same time, we are women. We are capable of carrying life, creating life, with or without a man. But at the same time remembering the balance. The man has a purpose and we create a balance together.

She goes on to state that the ribbon skirt is almost a declaration of being a survivor of attempted genocide:

They tried to murder my grandmother. They cut her hair. They tried to beat and rape the language out of her. But she still taught me that it's okay to wear a skirt. She told me she was so proud of me. She was able to say that from her own lips. That's resilience. That's power.

[Translation]

In honour of National Indigenous History Month and National Indigenous Peoples Day, I encourage you, honourable senators, to vote in favour of this bill, which is one more step toward reconciliation, toward sharing traditional knowledge and toward recognition of the power of Indigenous women across the country. I will wear my skirt with pride next January 4. I look forward to feeling the confidence and strength of my grandmothers, the ancestors of the Abenaki Nation, and to sharing a powerful connection with them.

[English]

I still have a power suit which I will pull out on occasion, but as I pursue my own personal journey, I am looking forward to including my new power ribbon skirt in my overflowing wardrobe.

Thank you. *Marsee*.

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

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to and bill read second time.)

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

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

(On motion of Senator McCallum, bill referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples.)

[*Translation*]

• (2030)

CANADIAN VICTIMS BILL OF RIGHTS

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu moved second reading of Bill S-235, An Act to amend the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights (posting of information about the victim).

He said: Honourable senators, it's with great honour and respect for the families of crime victims that I rise today to deliver my speech at second reading of Bill S-235, An Act to amend the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights with respect to posting of information about the victim.

This Bill is also called the Véronique Barbe Act, in honour of the memory of Véronique Barbe, a 41-year-old woman, a mother, who died tragically on September 14, 2017, when she was killed by her spouse in their home in Saint-Eustache, Quebec.

I also want to pay tribute to Yvon Lacasse, who was brutally murdered by the same man a few days later, during a murderous rampage.

According to her mother, Claudette, and her father, Pierre, Véronique Barbe was a smiling, happy and loving woman. She loved life and knew how to pass on her happiness and her love to her children, who were her priority. She was a caring mother who spoiled her children and, as her mother told me, a ray of sunshine to the whole family whose sense of humour enlivened family meals.

Unfortunately, like many women in Canada, Véronique was a victim of domestic abuse and found herself, unwillingly, in a downhill spiral for many years, in the clutches of a violent spouse.

She had already taken steps to contact the police seven years before she was murdered. In 2010, she began reporting what was happening to her, including the episodes of violence and serious incidents of physical and psychological abuse that should have

been taken seriously by the authorities. Despite her cries for help, our criminal justice system failed to help, protect and free her from this toxic relationship.

There have been 13 femicides in Quebec since the beginning of 2020. These 13 murders were committed in a context of domestic violence and, in the majority of cases, police authorities had been alerted to the situation.

According to the Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability report, 160 women were killed in Canada in 2020, half of them in a context of domestic violence.

I want to reiterate that it is essential and urgent to support, study and quickly pass Bill S-231, which seeks to combat the scourge of domestic violence.

Coming back to the case of Véronique Barbe, the murderer has since been convicted and is currently incarcerated. Cowardly and with no respect for the memory of Véronique and her family, the murderer continued to post images of himself and Véronique on his Facebook account, despite the family's many attempts to get the web giant to permanently shut down his account.

The family's many requests were denied by Facebook without explanation. Facebook did not respect the principles of the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights, which is a supra-constitutional law in Canada. It took a lot of media pressure to get the murderer's profile taken down and to get Facebook to apologize to the family.

I want to thank the *Journal de Montréal* for also denouncing Facebook for its lack of cooperation and for helping the family prevail over this web giant.

Apologies do not go far enough to ease the pain of Véronique's family, who had to fight hard to get her former husband's Facebook account shut down out of respect for their daughter. It was outrageous for the murderer to do this, and it was a serious failure on the part of Facebook.

I would like to quote a statement made by Véronique's mother about this bill. She said:

It was very hard on the family see photos of Véronique with her murderer on social media, but with Senator Boisvenu's help, we managed to close his account on Facebook with this long-awaited bill. I am grateful that it is named in honour of Véronique. Victims of crime and their families have the right to expect respect for any information and images pertaining to them. Thank you, Senator.

I was also contacted by a father who experienced a terrible family tragedy more than a year ago in Montreal. This man lost his 11-year-old daughter, who was murdered, unfortunately. This bill is also in memory of this young girl.

There was also an attempt on the life of his second daughter, who is 5 years old, and she will be traumatized for life by this sad incident that should never have happened.

Legal proceedings are under way and I will not disclose any further information about this story, but the mother of this young girl, who is accused of these crimes, still has a Facebook profile with pictures of her victims.

I would also like to quote the father's statement on this matter:

It is insane. The photo was taken six days before the murder, right in front of where I live. When I saw it, I was disgusted.

It should be automatic. It takes laws to force the accused to provide their passwords and temporarily suspend their accounts for the duration of the trials We must protect the victims.

I went through the horror, and all I am asking for is respect for my daughters. It bothers me to know that everyone has access to the photos of them with their mother.

Also, I urge all honourable senators to sign a petition initiated by this brave father, which can be found on the Quebec National Assembly website, to support his fight to advocate for respect and remembrance for minor victims of crime. The petition is entitled "Protection de l'identité de victimes mineures d'actes criminels sur les médias sociaux," and focuses on protecting the identity of minor victims of crime on social media.

At the request of both families, I decided to introduce this bill, which would amend the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights to increase protections for victims and their families who are in similar situations.

The Association des familles de personnes assassinées ou disparues, which I founded in 2004 with three other fathers whose daughters had been murdered or kidnapped, believes that this is an important bill that will guarantee the dignity and protect the memory of victims who are ruthlessly murdered. This bill would amend the Bill of Rights by adding a paragraph to section 11, entitled "Privacy," that would prohibit the offender from posting any information about the victim on the Internet. This bill will strengthen the portion of the bill of rights that deals with protection.

This bill is a first step toward amending the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights, and that amendment will call for much more extensive work with respect to the Criminal Code. I plan to introduce a bill during the next parliamentary session to prohibit any offender or accused from posting photos or information about their victims or keeping existing photos of their victim on social media either during legal proceedings or after conviction. To do so will be an offence.

I also plan to include constraints for digital platforms such as Facebook and for their privacy policies. Nobody is above the law, and it is our duty to regulate how these platforms operate in our country and how they treat victims of crime.

I would like to take this opportunity to talk to you about the importance of improving the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights. As you know, I was the co-founder of the bill, which was passed six years ago in 2015.

For victims of crime, the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights is, first and foremost, recognition of their rights within the criminal justice system.

Let's not forget that this bill of rights is supra-constitutional and consists of four pillars based on four fundamental rights that actors in the criminal justice system have the obligation to uphold: the right to information, participation, protection and restitution.

This bill that I am introducing today is the only one in the past six years that seeks to amend the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights to improve and enhance it. Unfortunately, according to the many accounts that I hear every week, this bill of rights is all too often applied inappropriately and not complied with. It is therefore urgent that Parliament undertake the five-year review of the legislation and get victims to actively participate in this legislative exercise.

Bill S-235 reminds us that we have a victims bill of rights that has the force of law in Canada. This bill of rights does not discriminate on the grounds of race, gender, religion or community, and it must be used and respected by us, as legislators, more often. The Senate of Canada needs to ensure that it is implemented across the country in order to show respect for all victims of crime and their families.

• (2040)

Honourable senators, I am convinced that you care about protecting and respecting victims' rights. That is why I invite and urge you to take part in improving this bill of rights by amending it every time you consider that victims' rights were not respected.

Victims and their families should not have to fight again, and fight so hard, when there is a tool in place that should keep victims and their loved ones from being victimized yet again.

In closing, honourable senators, in memory of Véronique Barbe, in memory of the young girl who lost her life at the tender age of 11, and in memory of the many other people you know, I ask you to pass the bill at second reading so it can be sent to the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs for prompt consideration.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

(On motion of Senator Duncan, debate adjourned.)

[English]

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT, 1999

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Frum, seconded by the Honourable Senator Martin, for the second reading of Bill C-204, An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999 (final disposal of plastic waste).

Hon. Rosa Galvez: Honourable senators, I rise today as the critic of Bill C-204, An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, a bill that will prohibit the export of certain types of plastic waste to foreign countries for final disposal.

First, let me thank Member of Parliament for York-Simcoe, Mr. Scot Davidson, and our colleague Senator Frum for raising this important issue of final disposal of our plastic waste. In this speech I will address the reasons for this type of legislation and my agreement on its principle. I worked my entire career on identifying, assessing and solving pollution and contamination problems created by domestic or hazardous industrial wastes. These problems affect human health and safety, as well as that of an ecosystem that provides ecological services essential to our survival.

Too numerous times to be mentioned here, I have witnessed firsthand the negative impact of our irresponsible, ever-growing waste-producing habits and handling of toxic substances. Typical landfill operations stockpile all kinds of objects that could have been recycled but, instead, become macro- and microplastics that will find their way to water bodies initiating their path into the food web.

One view that is still very fresh in my mind are the numerous fish from Chaudière River that develop tumours and deformations since the Lac-Mégantic oil spill. Who will eat these fish? Do you know that scientists found microplastic in human lungs, livers, spleens, kidneys and recently in human placenta?

Colleagues, it is no secret: Humanity has a global waste problem and if we don't manage it in a sustainable way as our population grows, we will further intoxicate our lives.

Every year, 280 billion tonnes of groundwater is polluted by landfill leachate containing contaminants — a source of water which a quarter of Canadians and at least half of the world's population rely on to survive.

The use of land for our billions of tonnes of waste every year reduces our capacity to stop deforestation, to fight climate change or to offer healthy environments for humans and wildlife alike. To minimize the contamination of our lands, we rely on foreign countries and on the oceans.

In the end, 13 million tonnes of plastic end up in the oceans each year, pollute the waters and destroy oceanic ecosystems. More than half of this plastic is less dense than the water and thus will float. Once these plastics enter ocean currents, they are unlikely to leave the area until they degrade into smaller microplastics under the effects of the sun, waves and marine life. As more and more plastics are discarded into the environment, the plastic concentration in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch will only continue to increase. This floating plastic patch covers an estimated surface area of 1.6 million square kilometres: an area the size of my province of Quebec. At this rate, there will be more plastic than fish in the sea by 2050.

Canada is no shining example for the rest of the world. In fact, we are among the worst waste producers. With an estimated 1.33 billion metric tonnes of waste or 36.1 tonnes per person in 2017, Canada ranks as the most wasteful country per capita.

The difference in waste production per province and territory is noticeable, with provinces such as Alberta and Saskatchewan producing more than double the amount per capita of provinces like Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. Here, it is worth noticing that this data comes from a total per province that includes domestic, industrial and municipal wastes and divided by the respective provincial population.

The waste problem is increasing in Canada, and it goes beyond plastics. I hope we will address this problem holistically with robust legislation.

In 2016, we generated 3.3 million tonnes of plastic, with only 9% of it being properly recycled, 4% being incinerated for energy recovery and an incredible 86% being sent to landfills. Take a moment to reflect on the sheer amount of plastic waste sitting in landfills across the country right now that will persist for generations.

The main offender representing almost half of total plastic waste in Canada is the packaging sector, followed by the automotive, textile, electrical and electronic equipment and construction sectors.

[Translation]

Why do we urgently need to address problems associated with plastic waste? Because it is not just a problem of stored materials. It is also a health problem and an environmental problem, and if that does not move you, you should know that it is also a major economic problem. I would also add that as a mother and grandmother, it is also an ethical problem that is causing significant harm around the world.

Historically, and still today, our economy follows a linear model, namely extraction, production and disposal. More than 60% of all extracted natural resources end up as waste. What a waste. How ineffective and inefficient. These completely outdated economic models rely on the false and illogical assumption that our planet has infinite resources and that we can grow forever in a system that in fact does not exist on our planet.

In 2009, scientists described the limits of our planetary system, which is essential to sustaining life on Earth, as the entire world knows it. Today, we have already exceeded four of those limits: climate instability, loss of biodiversity, land use and nutrient cycles.

We must immediately shift our consumer model into a circular economy.

Using our natural resources more efficiently, preventing products and materials from becoming waste for as long as possible and transforming waste that cannot be avoided into a new resource are key steps to achieving a more sustainable and circular economy. These key steps will help stimulate the economy, ensure the economic stability that investors and industry demand and create millions of jobs through the development and implementation of clean technologies.

Actions to ensure sustainable waste management must follow a clear sequence: source reduction, reuse, recycling, energy recovery and encapsulating final waste materials. This is the waste management model advocated by waste management experts around the world, including multinational organizations like the OECD, of which Canada is a member.

• (2050)

Historically, however, Canada has chosen to focus on the third option, creating a recycling industry. If we take a closer look at plastic recycling rates today, we can see that our feeble attempts at sound waste management are a complete failure, and we must acknowledge that. We have created an entire recycling industry that is not very efficient. Our recycled materials are used very little in the manufacture of new products. Packaging manufacturers, advocates for planned obsolescence and those who waste materials do not assume any responsibility, which does nothing for the circular economy.

By skipping the first two steps of sound waste management, we are massively diminishing our opportunities to reduce waste.

[English]

In fact, through the funding of our own department of Environment and Climate Change Canada, a 2019 report entitled *Economic Study of the Canadian Plastic Industry, Markets and Waste* stated that in 2016 Canada lost an \$8 billion opportunity from unrecovered plastic material, a number that will grow to \$11 billion by 2030.

The same report states that by diverting 90% of plastic waste out of landfills and back into the production cycle by 2030, Canada could save \$500 million per year. It could also create 42,000 direct and indirect jobs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 1.8 million tonnes of CO₂ per year.

Why are we not doing that? The world is looking to decarbonize, and better waste management is a major factor.

In 2019, ECCC published a discussion paper entitled *A proposed integrated management approach to plastic products to prevent waste and pollution*, in which it adopted a target of at

least 50% recycled content in plastic products by 2030. Why the government cannot and has not acted earlier on this is baffling to me.

On the private sector side, a series of corporations operating in Canada have partnered with the Canada Plastics Pact, a member of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's global Plastics Pact Network, to commit to four actionable targets by 2025, including all plastic packaging being designed to be reusable, recyclable or compostable; half of plastic packaging being effectively recycled; and all plastic packaging containing 30% recycled content.

These initiatives are encouraging to hear, but they are tiny steps to ending the plastic waste problem in Canada. We need a comprehensive and interlinked waste legislation framework.

For example, encouraging recycling is only one part of the circular economy. Manufacturers must use a maximum amount of recycled material in their new products to capture the value of the recycled material and avoid exhaustion of natural resources. Bold policies like this will help us shift to a more sustainable economy.

Where does our plastic waste currently end up? Most of our plastic waste, well above 90%, is exported to the United States, with other countries such as Vietnam, Malaysia, Honduras, Turkey and Chile sharing the rest. The trade of plastic waste, however, is internationally regulated by the *Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal*, which was adopted in March 1989 as a response to mounting controversy over wealthy nations exporting hazardous waste to developing countries with no capacity to adequately manage it, therefore provoking massive environmental and health issues. Its main objectives are to reduce hazardous waste generation and promote environmentally sound management, restrict transboundary movement of hazardous waste except to nations that are capable of environmentally sound management and create a regulatory system to frame permissible trade of hazardous waste.

Although Canada ratified in December 2020 new amendments to the Basel Convention, "... requiring prior informed consent-controls for all but the cleanest types of plastic-waste exports traded between treaty parties," the United States has not done so, which has many experts worried about a 2020 bilateral agreement with the U.S. allowing exports of plastic waste to the south, with less strict controls than the Basel Convention and possible re-exportation to developing countries.

With heavily mediatized cases of international waste disputes involving Canada in recent years, I cannot say that I am confident our plastic waste will be adequately managed under our current agreements.

In the spirit of all this information, I completely agree with the principle and intent of Bill C-204. I will echo the words of Senator Frum: "By continuing to export our plastic waste, we are failing in our duty for environmental stewardship."

For centuries, the wealthy nations of the world have imposed a burden on developing countries by making them deal with our toxic waste. This is environmental racism and colonialism, period.

The world is not our dumping ground, and to continue to act like it is reinforces the colonial tendencies of a country grappling with the consequences of its own actions. The wealth of a nation should not justify the transfer of responsibility for our waste. In fact, it should be quite the opposite. We have some of the highest capacities in the world to manage waste in an environmentally sound way.

The above applies to pollution reduction and environmental protection as a whole, including climate legislation. Canada needs to stop lagging. We still don't have a climate accountability bill that will harmonize our law with our international commitments and that would make our country cleaner and our economy more competitive. We should not be afraid of legislation that will make our people healthier, happier and ultimately more prosperous. I long for a time where these issues stop being political and we start focusing on our needs as humans.

That being said, I do believe this is an issue that requires detailed and careful study, especially given the potential impacts on interprovincial and international trade, and the fact that it affects many sectors.

As responsible citizens of the world, we want Canada to deal with its waste, and I believe that you will agree with me that we must quickly determine the paths to eliminate unnecessary waste production and cure the problem at its roots.

As the critic of this bill, I wholeheartedly agree to send this bill to committee.

Colleagues, I will leave you with these wise words from Pete Seeger's song "If It Can't Be Reduced":

If it can't be reduced, reused, repaired
Rebuilt, refurbished, refinished, resold
Recycled or composted
Then it should be restricted, redesigned
Or removed from production

Thank you very much. *Meegwetch.*

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Senator Gold, do you wish to speak? We have about a minute before we adjourn.

Hon. Marc Gold (Government Representative in the Senate): Thank you, Your Honour. I would like to say a word or two, and then I will be adjourning for the balance of my time.

Honourable senators, I rise today to speak at second reading of Bill C-204, An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999 (final disposal of plastic waste).

Clearly, colleagues, the world is facing a challenge with managing plastic waste responsibly. Challenges with domestic management of large volumes of plastic waste often result in releases into the environment or landfilling, posing a serious global environmental problem and a lost economic opportunity. There is simply no denying that reality.

However, whether Bill C-204 is the appropriate instrument to address those issues, or even to assist in addressing them, is an important question that this chamber must carefully contemplate. Respectfully, it is the government's view that it is not, and I will outline the reasons for this position.

(Debate.)

(At 9 p.m., pursuant to the order adopted by the Senate earlier this day, the Senate adjourned until 2 p.m., tomorrow.)

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